



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja

ÁREA SOCIO HUMANÍSTICA
TITULACIÓN DE LICENCIADO EN CIENCIAS DE LA
EDUCACIÓN
MENCIÓN INGLÉS

The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning
process in Ecuadorian high schools

TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

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CENTRO UNIVERSITARIO MANTA

2014

APROBACIÓN DEL DIRECTOR DEL TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

Magister

Nina Nesterenko

DOCENTE DE LA TITULACIÓN

De mi consideración:

El presente trabajo de fin de titulación: “The influence of large classes in the English language - teaching learning process in Ecuadorian high schools” realizado por: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por cuanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

Loja, enero de 2015

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DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

“Yo, De Mera Ureta Verónica Verenice declaro ser autor(a) del presente trabajo de fin de titulación “The influence of large classes in the English language teaching – learning process in Ecuadorian high schools” de la Titulación de Licenciado en Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, siendo Mgs Nina Nesterenko directora del presente trabajo; y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Además certifico que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultados vertidos en el presente trabajo investigativo, son de mi exclusiva responsabilidad.

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Verónica De Mera Ureta
1309155057

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dear daughters Alanys and Simonne, a special acknowledgement to my husband Jovanny whose love and patience has supported me in this long process. They are the reason of my universe. I also dedicate this effort to my parents whose words of encouragement always made me feel that could accomplish anything in a successful way.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I thank all the people and the institution that made it possible to finish my research, I want especially thank to my thesis tutor who helped me with the corrections and suggestions through this project process.

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ABSTRACT

The topic of this research is “The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools” and the purpose of this research is to determine whether or not large classes affect the English teaching-learning process. It is also focused on factors that may inhibit the output of students.

The method used to analyze the data was quantitative, the contributors of this project were taken from one private Ecuadorian high school, located in Manta; the respondents were from ninth and tenth grade of Basic General Education and first and third year of senior school. The answers of the students were analyzed through a questionnaire with 21 statements divided into three sections, academic issue, social issue and psychological issue.

The conclusion of this work is that in large class students always have the opportunities to express opinions especially throughout group work, and enrich the learning process and make it more enjoyable. However, due to the significant amount of students, teachers’ work becomes difficult. The students do not have a good control and the feedback is so poor.

KEY WORDS: High Schools, English language teaching, skills, environment, large classes.

RESUMEN

El tema de ésta investigación es “The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools” y el propósito de ésta investigación es determinar si o no las clases numerosas afectan en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés, está enfocado también en factores que pueden impedir a productividad del estudiante.

El método usado en ésta investigación fue cuantitativo, las muestras fueron tomadas de un colegio Ecuatoriano, localizado en Manta; los encuestados fueron de noveno y décimo año de Educación Básica, primer y tercer año de Bachillerato. Las respuestas de los estudiantes fueron tomadas de un cuestionario con 21 interrogantes contenidas en 3 secciones, enfocadas en los aspectos académicos, sociales y psicológicos.

La conclusión de éste trabajo es que en clases numerosas los estudiantes tienen oportunidad de expresar sus ideas, especialmente a través de grupos de trabajo y enriquecerse con la variedad de recurso humano. Sin embargo, debido a la cantidad de estudiantes, el trabajo del profesor es difícil porque no hay un buen control de comportamiento y la retroalimentación es pobre en algunos estudiantes.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Colegios, enseñanza del idioma Inglés, destrezas, entorno, clases numerosas.

INTRODUCTION

The Ecuadorian Government in the last year has adopted some important programs to improve the English education in our country, which is why teachers have better opportunities to study in other countries and practice the language in a real context, in order to improve their skills which are needed in the Ecuadorian classrooms.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not large classes influence the English language teaching – learning process, related also with the instructional, social and psychological implications that large classes have upon the teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian High Schools.

Previous related studies have shown that large classes have their advantages and disadvantages. One of the studies related to the topic was made by Dachs (1998) stated that large classes have positive results and views, learners with a daily English practice in large classes have gained more confidence and have improved their ability to communicate, interact and share ideas among them.

Another study was done by Merab (2011), who investigated about the physical infrastructure, teaching materials, and the affective relationship between students-teachers and teachers-students. The results showed that the infrastructure such in public as in private schools were poor, they did not have enough visual materials to work with young learners, and libraries were not available.

Something similar was mentioned by Blatchfor (1999), who wrote that class size is a factor which really affects the interaction, behavior control and the learning

process. In some classroom observations it was noticed that there were less individual attention, the feedback was minimal, fewer reading opportunities.

Another study done by Tabali (2003) the researcher pretended to figure out whether the teachers use strategies in the teaching learning process in order to improve the four skills such as listening, writing, speaking and reading. The results demonstrated that in a positive way teachers investigate strategies, and try different techniques to improve the students' production.

Something relevant in this investigation was that teachers apply in their classes their own personal style and experience in the teaching process.

The results of the present investigation will benefit educational institution in general, teachers, and students who are involved in the teaching and learning of this language which provides a wide variety of opportunities in the academic and professional fields.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in one private high school located in the city of Manta, the province of Manabí-Ecuador. The sample comprises five classes with a total of 211 students from 9th grade of Basic General Educational, two 10th grade of Basic General Education, one 1st year of senior's high school, and one 3rd year of senior's high school. The age of the group was taken from 12-17 years old.

Procedures

The investigation began by researching previous literature directly to this study, the literature came from two different formats which were books and articles.

Regarding several topics such as Teaching approaches and methods, Class size (number of students), Managing learning (Instructions, feedback, discipline, and timing), Managing large classes, Activities for working with large classes, Seating arrangement and classroom space and different levels of proficiency. After this, it was necessary to find previous studies about "*The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process*" in the internet. The information of studies was found in the virtual library of Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja.

The instruments contained 21 statements divided in three sections, 9 statements about academic issues, 5 statements about social issues and 7 statements about psychological issues.

The information was tabulated by hand, then it was transferred to an excel program. In this phase the information was transformed into percentages which

helped us in an easy way to analyze the three different aspects. The method used for this research was quantitative.

The information was checked several times in order to avoid problems regarding the results. The method used to analyze this research was quantitative.

Finally, during the analysis of the information obtained from the questionnaires there were two aspects to consider, the first aspect was to be focussed on the purpose of the study, the second aspect was to be very attentive in which section was being worked, it means such as academic, social or psychological. The data needed to be analyzed very carefully in order to understand its correlation to the whole study.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

In the last years, our Ecuadorian Government has studied different ways to improve the English level education in our students, teachers have applied for international standards, the daily teacher`s training, technologies, new methodologies in order to ensure their communicative language skills, but the results are not satisfactory.

It is known that there are many factors to consider that influence the teaching learning process, but one of the most important in the present research is the Ecuadorian large classes.

Regarding this issue it is possible to determine whether large classes in Ecuador affect the learning process.

As a result, it will be possible to find possible solutions to improve the expect results in order for the students to be able to communicate in a written and oral way. It is necessary to improve the teaching learning process in Ecuadorian schools by proposing new ideas and projects. Fortunately we are in the process.

Shelagh Waddington (2010) stated in a project in “Nui Maynooth”, university of Ireland that “Large group teaching” had a wide variety of positive aspects which could contribute in teaching in large classes, such as the lack of pressure to participate, or even to attend or meet new people, and the most frequently cited problem it was the discipline, the students spoke at inappropriate times.

Starting with the investigation, some important aspects will be analyzed in this research.

Teaching Approaches and Methods

Content-Based Instructions (CBI) is an approach that focusses on what the students learn by using their target language in order to develop their linguistic ability. Content Based Instructions is a very popular approach because students can work on feedback and improve their knowledge.

According to Richard and Rogers (2001, p.219), this method stimulates students to think and learn through the target language. For example, it employs authentic reading materials which does not require students understand every single word, but to interpret in context as well. Content-Based Instructions provides forums in which students need to discriminate, synthesize, join ideas with an order and systematic preparation in writing.

In this approach, students are exposed to study skills which prepare them for a range of academic tasks they will encounter. Lightbown, & Spada (1999), coincide with the same idea. They said that Content Based Instructions is an approach which seeks to reach a balance between language and content instruction with the principal propose of using the language rather than on talking about it.

In Communicative Language Teaching, the students are encouraged to communicate by interaction in the target language inside and outside the classroom.

Brown (1994), and Richard & Rogers(2001) claim that this is a model with diverse set of principles which helps the process of communication, and is used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures. For example, learners learn a

language by using it, the fluency plays a very important role in communication, and also the integration of different language skills may help to the language acquisition. Communicative Language Teaching has passed through some numbers of phases.

The first is the need to develop a syllabus that was compatible with notions of communicative competence, the second phase is focused on procedures for identifying learner's needs and analyze the component of communicative methodology, the third phase deals with the kind of classrooms, activities such as group work, tasks work, and information gaps. Another author, Brown (1994, p. 77), mentioned that "the teacher's presence is not perceived as a threat, and the learners in a classroom are regarded as a "group" rather than a "class", here students and teachers join together to facilitate learning in a context, the anxiety caused by the educational context is lessened by means of supportive community, but the teacher is a true counselor, to center his or her attention on the learners and their needs. Communicative Language Teaching is giving a transformation to the learning process and is one of the most accepted in the world of the education.

The Natural Approach was exposed in the late of 1970s, it is an approach that claims that language learning is the way how students acquire their native language. The aim of this method is to develop communication skills step by step, by listening and understanding and pick up the language in a fluently way, not by learning grammatical rules. According to Richard & Rogers (2001,p.190), "The Natural Approach belongs to a tradition of language teaching methods based on observation and interpretation of how learners acquire both first and second language in nonformal settings."

The above authors together with Newmark (1968) stated that “an adult can effectively be taught by grammatically unordered materials” and that such approach is “the only learning process which we know for certain will produce mastery of the language at a native level”. In fact, The Natural Approach is revolutionary in its procedures, it employs methods that increase practice activities rather than production of grammatically perfect utterance and sentences.

Additionally, Douglas Brown (1994) says that in fact, The Natural Approach advocated the use of TPR activities at the beginning level of language learning when “comprehensible input” is essential for the acquisition of language, in its case the teacher is the only resource of the learners’ input and the creator of the most interesting activities, games, skits and group work in the classroom.

The Cooperative Language Learning aims at organizing classroom activities in order to improve the social learning experiences. With this approach students need to work in groups to complete tasks. It is a cooperative work, here the students can evaluate one another ideas by asking one another for information, everyone succeeds when the group succeeds. Brown (1994) and Richards & Rogers (2001) stated that the organization of the class is through a group, and cooperative activities in order to increase the participation of the students and provide a good language production by the students in this learning process, CLL activities can also be used in collaboration with other teaching methods and approaches. Cooperative Language Learning is not without its critics, however, some researchers have questioned its use with students of different levels by suggesting that some groups of students may obtain more benefits than others.

Adding to above mentioned, Douglas Brown (1994) claims that Cooperative Language Learning is cooperative and not competitive, since students work together, in pairs or in groups, they share information and contrast ideas. Something that the teacher has to be clear is in emphasizing on collaborative effort of students. Collaboration should be strictly among students; also the teacher has to carry out techniques in evaluating process.

Task-Based Language Teaching, (TBLT) focuses on the use of the language in a real life situation, it means apply the language through tasks activities and problem solving such as, go to the dentist, go to the doctor, go shopping. When these tasks are transformed from real world to the classroom, they are called pedagogical tasks. Richard and Rogers (2001) observed that tasks promote communication and authentic language use in the classrooms. TBLT, however, offers a different and dynamic way to produce the target language, such as finding a solution to a puzzle, make a telephone call, giving directions, writing a letter, and there is the absence of a systematic grammatical explanation. Richard and Renandya (2002) agree with the above information, but they give more information about the classroom activities which may improve the language learning such as “information-gap-task, opinion gap task”. In order to encourage a curriculum for the Task-Based Language Teaching above activities can be adapted in tags activities.

Grammar Translation Method, also called traditional method, has the main objective to practice the rules and translate the whole sentence in order to develop in a better way the reading ability. Brown (1994) and Richards’ and Rogers (2001) stated that the main characteristic of this method is studying by translating sentences

and texts into and out of the target language. Reading and writing are the major focus, the specific vocabulary is taught through bilingual word list, and translation is the distinctive feature of this method. The students develop high quality in translation, grammar rules which are practiced in different exercises in class.

Regarding the same topic Douglas Brown (1994) shares the idea by saying that much vocabulary is taught in the form of the list of isolated words. Long elaborated explanations of grammar are given. The attention of the context on texts is little, and the memorization in this method plays an important role.

The concept of Class Size differs in the place where it is taken, however, large classes give the opportunity to improve the teachers' teaching skills and style. Sharan & Chin Tan (2008) collected information about large class for teachers around the world.

This topic varies according to the place, and the schools. For example, educators in Western countries generally consider any classroom of 25-30 students to be large and, consequently, these classes present difficult challenges to teachers in achieving their instructional goals, but in China teachers work with 50 or more, after an effort was made to reduce class size from much larger numbers (around 150). This gives an idea that there is no consensus on what means a large class. On the other hand, Numan (1996) stated that in Nigeria Pakistan, India, it is easy to find classes over 200 students, and he focused more on the effects of physical location on motivation and how to impart the knowledge to all students in large classes.

Managing Learning

This learning approach contains four important factors that are correlated in the learning process such as instructions, discipline, feedback and timing. Woolfolk (2007) stated that the aim of classrooms management is to maintain the clear rules in order to encourage a positive learning environment, the timing needs to be effectively in a classroom, if the teacher sets up the rules correctly he is going to avoid problems, and the management will be very productive. Adding to this research, Gower, Philips, & Walters, S. (1995) agree with this terms; they stated that a disciplined class and a cooperative atmosphere can determinate the good students' input. The age of the students plays an important factor in this approach, teachers need to manage the rules, the instructions, the timing according to the stages that they are working on it.

Something is clear, that every class carries out some differences, but the discipline is always the same value that teachers need to establish in their teaching process. If teachers are disciplined with the time, the lesson planning, and strictly on their decisions, students will respect the English class.

Managing Large Classes

This approach is a particularly challenging and a very important aspect in teaching, but once a teacher gets his or her classroom management strategies teachers will find the pleasure of teaching. Woodward (2001) tells when she was in an international teacher group, there was a debate about large classes. According to her observations, 25 students is large class, but other participants stated that there were 55, other said 120 is really large. It was interesting because teachers asked some tips

to work with large classes, she gave some general suggestions to manage the class. For example, she proposed to memorize the name of the students of course is a large process, but with practice can be improved, use clear eye contact with individuals may produce a positive engagement, use other systems for attracting the attention of the students, such as hands up, ringing a little bell, use a whistle, to create a way that they speak and interact with a partner or in groups, challenge them to establish a certain amount of routines, keep students involved from the start of the lesson. Even though Brown (1994) stated that language classes should have more than dozen students enough to provide diversity and students interaction, large classes present some problems such as individual teacher-student attention is minimized, teachers' feedback is limited, and student's opportunities to speak are lessened. And he gave some solutions or strategies to these problems. For example, try to make each student important by learning their names. Using the names, give much interactive work as possible, so the students feel part of the education community, it is important to give students a range of extra-work, organize informal conversations groups and studies groups.

Activities for Working with large classes

Teaching large classes is particularly challenging, therefore the application of games helps to engage students in the learning and participation activities. O'Neill, & Ramsey, G. (1998) suggested some interesting activities, one of the relevant activities is watch a video with large classes according to the level of the students, teachers can do many activities with a video by playing the tape without sound, so the students discuss what they see, what the character is saying. With the same video

it could be freezing the picture, the teacher presses the pause button and ask the students what is going next. Can they predict? Also they shared ideas with listening discrimination activities according to the levels.

Brown (1994) stated that the teacher is the one who promotes the successful group work, always with the established rules, and he gave some suggestions such as, role play simulations, drama, projects which involve interaction with partners, brainstorming ideas, information gaps, jig saw activities, opinion exchange. These kind of activities promote the interaction and all the students have the opportunity to develop their target language, and may learn on their own errors.

Seating arrangement and classroom space (physical space-big/small rooms)

Seating arrangement depends on the age of the students and the subjects that are taught in the classrooms. Teachers may try alternate ways of seating according to the necessities. Gower, R., Philips, D., & Walters, S. (1995) said that the types of chairs, tables, desks, in the classrooms always affect the learning atmosphere. A horseshoe arrangement will allow easy, face to face contact between the students but in small classes.

In addition, Brown (1994) argues that students are members of a team and should be able to see one another, and talk with another in English. If the classroom has movable desk-chairs, consider to work in semicircles, U shapes, concentric circles, try to make configurations to make interactions among students. He also suggested that if students are being disruptive, teachers may decide to selectively move a few people, of course with a certain plan in mind.

Different levels of proficiency are related with the degree that each learner has from beginner to advance levels; it refers to the use of different strategies and the use of visual material resources according to the level and the age of the students. Saville (2006) states that demands learners' attention, and thus involves controlled processing, for example if there are some students with a lower level and, other with an upper level, teachers should give extra activities to increase the level of the student who need to reach the achievement throughout extra classes, extra materials, and academic support in the school. Some schools have the levels of English proficiency divided, and they select the students according to the level previous a placement test, these are the levels.

Beginners are learners who know basic vocabulary; they can ask for simple directions among them; Intermediate level is when students can interact by speaking about different social topics. Advanced level is when the learners acquire the language and can develop an eloquence conversation with a native speaker without trouble.

Peer teaching is a good strategy to help learners to achieve the goals in the learning process.

Previous studies have been done to analyze the influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in this educational system. This presentation includes five studies with similar research questions.

Dachs, T. (1998) had some questions to develop his research. The first was about how do teachers in large classes interact with their pupils? The second was, what use is made of teaching and learning materials? The third was, in what way

does the use of such material contribute to effective learning? The fourth was, what do teachers, principals and materials designers feel about large class teaching and the benefits of the materials available to them?

The method used to collect data was the interview, two similar but separated interviews schedules were prepared after consulting. This first was designed to record the attitude of the school principals and the second to record those of the class teachers.

Each sought to gather information of difficulties in handling large classes. The interviews were conducted by the field researchers and the responses of the interviewees were recorded either on a Likert-type scale of responses or in an open-ended style. These responses were analyzed in two ways. The Likert responses were translated onto a numerical scale and mean scores determined; while the opened responses were analyzed for similarity of word string and phrases in order to establish trends of similarities and differences. The two instruments were fundamentally time-lapse studies in which pre-identified teacher and pupil behaviors are described during each observation period.

The outcomes showed an overall improvement of 180% in comparison with the 63% overall improvement of the two control schools. It is evident that the learners have gained confidence and their English language Communication skills.

In conclusion, these results confirmed that the English as a second language had major benefits for pupils in terms of their communicative skills and their ability to write good English. They improved their reading and writing skills.

Another researcher, Merab (2011) did a research with two purposes: identify the physical infrastructure and the teaching materials in schools, and examine the relationship between trainee teachers, teacher administrators, supervisors and students.

The method to collect data was purely qualitative using focus group discussion with trainee teachers and interviews with co-operating teachers that were selected randomly. 30 trainee teachers were randomly selected from 30 rural and urban schools.

The interviews, conducted in person by the researcher, were open ended questions that were designed to provide facts, opinions and attitudes. Merab (2011) found out that the socialization process into co-operative teachers and schools was not well done in some schools, consequently having a negative attitude towards directors of studies and some teachers.

As a conclusion, the infrastructure in some schools, both government and private, is poor. There are few classrooms in some schools; libraries are not available in some schools while science laboratories are poor. The socialization is not well done in some schools, this makes teachers prefer be separated from the group, consequently having a negative attitude toward directors of studies. Finally, he recommended to apply better training approaches in order to be used with the teachers and students, the supervisors should be given an induction course on the pedagogy of teacher's education for them to do a good job.

Blatchford, Moriarty & Martin, C. (1999) investigated connections between class size and teacher interaction in a wide range of urban, suburban and rural areas.

The methodology used in this research was by data collection. They collected a number of forms of data, including start of schools and end of the year, also systematic classroom observations. Also they used open-ended questions.

In general the results indicated that there were less individual attention, the feedback was so poor, few group attention. This was because of the longer group sizes, also fewer individual reading opportunities, some of them were talking and did not pay attention to the class.

In conclusion, this research showed a wide view about the relation of sizes of the classrooms, class size is one environmental contextual factor that will influence teachers and pupils in a number of ways such as, the poor way to interact with the students, the opportunity to express ideas and share them with a whole class, the positive feedback is just with some students, and the learning process take more time. Reducing class size may improve the teacher performance, teachers may gain more experience by putting in practice many group and pair activities.

Adeyemi (2008) investigated the relationship between class size and the quality of output from secondary schools.

The method for collecting data in this study was designed along the lines of a descriptive survey. The instruments used for collecting data for the study was an inventory checklist or an open instrument compiled to serve educational needs. The inventory items took enrolment figures, number of classes in each school, number of teachers and students, grades in five major subjects in schools.

The results were found to be significantly related with school sex, school location, and the quality of output from secondary schools in the states. The

significant difference found in this study was on the quality of output which was consistent with class size and it tends to tag the students in a lower level of achievement.

The author concludes that class size is a critical factor in determining the quality of output from secondary schools. Students in small class size had better quality of output than students in schools having large class size. It is therefore, recommended that the state government should build more classrooms in all schools. It could change the reality of the learning process, and the achievement of the goals.

Tabali (2003) made a research with four main objectives. The first was regarding the strategies used by English teacher to enhance and develop speaking skills in young learners in large classes? The second was, do the teachers follow the strategies stated in the guidelines of schools' language project when teaching speaking skills to their students? The third was, which of the strategies employed by teachers to teach speaking skills go beyond the schools' polices? the fourth one was, how do the teachers overcome the deficiencies of the school's recommended strategies for teaching speaking?

The method for collecting data in this research were interviews due to time limitation of the participants, the interviews were conducted prior to the application of classroom observation. The first phase of the study was to answer the research questions.

After that, face to face interviews were conducted with two teachers of England and their supervisor from the schools' private project. The purpose of the interview was to discover how the teachers use the strategies to teach speaking skills.

The next step was to collect the teachers' opinions, perceptions, emotions and experiences of their own reality. The second phase was the class observation of each English teacher that participated in the interviews, the observations were well planned in terms of qualitative approach, and a checklist or an elaborated and fully planned scheme.

The results of this study revealed that the English teachers employed a wide variety of activities to enhance their young learners' oral proficiency. Moreover this study showed evidence of teachers putting their own personal style and experience in the language teaching classroom.

The author concludes by saying that "large classes are classrooms with more than forty or fifty students in which the physical equipment and space are not enough" An example of this was given by an interviewed teacher "If classes were smaller, we could have had better results, because we could focus on giving each student more time, speaking is a difficult skill, because is producing, so it means that involves producing language rather than receiving, so it's difficult....."

(Coleman,1989)

Description, Analysis and interpretations of results

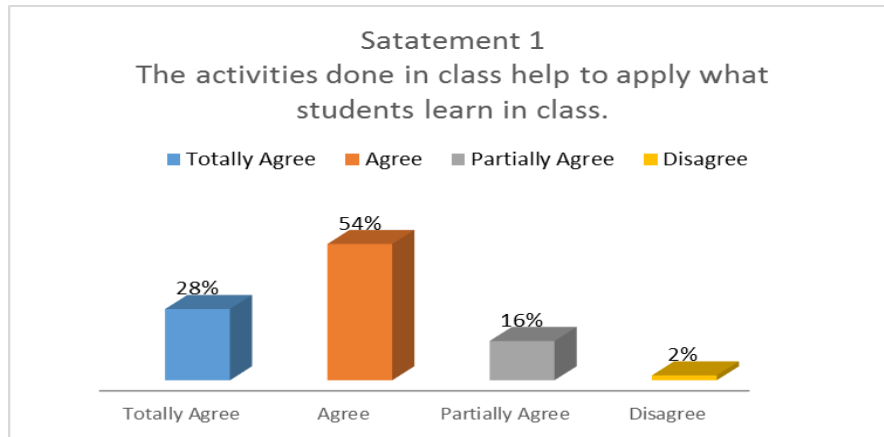
The following step will show the description analysis and interpretation of the results obtained by questionnaires given to five large classes from ninth to third senior high school, all this information will have its own interpretation, results and recommendations as well.

What instructional implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process?

N°	In classes with a large number of students	Very satisfactory		Satisfactory		Somewhat satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	The activities done in class help to apply what students learn in class.	58	28%	111	54%	32	16%	4	2%	205	100%
2	The activities done allow to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.	63	30%	108	51%	39	18%	2	1%	212	100%
3	All the students are attentive and practice in class activities including those sitting at the back of the classroom.	21	10%	78	38%	95	46%	13	6%	207	100%
4	Varied class activities are used such as group, individual, pair - work activities, etc.	123	58%	68	32%	17	8%	4	2%	212	100%
5	Activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games, etc. are used in class.	46	22%	84	40%	57	27%	23	11%	210	100%
6	Students can cheat during the test.	13	7%	30	14%	57	27%	108	52%	208	100%
7	Students get distracted by doing homework from other assignments.	13	6%	44	21%	77	37%	76	36%	210	100%
8	The seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class.	58	27%	115	54%	34	16%	5	2%	212	100%
9	Students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students.	35	17%	81	39%	64	31%	27	13%	207	100%

Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verónica.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

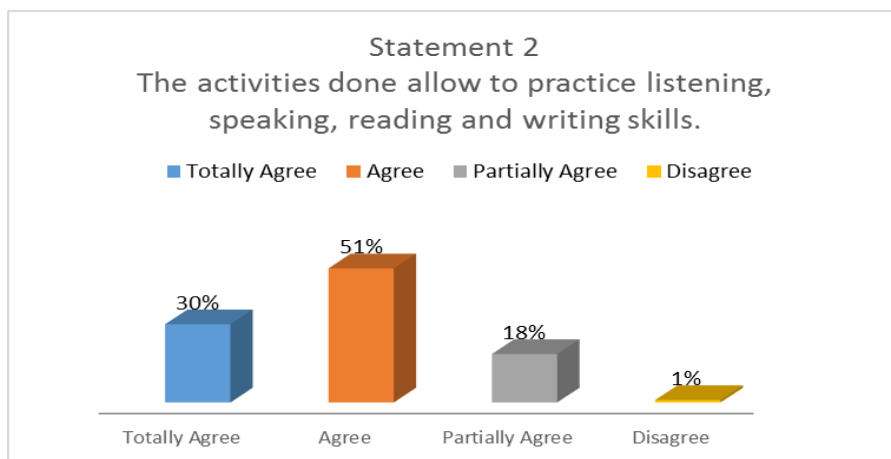


Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

In this first statement 28% of the students hold their opinion in “totally agree” because the activities help as a strategy to reinforce the knowledge, next we have 54% who agree with the activities and think that these activities are good, and 18% who think that the activities are poor.

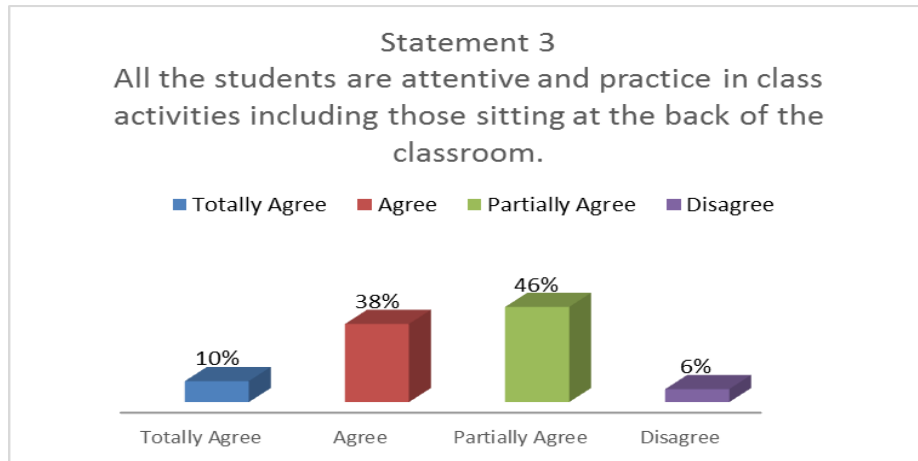
The students reflected their positive answers about the activities done in class; they confirm that English teachers use their activities resources to integrate the four skills approaches. These results have a strong support with Tabali (2013) in a study analyzed, and found that English teachers set up and manage some variety of debates, and group work, pair work in order to enhance and make students produce their knowledge.



Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

The second statement shows us that the 81% (combination of “totally agree” and “agree”) agree that the activities help to improve the four learning skills; it means that the teachers in large classes use different activities which involve speaking, reading and writing skills, the other 18% of students partially agree with these activities, probably because they rarely have opportunities to put into practice the four skills, and 1% of the students do not agree with this statement. It is necessary that teachers organize many activities in order to improve the speaking skill, such as pair work, small group, jigsaw stories, the objective is to engage an actively conversation.

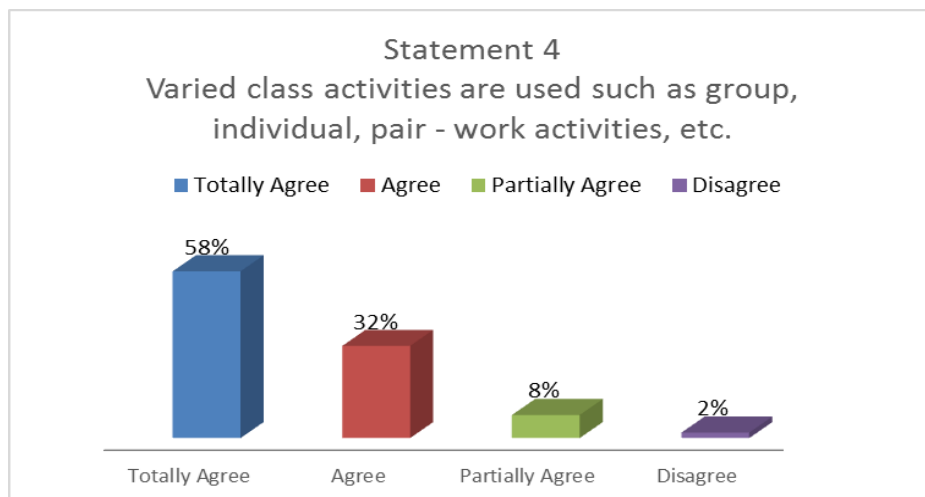


Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

Third statement demonstrates that an average of 38% of students consider that almost all students are attentive, they have the opportunity to practice (including the students at the back of the classroom). Students responded not such in a positive manner, although teacher used all the resources, materials, group engagement, and participation roles, some of them partially agree with a range of 46% who think that they are not really attentive, and just 10% “totally agree”. In contrast, 6% of students totally disagree with this idea.

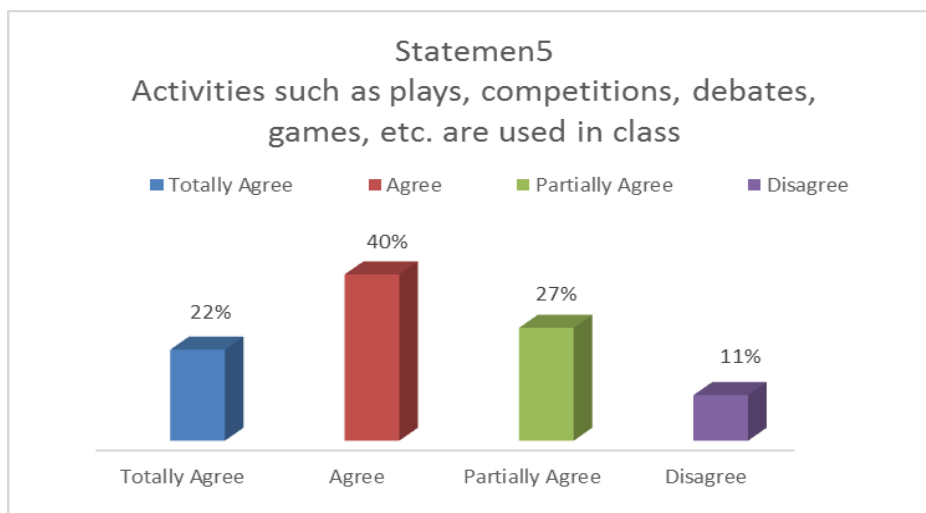
It was determined that not all students are focused on the lesson, it means that the seating arrangement is necessary in order to have an active English class. Brown (1994) stated that students in a class are a team, and they should have the opportunity to interact, so they should always change places, those from the back have to go in front sometimes teacher should use the U shape, concentric circles, semicircles and create a positive atmosphere and this will make easier to get students’ attention and class participation.



Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

In statement 4, the students' answer was positive in 58%. It means that teachers prepare efficient activities and let students express and develop their language skills. It is demonstrated that the teachers always are finding out new and creative group and pair-work activities. It is the only positive alternative to improve and increase the student's attention. 32% of students agreed with the varied activities that joined them as a group and let them put into practice their knowledge. On the other hand, 8% of students partially agreed with the use of varied activities. Finally, 2% of students disagree. From these low results, it can be inferred that students learn through their participation and interesting activities in the learning process.



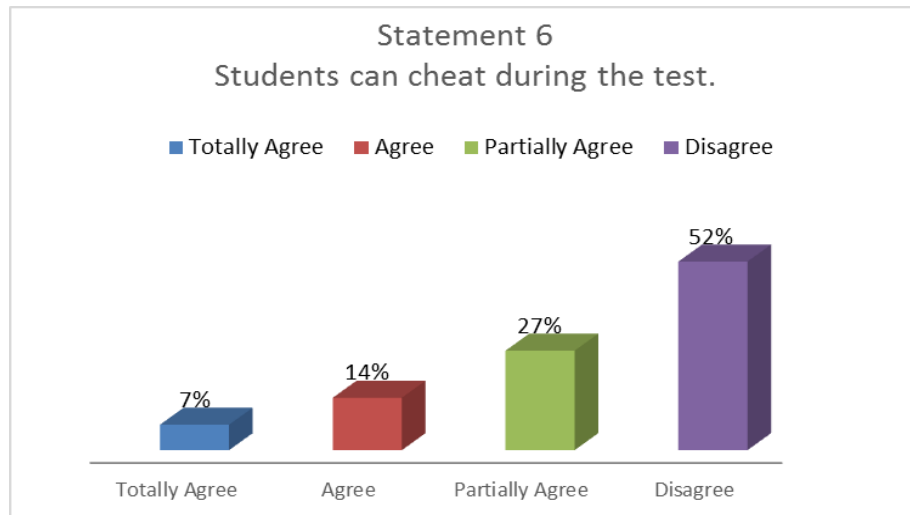
Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

It can be observed in this graph that 22% of the participants “totally agree” that plays, competitions, debates and games are used in class by the teacher, while 40% agree with this statement. On the other hand, 27% “partially agree”, and 11% are in disagreement with the resources used in the class.

Through these results, it can be inferred that most of the students agree with the pedagogy and the methodology used during the performance of activities which the teachers use to engage the lesson of the class, that is, teachers have a positive control on students, their discipline and participation.

It is important to mention that in all the institutions, both public and private the training of teachers in resources, material and new ideas of group activities should be continuous.

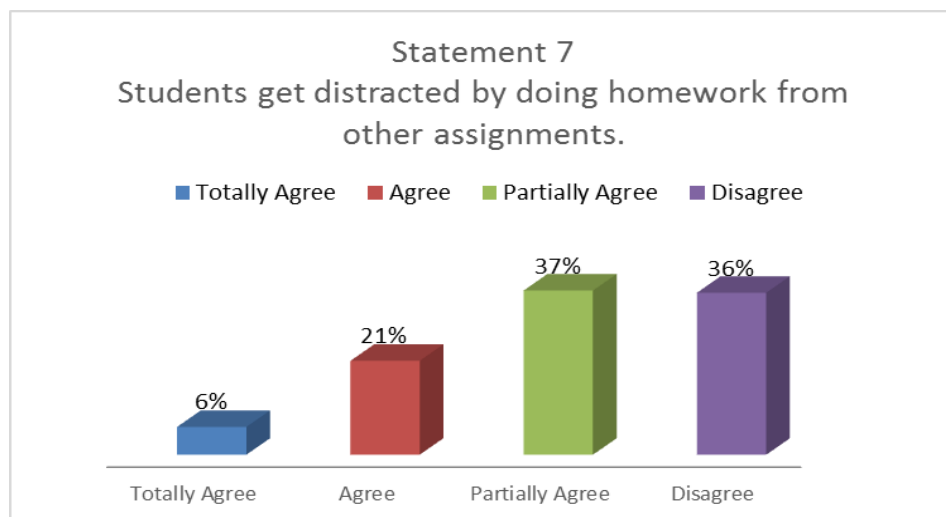


Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

Through this graph, it can be inferred that only 7% of the participants “totally agree” to cheat during the test, 14% “agree”. It means that it is possible for them to cheat during a test; 27% of students “partially agree”, 52% stated strongly their disagreement regarding cheating during a test, it means that teachers have the control and the clearly established rules in their classrooms.

Students are aware that cheating is not good for the learning process in the English class, and this is strongly sustained by Woolfolk (2007) who stated if the teacher has the rules, and represents an icon of respect by his or her job, the teacher is going to maintain the discipline, good behavior, and is going to avoid possible problems in the class development.

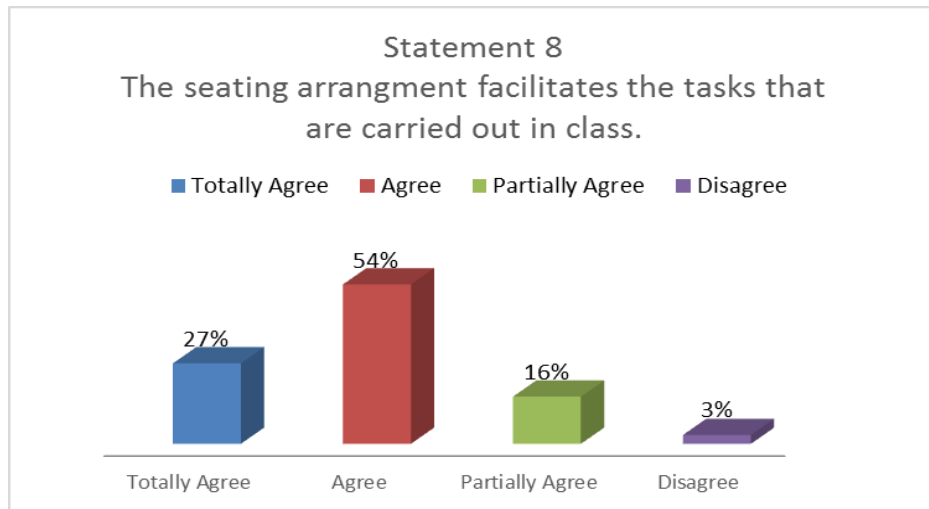


Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

The results for this question show that a quantity of 6% “totally agree” students get distracted by doing something else which is not English assignment, 21% with a rank of “agree” stated that they get distracted too, but with almost the same rank 37% and 36% (partially agree and disagree) do not get distraction by doing other homework in the English classes. It also responds to the mentioned above about the discipline, control, group management.

It is so important to say that in this case, when teacher uses many activities such as group, pair work, etc., the students become very engaged with the topic and the activities do not allow them to get distracted and the time is efficiently used during the class period.



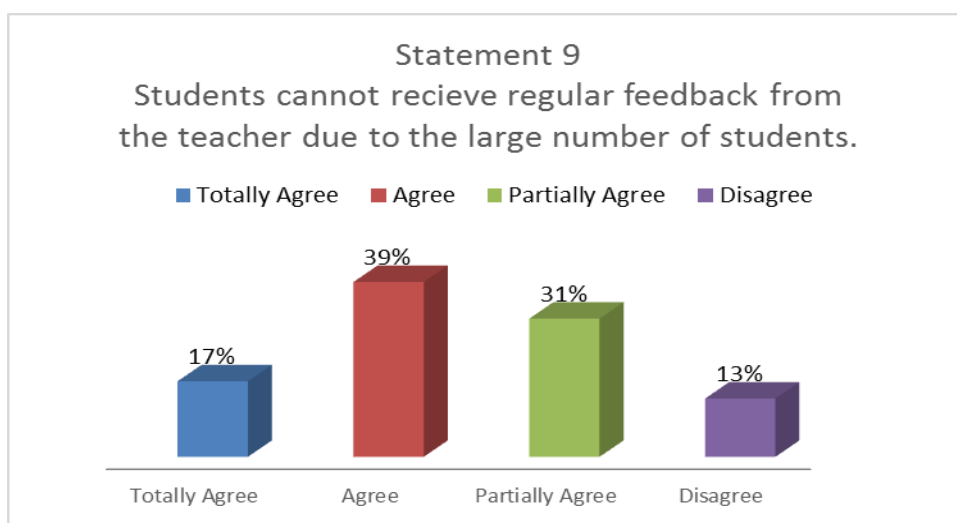
Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

In this graph, it can be seen that students demonstrated that there is a clear satisfaction feeling about the seating arrangement, and learners can do all their tasks efficiently. 27% of students “totally agree” that the space and the seating arrangement play an important role in this process. 54% of students agree with the statement and it demonstrates that seating arrangement facilitates the different activities done in class. It was demonstrated that 16% of students partially agree that it is not very significant, comparing to a minor of 3% who disagree. It shows the positive feeling of students toward the different strategies to arrange the seats in the class, the variety of tables placement, impact of the learning process to get a major attention of the students.

With the above results it can be said that the students strongly want to learn a foreign language. The seating arrangement is very important in this study. 81% of students think that it plays an important role in the learning process, according to

Gower, R., Philips, D., & Walters, S. (1995), the creation of a good atmosphere in class could increase the participation, and the interaction of teachers and students.



Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

In this graph, the result is controversial, because the 39% and 17% of students reported that the feedback is positive (totally agree and agree correspondingly); the 31% indicate they are in “partially agree” that it is somewhat difficult to get a positive feedback, but 13% of students disagree. It proves the fact that in large classes, teachers can pay attention to few students and the rest of the class is not clear with the purpose of the topics.

It is important to mention that teachers find the opportunities to reinforce the students` knowledge in any way.

Woolfolk (2007) states that the positive feedback is as a compendious of any class, and it is necessary to reinforce the knowledge of the students.

The satisfactory responses about activities in class can demonstrate that the students like to cooperate with the English teacher. This cooperation contributes

positively to the learning process. This implies the teachers involve their students in a good process of learning. However teachers should use more activities during a class; high-school authorities should implement more training courses for teachers.

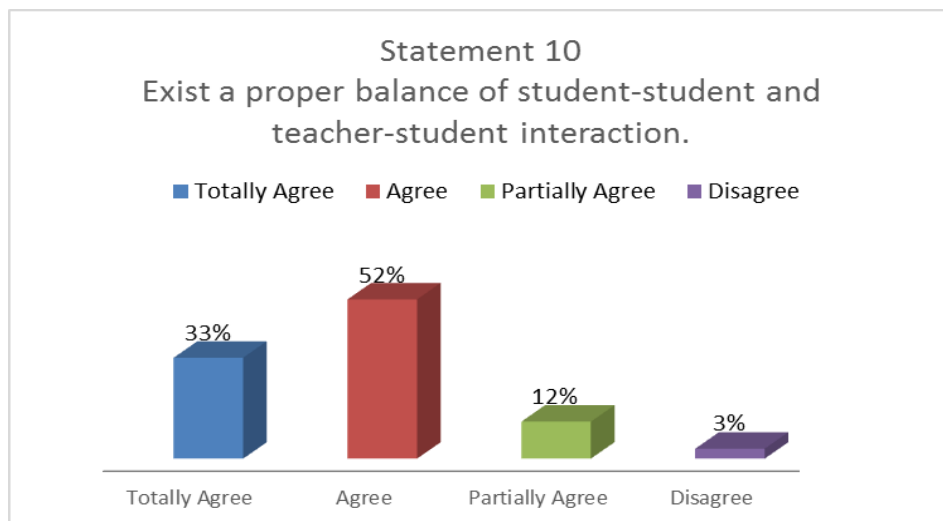
What social implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process?

A. Social Issues

N°	In classes with a large number of students	Very satisfactory		Satisfactory		Somewhat satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
10	Exist a proper balance of student-student and teacher-student interaction.	71	33%	112	52%	26	12%	7	3%	216	100%
11	Students have the opportunity to build relationships with other people.	94	46%	89	43%	18	9%	4	2%	205	100%
12	The teacher has problems remembering all the students 'names.	58	27%	56	27%	57	27%	40	19%	211	100%
13	The atmosphere is less stressful since the teacher does not ask several questions to the same student.	40	20%	94	47%	52	26%	16	7%	202	100%
14	Students can use their cellphones or any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher.	25	12%	32	15%	57	27%	94	46%	208	100%

Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.



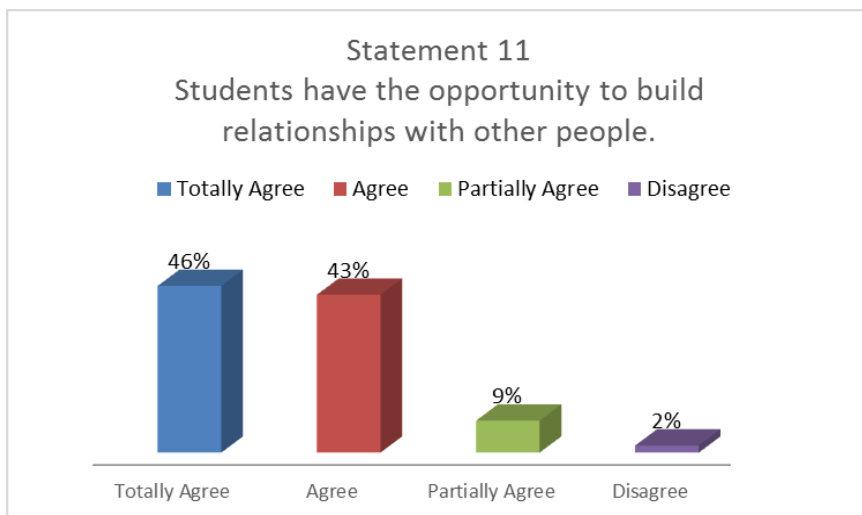
Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

As it is shown in this chart, 33% of students “totally agree” that there is a positive interaction with the teacher. 52% of students strongly “agree” that the interaction is good, 12% of students “partially agree” about the English interaction, and just 3% disagree that there is a positive interaction. It means that teachers apply appropriate methodology of teaching in order to engage the students and make them interact.

It is important to mention that the whole group or pair work activities help to improve the oral communication, thus, teachers can produce a proper balance of students-students, teachers-students interaction.

The overwhelming results in this statement, 85% (mix of totally agree and agree items), permit us understand that the majority of the students have the opportunity to participate, share ideas and interact during the class.



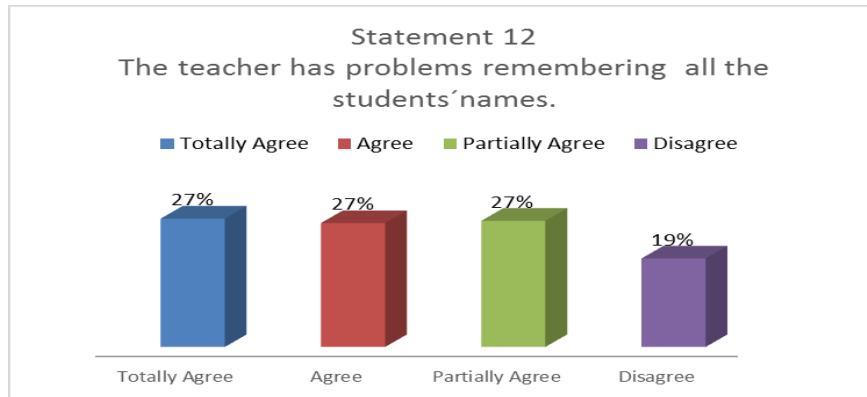
Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

Through this table it is easy to determine that 89% (combination of totally agree and agree) of students think that they have the opportunities to build relationship with other classmates. They say that there is a healthy balance of social relationship during the class; 9% of students stated “partially agree”. Only 2% of students disagree regarding this point.

These results are in agreement with Brown (1994) who states that students in large classes are as a team and having students work together is a good way to manage large classes. This kind of activity allows the teacher to give a personal attention to students with special necessities in the development of the class, while many others are working in pairs or in small groups.

It is important to state that large classes can be especially advantageous for shy students who would prefer work in pairs or in group in order to interact, share ideas and build good relationship among the students.

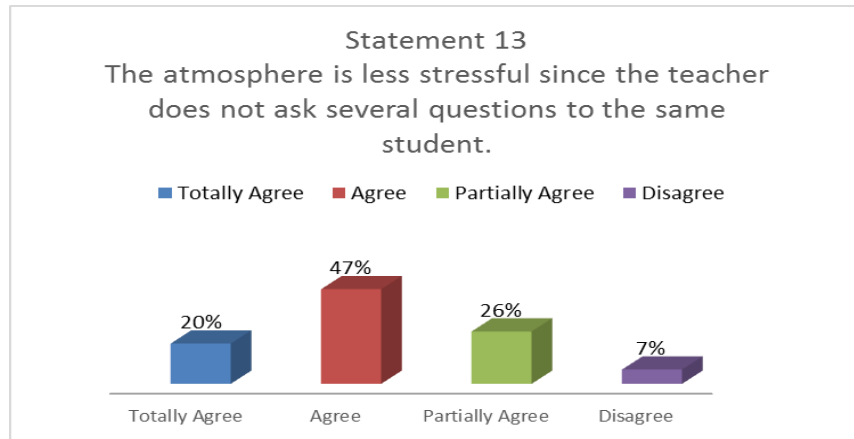


Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

As it is seen in this graph 27% of surveyed students “totally agree” about the statement above. 27% of the students agree regarding the statement they manifested that teachers have problem remembering their names. Another group with the same result of 27% “partially agree” regarding the concept. Only 19% of students disagree. They think that teachers remember their names. These results demonstrate that one of the most significant challenges of the teachers is to remember the students` names. It is important to learn the students` names for establishing good environment in class; it determinates the relationship with the students.

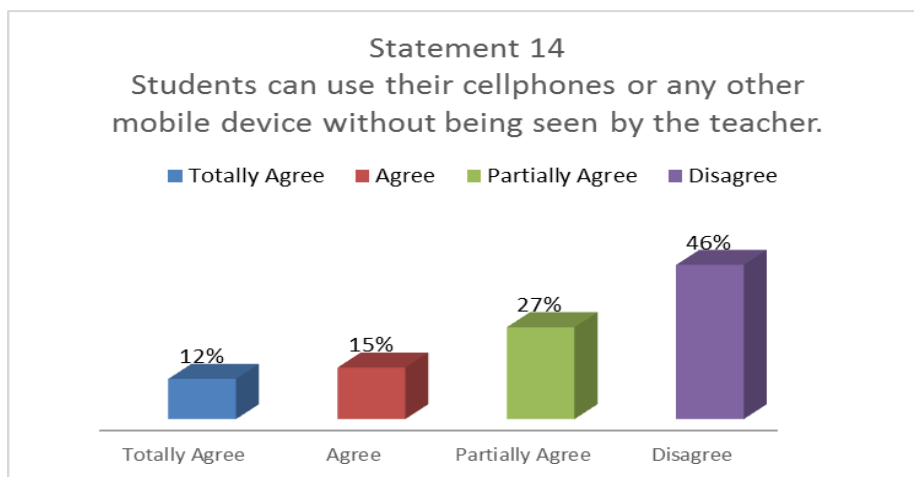
Students feel that they are important enough and the self-confidence is the key to succeed in the class activities. It is important to say that students respond better to any activity when teachers call them by their names; this factor may influence the process of learning language. In addition to this, teacher has to work with students in some cases approximately up to 7 hours per week, and can affect the students-teacher interaction. Woodward (2001) stated that 120 students is really large class, and remember the students names may be a long process.



Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

The results above show that regarding the statement number thirteen 20% of students indicate that there is less stress in a “totally agree”, 26% of students stated “partially agree” about this point, but 47% agree that there is less stress, and only 7% stated that they disagree. In general students reported that they do not feel stress in the classroom when the teacher does not ask several questions to the same student due to there are many students in the classroom, and teachers give the random opportunities in order to make all the learners participate and practice the different skills that involve the target language.



Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

Regarding the statement fourteen, it was possible to establish that 46% disagree that it is not permissible to use their technology devices in the class. 27% of students partially agree, 15% agree, and finally, 12% of learners responded that they totally agree about this issue.

The results represent that it is not easy for the students to use their technological device such as cellphones, iPod, tablets in large classes, even though the Ministry of Education nowadays allow to use these electronic devices in the school, but it depends on the control, and the appropriate use of these gadgets. The use of the technology is seen now as a pedagogical tool in a class and it can facilitate the better developing and behavior in the class. On the other hand, it is almost unnecessary to use these implements in classroom; this kind of technology can cause much distraction and troubles in the classrooms.

The social aspects in this research can demonstrate through the present results that the social environment, technology, relationship, interaction with students

in large classes can affect the learning process in a positive and negative manner, just the teachers are those who implement strategies to avoid problems in the normal development of the class.

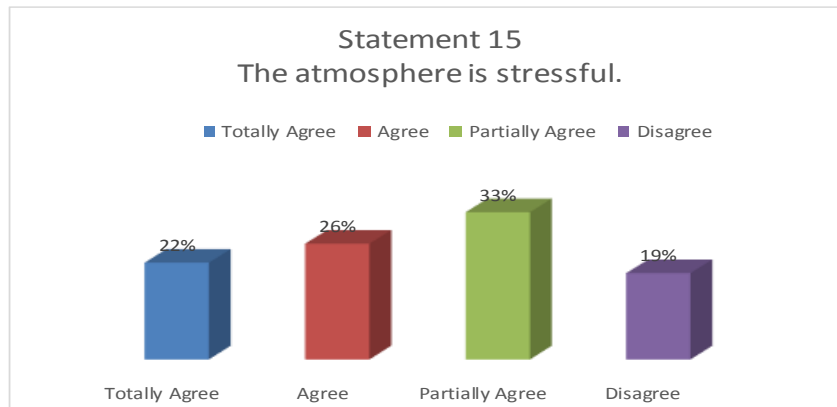
What psychological implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process?

B. Psychological issues

N°	In classes with a large number of students	Very satisfactory		Satisfactory		Somewhat satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
15	The atmosphere is stressful.	46	22%	55	26%	70	33%	41	19%	212	100%
16	Students feel uncomfortable when speaking in front of other classmates.	33	16%	69	33%	69	33%	40	18%	211	100%
17	The students are attentive and practice in class activities including those sitting at the back of the classroom.	34	16%	62	29%	69	33%	46	22%	211	100%
18	Students do not like to participate because they feel afraid.	28	13%	59	28%	70	34%	51	25%	208	100%
19	Teachers do not pay equal attention to all students in the classroom.	39	18%	67	31%	65	31%	42	20%	213	100%
20	Students feel they can act competitively with other students.	68	32%	85	40%	43	20%	16	8%	212	100%
21	Students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed.	44	20%	67	31%	75	35%	30	14%	216	100%

Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

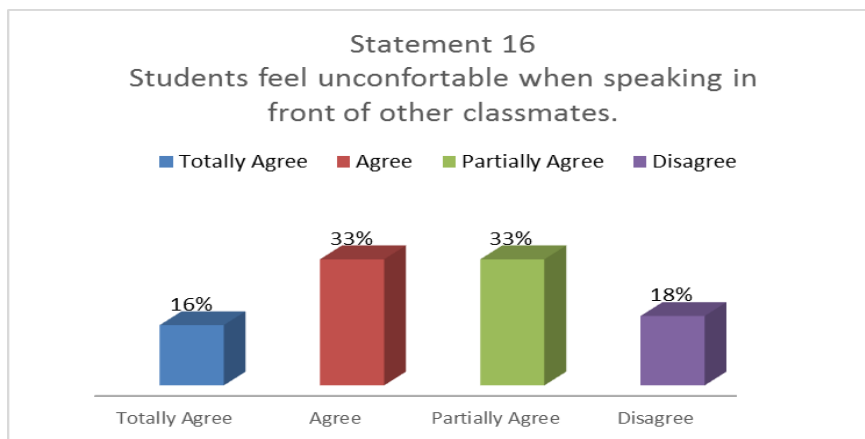


Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

With respect to this question, it was found that 22% of students said they totally agree that the atmosphere is stressful, 26% agree, 33% partially agree, and 19% disagree. Students' opinions are clearly divided, as can be seen from the percent of answers. It can be inferred that students have different opinion about the atmosphere in the class probably because of many activities which imply speaking, writing, listening, and the students start to get stressful or perhaps because they think they may not to accomplish the tasks in a successful manner.

It is important to say that although the environment in the class could be stressful, teachers have the proper methodology to manage emotions and find a way to make the students feel comfortable and let flow smoothly. This is why the constant training in methodology and the innovation of classroom resources are so important.



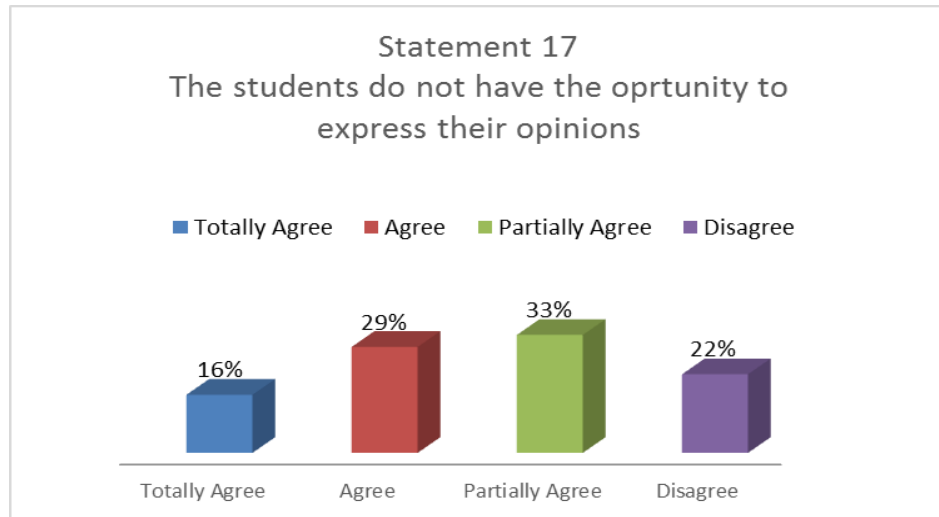
Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verenice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

This graph shows that the students have different perceptions about this topic. Who is not nervous when is time to talk in front of others? These results demonstrate that 66% (combination of agree and partially agree) feel really uncomfortable. The majority of students feel introverted, anxious. 16% of students totally agree, and 18% stated they disagree. It is important to implement projects as debates, forums, etc., in order to develop speech activities to encourage the production of language and the students may lose their fear of express in front of the class despite of errors. The goal would be that the students dare to speak and feel comfortable at the time to speak in front of others.

Speaking is perhaps one of the most important skills when learning a foreign language; some students feel more uncomfortable speaking than writing, reading or listening. We all have all felt nervous at one time when we had to speak in front of a group of people. This is the moment when the methodology of the teacher comes up by giving some diversity of activities in which the speaking skill needs to be

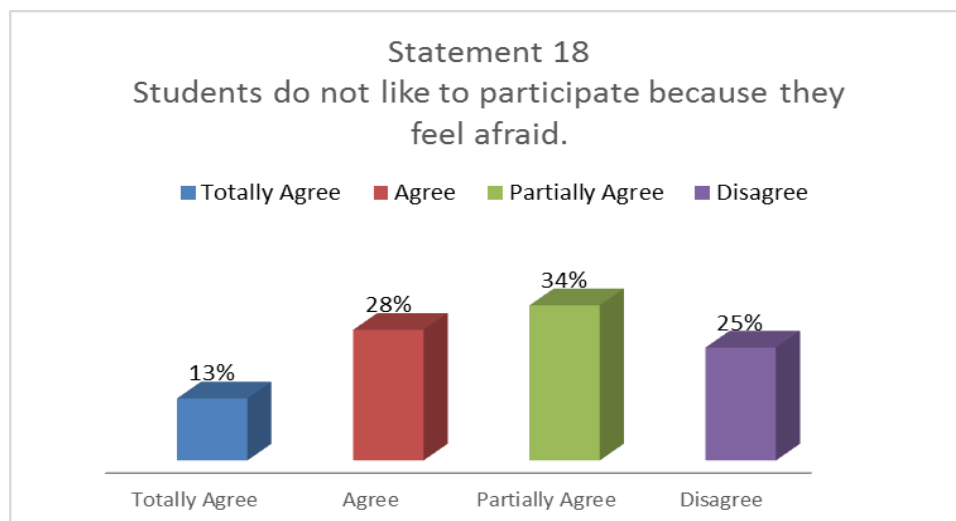
improved, and make the students feel a little more comfortable with their English language knowledge.



Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

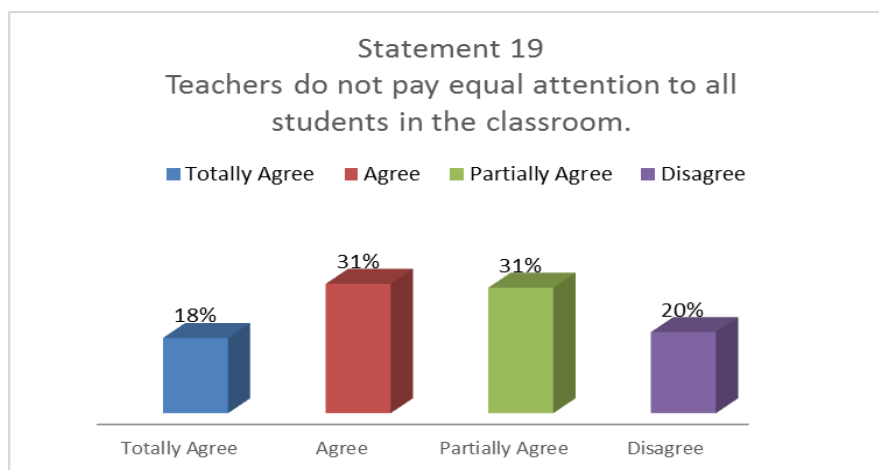
This graphic shows that the answers are divided. It shows that in large classes the opportunity to express opinions, ideas is limited. 16 % of students “agree” 29%, partially agree is represented with 33% and in disagree 22%. Large classes often demonstrate lack of quality and quantity of interaction with teachers, even though the results are divided, the students here claim for the chance to share their ideas, express opinions and interact more often among them during the class. The time of discussion in large classes is limited and it is difficult to engage the students in the topic because of the lack of time, and the opportunities to interact are limited.



Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

In the above graphic it is clear that the learners show different rank of fear to participate in classroom activities, for example 13% estimated that totally agree, 28% stated as agree, 34% with partially agree, and finally, in “disagree”, 25%. Everyone knows that speaking or sharing opinions in large classes could have some disadvantages especially for shy students, they could feel really afraid of saying something wrong or unintelligent for them, and they prefer not to participate in order to avoid negative comments and laughter of their classmates. Through these results it can be seen that for some students the participation time is because everyone else in class participates all the time. Therefore, teachers must apply the updated learning strategies for students lose their fear to participate.

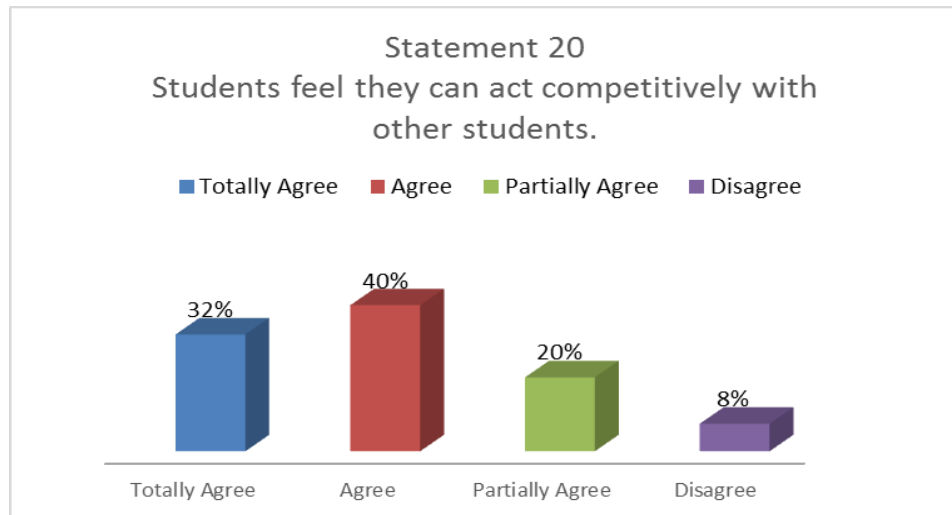


Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

It can be observed in this graph that 18% of students totally agree that teachers do not pay equal attention to all students, 31% agree with the statement. With the same percentage, 31% of students they partially agree, and 20% in disagreement.

Based on these results it can be stated that students claim for attention; it is clear that 62% (combination of agree and partially agree) agree that teacher does not have enough time for attending all the students' necessities, the goal of the lesson is not reached, and the feedback is as necessary as the attention for all the students. There is something important that is true, in some schools teachers will find bright students, average students and dull students, most of the time teachers appreciate more the bright than dull students, and it may produce a negative effect on the learners.

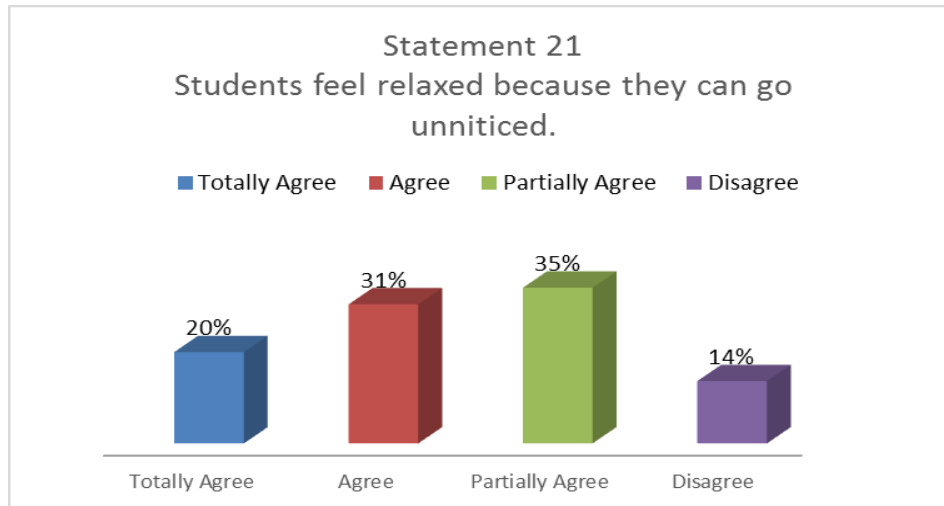


Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

Statement 20 shows that the majority of students feel comfortable in academic competition with other students. Students who totally agree represent a 32%, 40% agree, 20% partially agree and only 8% disagree.

Students enjoy developing their competitive skills, in spite of their weaknesses, it is clear that over time schooling the cognitive process becomes more interesting regarding the classroom activities, and this is the reason why cooperative and competitive learning strategies are correlated with the motivation to achieve the necessary levels in the learning process. The age, group size and type of learning tasks play an important role in the classroom activities, and a positive competition is beneficent for problem solving situations. Throughout these results the above mentioned has consistency and motivate the students to be competitive.



Author: De Mera Ureta Verónica Verénice.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

The results in statement 21 show something to reflect. Do students like to feel and relaxed going unnoticed at the same time? The 31% totally agree, with 35% some of the students agree, on the contrary, some students (20%) partially agree and 14% are in disagreement with the statement above. It permits to analyze how teacher manages large classes. Probably in some situations teachers find it difficult to make all students participate because of the amount of the students, or there is always someone who is willing to answer questions, the time is also another factor that affects the tasks activities, so it is necessary making sure to take answers from variety of students.

These findings are in agreement with Blatchford, Moriarty & Martin, C. (1999), who started that class size is one of the factors that affects the process between teacher and students, the way to interact with students will be so poor, the opportunity to express ideas is shorter, and the feedback will not have the positive effects that is needed in large class size.

The investigation of this psychological amount reported that there are students who feel themselves self-confident and can do all their task, they can positively share ideas, express opinions, but there is another part which tells us that some students do not practice the language, do not do their works, they do not believe in their abilities, is here when start the stressful one wants to participate, other need help, another do other subjects, and the teacher needs to manage these several situation at the same time. This is why the psychological part is an overall of the necessities and feedback that teacher needs.

Conclusions

Teachers try to vary activities such as group work, pair work and individual work in class in order to help to develop the topic of the lesson.

Feedback in large classes is not effective because of the amount of students. It is almost impossible to attend all the necessities of students. The attention of teachers is seen limited. It is demonstrated with the answers of 13% of students who claim for a positive feedback in statement nine which states that students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher.

Through the overwhelming result of 46% of students in disagreement range, in statementfourteen, it is demonstrated that the use of technology is hardly controlled by teachers in the classroom.

In large classes, it is demonstrated that student's compewtition plays an important role in the English language learning process.

The fear to speak or express opinons sabotage the opportunity to practicipate and interact with the knowledgement in class, it is demonstrated with a 34% of students in partially agree and another 25% of satudents in a range of disagreement, according with the statement eighteen which states that students do not like to participate because they feel afraid of speaking in front of their classmates.

Teachers use appropriate methodology to teach their classes which contributes to have an effective learning.

Recommendations

It is recommendable to implement in the institutions more technology and make a commitment between the school and students; it means set rules of the good use of the electronics appliances.

It is recommendable to provide seminars for the English teachers about how to use academic strategies in order to involve and make students gain the knowledge imparted in the class in a better way.

It would be important to improve the teachers-students interaction through appropriate activities, in order to reduce the fear to speak or express their opinions on front of others.

The institutions should offer more classrooms with the purpose of reducing large classes, so teacher could gain experience, and schools can hire new teachers with new ideas, new proposes and projects that might increase the students motivation.

Teachers should set general rules for the whole class and identify student's behavior, it is also important to report any incident in the class.

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ANNEXES
Instruments



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

OPEN AND DISTANCE MODALITY

ENGLISH DEGREE

Dear Student,

The aim of this aim of this brief questionnaire is to obtain information concerning the: *Influence of large classes on teaching and learning English*. The following information will only be used for academic/ research purposes. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible based on the following criteria.

Very Satisfactory	Totally agree
Satisfactory	Agree
Somewhat satisfactory	Partially agree
Unsatisfactory	disagree

Informative data: Please fill in the information bellow

Name of institution: _____

Type of institution: public () Private ()

Year of study: 8th () 9th () 10th ()

1st senior 2nd senior high 3rd senior

high

high school. () school. ()

school. ()

City: _____

Instructions: Place an (X) in the box that best reflects your personal opinion:

A. Academic Issues

N°	In classes with a large number of students	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1	The activities done in class help to apply what students learn in class.				
2	The activities done allow to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.				
3	All the students are attentive and practice in class activities including those seating at the back of the classroom.				
4	Varied class activities are used such as group, individual, pair - work activities, etc.				
5	Activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games, etc. are used in class.				
6	Students can cheat during the test.				
7	Students get distracted by doing homework from other assignments.				
8	The seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class.				
9	Students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students.				

B. Social Issues

N°		Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
10	Exist a proper balance of student-student and teacher-student interaction.				
11	Students have the opportunity to build relationships with other people.				
12	The teacher has problems remembering all the student`s names				
13	The atmosphere is less stressful since the teacher does not ask several questions to the same student.				
14	Students can use their cellphones or any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher.				

C. Psychological Issues

N°		Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
	In classes with a large number of students				
15	The atmosphere is stressful.				
16	Students feel uncomfortable when speaking in front of other classmates.				
17	Students do not have the opportunity to express their opinions				
18	Students do not like to participate because they feel afraid.				
19	Teachers do not pay equal attention to all students in the classroom.				
20	Students feel they can act competitively with other students.				
21	Students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed.				

Thank you for your collaboration!