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**Teachers and Students' perceptions of teaching and learning English as a
second language in small classes**

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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Doctora.

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De mi consideración:

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Loja, abril de 2015

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“Yo, Casali Fernández Verónica Paola declaro ser autora del presente trabajo de titulación: Teachers and students’ perceptions of teaching and learning English as a second language in small classes, de la Titulación de Licenciado Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, siendo María Olivia Arias Córdova 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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ABSTRACT

This research work is about teaching and learning English as a second language (ESL) in small classes. The principal objective of this investigation is to determine the benefits of teaching ESL in small classes, examine effective strategies and resources, inquire about students' feelings about learning ESL in small classes, and find out about perceived limitations to teaching ESL in small classes. Five ESL classes were observed and students and teachers were surveyed at a church in Norristown and a high school in Philadelphia, both located in the state of Pennsylvania.

For this research work, the qualitative and quantitative research and several methods were used. The qualitative research was utilized for the narrative data in all the process, and the quantitative research was used the numerical data. The data was gathered by administering questionnaires to teachers and students. Additional data was gathered through class observations as well as interviews.

Main findings were found after the analysis of the questionnaires, interviews, and class observations. Survey and observation results were analyzed and suggest that greater teacher-student and student-student interaction facilitate frequent and in-depth feedback.

KEY WORDS: Small classes, benefits, interaction, limitations, students' feelings, teaching and learning English as a second language.

RESUMEN

El presente estudio explora la enseñanza y aprendizaje de inglés como segundo idioma en clases con pocos estudiantes. El objetivo principal de la investigación es determinar los beneficios de la enseñanza en clases pequeñas, examinar las estrategias y recursos que le son eficaces, investigar la percepción de los estudiantes acerca de aprender inglés como segundo idioma en clases con pocos compañeros y descubrir las limitaciones que los participantes perciban al enseñar y aprender inglés como segundo idioma en clases pequeñas. Cinco clases de inglés como segundo idioma fueron observadas y encuestadas en las escuelas de inglés como segundo idioma de una iglesia “Church” en Norristown y un colegio secundario “High School” en Philadelphia, las dos localizadas en el estado de Pensilvania, Estados Unidos. Los resultados de las encuestas y las observaciones fueron analizadas y estos sugieren que hay una mayor interacción entre maestro - estudiante y entre estudiantes, lo cual permite una retroalimentación frecuente y exhaustiva.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Clases pequeñas, beneficios, limitaciones, percepción de los estudiantes, interacción.

INTRODUCTION

A commonly held belief among teachers and students is that smaller classes are better for students learning English as a second language. However, with the goal of improving English language instruction, an exploration of teachers' and students' reasons for this belief is required. The following investigation will examine teachers' and students' perceptions of teaching and learning English as a second language in small classes.

It is important to frame this research work in order to reflect the perspectives and experiences of both teachers and students. Therefore, the study will seek to determine what they believe are the benefits offered by small classes for teaching and learning English. Teachers and students will also be asked to comment on the relevant teaching strategies and resources that facilitate the teaching of English in small classes. In addition, both groups will be asked to indicate how the students feel about learning English in small classes. Finally, teachers and students will be asked to comment on any limitations on teaching English found in smaller classes. The information provided by teachers and students participating in this study contributes to ongoing discussions and research about the best practices and resources for teaching and learning English as a second language.

Previous studies have been done to examine students' and teachers' perceptions about teaching and learning English in smaller classes. Harfitt (2011, 2012, 2013) conducted three investigations while studying ESL teachers and students in secondary schools in Hong Kong. His first study asked how students perceive the differences between teaching and learning in a larger class and smaller classes and how those differences may affect the sociocultural aspects of learning. After, the author suggested that Asian students' cultural background and attitudes, as well as appropriate training for teachers, should guide any decisions to reduce class size.

Harfitt also stated the need to examine social interactions in small classes as a way to understand their benefits (Harfitt, 2011). His subsequent study emphasized the importance of considering students' opinions about class size and learning English. However, his conclusions were limited by the small size of the sample (Harfitt, 2012). His third study examined how teachers respond to students' feedback about their pedagogy in reduced-size classes and how it influences their instruction. Among the limitations Harfitt noted are whether teachers would receive helpful feedback from students similar to that observed in the study and recommended a longer-term study with a larger sample. The author also noted that he "had to play the role of broker" between teachers and students and hoped that teachers would someday regularly dialogue with students about their pedagogy (Harfitt, 2013).

Other researchers have examined whether reducing the size of the class effectively improves teaching and also enhances the students' English language acquisition (Galton & Pell, 2012). For this fourth study, the authors did not publish any limitations on their research. The fifth study selected asked how ESL teachers reflecting on videotaped lessons can be used to support their overall professional development (Wong & Pow, 2012). Again, however, these authors did not list any limitations on their research method.

The objective of this research work, when added to those conducted in different educational contexts throughout Ecuador by other students in this course, is to provide a thorough view of the selected topic: the participants' perceptions of the instructional process in learning English in classes with fewer students. Therefore, the direct beneficiaries are the institutions of higher learning, such as UTPL, that are committed to training professional EFL teachers in the country. The ideas and conclusions generated by this study could also benefit independent researchers interested in the topic as they review studies previously conducted by others.

Finally, and more importantly, these studies as a whole provide an indirect benefit to educational policy and decision makers in the Ministry of Education, that is, to generate fresh ideas and thinking that justify and modify the practice of teaching to benefit Ecuadorian students learning and acquiring English, who ultimately are the real reason for educational research.

Although the students' and teachers' participation was realized without difficulty, the research was based on two very different student populations. Therefore, the numeric results of some questions, when tabulating their responses as a whole, lost some of their significance. In part, this investigation was informed by the opinions of students between the ages of 15 and 18 years at a High School (HS) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They attend compulsory ESL classes daily as preparation and support for their immersion in mainstream classes with students and teachers who use English as their main language of communication and study. On the other hand, this study was also informed by the opinions of adults who voluntarily attend classes twice per week at an ESL school in a Church (C) in Norristown, Pennsylvania. HS has modern technology and teaching materials, while C has a very old text and workbook that may be inadequate for the practical needs of that population. When asked if they felt anxiety in a class with fewer students because the teacher had more control, a little more than ten percent of the adults at C indicated that they did and their verbal responses suggest that more participation in class benefits them, they like it, it makes them feel supported, etc. However, almost seventy percent of the HS students' responses to the same question suggest that they do not like the teacher's increased control and expectation for greater student participation in smaller classes. In both cases, it is important to note that students do not receive grades for participation and consistent attendance is not enforced.

In conclusion, further investigations of pedagogy and methodology are recommended to explore, compare, and contrast the attitudes and educational needs of adolescent and adult ESL students in smaller classes in order to reflect their distinct experiences and circumstances.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

This research work was conducted in three ESL classes at a High School (HS) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and two adult ESL classes at a Church ESL School (C) in Norristown, Pennsylvania. The HS students surveyed ranged from 14 to 18 years of age and attended *ESL Intermediate*, *ESL – Intermediate Writing*, and *ESL – Intermediate Reading* classes, grouped in classes of 19, 15, and 14 students, respectively. They attended ESL classes daily, and some students participated in more than one class. The teachers had a Master’s degree in education with a concentration in TESOL, as well as a Pennsylvania state certification for public school education. The adult students surveyed at the C attended a biweekly ESL beginner class either in the morning or at night, in groups of 6 and 8 students, respectively. Teachers were volunteers and one of them was a retired elementary teacher who co-taught the morning class. The other teacher did not have an educational degree. Students at C are mostly Mexican and Central American immigrants ranging from 21 to 60 years of age.

Procedures

To begin the research, a search was conducted to find documents related to the topic. Material was reviewed in books and journals at various universities located in Philadelphia and its suburbs. Additionally, online library databases were consulted to find recent studies about teaching English in classes with fewer students. Literature was selected corresponding to the following ESL and EFL topics: managing learning, teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, class size, techniques and activities in small classes, and learning environments in small classes.

The methods utilized for this study are both quantitative and qualitative.

The qualitative research was used for the narrative data in all the of the process, and the quantitative research was utilized for the numerical data. For the quantitative section, five ESL classes were surveyed at the High School and the Church. Survey instruments were utilized to survey classes of 19, 15, 14, 6, and 8 students, and also to survey the opinions of their respective teachers. As a complement, an observation questionnaire was utilized and applied to the classes surveyed in order to include the qualitative component of the present investigation. The collection of data was done in the final months of the school year when attendance at the secondary school was more regular (end of school term). The adult students were also surveyed toward the end of the term of the course.

The data were tabulated and organized in tables that totaled students' and teachers' responses separately. Likewise, the percentages obtained for each response were calculated in order to clarify the description of the results and the process of analyzing them. The data obtained were interpreted and the results compared with those found by selected authors of previous studies in order to provide the reader a more complete and informed opinion about the topic.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

Since the beginning of the modern era, English has undoubtedly been the universal language of communication between countries and international organizations, offering possibilities for economic, diplomatic, and cultural understanding. These days, thanks to the unprecedented development of information technology, English continues to be the universal language, but now on a massive and truly global scale. While in the past it was studied and used by diplomats, politicians, and business managers, today it is used by almost all levels of society to educate, inform each other, and perform work tasks, social activities, and recreation. As a result, demand for learning the English language has expanded, and with it the study of English language instruction through analysis of its pedagogical components and the factors that influence them.

One of the factors frequently mentioned by teachers and students is the size of the class. In any educational context, the number of students is considered fundamental for teaching and learning. In general, overcrowded classes are viewed as counterproductive to instruction in any subject while small classes are considered ideal environments for achieving instructional and learning goals. The present study will explore the benefits and constraints occurring in classes with fewer students. Information has been gathered relating to topics such as teaching techniques, relationships between class participants, practice exercises, physical layout of the classroom, and the emotional and social environments common in classes with fewer students. With the same objective, five studies were selected which examine what other researchers have found out regarding teaching the English language in similar contexts.

Managing Learning

One aspect of managing learning is the importance of the teacher giving clear instructions for performing activities in and out of the classroom. Echevarria, et al. (2008, p. 82) point out, “English learners at all levels (and native English speakers) perform better in academic situations when the teacher gives clear instructions for assignments and activities.” They emphasize that they must receive step-by-step instructions with concrete, modeled demonstrations. In addition, detailed written instructions should supplement oral directions for all tasks to allow students to check them.

When this does not happen, Echevarria, et al. (2008), have observed frequently that students lack sufficient language to ask the teacher even how to begin. Furthermore, they often noticed students misbehaving simply because they were uncertain how to complete the task.

So while it is evident that clear instructions are necessary for students to perform everyday tasks, it is essential that English language learners have opportunities to study authentic academic content in their ESL classes. Therefore, they should do projects and other activities done in regular classes to give them practice so that they will be ready to be integrated into mainstream academic content classes after they no longer receive specific English language support.

Another very important aspect of managing learning is the teacher’s feedback about students’ performance. Hattie’s analysis of 8,000 studies (cited by Marzano et al., 2001, p.96) demonstrated: “The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback.” Marzano et al. go on to point out that to be most effective, feedback should be given as soon as possible after the students complete the specified task. Furthermore, students generally show more improvement when less time passes between the task and the teacher’s feedback.

Besides punctual feedback, the best type of feedback is “corrective” in nature. Since the students benefit much more from an explanation than from a judgment of the quality of their work, the teacher should specifically highlight what they are doing correctly and incorrectly. In fact, “the best feedback appears to involve an explanation as to what is accurate and what is inaccurate in terms of student responses.” (Marzano et al., 2001, p. 98)

Marzano, et al.(2001, p. 99) indicate that teachers’ feedback should reference a specific skill or knowledge instead of giving students feedback that compares them with their peers. They also note that students can track their own performance while they are learning and researchers recommend students self-evaluations. Similarly, teachers have demonstrated that these practices are useful in the classroom.

Teacher-Student Interaction

An important focus of second language instruction is fostering “rich and meaningful interaction in the classroom that supports second language acquisition” (Carter & Nuan, 2001, p.124). For example, if the teacher’s questions do not generate a response from the students, there are a few possible causes. If the questions are too complicated, then any modifications should promote comprehension by paraphrasing difficult words, using a simple syntax, or emphasizing the main point. If the questions contain unusual phrases or difficult vocabulary, the teacher should modify their speech to foster student responses by reformulating them into simpler questions. In any case, Carter and Nuan (2001) emphasize the importance of the teacher observing how the students react to these modifications, reflecting on what works well, and discussing successful measures with colleagues.

Second language learning can sometimes be a psychologically distressing experience, so the teacher must consider the potential for student embarrassment. A common cause of this is when the teacher rushes a lesson or even answers her own questions.

Carter and Nuan state “Not giving enough wait-time for learners to process a question and formulate an answer is another reason for the lack of response from students” (2001, p.124). Besides recommending modifying questions so that students can understand them, the above authors assert that English language teachers must provide students with extended wait-time to respond to questions and after errors are committed. Some ways to accomplish this are telling them beforehand what the lesson will be about, giving them time to compare their notes and rehearse their responses with others, and giving time for students to write their responses to the teacher’s questions. These techniques facilitate students’ correct responses, and so they feel less anxiety. As a result, teachers receive direct feedback on their instruction and reduce their fear that extra wait-time may slow down the flow of the lesson and cause disruptions.

In addition to reformulating questions and providing longer wait-time for student responses, Malamah (1997) asserts that English language instruction is most effective when the teacher skillfully and purposefully uses dialogue with students to mediate between the students’ own background knowledge of the content of a given academic subject and their ability to enunciate it in English. While observing two elementary science teachers, he noted how they “mediated language and learning by engaging in a range of dialogic strategies during moment-to-moment interactions, including: mode shifting, signaling how students can self-reformulate, indicating where a reformulation is needed, and modeling alternative ways of recontextualizing personal knowledge”. Malamah continues, “The teacher in this interaction appropriates the students’ meaning while at the same time recoding their everyday meanings and recasting them into more scientific terminology” (1997, p. 74). These English language techniques help support students who will eventually have to transition into mainstream classes where they will be required to learn all academic content in English, especially if they no longer receive content-based ESL services.

Student-Student Interaction

English language learners (ELLs) need to interact in order to acquire and improve their second language and thus they must communicate and understand their teachers and classmates. Krashen (cited by Haynes, 2007, p. 5) said that ELLs “acquire language by hearing and understanding messages that are slightly above their current English language level,” that is, comprehensible input. Teachers give comprehensible input when they apply techniques already described above. Students can also give comprehensible input to each other when they converse in English. However their comprehensible output is almost as important, which is when they improve their English skills while conversing with peers (Haynes, 2007). Haynes also states, “A small-group setting allows ELLs to have more comprehensible input because classmates modify or adapt the message to the listener’s needs. There are more opportunities for oral practice and for repetition of information as peers help newcomers negotiate meaning” (2007, p. 6). Also, cooperative learning groups encourage both comprehensible input and output because ELLs receive rapid feedback and correct each other’s mistakes without judgment (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Class size

Most people agree that class size influences teaching styles and students’ learning and outcomes. In general, small classes are regarded as the ideal environment for teachers and students, while crowded classes are considered poor educational settings. However, Hess claims, “Although teaching in the large class is far from easy, there are certain advantages that we should be aware of” (2001, p. 6). Some of the advantages he describes include the rich diversity of opinions, styles of learning, experiences, backgrounds, knowledge, and values. Consequently, the class is always filled with stimulating activities and processes for students. For some teachers, this represents pedagogical challenge.

Indeed, Hess points out that teaching large numbers of students of varied levels compels teachers to be organized, creative, and able to improvise their instruction, all of which promote professional growth. Such conditions also recognize the students' own role as peer teachers (Hess, 2001).

The same author describes some of the challenges of teaching large classes. For example, teachers may feel that they have less authority and face more behavioral problems. Teachers may also feel overwhelmed by the enormous amount of paperwork and/or unable to provide adequate feedback to all their students. Obviously, it is difficult to accommodate all individual learning styles, including the students who are quiet or bored. Above all, working with large numbers of students requires good organizational skills and a variety of classroom management strategies and techniques (Hess, 2001).

Flood et al. (2003) conducted research comparing the nature of teacher and student interaction in smaller and larger classes, and many benefits were observed in smaller class settings. In general, teachers can manage behavioral problems because they can provide more frequent and higher quality feedback to their students. Students frequently show more self-control and discipline, are more motivated and confident, and less anxious and embarrassed. As a result, they are able to concentrate better which contributes to enhanced student language learning.

Regarding class size, Flood et al. (2003) claimed that greater individualization of instruction did not always occur in smaller classes. Specifically, these teachers tended to not vary their pedagogy as much. This could be attributed to teachers' perceptions that variation was unnecessary or simply because they lacked adequate training or experience.

Teaching Techniques, Strategies, and Activities in Small Classes

As already described in the section on Student-Student Interaction, active student practice using the English language is essential for L2 acquisition and learning. However, since teachers in small classes (i.e., approximately 20 students) can interact more frequently with students, this can actually limit the opportunities for interaction between the students themselves. Therefore, it is necessary to strategically reduce the amount of talking by teachers during lessons. Celce-Murcia & McIntosh state, “Careful preparation can change the classroom interaction from teacher-dominated activities to teacher/students communication and finally students/students communication” (1978, p. 321). The authors suggest some strategies for involving students in everyday tasks, such as classroom management, taking attendance, and distributing and collecting paper exercises and written work. These routine activities are opportunities for student interaction while also encouraging collaboration.

Practice activities should be carefully selected to support the objective(s) of the lesson and encourage and support students’ English language learning. “A well-selected variety of activities prevents boredom, minimizes classroom control, and even encourages student achievement” (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 318). Therefore, they should progress from easy to difficult and include audio-visual aids to reinforce learning, above all for students who are visual learners.

When selecting an activity for a pair or group, teachers must consider students’ backgrounds and their levels of English proficiency. “Some language learning or language practicing activities are more appropriate for small group work than for pairs of students” (Celce-Murcia & McIntosh, 1978, p. 323). In any case, since teachers in small classes should reduce their own talking, the goal should be promoting interaction among the students.

For all activities, it is essential to include opportunities for students to use English in all modes of communication. “Many ESL teachers follow the suggested sequence of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, because it is thought to parallel the natural language learning process” (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 318). Moreover, these modes overlap and reinforce each other. For example, listening supports speaking, reading supports writing, writing reflects speaking, etc. Teachers in smaller classes have more opportunities to assess ESL students’ strengths and areas of need.

Listening activities are most effective when supplemented by visual reinforcement, such as hearing native English-speaking guest speakers while displaying visual aids or props. Recordings of conversations, radio broadcasts, videotape recordings, and songs with lyrics can be transcribed and designed to focus on hearing specific words in context. Watching films gives visual reinforcement and contextual support to their dialogue.

Besides conversations during group work, other ideas for speaking activities include asking questions of a guest speaker, simulated telephone conversations, discussing photographs and topics read in class, describing familiar objects hidden from view while classmates try to guess what it is, students’ performing their own dialogues, and storytelling.

There are endless possibilities for reading activities, but recognize the importance of practical daily applications. Examples include newspapers, magazines, signs, maps, schedules, travel brochures, catalogs, letters, and comic books. Students can also practice reading aloud to their peers, such as reading directions to an activity aloud, or for a taped recording for later analysis. They can also read each other’s compositions to encourage peer review.

Whether they are doing written exercises, teacher-guided compositions, or creative writing, students should independently practice writing frequently.

This provides teachers valuable insight into individual students' progress, personalities, backgrounds, and learning styles, and also informs instruction. Moreover, students collaboratively writing in pairs or groups can contribute ideas, revise, edit, read, and give feedback on each other's work. Suggested activities include "short stories, poems, plays, radio dramas, advertisements, dialogues or role-plays, business and personal letters, editorials or jokes...or even culture journals, describing their experiences in living in a new place and learning a new language" (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 320).

Learning Environment in Small Classes

The use and organization of the physical space affects both academic performance and the social and emotional atmosphere of the class. "Your position and the way you organize the positions of the students in your class is of great importance" (Gower et al., 2005, p.21). Teachers should recognize cultural differences that students in multicultural classes might have concerning individual personal space. By doing so, teachers hope to minimize the potential for antagonism while encouraging interaction between students by arranging them at an appropriate distance from each other. Besides students' cultural backgrounds, other elements should be considered such as the age of students and their personalities. Essentially, by organizing where students should sit at the beginning and throughout the course for different activities, teachers reveal their own attitudes toward the students, help define students' attitudes toward each other and toward the teacher, affect how they interact, and the types of activities they can do (Gower et al., 2005, p.21). For example, students with different mother tongues should sit apart, but should sit together if they work on common problems; weaker students should sit together during activities to receive guidance and direct support; or an outgoing student is usually next to a quiet one. The same authors said that classes that combine different people working together not only increase diversity but also class cohesion as a result of the intermixing.

Rearranging seating is another part of a conscious plan implemented to try to stop interruptions, include students that seat themselves in back seats, or use an absent student's chair to incorporate students who avoid participating in class. Gower et al. (2005, p. 21) suggest that teachers "need to be sensitive, yet positive from the beginning" to avoid upsetting students by asking them to change seats for no obvious causes. In any case, if teachers are going to move students, teachers should try to use authority respectfully and/or also words of encouragement or humor to persuade students with different personalities to collaborate with the classroom plan.

Besides positioning students purposefully in the classroom, teachers also should incorporate experiences that address the affective needs of learners (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Dewey (cited by Celce-Murcia, 2001, pg. 304) considered that the classroom should reflect society outside the classroom, and also advocated for "democratized classrooms" where students not only are being given facts but also the opportunity of taking part in "Socratic dialogue" connecting similar themes to their own experiences.

Dewey (cited by Celce-Murcia, 2001, pg. 304) reasoned that "if humans are learn to live cooperatively," classrooms should provide the first experiences of collaboration. Classrooms being a small-scale version of society, the experiences that students should have of democratic processes are "cooperation in groups," which may include not only studying and developing school projects but also acquiring the practical skills that one needs when interacting democratically in groups. In particular, as Celce-Murcia adds "being taught to empathize with others, and to work together on rational problem solving" (2001, p. 304). For instance in a "learning community" like this, all participants express their views using logical reasoning in shared discussions, decisions are made based on agreement or majority, if necessary, and "what gets done or not done" depends on students' creativity and group collaboration.

“Students learning collaboratively have been shown to use higher level learning strategies, are more motivated to learn...and are able to learn through cooperative problem solving. ...They also produce more significant projects than they could have as individuals” (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 304).

After reviewing information about topics such as managing learning, interaction in class, class size, teaching techniques and learning environment, additional material was selected for analysis from five different past research studies covering topics related to teaching English in small classes in different contexts and approaches.

First, Harfitt, in 2012, investigated students’ perspectives about class size and language learning in Hong Kong. He studied the influence of language learning anxiety in teaching and learning in language lessons where class size varies. Guiora (cited by Harfitt, 2012) explains that acquiring another language has been “described as a profoundly unsettling psychological proposition” and provokes “a great deal of stress and anxiety in learners” (Allwright & Bailey cited by Harfitt, 2012). Harfitt asserts that it is crucial to look up problems and elements that support “participation and oral production in the classroom, particularly in classes of different size” (2012). Therefore, this study explores individual learning styles, cultural backgrounds of students, and their psychological state while learning a second language.

In order to collect data, the researcher used multiple interviews and classroom observations performed through multiple case studies of large and reduced-size classes in four secondary schools in Hong Kong. Harfitt, uses ‘case’ to refer to one teacher that teaches in a reduced-size and a large class. Interviews from group and semi-structured individual interviews with 231 students from large and reduced classes conveyed the study’s information.

Interviews were performed in English about the following topics: important anecdotes from observed lessons; students' own likes and dislikes about learning English in larger and smaller classes, their opinions about learning and teaching in their particular class, their views on peer relationships in their respective classes; their class participation and motives for engagement in their respective class, and cultural aspects including their views on language learning anxiety.

This study had the same teacher for both large and reduced-size classroom, which is different from other studies that did not control the teacher variable. Chinese was the first language of all participating students, aged between 13 and 15 years. The teachers (4) were Chinese native speakers with 6 to 13 years of experience teaching English. All of them participated voluntarily teaching one small and one large class of the same grade that were part of their regular teaching schedule. Students were nominated randomly in each class.

One advantage of this study over others is that students' opinions represent a different view of the main issue of how class size can facilitate learning and teaching. Another benefit of the research method utilized in the study is the comparison of what students say about their classroom and what they do in that class.

Second, Galton & Pell in 2012 investigated: Do class size reductions make a difference to classroom practice? The case of Hong Kong primary schools. Demographic changes in Hong Kong reduced the school population such that teachers faced possible lay-offs. Additionally, controversy arose about either losing experienced teachers or reducing "normal" class sizes (average 38 pupils). As a result of the pressure, the Government commissioned a small class teaching (SCT) four-year study in 2004 to determine the benefits of small class teaching in local context. For this reason, an observational study was designed to examine if class cutbacks "led to improvements in the quality of teaching, in particular, a government initiated shift away from teacher directed instruction with a view of increasing pupil's participation."

Observations were done using two reduced forms of instruments used previously from the ORACLE (Observational Research and Classroom Learning Evaluation). The Teacher Record notes the teachers' questions, comments, and silent interactions when listening to students reading or giving them feedback. Also, "the target of the teacher's attention (individual, group/pair or whole class) was also noted" (Galton and Pell, 2012). The Pupil Record notes students' interactions, instances of on- or off-task behaviour, and also if their actions include conversation with other students or adults.

After three years of studies, research corroborated that students in Hong Kong attending small classes do not receive more undivided attention from the teacher than students in regular classes. Rather, it is due to the students working in pairs and groups in smaller classes. In smaller classes, students who act as the group's speaker get more attention. In normal size classes, they get the same attention as a member of the class. Although in both cases these types of student-teacher interaction are short, in smaller classes they tend to be sustained because the students' first response would be followed up. The study shows evidence that teachers spend more time attending to children discussing their work.

At the beginning of the study teachers were afraid of being told how the small class should be, but at the end they recognized that there was not a unique small class approach. On the contrary, it was realized that effective pedagogy was the same for all sizes of classes, but some strategies were easier to develop in smaller ones, such as less teacher instruction and more student ideas, participation, and group and pair work during whole class discussions. These strategies served as a structure, but teachers had to modify this approach to fit their classrooms.

Harfitt's third study, in 2011, "How class size reduction mediates secondary students' learning: hearing the pupil voice," has a double aim: first, to focus on students' opinions rather than on teachers' reports; and second, using students' viewpoints, to gain insight into the importance of class size reductions with respect to the social and cultural characteristics of the classroom where the cultural background of students could be an important factor in learning. The research inquiries are: How do students perceive the differences, if any, between teaching and learning in a large class with teaching and learning in a reduced-size class? How do these differences, if any, influence cultural and social aspects of learning?

Since the study focused on the whole classroom environment, the method of investigation utilized was case study research, as well as a non-experimental design to replicate the real classroom context. Instead of focusing on how differences in interaction and pedagogical strategies are affected by class size, this study emphasizes the role that teachers' age, gender, experience, attitude, and decisions might have. To investigate the teacher factor variable, the study compared large and small size classes with the same professor teaching both classes.

Classes were also taught in the same grade in three different schools where teachers volunteered to be observed, and video-recorded to ensure a naturalistic setting for the study. The teachers were all female with 5 to 13 years of experience teaching at the secondary level. Multiple case studies helped to discover if the same results could be observed in other cases. A total of 191 students from both class sizes were interviewed multiple times, during lunchtime or after school, in individual and group settings, about their perceptions of learning and teaching in their class.

Observation of students in large and reduced classes produced data on classroom events and discourse. Each class was observed in a full cycle of teaching, and about 8 lessons per class were video-recorded and transcribed.

Classroom transcriptions were analyzed, focusing on “interaction patterns” between class and teacher, and between students. It was the aim to verify if there were any differences between class sizes in the area of language development.

This study contributes to the limited research on class size in Hong Kong and Asia with an emphasis corroborated by previous studies, which is the inclusion of students’ opinions in teaching and learning plans. Results of other studies of smaller classes highlight the significance of the “sociocultural perspective” when evaluating class size. Students’ social interaction and academic collaboration is more frequent in smaller classes, which conveys benefits to individuals and group members of small classes. This particular finding contradicts other studies that suggest that although students benefit academically in small classes, they may experience diminished social relations.

The second to last study, the fourth review, presented by Wong (2012), makes reference to “Initiating small class teaching in Hong Kong, video reflective narratives and the professional developmental learning model,” has the goal of answering the following question: “How to introduce small class teaching to practicing teachers in a way that engages individual teachers initiatives?” In order to respond, Wong studied the practice of video reflection as part of professional development aimed at supporting primary teachers’ engagement with small classes in Hong Kong. It also aims to give insight to administrators, teachers, and teacher educators on the utilization of video reflection in teachers’ professional development.

The study includes a qualitative multiple case study. This approach allows the researcher to include various types of documents in the analysis, plus verbal and written information from each case. The teachers’ own reflective video narratives were examined to get information about their experiences with professional development.

Triangulation was accomplished through studying teachers' notes on professional learning, their portfolio items, and comments from their instructors. Also, their video narratives were transcribed, coded, and analyzed.

The results demonstrate that student teachers and experienced teachers can benefit from utilizing video reflective narratives to reflect about their own instruction and curriculum implementation, from which they gain insight for professional growth and improvement. Moreover, when teachers share these insights with colleagues, they learn from each other's experiences and start a self-directed, collaborative process.

Finally, Harfitt's study in 2013 suggests "Brokering dialogue between secondary students and teachers to co-construct appropriate pedagogy in reduced-size classes," has two purposes: first, to "broker" the students' opinions on learning and teaching in small classes; and second, to verify if teachers make use of students' feedback to reflect and to apply in their own pedagogy. The research questions guiding the investigation are: How do students perceive that teaching and learning processes might be enhanced in their reduced-size classes? What are teachers' perceptions of the student feedback, and how does it influence their practical knowledge of the classroom?

The investigation utilized case study research to explore the whole classroom. Also, students' and teachers' own narratives were examined to recount anecdotal stories of the two schools. These narratives give the students' perception on how case study research can improve approaches to teaching and learning and how teachers could use this information to influence or modify their pedagogy.

In Hong Kong, the two secondary classes described this study contained 21 and 22 students, respectively. Both teachers in the study were female, had between 9 and 12 years' experience teaching, and had a postgraduate diploma or education certificate.

A non-experimental research plan was chosen so as to observe classes in the current teaching timetable. Prior to this study, no students in either class had been in a small class. In each institution, the selection of students in each class was done randomly.

Students were interviewed and the results were analyzed and transcribed. Later, the two teachers were given copies of the transcriptions and asked to ponder their responses to the students' comments. The teachers were interviewed a month later to learn their opinions about the students' feedback and if and how their comments affected their pedagogy.

Even though the aim of the study was to involve students in conversations with teachers about pedagogy in reduced-size classes, it has emphasized the need for teachers and students to reflect on learning, and not teaching only. Teachers were anxious about getting students' feedback because it could be a criticism of their teaching, but listening to students' experiences and ideas permitted them to better comprehend students' perceptions of learning in a context with fewer students.

While not all data from the investigation generated positive feedback, it suggested that students are personally invested in their own learning capacity and alludes to the collaborative possibilities for teachers and students in smaller classes.

DISCUSSION

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

This section of the study gives a description, analysis, and interpretation of results of a survey about teachers' and students' perceptions of teaching and learning English as a second language (ESL) in small classes and class observations as well. Four main questions were asked: 1) *What are the benefits of teaching and learning ESL in small classes?* 2) *What teaching strategies and resources benefit the teaching of ESL in small classes?* 3) *How do students feel about learning ESL in small classes?* 4) *Are there any limitations when teaching ESL in small classes?* Participants' responses show their opinions about different aspects of each main question. For the quantitative section of this investigation, results for each aspect of the main questions were tabulated and displayed in tables for both participant groups. Numerical responses and their percentages were analyzed for the sample and correlated simultaneously with notes from a nonparticipant observation instrument that gives qualitative information about the reported research.

Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

What are the benefits of teaching and learning English in small classes?

Table 1

Teachers' Perceptions

A. Benefits of teaching and learning English in classes with fewer students.

	In classes with fewer students:	Totally Agree		Agree		Partially Agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	It is easy to design activities that allow students to put into practice what they have learned.	3	60	2	40					5	100
2.	The students are attentive and participate in the activities implemented in class.	2	40	2	40	1	20			5	100
3.	The space in the classroom allows proper development of the activities designed by you.	2	40	3	60					5	100
4.	You are able to provide adequate feedback.	4	80	1	20					5	100
5.	Activities are done that permit greater interaction between students.	4	80	1	20					5	100
6.	There is greater interaction between the teacher and students.	5	100							5	100
7.	It is easy to remember the names of the students.	4	80	1	20					5	100

Author: Verónica Casali

Source: Intermediate ESL High School classes & adult ESL classes

Table 2

Students' Perceptions

A. Benefits of teaching and learning English in classes with fewer students.

N°	In classes with fewer students:	Totally Agree		Agree		Partially Agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	The activities done allow to practice what the students learned in class.	33	53	23	37	6	10			62	100
2.	The students are attentive and participate in the activities developed in class	19	30	38	61	6	9			62	100
3.	The students concentrate better because there is not a lot of noise in the classroom.	26	42	30	48	4	7	2	3	62	100
4.	The space in the classroom allows adequate implementation of the activities assigned by the teacher.	31	50	24	39	7	11			62	100
5.	The teacher provides adequate feedback.	21	34	33	53	7	11			62	100
6.	There exist interaction between students.	21	34	31	50	6	10	4	6	62	100
7.	There exists interaction between the teacher and the students.	34	55	16	26	2	3	10	16	62	100
8.	The teacher remembers the names of the students.	50	81	10	16	2	3			62	100

Author: Verónica Casali

Source: Intermediate ESL High School classes & adult ESL classes

All teachers' responses from the sample show their agreement (60% Totally Agree, 40% Agree) that it is easy for them to design activities for small classes that help students to practice the lessons that they have learned. Students' responses to the same question show similar agreement (53% Totally Agree and 37% Agree, respectively), while 10% of participants indicated that they "Partially Agree." Thus, the results show a general agreement about teachers designing activities that students are able to practice in small classes.

Observations of the Church's English as a Second Language (C-ESL) classes corroborated that the activities build on their previous lessons. For example, the morning class with 8 students first practiced using flash cards and pictures presented on a smart board. Then, after reviewing the necessary vocabulary, they practiced in pairs ordering food and taking orders in a take-out restaurant. In a writing class observed at the High School (HS), students followed instructions and wrote a business letter, a practice that combined lessons from two previous classes on the same subject. Regarding activities in class, Nunan & Bailey (2008) conclude in their study about small classes that a well-selected variety of activities prevents boredom, minimizes classroom control, and even encourages student achievement.

When asked about students being attentive and participating in the activities implemented in class, most of the teachers either totally agree (40%) or agree (40%), but 20% only partially agree. With minor variation, students' responses overall indicate greater agreement (30%, 61%, & 9%, respectively) than teachers for this question. Moreover, 90% of students indicated they are able to concentrate better in classes with fewer students because of less noise. These opinions agree with Flood et al. (2003), who found that students in smaller class settings are able to concentrate better, which in turn contributes to enhanced student language learning.

In the C-ESL classes observed, no disruptive noises were heard and students appeared to be concentrating and engaged in different activities during class. This could be partially attributed to adults' more mature attitudes, motivation, and the practical or even urgent necessity to learn English. During observations of the HS-ESL classes, the level of noise was more or less typical for a high school class. However, no disruptive noises were heard and most of the students were attentive to the teachers' instructions and comments when working individually, in pairs, or in small groups. For example, small groups were rehearsing their compositions from an ESL reading class before reading them aloud to their classmates.

Other students in an ESL grammar class discussed vocabulary words with common suffixes while utilizing their smart phones to supplement the dictionaries available in the classroom. Students were also observed speaking and hearing English while rehearsing for oral presentations from other subjects. Of course, an important goal for the HS-ESL classes is to prepare students that speak other languages to enter mainstream classes and use English to learn all academic subjects. Undoubtedly, students in smaller classes will have more opportunities to engage in this type of practice.

The two C-ESL teachers use the same room for their respective morning and night classes. The room has enough space to seat twenty-five students at large tables facing the chalkboard and smart board. The morning class, with 6 students present, was observed to have tables arranged in a “horseshoe” formation where two students shared the same table so that they could work in pairs. Students had an unobstructed view of the smart board and chalkboard and were encouraged to stand up if needed during their two-hour class. The teacher of the night class did not rearrange any furniture nor use the smart board, but the 8 students present could stand up from chairs if necessary during their 1.5-hour class. Three different ESL classes were observed using the same room at the HS. This classroom has a dry erase board, smart board, the teacher’s computer, dictionaries, thesauruses, textbooks and workbooks for grammar, reading, writing, as well as numerous other books and visual aids for students in grades 9-12. Students sat in groups of five desks, but they could move around the classroom when needed to interact with the teacher and peers when working on projects. They need a pass from the teacher to go to the bathroom, school nurse, or other places in the building.

Teachers’ responses indicate that they are satisfied (40% Totally Agree and 60% Agree) with the suitability of their classroom spaces to allow proper development of self-designed activities.

Similarly, half of students (50%) responded that they totally agree that the class space is adequate to develop activities assigned by the teacher, 39% responded that they agree, while 11% said they partially agree. Moreover, direct observations corroborated that there was adequate space around furniture and materials for students to implement the activities assigned by the teacher. In accordance with the recommendations of Gower et al. (2005), the teacher's decisions regarding the physical arrangement of the classroom, his/her own location and movements, as well as how and where students sit go a long way in determining the types of activities that can be done and the kind of interactions the students have. All of the classes observed, except the night C-ESL class, purposefully arranged furniture and materials to provide more comfortable spaces for students to complete activities, especially when working in pairs or groups.

During all the observations, the teachers gave frequent and mostly individualized feedback to students. Accordingly, their survey responses about their ability to provide adequate feedback in classrooms with fewer students show a high degree of agreement (80% Totally Agree and 20% Agree). In comparison, however, significantly fewer students (34%) totally agree that teachers give adequate feedback, 53% agree, while 11% partially agree. Here it is worth noting that Hattie's analysis of 8,000 studies concluded: "The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback" (cited by Marzano et al., 2001, p. 96).

Students in the beginner level of the C-ESL classes typically did not have sufficient language in comparison with intermediate level students in the HS-ESL. Nonetheless, the morning C-ESL teacher was observed guiding students as they reformulated questions, supplementing language, focusing on clear pronunciation, and using various techniques to encourage students to independently produce their own sentences and phrases. In contrast, the teacher in the night C-ESL class followed a more structured practice using the students' workbooks and feedback was given only for incorrect responses.

This practice agrees with research on small class settings by Marzano et al. (2001), which said that feedback should be given as soon as possible after students complete the specified task. Moreover, they noted that students generally show more improvement when less time passes between the task and the teacher's feedback.

All the teachers at the HS also were observed giving support according to the students' needs. Some examples include when a teacher rephrased students' oral questions and comments; or reformulated students' questions to clarify them; or helped them to complete sentences in their compositions by pointing out incorrect words; or gave clues to students when fixing run-on sentences; and many other one-on-one opportunities available due to fewer students in the class. These practices coincide with recommendations by Marzano, et al. (2001) that the best type of feedback is "corrective" in nature, specifically highlighting what they are doing correctly and incorrectly, and teachers' feedback should reference a specific skill or knowledge instead of giving students feedback that compares them with their peers. So, in addition to greater frequency, students in smaller classes not only receive feedback that is more individualized, but moreover, they receive more sustained and more in-depth feedback, the type that elaborates on students' initial responses, as noted by Galton & Pell (2002).

In classes with fewer students, all teachers surveyed said that they plan activities that permit greater interaction between students, and most (80%) indicated that they totally agree while some (20%) agree. Certainly, a great deal of interaction was noted during observations of all HS-ESL classes, depending of course on the activity. However, students' responses were more varied (34% Totally Agree, 50% Agree, 10% Partially Agree, and 6% Totally Disagree). Although students were generally favorable reporting on their interactions with classmates, 16% either only partially agreed or disagreed that interaction between students even occurs in smaller classes.

One reason for this discrepancy could be how the question was formulated (“There exists interaction between students.”). As noted previously, students in the beginner level class in the C-ESL class in general spoke less English. Since most of these students are native Spanish-speakers, their interactions were mostly in Spanish unless they were practicing conversation in English as part of a scripted dialogue.

However, the students in the HS-ESL classes are also a very diverse group. They are in a range of grades (9-12) and have different levels of English proficiency. All are adolescents with varying levels of maturity and biological and emotional development. They come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and therefore may not necessarily interact well socially, not to mention that certain ethnic barriers sometimes exist between persons of different nationalities. Consequently, their responses that they interact with classmates could mean that they work only with friends but never interact with non-friends, while others may be more open to interacting with any classmates. In fact, the teachers reported normal interactions between the students, but only among close friends, as is typical with adolescents. They also said that some students from Haiti, Vietnam, and China simply do not have any peers with whom to work. Therefore, these students were observed mostly working by themselves or as part of a mixed group. When they experienced difficulty, more advanced students were available to help them. For example, when the survey was distributed, the teacher asked three students to help them. According to Haynes (2007), since conversing with peers is an important way to improve English skills (comprehensible output), “[a] small-group setting allows ELLs to have more comprehensible input because classmates modify or adapt the message to the listener’s needs. There are more opportunities for oral practice and for repetition of information as peers help newcomers negotiate meaning” (p. 6).

Teachers unanimously agreed (100% Totally Agree) that in smaller classes there exists greater interaction between teachers and students. However, responding to the same question, a little more than half of students (55%) surveyed totally agreed, while 26% agreed, 3% partially agreed, and 16% disagreed. Here it is important to point out that 100% of the adult students in both C-ESL classes noted that the interaction between teachers and students was very satisfactory. That is to say, only students from the HS-ESL classes indicated that teacher-student interactions were unsatisfactory. It is worth recalling that these students are adolescents whose attitudes likely reflect their level of maturity. Interestingly, these students were all enrolled in either an ESL grammar or writing class. Thus, they are expected to complete academically rigorous tasks in their mainstream classes and may expect more help from their ESL teacher. Furthermore, since the surveys were conducted near the end of the school year, they may have expressed some frustration from stress due to final projects and essays.

Needless to say, the students' level of English is an important factor in the type of interaction during class and in turn, their proficiency determines what kind of support and encouragement the teacher gives. For example, the morning C-ESL teacher was observed to initiate the interaction by prompting students to answer and ask questions, give responses, and in general encouraging them to take risks by speaking or writing using new words and phrases. Of course, a different teaching style was evident during the night C-ESL class. Most of the interaction was prompted by the teacher asking students to repeat new vocabulary to practice pronunciation, to complete some activities from the textbook, and then read them to the class.

In contrast, in the HS-ESL classes, the students' intermediate proficiency was apparent during fluent oral interaction initiated by both teachers and students, such as by asking questions, requesting assistance, and soliciting information and explanations.

An important focus of second language instruction is fostering “rich and meaningful interaction in the classroom that supports second language acquisition” (Carter & Nuan, 2001, p.124). At the HS, teachers were observed not only instructing students about the content of the lesson and practice activities, but also looking to explicitly confirm the students’ understanding. For example, when their questions did not generate responses from students, teachers were seen paraphrasing difficult words, using simple syntax, or clarifying the main ideas. If students appeared in doubt or hesitant, teachers would seek to enhance their comprehension by using modified speech to foster students’ responses. These techniques coincide with the recommendations of Carter and Nuan (2001), that teachers should note students’ reactions to their modified attempts to ensure that the students understand the question. Indeed, the small class size seemed to support the teachers’ ability to adapt their own speech according to their students’ responses and reactions.

Providing extended wait-time was another strategy repeatedly utilized successfully by teachers in the HS-ESL classes. After being asked or prompted by teachers, students were given extra time to help them process the point discussed and provide answers. Teachers also provided students with extra time to prepare responses before presentations or reading to the whole class. In this regard, Carter and Nuan (2001) recommend modifying questions so that students can understand them, and that English language teachers must provide students with extended wait-time to respond to questions and after errors are committed. Teachers were also observed giving clear instructions during transitions to help students to prepare for the coming tasks and prevent misunderstandings or even anxiety.

Teachers in the HS-ESL classes also schedule a regular time for students to work on projects and presentations for their mainstream classes.

Students certainly appeared to benefit from the support and guidance from their ESL teachers as they rehearsed presenting projects to classmates before their final presentation in their regular class. Two Power Point presentations were observed being practiced by two students from their Health and Science classes, respectively. Beforehand, their classmates were informed and instructed by the teacher to listen, take notes, and to give feedback about the content and language used. At the end, there was time for comments and questions facilitated by the teacher. All these techniques coincide with the recommendations of Malamah (1997) and, moreover, seemed very effective at supporting the HS students that were transitioning into mainstream classes. Again, the smaller class size seemed to facilitate more frequent and elaborate interactions between teachers and students.

Teachers were asked if they easily remember students' names in smaller classes. All teachers but one totally agreed that in classes with fewer students it is easy to recall their names (80%), while one teacher agreed (20%). Most students (81%) also totally agreed that teachers in classes with fewer students call them by their names. The remaining students agreed (16%), while a few (3%) partially agreed. Direct observations corroborated that teachers used first names to call on students in all classes except the night C-ESL class, in which the teacher used a folded colored paper placed in front of each of the students with their names written on them. Students were given this sheet of paper and instructed to use it in every class. A reason for this could be that students' attendance in that class is inconsistent and the group changes as new students come and go.

What teaching strategies and resources benefit the teaching of English in small classes?

Table 3

Teachers' perceptions

B. Strategies and resources that support teaching English in classes with fewer students.

	Classes with fewer students facilitate:	Totally Agree		Agree		Partially Agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
8.	Designing and implementing activities that permit students to practice listening skills.	3	60	2	40					5	100
9.	Designing and implementing activities that permit students to practice speaking skills.	3	60	2	40					5	100
10.	Designing and implementing activities that permit students to practice reading skills.	3	60	2	40					5	100
11.	Designing and implementing activities that permit students to practice writing skills.	3	60	1	20	1	20			5	100
12.	Designing and implementing group activities.	3	60	2	40					5	100
13.	Designing and implementing individual activities.	3	60	2	40					5	100
14.	Utilizing technological resources.	3	60	2	40					5	100
15.	Utilizing didactic materials.	3	60	2	40					5	100

Author: Verónica Casali

Source: Intermediate ESL High School classes & adult ESL classes

Table 4

Students' perceptions

B. Strategies and resources that support teaching English in classes with fewer students.

	In classes with a small number of students:	Totally Agree		Agree		Partially Agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
9.	We do activities that allow us to practice listening skills.	23	37	34	55	3	5	2	3	62	100
10.	We do activities that allow us to practice speaking skills.	22	36	36	58	4	6			62	100
11.	We do activities that allow us to practice reading skills.	24	39	38	61					62	100
12.	We do activities that allow us to practice writing skills.	26	42	32	52	3	5	1	1	62	100
13.	Group activities are utilized.	14	23	33	53	12	19	3	5	62	100
14.	Individual activities are utilized.	29	47	26	42	7	11			62	100
15.	Technological resources are utilized.	24	39	20	32	9	14.5	9	14.5	62	100
16.	Teaching materials are utilized.	14	23	33	53	10	16	5	8	62	100

Author: Verónica Casali

Source: Intermediate ESL High School classes & adult ESL classes

The next group of questions refers to teachers' and students' perceptions about strategies and resources that support teaching English as a second language in classes with fewer students. Teachers were asked if smaller classes facilitated designing and implementing activities that permit students to practice listening skills. All teachers either totally agreed (60%) or agreed (40%) with this. Students were also asked if in small classes they practice listening skills through activities.

Students' responses were as follows: Totally Agree (37%), Agree (55%), Partially Agree (5%), and Disagree (3%). Students that responded "Partially Agree" and "Totally Disagree" were adolescents attending grammar and reading class.

According to Nunan & Bailey (2008), "Many ESL teachers follow the suggested sequence of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, because it is thought to parallel the natural language learning process" (p. 318). Since these communicative modes are interrelated, teachers can assess ESL students' strengths and deficiencies more frequently in smaller classes. All the ESL classes observed at the C and HS employed a balanced practice of the four language skills and listening skills were part of their lessons and practice activities.

The teachers are all native English speakers (with the exception of the night C-ESL teacher—who is a native Spanish-speaking volunteer) and during classes only English was used in all activities. After greeting the students to begin the class, all teachers were observed giving oral instructions to them. As many other oral language opportunities developed, teachers were heard speaking to the group and individuals during lesson presentations and other types of interactions. Specifically, teachers modeled correct pronunciation, even using an exaggeratedly slow pace when introducing new sounds and difficult words to beginner and even some intermediate level students. Besides listening to teachers and classmates, both the morning C-ESL and the HS-ESL classes utilized a smart board with special listening programs focused on pronunciation for the morning C-ESL class and on content and gathering information for HS students. The latter also practiced listening to classmates orally presenting their projects and their comments after the presentation included feedback about pronunciation.

All teachers agreed that having fewer students facilitated designing and implementing activities which permit students to practice speaking skills (60% Totally Agree and 40% Agree).

Students' responses about opportunities to practice speaking skills in smaller classes were as follows: Totally Agree (36%), Agree (58%), and Partially Agree (6%). In general, then, there is agreement among teachers and students that they do practice speaking skills in class.

Observations corroborated that speaking practice was one of the main purposes of class interactions in all sessions, between teachers and students and among the students themselves.

After greeting students, the teachers at the HS elicited additional information by asking students to share news with the class or to comment about news topics that were selected by teachers. This type of speaking activity was also utilized in the morning C-ESL class. Since it is a biweekly class, the teacher dedicated time to greet and converse with each of the six students as a warm-up activity. During the night C-ESL class, there was less initial oral communication and the teacher started reading the textbook after a brief and general greeting. In the HS-ESL classes, the opening activity was observed to be more informative and, as they meet for class daily, news was often related to questions about homework and recalling the content of the lesson from the previous day.

Beginner students in the C-ESL classes utilized practice books to read aloud, practice pronunciation, and also to learn additional vocabulary related to each lesson. Teachers in both classes modeled reading and asked students to repeat and then present activities that followed a particular lesson, including reading their own answers to questions or write-in practices after completing them. In the morning C-ESL class, students also practiced scripted dialogues, vocabulary using flash cards, and recognizing actions in pictures downloaded from the Internet. On the other hand, HS-ESL students routinely practice speaking skills in all their classes, orally interacting with students and teachers during daily lessons.

For example, they were observed reading aloud written responses, choosing the correct word, commenting about a classmate's project or presentation, describing pictures, commenting about a reading assignment, or debating on national and international news at the opening of class.

When teachers were asked if classes with fewer students facilitated designing and implementing activities that permit students to practice reading skills, 60% responded "Totally Agree" and 40% responded "Agree." To the same question, 39% of students responded "Totally Agree" and 61% responded "Agree."

Naturally, all classes observed practiced reading activities since the material for every lesson was in written form and students in all classes used textbooks, workbooks, and reference books. Much of the lesson content is conveyed in written form, but reading is also utilized by teachers and students to elaborate subject matter and extend vocabulary. Needless to say, reading is an indispensable part of students' individual and group work.

Students were heard reading aloud in all classes observed, for example when students in beginner classes at the C read their written responses to questions during lessons and practice activities. Furthermore, students in each session of the morning C-ESL class read aloud ten additional homework sentences to their peers. Similarly, students at the HS-ESL read information about suffixes from a text in grammar class, read aloud their business letters and sentences in writing class, and read their own sentences about favorite characters from a book they read in a reading class. Based on observations of these classes with fewer students, teachers paid special attention to students' pronunciation while reading and, consequently, students received more in-depth feedback.

Teachers answered that classes with fewer students facilitate designing and implementing activities that allow students to practice writing skills, as follows: 60% Totally Agree, 20% Agree, and 20% Partially Agree.

To a similar question, students' answered as follows: 42% Totally Agree, 52% Agree, 5% Partially Agree, and 1% Disagree. Writing, like other language skills, was observed in all classes with some differences depending on the students' level of proficiency. For example, students in both C and HS classes were observed practicing writing when writing in responses or answering questions corresponding to the lesson activities from their text or workbook. Also, students from the morning class at the C write ten sentences as additional homework using new vocabulary words chosen from the last lesson. In the next session, they read them aloud to the class and teacher feedback is provided immediately about grammar, syntax, spelling, and pronunciation.

Students in the HS-ESL classes practice writing in a variety of contexts and for many different purposes related to their ESL and mainstream classes. In mainstream classes, students have to write words, notes, sentences, essays, and research papers in order to complete the high school curriculum. The students were observed writing a chart and filling it up with new information, writing sentences about favorite characters from a reading assignment, and writing a business letter as a culmination of two days' writing lessons. Additionally, they took notes and wrote down the class agenda.

Perhaps more than any other language skill, writing reveals not only valuable information about students' overall language proficiency, but more importantly, provides teachers feedback about their pedagogy and gives students a useful tool for self-evaluation. Students in small classes get the additional benefit of having writing activities that are more closely and frequently monitored by their teachers as well as more opportunities to work with peers at the same proficiency level.

All teachers were satisfied that classes with fewer students facilitate designing and implementing group activities; 60% totally agreed and 40% agreed.

However, students' responses were more varied (23% Totally Agree, 53% Agree, 19% Partially Agree, and 5% Disagree). The reasons for the discrepancy between the teachers' and students' responses are unclear, but group work was observed in the HS-ESL and the morning C-ESL classes. During repeated observations of the night C-ESL class, group work was not observed and students in this class asked while completing the survey how they should answer the question.

As previously described, the morning C-ESL class is set up so that students can work on practice activities in pairs, such as the scripted dialogue mentioned above. The students' desks at the HS are arranged in groups of five, so they usually work collaboratively in all classes unless the teacher assigns them individual work. An example of this was when they were looking for suffixes and writing them on a graphic organizer in grammar class. Nunan & Bailey (2008) note how students working together "in pairs or groups can contribute ideas, revise, edit, read, and give feedback on each other's work" (p.320). There are many benefits for students working in groups, such as collaborative learning, but in classes with fewer students, the teacher can also more frequently monitor the groups and provide support as needed. However, as in the case of both C-ESL classes, having too few students reduces the variety of perspectives and can lead to unmotivated interaction or boredom.

When asked if smaller classes facilitated designing and implementing individual activities, teachers either totally agreed (60%) or agreed (40%) with this statement. Students were also asked if individual activities were utilized in classes with fewer students. Students' responses were as follows: Totally Agree (47%), Agree (42%), and Partially Agree (11%). Many different types of individual activities using all language skills were noted in all classes observed for this study.

All teachers agreed that classes with fewer students facilitate the utilization of technological resources (60% Totally Agree and 40% Agree). However, students' responses were much more varied (39% Totally Agree, 32% Agree, 14.5% Partially Agree, and 14.5% Disagree). The reasons for the discrepancy between the teachers' and students' responses are unclear, but technological resources were observed being used in the HS-ESL and the morning C-ESL classes. At HS, ESL teachers and students have access to a computer with Internet access that is connected to a smart board. All three teachers were observed using these devices to present parts of lessons and students also used them to present their projects to the class. In addition, the teachers allowed students to use their smart phones to access online dictionaries on certain occasions. The teacher of the morning C-ESL class also utilized a smart board to demonstrate a language program for beginners, using it as a visual dictionary and an aid for pronunciation. During repeated observations of the night C-ESL class, technological resources were not used and students in this class mentioned that they had never seen the smart board and compact disc player being used. Technological resources certainly are useful and quick sources of information, and can be utilized effectively to practice and reinforce second language learning in all communicative modes (speaking, listening, writing, and reading).

When teachers were asked if classes with fewer students facilitated utilizing didactic materials, 60% responded "Totally Agree" and 40% responded "Agree". To the same question, 23% of students responded "Totally Agree", 53% responded "Agree", 16% responded "Partially Agree", and 8% responded "Disagree". The "Disagree" responses came from students in the (night) C-ESL classes, while the "Partially Agree" responses came from the HS-ESL students. Students in the (night) C-ESL classes use a textbook and a workbook and the walls have some visual aids on them, for example numbers, months, personal pronouns, etc.

Students in the HS-ESL classes use textbooks, workbooks, a variety of worksheets, reference books (dictionary, thesaurus, writing manuals, etc.), fiction and non-fiction books, and several visual aids on the wall, such as word lists and grammar posters. These materials are used on a daily basis in all the classes observed, sometimes multiple times per day and some of them more than others. Clearly, these materials are essential tools for both second language instruction and learning, and a teacher in a small class can provide more support to more students when using them.

How the students feel about learning English in small classes?

Table 5

Teachers' perceptions

C. Opinions about how your students feel learning English in a class where there are fewer students.

	In classes with fewer students, the students feel:	Totally Agree		Agree		Partially Agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
16.	Relaxed when speaking in front of their peers.			5	100					5	100
17.	Taken into account because they have more opportunities to participate in class.	1	20	4	80					5	100
18.	Motivated to participate because there are fewer peers in the class.			5	100					5	100
19.	Comfortable because they can compete in a non-threatening way with other students.			5	100					5	100

Author: Verónica Casali

Source: Intermediate ESL High School classes & adult ESL classes

Table 6
Students' perceptions

C. Opinions about how you feel learning English in a class where there are fewer students.

	In classes with a small number of students:	Totally Agree		Agree		Partially Agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
17.	Relaxed when speaking in front of my peers.	36	58	16	26	9	14	1	2	62	100
18.	Taken into account because I have more opportunities to participate in class.	30	48	27	44	3	5	2	3	62	100
19.	Motivated to participate because there are fewer peers in the class.	34	54	21	34	6	10	1	2	62	100
20.	Comfortable because I can compete in a non-threatening way with other students.	23	37	34	55	5	8			62	100

Author: Verónica Casali

Source: Intermediate ESL High School classes & adult ESL classes

In classes with fewer students, teachers unanimously agreed (100%) that students learning English feel relaxed when speaking in front of peers. In contrast, students' responses were much more varied (58% Totally Agree, 26% Agree, 14% Partially Agree, and 2% Disagree). Keeping in mind that formal speaking in front of a group of peers makes most people nervous, even in their first language or when reading aloud from a text, it is remarkable that more students answered "Totally Agree" to this question than to all but one other in this survey (with the exception being that the teacher remembers their names). It is also important to point out that the students that responded "Partially Agree" attend the night C-ESL class and the grammar and writing classes at the HS-ESL, and only 1 student from the HS-ESL grammar class (i.e., "Disagree") did not feel relaxed when speaking in front of peers.

Finally, it is worth recalling that students in the ESL grammar and writing classes at FHS are adolescents whose attitudes likely reflect their level of maturity. Similarly, the adults in the night C-ESL class are simply not accustomed to doing group work or to interacting or conversing with other students in class, nor do they practice speaking in front of peers. Rather, they simply take turns reading as part of activities from the textbook and workbook.

To avoid situations where students feel embarrassed, teachers were observed to tell students that, after completing writing exercises, they would be reading them aloud in a pre-established order. During observations of all the classes, most of the students ‘in the spotlight’ appeared relaxed when reading a text in front of their peers, but a few seemed somewhat embarrassed as they looked repeatedly at their paper, lowered their voice, and/or appeared unenthusiastic about speaking. When the HS-ESL teachers asked for volunteers to answer a non-scripted question, some students shouted responses aloud, some raised hands waiting to be called, and others showed their unwillingness by being silent. In the morning class at the C, students were willing to speak in front of peers mostly when they had a scripted dialogue or text. Unscripted conversations and telling stories were usually reduced to a few words or phrases, but the students seemed relaxed and happy to try, especially when teachers praised them for doing so.

All teachers (80% Agree and 20% Totally Agree) indicated that students in smaller classes are taken into account because they have more opportunities to participate in class. Students’ responses to the same question were as follows: 48% Totally Agree, 44% Agree, 5% Partially Agree, and 3% Disagree. As noted previously, teachers in smaller classes were observed taking students into account by thoughtfully preparing the classroom and arranging the furniture.

They also considered students' needs by giving them opportunities to participate in activities designed to practice all language skills, calling students by their names, giving them appropriate, frequent, and instant feedback, giving students support with grammar in their writing as needed, giving them advice while they planned projects, proofreading their essays, paraphrasing to help them comprehend texts, and modeling native syntax and pronunciation. Additionally, except in the night C-ESL class, all teachers were observed promoting collaboration while facilitating group work, encouraging and supporting peer feedback, and above all, making use of their experience and professional knowledge to foster students' language acquisition.

When asked how their students feel learning English in a class with fewer students, 100% of teachers totally agreed that students felt motivated to participate because of the lower number of students. To the same question, students responded as follows: 54% Totally Agree, 34% Agree, 10% Partially Agree, and 2% Disagree. Again, the "Disagree" response represents only 1 student from an ESL writing class, and at the HS, ESL writing is considered the most difficult skill to master. On the contrary, as seen in the responses, the vast majority of students expressed that having fewer peers in class motivates them to participate. Without a doubt, greater motivation leads to greater achievement and leads to better second language acquisition.

In all classes observed, most students participated and all completed tasks in their ESL classes. Perceived examples of student motivation observed in ESL classes include students enthusiastically greeting each other and teachers, sharing news about their personal and social lives in the morning C-ESL class, and commenting about news topics with teachers and peers at the HS, helping each other with words during grammar exercises, volunteering to read completed worksheets, helping other students as they completed this survey, and giving feedback to peers after their oral presentations.

Both C and HS students were also observed volunteering to help the teacher with routine classroom tasks like taking attendance, handing out papers, and writing the class agenda on board.

In classes with fewer students, teachers unanimously agreed (100% Totally Agree) that students felt comfortable because they can compete in a non-threatening way with other students. On the other hand, students' responses to the same question varied (37% Totally Agree, 55% Agree, and 8% Partially Agree). The teachers' responses would seem to indicate that they are confident about how they conduct their classes and may also reflect a desire to create a sense of community in the classroom. Creating a classroom environment where students feel safe includes "being taught to empathize with others, and to work together on rational problem solving" (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 304). Moreover, the students' high degree of satisfaction "Agreement" says a lot about how students interact with each other in class. During observations, students were free to move around the class, encouraged to converse and work with each other, and to freely use didactic materials and technological resources as long as all this was done in a manner appropriate for the classroom. Other examples of non-competitive interactions between students include appearing relaxed, sharing books and smart phones, more advanced students helping those who were struggling, and helping each other complete the survey. These benefits for students in a non-competitive classroom environment are likely to be fewer in a class with more students.

Are there any limitations when teaching English in small classes?

Table 7

Teacher's perceptions

D. Limitations on teaching English in classes with fewer students.

	In classes with fewer students:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	There exists anxiety among students due to the professor having more control.							5	100	5	100
2.	It is difficult to practice speaking and listening skills.							5	100	5	100

Author: Verónica Casali

Source: Intermediate ESL High School classes & adult ESL classes

Table 8

Students' perceptions

D. Limitations on learning English in classes with fewer students.

	In classes with a small number of students:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	There is anxiety among the students because the teacher has more control.	9	15	25	40	20	32	8	13	62	100
2.	It is difficult to practice speaking and listening skills.	6	10	10	16	14	22	32	52	62	100

Author: Verónica Casali

Source: Intermediate ESL High School classes & adult ESL classes

All teachers surveyed disagreed that students in small classes feel anxiety because teachers have more control. On the other hand, the students responded as follows: 15% Totally Agree, 40% Agree, 32% Partially Agree, and 13% Disagree.

This means that 87% of students surveyed in a class with fewer students (92% of the HS-ESL students and 71% of the C-ESL students) indicated that they have felt anxiety due to increased teacher control. Of course, this could be anxiety felt only in certain stressful situations, such as speaking more often in front of peers.

Not surprisingly, then, in a class with fewer students, each student can expect to be asked by the teacher more often to answer questions, speak, read aloud, etc. Disproportionately, of the 8 students that said they did not feel any anxiety, 3 attended the night C-ESL class. As noted previously, these students do not do group work, there is little or no interaction between students, and nearly all work comes from the textbook or workbook.

However, based on the observations, not as many students appeared anxious as indicated by the survey. Being anxious would have signified that the students refrained from being themselves because of a teacher's tight control, and this did not seem to be the case, either. Indeed, all the teachers expressed that they had never witnessed any kind of gestures or body language that would show students feeling anxious. A few teachers recalled some students being too shy to speak in front of others or only lacking sufficient English to have fluent interaction. Another suggested that students could be sometimes quiet because of lack of education, lack of knowledge, and/or lack of pertinent information in their first language. Observations of interaction between teachers and students revealed that most of the teachers were very actively engaged in helping their students to be successful. In the HS-ESL classes, students were clearly expected to take responsibility for their own learning, and the teachers were observed giving them suggestions to help them guide their own thinking and empower them to acquire English, instead of just giving correct answers. Teachers addressed students' needs by being a connection between the English language required in mainstream classes and society and the students' own English language proficiency level.

Interactions between teachers and students were very polite and respectful, no grades were involved, and consequently, there was no fear of receiving bad grades or failing the course.

In sum, students in both schools were observed to have a lot of freedom and input into how they learned and interacted with teachers and other students in the classroom, and teachers were observed to support and guide them.

To the last question in the survey, all teachers disagreed (100% Disagree) that it was difficult for students to practice listening and speaking skills in classes with fewer students. Students' responses about difficulties to practice listening and speaking skills in smaller classes were as follows: Totally Agree (10%), Agree (16%), Partially Agree (22%), and Disagree (52%). Here again, teachers felt that students have plenty of opportunities to practice listening and speaking skills (which likely indicates a high degree of satisfaction with their pedagogy in smaller classes) and more than half of students agreed. It is curious that 26% of students agreed that it was difficult to practice speaking and listening skills in classes with fewer students. The reasons for this are unclear, especially since, when answering previous survey questions (Table 4, Questions 9 & 10), 92% and 94% of students either agreed or totally agreed that they do activities that allow them to practice listening and speaking skills, respectively. Numerous examples of students practicing these skills were observed in all classes (see *Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results* for Tables 3 & 4).

Clearly, then, teachers feel that there are no limitations when teaching English in classes with fewer students. Some students, on the other hand, may feel uncomfortable with the increased attention given to them, or may have felt more stress due to final examinations and projects for other classes. Also, some students appear to feel that it is difficult to practice speaking and listening skills in classes with fewer students, even though their survey responses show some inconsistencies in this regard.

CONCLUSIONS

Teachers were observed spending more time giving students feedback on all English language skills. Their feedback was also more frequent, in-depth, and better adapted to meet students' changing needs.

Results showed that teachers agreed that it was easier in ESL classes with fewer students to design and implement classroom activities aimed at practicing and reinforcing previously presented lessons. Students' responses showed similar agreement; however, a small group of the *adolescent* respondents expressed some disagreement. Despite some patterns of age-related differences revealed in observations and responses by the students, the results showed a general agreement about teachers designing activities that students were able to practice in small classes.

It was observed that substantially in small classes, teachers and students got to know each other better, which facilitated interaction. Survey responses by both teachers and students showed that teachers recalled students' names, greater interaction occurred between teachers and students, as well as among the students themselves. Observations corroborated that students interacted frequently in smaller classes.

In small ESL classes, students were more attentive and concentrated better on activities developed in class because there was not excessive noise. Survey responses by teachers and students showed that both groups agreed that it was easier to concentrate in smaller classes because there was less noise. Observations corroborated these results.

According to the results, teachers in smaller ESL classes have greater flexibility to physically arrange the classroom to design activities that promote collaborative learning and greater interaction between students. All teachers and nearly all students in smaller classes agreed that the classroom space was adequate for regular interaction and permitted the learning activities to develop.

Indeed, direct observations revealed that there was sufficient space for students to practice the activities assigned by the teacher. Additionally, in most of the classes observed, furniture and materials were thoughtfully arranged to provide comfortable spaces for students to complete activities while working in pairs or groups.

In smaller ESL classes, students felt more confident speaking in front of peers and more motivated to participate in classroom activities, which undeniably supports greater academic achievement. All teachers' and nearly all students' responses showed that students in smaller classes felt relaxed when speaking in front of their classmates, and students observed doing so certainly appeared relaxed. Teachers were observed supporting students who might have been hesitant to speak by giving them instructions beforehand. Similarly, teachers' and students' survey responses agreed that students were more motivated to participate in smaller classes. During observations, many students willingly responded when asked to volunteer or answer questions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of age-related differences in adults' and adolescents' survey responses, a survey of high school students should include individual interviews that could triangulate the data by incorporating adolescents' social and developmental contexts and their opinions about the social and academic benefits as well as any difficulties of learning English as a second language in small classes.

A further exploration of adult students in ESL classes should take into consideration their particular socioeconomic contexts, as well as help develop more accurate and appropriate materials such as textbooks and workbooks based on their unique needs.

Since many benefits were observed in smaller ESL classes, not to mention teachers' and students' own expressed perceptions of those benefits, an investigation of teachers of small ESL classes should include study and inquiries about how they adapt and modify their pedagogy to individualize instruction according to their students' learning styles, personalities, and preferences.

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ANNEXES



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
 La Universidad Católica de Loja
MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA TITULACIÓN DE INGLES

Dear Student:

The objective of this questionnaire is to know your opinion about learning English in classes with 20 students or less.

The information you provide below will only be used for academic and research purposes.

Information:

Name of Institution			
Type of institution:	Public () Private ()		
	School ()	College()	Institute ()
City:			

Instructions: Mark with an X according to your discretion.

Strategy: After reading each item, please answer according to the following rating scale.

Very satisfactory
Satisfactory
Somewhat satisfactory
Unsatisfactory

A. Benefits of teaching and learning English in classes with fewer students.

	In classes with fewer students:	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1.	The activities done allow me to practice what we learned in class.				

2.	The students are attentive and participate in the activities developed in class.				
3.	The students concentrate better because there is not a lot of noise in the classroom.				
4.	The space in the classroom allows adequate implementation of the activities assigned by the teacher.				
5.	The teacher provides adequate feedback.				
6.	There exist interaction between students.				
7.	There exists interaction between the teacher and the students.				
8.	The teacher remembers the names of the students.				

B. Strategies and resources that support teaching English in classes with fewer students.

N°	In classes with fewer students:	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
9.	We do activities that allow us to practice listening skills.				
10.	We do activities that allow us to practice speaking skills.				
11.	We do activities that allow us to practice reading skills.				
12.	We do activities that allow us to practice writing skills.				
13.	Group activities are utilized.				
14.	Individual activities are utilized.				
15.	Technological resources are utilized.				
16.	Teaching materials are utilized.				

D. Opinions about how you feel learning English in a class where there are fewer students.

N°	In classes with fewer students I feel:	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
17.	Relaxed when speaking in front of my peers.				
18.	Taken into account because I have more opportunities to participate in class.				
19.	Motivated to participate because there are fewer peers in the class.				
20.	Comfortable because I can compete in a non-threatening way with other students.				

E. Limitations on learning English in classes with fewer students.

	In classes with fewer students:	I totally agree	I agree	I agree somewhat	I disagree
21.	There is anxiety among the students because the teacher has more control.				
22.	It is difficult to practice speaking and listening skills.				

INSTRUMENTOS



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja
MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA TITULACIÓN DE INGLES

Dear Professor:

The objective of this questionnaire is to know your opinion about teaching English in classes with 20 students or less.

The information you provide below will only be used for academic and research purposes.

Information:

Name of institution:			
Type of institution:	Public () Private ()		
	School ()	College ()	Institute ()
City:			

Instructions: Mark with an X according to your discretion.

Strategy: After reading each item, please answer according to the following rating scale.

Very Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Somewhat satisfactory
Unsatisfactory

A. Benefits of teaching and learning English in classes with fewer students.

	In classes with fewer students:	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1.	It is easy to design activities that allow students to put into practice what they have learned.				

2.	The students are attentive and participate in the activities implemented in class.				
3.	The space in the classroom allows proper development of the activities designed by you.				
4.	You are able to provide adequate feedback.				
5.	Activities are done that permit greater interaction between students.				
6.	There is greater interaction between the teacher and students.				
7.	It is easy to remember the names of the students.				

B. Strategies and resources that support teaching English in classes with fewer students.

N°	Classes with fewer students facilitate:	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
8.	Designing and implementing activities that permit students to practice listening skills.				
9.	Designing and implementing activities that permit students to practice speaking skills.				
10.	Designing and implementing activities that permit students to practice reading skills.				
11.	Designing and implementing activities that permit students to practice writing skills.				
12.	Designing and implementing group activities.				
13.	Designing and implementing individual activities.				
14.	Utilizing technological resources.				
15.	Utilizing didactic materials.				

C. Opinions about how your students feel learning English in a class where there are fewer students.

N°	In classes with fewer students, the students feel:	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
16.	Relaxed when speaking in front of their peers.				
17.	Taken into account because they have more opportunities to participate in class.				
18.	Motivated to participate because there are fewer peers in class.				
19.	Comfortable because they can compete in a nonthreatening way with other students.				

D. Limitations on teaching English in classes with fewer students.

	In classes with fewer students:	I totally agree	I agree	I agree Somewhat	I disagree
20.	There exists anxiety among students due to the professor having more control.				
21.	It is difficult to practice speaking and listening skills.				



**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE
LOJA**

La Universidad Católica de Loja
**MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A
DISTANCIA TITULACIÓN DE
INGLÉS
HOJA DE OBSERVACIÓN**

INSTITUCIÓN EDUCATIVA:	
FECHA:	
CURSO/NIVEL:	

1. Se realizan actividades que permiten poner en práctica lo aprendido.

SI () NO ()

Notas:

2.

3. Todos los estudiantes están atentos y participan en las actividades desarrolladas en clase.

SI () NO ()

Notas:

4. El espacio de la clase permite desarrollar adecuadamente las actividades asignadas por el profesor.

SI () NO ()

Notas:

5. El profesor brinda una retroalimentación adecuada debido al poco número de estudiantes en la clase.

SI () NO ()

Notas:

6. Existe interacción entre los estudiantes.

SI () NO ()

Notas:

7. Existe interacción entre el profesor y los estudiantes.

SI () NO ()

Notas:

8. El profesor recuerda el nombre de los estudiantes.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

9. Se realizan actividades que permiten practicar la habilidad de **escucha**.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

10. Se realizan actividades que permiten practicar la habilidad de **habla**.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

11. Se realizan actividades que permiten practicar la habilidad de **lectura**.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

12. Se realizan actividades que permiten practicar la habilidad de **escritura**.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

13. Se utilizan actividades **grupales**.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

14. Se utilizan actividades **individuales**.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

15. Se utilizan recursos tecnológicos.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

16. Se utilizan materiales didácticos.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

17. Los estudiantes se muestran relajados al momento de hablar frente a sus compañeros.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

18. Los estudiantes tienen mayor oportunidad de expresarse.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

19. Los estudiantes se muestran interesados en participar en las actividades realizadas en clase.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

20. Los estudiantes pueden competir sanamente con sus compañeros.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

21. Los estudiantes se muestran relajados porque no hay mucho ruido en el salón de clase.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

22. Los estudiantes se muestran tensos debido a que existe mayor control por parte del profesor.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:

23. Se dificulta realizar habilidades de habla y escucha.

SI () *NO* ()

Notas:



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
 La Universidad Católica de Loja
MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA TITULACIÓN DE INGLÉS

Estimado estudiante:

Este cuestionario tiene como objetivo conocer su opinión en cuanto a la enseñanza del Inglés en clases con grupos de 20 estudiantes o menos.

La información que usted brindará a continuación se utilizará únicamente con fines académicos e investigativos.

Datos Informativos:

Nombre de la institución:			
Tipo de institución:	Pública () Privada ()		
	Escuela ()	Colegio ()	Instituto ()
Ciudad:			

Instrucción: Marque con una X según su criterio.

Estrategia: Luego de leer cada ítem, le rogamos contestar de acuerdo a la siguiente escala de referencia.

Muy Satisfactorio
Satisfactorio
Poco satisfactorio
Nada satisfactorio

A. Beneficios de enseñar y aprender Inglés en clases con pocos estudiantes.

	En clases con pocos estudiantes:	Muy Satisfactorio	Satisfactorio	Poco satisfactorio	Nada satisfactorio
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1.	Las actividades que se realizan permiten practicar lo aprendido.				
2.	Los estudiantes están atentos y participan en las actividades desarrolladas en clase.				
3.	Los estudiantes se concentran mejor porque no hay mucho ruido en el salón de clase.				
4.	El espacio de la clase permite desarrollar adecuadamente las actividades asignadas por el profesor.				
5.	El profesor brinda una retroalimentación adecuada				
6.	Existe interacción entre los estudiantes.				
7.	Existe interacción entre el profesor y los estudiantes.				
8.	El profesor recuerda el nombre de los estudiantes.				

B. Estrategias y recursos que favorecen la enseñanza del inglés en clases con pocos estudiantes.

N°	En clases con pocos estudiantes:	Muy satisfactorio	Satisfactorio	Poco satisfactorio	Nada satisfactorio
9.	Se realizan actividades que permiten practicar las habilidades de escucha .				
10.	Se realizan actividades que permiten practicar las habilidades habla .				
11.	Se realizan actividades que permiten practicar las habilidades de lectura .				
12.	Se realizan actividades que permiten practicar las habilidades de escritura .				
13.	Se utilizan actividades grupales .				
14.	Se utilizan actividades individuales .				
15.	Se utilizan recursos tecnológicos.				
16.	Se utilizan materiales didácticos.				

C. Opinión acerca de cómo se siente al aprender Inglés en una clase donde hay pocos estudiantes.

N°	En clases con pocos estudiantes me siento:	Muy satisfactorio	Satisfactorio	Poco satisfactorio	Nada satisfactorio
17.	relajado al momento de hablar frente a mis compañeros.				
18.	tomado en cuenta porque tengo mayor oportunidad de participar en la clase.				
19.	motivado a participar porque somos pocos compañeros en la clase.				
20.	a gusto porque puedo competir sanamente con otros estudiantes.				

D. Limitaciones al aprender Inglés en clases con pocos estudiantes.

	En clases con pocos estudiantes:	Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Casi de acuerdo	En desacuerdo
21.	Existe ansiedad entre los estudiantes debido a que hay mayor control por parte del profesor.				
22.	Se dificulta practicar las habilidades de habla y escucha.				

INSTRUMENTOS



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A

DISTANCIA TITULACIÓN

DE INGLES

Estimado docente:

Este cuestionario tiene como objetivo conocer su opinión en cuanto a la enseñanza del Inglés en clases con grupos de 20 estudiantes o menos.

La información que usted brindará a continuación se utilizará únicamente con fines académicos e investigativos.

Datos Informativos:

Nombre de la institución:			
Tipo de institución:	Pública () Privada ()		
	Escuela ()	Colegio ()	Instituto ()
Ciudad:			

Instrucción: Marque con una X según su criterio.

Estrategia: Luego de leer cada ítem, le rogamos contestar de acuerdo a la siguiente escala de referencia.

Muy Satisfactorio
Satisfactorio
Poco satisfactorio
Nada satisfactorio

A. Beneficios de enseñar y aprender Inglés en clases con pocos estudiantes.

	En clases con pocos estudiantes:	Muy satisfactorio	Satisfactorio	Poco satisfactorio	Nada satisfactorio
1.	Se facilita diseñar actividades que permitan al estudiante poner en práctica lo aprendido.				

2.	Los estudiantes están atentos y participan en las actividades desarrolladas en clase.				
3.	El espacio de la clase permite que las actividades diseñadas por usted se desarrollen adecuadamente.				
4.	Se puede brindar una retroalimentación adecuada.				
5.	Se realizan actividades que permitan mayor interacción entre los estudiantes.				
6.	Existe mayor interacción entre el profesor y los estudiantes.				
7.	Es fácil para usted recordar el nombre de los estudiantes.				

B. Estrategias y recursos que favorecen la enseñanza del inglés en clases con pocos estudiantes

N°	En clases con pocos estudiantes se facilita:	Muy satisfactorio	Satisfactorio	Poco satisfactorio	Nada satisfactorio
8.	Diseñar y aplicar actividades que permiten practicar las habilidades de escucha .				
9.	Diseñar y aplicar actividades que permiten practicar las habilidades habla .				
10.	Diseñar y aplicar actividades que permiten practicar las habilidades de lectura .				
11.	Diseñar y aplicar actividades que permiten practicar las habilidades de escritura .				
12.	Diseñar y aplicar actividades grupales .				
13.	Diseñar y aplicar actividades individuales .				
14.	Utilizar recursos tecnológicos.				
15.	Utilizar materiales didácticos.				

C. Opinión acerca de cómo se sienten sus estudiantes al aprender Inglés en una clase donde hay pocos estudiantes.

N°	En clases con pocos estudiantes los estudiantes se sienten:	Muy satisfactorio	Satisfactorio	Poco satisfactorio	Nada satisfactorio
16.	Relajados al momento de hablar frente a sus compañeros.				
17.	Tomados en cuenta porque tienen mayor oportunidad de participar en la clase.				
18.	Motivados a participar porque son pocos compañeros en la clase.				
19.	A gusto porque pueden competir sanamente con otros estudiantes.				

D. Limitaciones al enseñar Inglés en clases con pocos estudiantes.

	En clases con pocos estudiantes:	Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Casi de acuerdo	En desacuerdo
20.	Existe ansiedad entre los estudiantes debido a que hay mayor control por parte del profesor				
21.	Se dificulta practicar las habilidades de habla y escucha.				

