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Systematization of Pedagogical Experiences

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DEDICATION

This “Systematization of Pedagogical Experiences” is dedicated to my husband and daughter who have been supporting and encouraging me since I started this challenging career. This work is also dedicated to my mother who is unconditionally there for me and taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve.

Thanks God for giving me strength and wisdom to accomplish my goals in life.

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Resumen

El presente trabajo de Sistematización de Experiencias Pedagógicas comienza con la interiorización del ciclo de aprendizaje llevado a cabo por diferentes profesoras en los diferentes niveles. Se describe el proceso de clase y algunas notas se han hecho respecto a las dificultades encontradas. El desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa a través de estrategias de aprendizaje cooperativo fue el enfoque de análisis que llevó a una investigación bibliográfica, así como a encontrar elementos que justifiquen la existencia de una relación entre los resultados obtenidos al final de cada lección. Además, se plantean propuestas sobre la base de mi propia experiencia que facultaría resolver los problemas encontrados y volver a utilizar estas lecciones aprendidas a futuro.

La enseñanza del inglés ha evolucionado de un enfoque aislado de la gramática hacia uno comunicativo donde los estudiantes desarrollan su potencial a través de actividades colaborativas que propicien la interacción oral mientras aprenden de sus pares. Así, los docentes tienen que pasar de los métodos tradicionales centrados en el profesor hacia técnicas interactivas de enseñanza que les permita sumergirse en situaciones de la vida real que incrementen su interés, participación y motivación en pos de un aprendizaje efectivo.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Aprendizaje Cooperativo, Competencia Comunicativa, Filosofía centrada en el docente, Filosofía centrada en el estudiante, Ciclo de Aprendizaje.

Abstract

This Systematization of Pedagogical Experiences begins with internalizing how the learning process is carried out by different teachers at different levels. A complete record of some classes is being described and some notes have been made on difficulties found within the teaching-learning process. The development of Communicative Competence through Cooperative Learning strategies was the focus of analysis that led to literature research as well as to find elements that may justify the existence of a relationship between the obtained results at the end of each lesson. Besides, proposals based on my own experience that would make it possible to solve the problems found and re-use these lessons within further teaching experiences are addressed.

English teaching has evolved from an isolated grammar focus to a communicative approach where students develop potential through cooperative tasks that enhance oral interaction while learning from peers at an understandable input. English teachers need to shift from traditional teacher-centered methods toward interactive teaching techniques that let students become immersed in real life situations that might enhance their interest, participation and motivation by approaching an effective learning.

KEY WORDS: Cooperative Learning, Communicative Competence, Teacher-Centered Philosophy, Student-Centered Philosophy, Learning Cycle

Introduction

The systematization of pedagogical experiences is a useful tool for pre-service teachers since having read and internalized numerous theories, philosophies and methodological strategies during the previous semesters, as students we have the opportunity to make classroom observations from colleagues or analyze our own behavior in terms of students academic training to discover successes, failures, contribute to finding ways to overcome obstacles and thus, improve our own teaching practice.

Systematization also contributes to theoretical reflection with knowledge that has emerged from the experiences in linking theory and practice as it promotes the development of qualitative proposals from the everyday teaching experience to re-direct, evaluate and submit new efforts towards a goal.

Personally, I chose this kind of undergraduate option in order to get my degree because teachers have the opportunity to reflect and analyze teaching practice and not only develop a topic based on theory that has been read during my whole training process but integrating theory and experience. Systematization is a process that should frequently take place on a regular basis as a personal feedback as well as in all institutional levels each school year.

The present work aims to analyze the development of communicative competence in students learning English because as far as it becomes significant in their lives and thereby strengthened through collaborative learning activities in the classroom, the more engagement a teacher may get from students during the teaching-learning process the better results by the end of the school year. In order to achieve this objective, teachers should consider the diversity in their classrooms such as: students' background, motivation, and cognitive aptitude; thus provide activities and resources that must include each and every student.

An extensive reading process was handled in order to include an understandable explanation and collection of theories, methodologies and techniques from past to present within the literature review so as to direct this systematization of pedagogical experiences focus to the analysis and reflection of communicative processes.

To fulfill this systematization of pedagogical experiences, classroom observations in elementary and high school took place in a chosen school facility during two weeks. This girls' school contributes to the education of catholic human beings committed to society. In addition to the morning schedule, there is also an evening high school taking place in the same facilities which helps students from low-income families. Morning students differ from evening students in socioeconomic status as they do not need to work to ensure the well-being of their families. Elementary and high school classrooms have no more than twenty students; this number of students helps the teachers to give individual attention to each of their learners' strengths and weaknesses within the learning process.

All the observed classes were recorded but only six of them were chosen in order to analyze how the communicative competence was enhanced by each teacher within the class period. Moreover, a special focus in the achievement of classroom objectives, students input, as well as the atmosphere generated by students and teachers led this systematization work to some valid conclusions, and recommendations that might contribute to a better teaching practice within the accomplishment of communicative competence which could be re-used in later teaching practices.

CHAPTER I. LITERATURE REVIEW

What is teaching?

Teaching is the expansion of the inner abilities of an individual to improve and develop knowledge. According to Ravi (2011) who cites the words of John Dewey, "Education is the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfill his possibilities" (p. 170).

With this assumption, schools provide education according to the society's needs and seek help from the society for its growth; indeed, teaching is a social practice as there is interaction among a knowledgeable individual and a follower within a continuous process where there is transfer of knowledge. Parida (2010) remarks Tagore, India's first Nobel laureate who believed that only men can teach other men; in a broad sense, teaching entails everything that can be learnt from a tutor. As this is a cyclic process, once knowledge is fulfilled, then both the follower and teacher know more knowledge.

In a progressively globalized world where people communicate among and between cultures, teaching a global language challenges new generation teachers each day. In order to accomplish higher standards, an early immersion to language learning will boost grammar awareness, citizenship and intercultural tolerance in students. (Llurda, 2004, p. 42-47)

English has emerged as a global language as it is the language of medicine, science and technology; besides, there is evidence that new generations in many countries are growing up bilingual. Pertaining this topic, Rickheit and Strohner (2008) review the literature of Bartsch and Weinschenc's where they advise that teaching English gains some major advantages: new generations acquire a second language through early exposure, English is now the world's most widely spoken second language, as more people now speak English as a second language than as their mother tongue; offers a wide open door onto a brand-new world, gives students the necessary tools to succeed and accomplish goals in life.

Referring to this topic, Greenwood (2009) refers in chapter three to Diaz and Flores study where it is mentioned that the growth of English has accelerated within the years as well as the contexts in which we apply it (p. 33). Nowadays, people are becoming increasingly more exposed to English films, advertisements, songs, computer and phone software, brands and a

great number of multinational companies are recruiting employees with some degree of English knowledge. Thus, this phenomenon is leading young generations to get involved in North American culture since they are born (Williams, 2001). As discussed earlier, Keim (2001) asserts that teaching any language or subject needs to ensure that students master specific skills and that their education needs have been met.

What is learning?

It is said that learning is a permanent change in behavior produced by experience. Hudley and Gottfried (2008) refer to learning as a permanent change in behavioral tendency as a result of reinforced practice trials; in other words, to assume something is learned, the change must be proved to be permanent. However, temporary changes may be attributed to stimulus or adaptation process but not to learning; the learning process involves the use of memory and may increase the understanding of a specific topic or area.

According to the dictionary, the word learning means change in response or behavior involving some degree of performance caused by experience. Within the learning process an individual brings in new information and according to it modifies behavior through experience as there is interaction between the learner and the situation. An observation study conducted by Guthrie (2003) stated that “learning involved the development of an organized body of knowledge or expectations about a given situation” (p. 1461) ; he proved this statement by referring to Tolman’s experiment with rats whose learning objective was to run through a maze and came to the conclusion that learning comprises an understanding about events and further consequences.

Learning studies mostly concentrate on classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational learning. Therefore, classical conditioning also known as Pavlovian conditioning concludes that when responses are elicited, they are automatic and involuntary. A literature review made by Henton and Iversen (2012) refers to Skinner who based his learning studies on Thorndike who thought that the best way to understand behavior is to look at the causes of an action and its consequences; hence, this approach was called operant conditioning. On the other hand, Ikiugu and Ciaravino (2007) in chapter 3 refer to the observational learning approach acknowledged by Bandura who was able to demonstrate that the application of consequences

was not necessary for a learning process to take place, however it could occur through observing someone else's activity (pp. 62-64). Current research on language learning shows that learning is happening all the time, the findings commented by Rogers (2007) mention that learning is concrete, immediate and confined to a specific activity while the learner is conscious and aware of learning.

Relating back to this topic, Piaget's theory of Constructivist learning asserted by Bruner (2006) and Lantolf (2013) who cites Vygotsky's studies, both suggest that learning is a dynamic activity since it occurs in the context of social interaction with other learners while knowledge is constructed. Thus, learning occurs when pushing the learner into unknown and uncomfortable situations that require the student to rely on other learners.

Nowadays, most experts conclude that learning is an approach through which a student achieves higher level of competence, fluency and mastery in the ability to assume or execute activities that were previously difficult or impossible to do (Opitz, Lausen and Rüdiger, 1993).

Students come from a variety of backgrounds and have a wide range of interests, choices, learning styles and needs. Traditional teaching used and in some cases still use mainly logical and linguistic teaching methods which include strictly reliance on textbooks, memorization, repetition, standard tests. For instance, students are labeled as intelligent or not intelligent individuals as a result of assessment scores or group averages (Rist, 2002).

It has been proved that using learning styles (Fleming and Stevens, 2015) as well as multiple intelligences (Gardner, 2015) approaches for learning may improve the speed and quality of learning. Consequently, everyone processes and learns new information in different ways; to exemplify visual learners learn better by watching pieces of writing, charts, graphs, pictures and are able to memorize and recall information as they have a good perception of aesthetics.; in contrast, auditory learners retain information over hearing and speaking while kinesthetic prefer demonstrating hands on how to do something rather than writing or telling how (Halonen and Santrock, 2012, pp.153-160). Many other models for learning styles exist, even though, most psychologists agree that almost no one may be categorized into only one learning style but a mixture of them.

Language learning aptitude is a type of learning skill that changes between individuals. Learners with high language learning aptitude tend to be faster second language learners; as a result, language learning aptitude is a built-in characteristic. English language learning can improve, for example, the more English speaking friends a learner has, the more books read in English and the more practice and use of English a student makes.

Regarding to this topic, Prosser and Trigwell (1999) emphasize teaching is about developing situations that make learning possible; the whole learning process is holistic as it is inclusive in terms of including a wide range of students and a variety of learning approaches to meet their diverse learning needs due to the fact that learning is a human right: a right that each individual possesses. Over the years, this perspective on teaching has led research onto special education as well; making education available to students who have physical, cognitive, language, learning, sensory, and/or emotional abilities that differ from those of the average students.

After lots of research, special education is able to ensure an opportunity to learn at various forms of disabilities, including autism, intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbance, communication disabilities, deafness, blindness, brain injury, and other health disabilities.

Modern methodologies, strategies, techniques, materials (current trends)

The Communicative Language Teaching Method is a current and effective language teaching approach as it promotes meaningful interaction through the use of language so as to develop communicative competence in students according to Lowe's past studies (Sternberg, 2005, pp. 9-11). Long time ago, language learning was under the control of the teacher who introduced grammar rules, word formation, vocabulary and tried to develop language skills within a process of controlled and mechanical habit formation; thus, the use of dialogues, drills, correct language structure production with no mistake opportunities were part of the traditional learning methods available at the time.

With these assumptions, Boumová (2008) cites White's literature where he mentions that there was no oral or pronunciation work because the teaching focus was in written language and memorization; there was no focus in any ability to use the language. This research also

concluded that, language learning was not considered a skill but a number of rules, vocabulary and procedures learned in isolation; despite the fact that students could identify rules and structures, they could not produce language in an everyday spoken language situation.

Actually, language learning has evolved into a different approach; besides, it is seen as a whole process where the students have the opportunity to interact, create meaningful language through the development of effective communication. In other words, the main goal in this process is fluency in defiance of vocabulary or grammar constraints because learners will learn and try new ways of sharing ideas and avoid communication breakdowns as it is a natural process on the assumption that it is developed by incorporating the right teaching techniques such as role-plays, jigsaws, roundtables and pair work where the teacher monitors and supports the learners and whose involvement is the least possible (Scrivener, 2011)

Students being immersed in simulated or real situations with partners, who share the same knowledge level lead to trial and error language learning in a gradual process at different rates, develop motivation and create an effective classroom climate where the main goal is the use of new language with accuracy and fluency (Hadfield, 2013). Furthermore, when applying the Communicative Language Teaching Method in the classroom, students are really engaged interacting by taking part in that interpersonal exchange where they can offer input and receive feedback. That is, students discover new structures, words, phrases by listening, analyzing and reflecting on their use within its use. The finding commented by Canale and Swain in Pawlak, and Waniek-Klimczak (2014) said that the development of communicative competence involves grammatical, socio-linguistic, discourse and strategic competence (pp.190-195).

Teaching a second language the way the student learned the mother tongue, within natural practice and in an improvised setting will provide a context so that language production may be meaningful and genuine since motivation includes confidence building where learners are willing to contribute. On the other hand, Willis (2012) refers to Coelho theory in which he states that Cooperative Learning is an efficient strategy since it provides a culturally appropriate learning environment that can increase academic achievement improve peer relationships and support second language acquisition. Thus far, the Communicative Language Teaching Method has not only influenced the English language acquisition but other languages as well; nowadays

most textbooks mention this approach as part of their chosen methodology and include activities to accomplish this method's goal: communicative competence at different learning levels.

Cooperative learning is a highly effective instructional strategy that leads to a maximum of English language learning in a school setting. During cooperative tasks, students learn that their input is valued as well as being able to ask for help. By understanding more this strategy, Hopkins (2013) refers to Sharon and Shachar studies who found that students develop positive attitudes and behaviors toward partners of different ethnic backgrounds. In addition, Lazarowitz , Kagan, Sharan, Webb and Slavin, (2013) mentioned noticeable improvements in students' self-esteem and self-concept (pp. 185-187). Similarly, Sutherland (2010) points out Johnson and Kagen studies referred to academic gains, positive relationships among students, and improved social and affective development.

Thus, cooperative learning is an effective instructional approach for helping students integrate the use of L2 with a subject topic learning, to develop social skills as well as responsibility for partner's learning, to develop problem-solving skills and become proficient communicators when appropriate conditions are available (Wiley & Sons, 2005).

In the ESL class, teachers need to use materials which are innovative, creative and learning-centered; likewise, the incorporation of audio, video and text materials is helpful. The use of innovative materials, however, is not simply its inclusion in the classroom but may contribute stimulating activities to focus learners' attention on a task; moreover, these materials must be interesting. Subsequently, Barkley (2014) states that the advantages of presenting language input within multiple modalities are clear if the materials are presented in an integrated way because students not accomplish some activities separately, but they can associate different components to achieve the learning goal. In contrast, teachers make essential decisions while trying to choose material that will suit students best in a specific teaching situation. For clarity purposes, in the field of English language teaching any innovation has to be practical; it has to meet the teachers' needs, but more importantly innovation depends on people and not things. They must help develop knowledge and skills in an inclusive environment (Barkley, Cross & Major, 2005).

Relating back to this topic, Wachs and Sheehan (2013) accept Lowenfeld explanation of the effects of blindness on children's cognitive development by assuring that teaching must aim at giving the blind learners knowledge of the realities around them, confidence to cope with

these realities and the feeling that they are recognized and accepted as people in their own right. Therefore, an eager step to introduce innovative and meaningful learning materials to disabled and special needs students is a must in government agendas. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2008) views inclusion as a dynamic approach of responding positively to students' diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning.

Communicative competence

The way a learner develops language proficiency through interaction in everyday situations is known as communicative competence. Thus, it is important to present authentic opportunities for language learning rather than only grammatical patterns in isolation; the learners need to develop the ability to understand and handle linguistic variation in different settings. With these assumptions, Rickheit and Stohner (2008) mention Hymes who rejected Chomsky's theory where he distinguished linguistic competence from linguistic performance introduced a broader and more elaborated concept of communicative competence; he broadened communicative competence within four groups: linguistic competence, explicit and implicit use of language rules as well as sociolinguistic knowledge (p.17). In a later study, Peterwagner (2005) references Canale and Swain who worked with Hymes four types of communicative competence: what is formally possible, what is feasible, what is social meaning and what actually occurs; they classified communicative competence within four groups: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence (pp. 12-16).

Grammatical competence consists of grammatical knowledge: vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar rules, word and sentence formation; besides, sociolinguistic competence relates to the ability to produce and understand correct utterances within a situation as well as the importance of handling linguistic variations in different settings while discourse competence refers to the learner's ability to use discourse styles according to Sato (Yule, 2013). Finally, strategic competence comprises the ability of a learner to become understood if there are linguistic constraints to solve communication problems as they arise.

The findings commented by McGroarty in Alcon and Safont (2007), states that communicative competence can have different meanings depending on the students and learning goals in a given context; in other words, when people use language, they need to assure it fits particularly the context; for instance, to be appropriate, learners should interpret listener's feedback, use the correct intonation, and appropriate utterances (p.55).

Teacher's roles

Conroy (2003) a well-known writer said "The great teachers fill you up with hope and shower you with a thousand reasons to embrace all aspects of life (p.63)." Therefore, a teacher is a person who inspires and commits learners to be the best they can, to accomplish not only academic but personal fulfillment goals. In contrast, teaching is not as easy as most people think it is, like many other occupations and professions, teachers must be deeply involved in teaching, they are not working with papers, budgets, business but with people who need to be lead, disciplined, counseled and respected.

Blase (2006) refers to Simon and Schuster who mention that a good teacher influences and creates a warm and confident learning environment. Thus far, the teacher's role is not only to share knowledge but being a coach, mentor, monitor administrator, psychologist, assessor, resource provider, supporter and role model. In fact, a teacher as a coach is someone who makes extensive use of cooperative learning, motivates, encourages and teach learners how to do and practice, how to manage and is always supporting students. A mentor offers helpful advice and inspires to reach greatness while the teacher's role as a monitor is linked to observation, empathetic listening and giving feedback on a task. Nonetheless, the teacher as an administrator understands curriculum standards; makes learning fun, help students improve time constraints and lead to student's academic success. On the other hand, a teacher as a psychologist speaks less and listens more; besides, an assessor encourages positive behavior and identifies students' skills so as to let them improve and develop them within work. In addition to the previous roles, a teacher who always displays positive attitudes toward colleagues and students provides effective feedback to others is a supporter and role model ("What makes a great teacher," n.d.).

By understanding more, inspiring students is a way teacher can assure they can accomplish academic goals, pursue great things in life and definitely have the ability to change the lives of students. Pertaining this topic, Wong (2013), expert on teacher effectiveness says that a well managed classroom has students who know what is expected from them and are work-oriented but in a positive classroom environment. Thus, a teacher needs to know how to achieve these roles so as to promote his or her as a successful teacher.

Motivation and its roles in language teaching

Wilson (2013) points out Kazantzakis, a Greek writer who once said that in order to succeed, we must first believe that we can (p.117). Moreover, motivation is commonly defined as an internal and external factor that stimulates desire and energy in individuals to keep interested and committed to a task, as people have a strong need for achievement than they do for failure. With this assumption, Shaffer (2009) refers to Atkinson who asserted that need for achievement require some degree of competence (p.214), on the other hand, McGuire (2009) highlights Maslow's proposal of a five-level hierarchy of needs. Thus, the order within the needs reflect which needs are seen as most important for individuals. Indeed, physiological needs are at the bottom of the hierarchy, ascending this hierarchy safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and self-actualization needs. The lower a need is located the more an individual will do to reach this need.

To enhance motivation, ability is the basis to achieve this goal. In order to increase self-esteem, competing may be seen as proper since society does not promote disadvantaged. According to Ames (1984), some individuals focus on effort as a basis for motivation that is why some students work alone on their own efforts as they ignore success or failure around. Cooperative learning helps learners to focus on effort and cooperation as well, they are fully motivated for the whole process and final result. In a later study, Glasser (1998) points out that student motivation and performance tend to increase for such activities which require team work. Alternatively, Huitt and Hummel state that there are various kinds of motivation: behavioral where classical conditioning affirms that biological responses to a stimulus empower and address positive behavior (Fox, 2015); cognitive motivation which asserts that if a learner does not believe in his or her strengths, then the probability of success will decrease as well as

motivation onto the task; intrinsic motivation “occurs when individuals act without any external rewards and just enjoy an activity or see it as an opportunity to explore, learn, and actualize potentials.”(Coon & Mitterer, 2010, p.378) and finally, extrinsic motivation which appears from an external reward and is opposed to intrinsic motivation. For clarity purposes, motivation determines the specific goals toward which students will do best as asserted by Maehr & Meyer (Virnoche, 2008); it determines how eager, energetic or indifferent they will accomplish a task and how well a work may be completed due to their sense of commitment arisen from motivation.

Teaching experience (gift or acquired skill)

Banks (2010) remarks Mandela’s old saying: “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” As a result, teachers make a big difference as they influence on forming minds; for instance, students spend more than eight hours a day at schools so this occupation plays a bigger role in developing students’ potential and leading them into achieving personal and academic goals. Moreover, teaching is one of the most important roles in life, and apart from being a job it is for sure a calling. As discussed earlier, there is no better resource for a school than teachers who are empowered and equipped to solve problems using their own talent and experience (Monteiro, 2014). The MacMillan Dictionary of English (n.d); however, defines vocation as a kind of work that someone feel suits to doing and to which it shall be given all the time and energy or the feeling of suitability itself. Therefore, the same dictionary refers to profession as an occupation where intellectual skills and techniques are needed to fulfill standards to which all individuals are accountable.

For clarity purposes, teaching is mostly a profession as it can only be mastered in a methodological way; teachers are matter of quality in the whole education process. Consequently, this profession must be handled with authentic commitment, responsibility, training and joy. In conclusion, teaching is a human activity by and for humans whose quality depends upon the fulfillment of moral virtues and ethics. Thus, a teacher can easily become an educational leader; can create positive change in the classroom and in the lives of students and can shape the environment, or even the future of the country. On the other hand, a teacher can also ruin the lives of individuals (Doyran, n.d.).

Links between experience and teaching

The conclusions withdrawn by Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor (2007) found that teacher experience has a powerful and meaningful effect on learners' achievement. Therefore, trainee teachers may need a whole school year to bring off the right performance. They need to get to know students, their learning styles, attitudes and behavior within the teaching – learning process. On the other hand, an experienced teacher will have an immediate and assertive control on students' performance since the very beginning. A trainee and experienced teacher may not necessarily differ in high or low level test scores as there are good and bad students everywhere; but an experienced teacher was once a trainee and has learnt that besides teaching a topic or subject has to go beyond knowledge to become really concerned in forming minds, in forming human beings.

There is a dominating premise that says that experience develops effectiveness; then, some recent studies assert that trainee teachers are less effective than experienced ones (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor 2007), but the same study affirms that teachers show productivity increase during the first few years on the job, after which their performance tends to level off. There is some research which shows that elementary school teaching contributes with a firm base for the development of abstract thinking later in life (Reid and Scott, 2013). That is, good teachers will have students who reply well to teaching as they have the ability to use and practice what they are learning as well as enjoy each lesson because they will find it meaningful.

CHAPTER II. METHOD

Setting and Participants

The classroom observations took place in a bilingual well-known school in the city of Quito, Ecuador whose mission is to educate children and teenagers. There is an approximate number of eight hundred forty students who attend the morning school, while the number of students who attend the evening school is once hundred twenty. There are about fifty five teachers in charge of the different subjects in the morning school and ten teachers in the evening school.

This girls' school contributes effectively to the education of catholic human beings committed to society. In addition to the morning schedule, there is also an evening high school taking place in the same facilities and which is planned to help students from low-income families. Morning students differ from evening students in the way parents with higher income can enrich life experiences of their children through trips, after-school activities, and exposure to English language at home; among others.

On the other hand, most of the evening students work in the morning as kitchen assistants or in household chores; as their parents' incomes are lower they are not able to travel, use spare time in different activities and can neither do their homework due to lack of time. There are no more than twenty students in each morning and evening classroom and all of them are having the opportunity to develop their strengths, realizing their potential and developing a lifelong love of learning and respecting their fellows as they do with themselves.

This report collects a description of the observed classes given by three different teachers in a morning elementary school, while the last three observations belong to the evening high school; both of them for a period of two weeks.

Procedures

In order to carry out the observation of classes, I chose an institution that offered morning and evening classes' periods as well as three different teachers who teach English in the basic, intermediate and advanced levels of the institution. The observations done at both school periods were interesting because, even though the students used the same facilities;

their socioeconomic level was not the same, they differed in terms of socioeconomic class and studies level was not the same as well.

Students from the morning school belonged to families with high and medium socioeconomic level; while families from the evening school came from low middle and lower socioeconomic level as well as parents' education level. Students from the morning school had the opportunity to take after school English classes in order to strengthen their language knowledge or travel during abroad during vacation; they do also have time in the afternoon to do homework and study for tests and exams.

On the other hand, an eighty percent of students from the evening school work during the morning and afternoon; they had to come to school without having eaten lunch properly: As the classes period end at eight o' clock at night, they require approximately a one-hour journey to their homes, this situation makes almost impossible for them to do homework o take some time to review and study contents properly. Moreover, the morning school has a three English class hour period each day, while the evening school had only one English class hour each day. The morning school is bilingual, while the evening one offers English language as a supplementary subject.

The English levels at which the observations were made belonged to the fourth and eighth year during the morning and evening hours respectively which were considered interesting as the observer could focus on the English knowledge level of the students and how the teaching-learning process was handled in basic levels. The sixth and tenth years corresponded to the intermediate level in which students are able to produce both oral and written language more fluently. Finally, the advanced levels as seventh year and sixth course were also observed as both respectively culminate primary school and the high school section.

CHAPTER III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis, Reflection and Application of Experiences

Class 1 – Sixth graders.

This lesson took place during the second and third English class period. A total of 19 out of 20 students attended the lesson. This lesson's objective was to talk about an invention by using target vocabulary and given expressions. The book they used was Backpack No. 6 from Pearson ELT. The teacher started class with a warm-up activity, she brought some riddles related to inventions so as to get her students focused on the topic; the students really enjoyed this activity because they were free to draw a picture or to write the word they thought was the right answer. After that, the teacher wrote on the board: "Put on your thinking cap" which was the title of unit number seven and let her students guess and brainstorm lots of ideas relating to the phrase. The teacher gave out the unit vocabulary sheet and asked students to draw something related to the word, they did this activity in groups of three. While I was monitoring the activity, I could notice that students were speaking English all the time, they divided tasks among themselves; in most groups: two out of three students handled an English – Spanish dictionary while the other student was writing and drawing; this activity lasted fifteen minutes. After that, the teacher encouraged students to write in their own words the meaning of those fifteen words, most of them were inventions. They did it as a whole class activity where all of them were able to participate. Finally, the teacher presented some slides related to these words so students could have a complete idea. The slides had information for visual learners through written words, meanings, as well as information for aural ones because there were some Internet links where students could listen to four facts about a list of inventions. The activity took about twenty minutes. To complete the activity, the teacher asked students to work individually on their notebooks by cutting and gluing the inventions next to their names. Before the class was over, the teacher grouped students to practice the technique Think, Pair, Share in which they were asked the question: "What did I like best from the class?" they were encouraged to think quietly for two minutes; after that, they had to pair the student next to them and share their ideas for other two minutes. Then, students raised their hands to tell what their partner shared with them and if they agreed or not. The class was over and the homework task was to finish and review the last activity in the students' notebooks for an oral quiz the next day.

The teaching methodology used within this lesson was the Engage, Study and Activate - ESA approach as students were engaged; they studied some unit target vocabulary and

activated previous and new knowledge throughout some activities. Students were able to speak freely as they used the Think, Pair, Share strategy that let them think individually and then, shared ideas with classmates to help build oral communication skills. Students enjoyed these activities as they were having fun and felt confident when participating because the teacher did not focus on grammar structures or mistakes, but on how much language they were producing while working individually and in groups.

Class 2 – Seventh graders.

This lesson took place during the fifth English class period. A total of 18 out of 20 students attended the lesson. This lesson's objective was to be able to summarize information in the context of festivals and other kind of celebrations. The book they used was Backpack No. 7 from Pearson ELT. The teacher started the class with a warm-up where she played the song: "It's a date" from the book page seventy-three, unit number seven which students already knew. The class was full of posters from traditions of all around the world which showed that the topic had been already discussed in the previous classes. After the unit song, the teacher also encouraged students to practice a tongue twister by writing it first on the board with big handwriting, then students read it orally; she erased some words and asked them to say it completely again. Finally, she erased the whole tongue twister and three students who raised their hands tried to do it alone. The students were laughing and enjoying this activity a lot. It took seven minutes. After the warm-up two students came to class late; they told the teacher they had to talk to their tutor as they had a problem. They were allowed to join the class. After that, the teacher cut the photocopies from an article found in the book page number seventy-five into five sections, then she arranged the students into groups of five and gave each group one section of the article; each student read their text and then summarized the content for the other students. After that, she applied follow-up activities by asking the leader of each group to decide on the correct order of the five; this activity required the students within a group to work together and help each other. When the sections were ordered accordingly, the students were asked to open their books and started reading the article about the festival of light celebrations in Indonesia and India. They did this activity by taking turns; they developed reading and pronunciation skills. When they finished reading, they could share ideas about the article as well as other kind of information they got about these celebrations. While I was monitoring the class, the students who arrived late were not motivated enough to work as they were talking among

them; so the teacher had to draw their attention to the classwork several times. They could not share ideas about the article because they did not understand it. The homework was to copy down on their notebooks the questions from the article and answer them accordingly using the future simple structure.

The teaching methodology used within this lesson was the Presentation, Practice and Production - PPP approach as students were presented a new grammar structure, then they had to summarize a paragraph by applying it and finally, they presented the whole article to the class. On the other hand, students were able to express their ideas and opinions as well as to interact among them; so they could develop speaking skills in a free environment. The planned time for the activities was handled correctly because the teacher mentioned how many minutes they had left so they would organize themselves. The teacher had her weekly planner with her all the time; she made some notes to improve it while her students were working and we could share some experiences together. There were some shy students who did not feel confident enough to speak but I liked that the teacher gave them the opportunity to share their opinions with her so she would correct pronunciation and they were not afraid or anxious anymore. On the other hand, the two late-arriving students made it hard for the teacher and the rest of the students to work as they were not motivated and focused on working. They did not participate and made too much noise while their classmates were working.

Class 3 – Fourth graders.

This lesson took place during the eighth English class period. The whole class attended the lesson. This lesson's objective was to be able to identify and talk about food containers. The book they used was Backpack No. 4 from Pearson ELT. The teacher started class with a warm-up activity; they played: "Whisper Down the Alley" where the teacher divided the students by rows, she walked toward the student at the front of each row and whispered the sentence: "A Container is an object that stores other objects". The students started passing the sentence to the next student and so on. While playing the game, they had lots of fun and laughed too as some students passed the wrong message. One of the rows was the winner. Next, the teacher displayed some pictures of food containers through slides by using the multimedia projector; she named each container and asked what kind of food they could find in each. Students could practice food vocabulary as they learned types of containers too. She displayed the slides again

and asked them to repeat after her so as to pronounce them accordingly. After that, students did a matching activity in their workbooks page sixty-four. Before the class was over, the teacher drew a table on the board where she divided it into: beverages, fruits and vegetables, containers, snacks and desserts, and meats. She gave some printed words to each row so they could run to the board and classify each word accordingly. Each row should choose a partner to make a sentence with some food and a container using the model the teacher gave: "There is some tuna fish inside a can". This activity took twenty minutes. As homework assignment, they had to work on a matching activity in a worksheet the teacher gave out to each student. While I was monitoring the class, I noticed that one student was not working in groups because she was new at school and did not speak English, so while the students were engaged in the group activity on the board, the teacher gave personalized feedback to this student who was practicing the pronunciation of the alphabet. I perceived that this student was feeling isolated as her classmates were engaged in a different activity, so she had to wait until the teacher was able to leave the whole group working in a task and then helped her with the alphabet pronunciation; this student was no motivated at all.

The teaching methodology used within this lesson was the PPP approach as students were presented a new target vocabulary through a visual aid, then they had to follow a model so as to make some oral sentences as part of a contest and finally, they categorized some words in the different groups. Students enjoyed watching the slides and were engaged with the pronunciation of the words. Changing the activities was good and motivating for students, the use of the multimedia projector was a good idea for the visual learners; it also had some speaker icons where they could listen to the pronunciation – auditory learners; and finally, the matching activity sent as homework will help them to review what they learned but at home – kinesthetic learners.

Class 4 – Sixth course.

This lesson took place during the seventh English class period at 18h30. The whole class attended the lesson. This lesson's objective was to be able to talk about predictions. The book they used was Megatrends No. 5 from Mc. Graw Hill ELT. The teacher presented a dialogue by means of the multimedia projector where three teenagers were talking about new experiences at university. The dialogue was suitable for intermediate students. Most students were paying

attention and I could perceive most of them understood the context because the teacher made some questions where they had to answer by using simple sentences. After that, the teacher arranged the class into groups of four students, they were asked to make an individual list of five things they would each like to do in their lives when they graduate or in the near future. Most students had an English-Spanish dictionary with them. They were speaking Spanish as they were looking up to some words in the dictionaries. The classroom became so noisy and English was not used at all. When the time was over, only three students out of twelve could list and compare, the rest of the class lost time finding out some words in the dictionary and talking among them. The teacher continued with the class and encouraged them to talk about the pictures at page one hundred and eight but only one student raised her hand to talk about some experiences she had while tasting new flavors such as seafood. The teacher helped her to say some words she did not know. While she was sharing her experience, students were attentively listening to her. I could perceive the student was making a great effort to speak, there was lack of vocabulary but the teacher was supporting her all the time so she continued talking as she felt confident. Finally, students drew a picture and wrote down one sentence that described which things they were going to try for the first time and why. They had no homework but to work on the individual list of five things they could not finish before.

The teaching methodology used within this lesson was the Direct Approach as a dialogue was presented at the beginning of the lesson; Spanish was not used by the teacher but by the students. Most students were afraid to speak English, they were trying to find out words in a dictionary because they were not allowed to speak Spanish and when a student participated the teacher corrected all the mistakes by writing them on the corner of the board and referring to them at the end. The teaching methodology did not work at all as the students' English level and self confidence were constraints during the teaching-learning process.

Class 5 – Tenth grade.

This lesson took place during the first English class period at 14h50. A total of twelve out of fifteen students attended the lesson. There were three students who always arrive at 15h30 due to their work schedule at a restaurant, the teacher told that they usually miss Thursdays' English class. This lesson's objective was to give directions while dancing or doing exercises. The book they used was Megatrends No. 2 from Mc. Graw Hill ELT. The teacher used the

classroom multimedia projector to show the students a YouTube video: “Just Dance Windows Down” and invited them to mime those movements. Students really enjoyed moving all around and miming their teacher. While the students were dancing, she described her movements by using prepositions of place; next, the teacher asked them to open their books on page ninety-nine, directed their attention to the picture near the top of the page and asked them to describe what they saw. Five students could describe some pictures, the grammar structures had mistakes but the teacher only heard and took some notes on the board. She wrote prepositions of place and placed a dancing movement flash card next to each. Afterwards, the teacher had students read the text silently and underlined key vocabulary they were not sure about. When they were ready she asked which words they did not understand and made a spelling list for this unit by drawing some pictures or writing a synonym for those words. Most of those words were prepositions of place. Next, the teacher showed another video and delayed it whenever her students could recall a preposition of place. Students looked motivated and enjoyed the activity, they paid attention to each instruction their teacher said. When the activity was over, students were engaged to match the prepositions of place with a sticker found in the book. For homework, they had to fill in the gaps with prepositions of place in their books at page one hundred and one.

The teaching methodology used within this lesson was the TPR because there was a lot of movement, the teacher used lots of imperatives and students could assimilate information and skills at a rapid rate. There was a high degree of motivation too.

Class 6 – Eighth grade.

This lesson took place during the last English class period at 19h05. The whole class attended the lesson. This lesson’s objective was to identify and name action verbs. The book they used was Megatrends No. 1 from Mc. Graw Hill ELT. The teacher started miming some movements such as: twist, turn, clap, and stamp. She named each movement as she performed it, she called some volunteers to do the same movements. The teacher invited the whole class to stand up and mime those movements as they listened to her commands; she started slowly and then speeded up her commands. After this activity, the teacher asked the students which they believed was the title of the unit and immediately wrote on the board the title: “Dance Lessons”, and asked the students which dances they could learn in a dance school. Students

answers were in Spanish, I perceived they understood their teacher's questions because she did a lot of body language and showed realia while speaking. Next, the teacher encouraged students to open their books so they could predict which words they would listen from the unit song as the teacher wrote them down on the board. After that, she played the song at page ninety-eight from the students' book; directed student's attention to the pictures from the same page and asked them to match each picture with a word from the song. Finally, she assigned a verse to each row and the students had to think of a movement they could do as they sang along their verse. She asked them to work alone on page ninety-seven from the workbook so as to complete the missing words. It is important to mention that while the teacher was miming the movements, some students felt shy to do the same but when she invited the whole class, they did those movements and had fun too.

The teaching methodology used within this lesson was the TPR because there was a lot of movement, the teacher used lots of commands and students could assimilate information and skills at a rapid rate. There was a high degree of motivation too but no English production from students; they communicated thoughts and answers in their mother tongue. The teacher had the necessary material such as the books and letter cutouts for the team work activity. The teacher did not speak Spanish but brought realia and used body language.

After having made a detailed description of the context in which each lesson had been handled, it is important to highlight the teaching method and strategies that enhanced a suitable learning environment and then analyze some constraints that might be improved. Relating back to the previously mentioned topic, it is important to remark that a positive and active learning environment was the result from praising and valuing successes more highly than criticism. Teachers' positive support helps students achieve emotional and social skills to display empathy within new knowledge. According to Harlacher (2015) Lampi, Fenty and Beaunae's establish procedures and structures for a valid way to recognize student's strengths and efforts is to positive praise them so as to contribute with a confident environment in the classroom and promote pro-social behavior. Furthermore, cooperative learning is a highly effective instructional strategy that leads to a maximum of English language learning in a school setting. During cooperative tasks, students learn that their input is valued as well as being able to ask for help. Hopkins (2013) remarks that Sharon and Shachar found that students develop positive attitudes and behaviors toward partners of different ethnic backgrounds; similarly Lazarowitz , Kagan,

Sharan, Webb and Slavin, (2013), mentioned noticeable improvements in students' self-esteem and self-concept, just as Sutherland (2010) points out Johnson and Kagen studies referred to academic gains, positive relationships among students, and improved social and affective development. Thus, cooperative learning is an effective instructional approach for helping students integrate the use of a foreign language with a subject or any topic learning, not only to develop social skills such as responsibility for partner's learning, but also to develop problem-solving skills and become proficient communicators when appropriate conditions are available. The Think, Pair, Share strategy is a cooperative learning strategy that allows the teacher to observe each student while interacting in pairs. Both extrovert and introvert students are given the same chances to cooperate and let the teacher monitor if there are topics or structures that need to be reviewed.

Despite handling an organized lesson plan with clear, concrete objectives and goals, as well as, an accordingly teaching procedure; a good teaching practice encourages feedback from students. As discussed earlier, teachers need appropriate feedback from students on their performance at different stages during a lesson and at the end of it. Teachers need opportunities to echo on what they taught, what was not clear, and how to improve their teaching methodology in benefit of the whole group. Although feedback should point out where improvement is needed, it has to be positive. It has to offer suggestions to enhance learning. Pertaining to this topic, Brookhart (2008) refers to Tunstall and Gipps strategies in relation to a descriptive and evaluative kind of feedback where a good performance is praised while a bad one is described and the evaluator needs to refer to strategies that might lead to the improvement of the task. In contrast, while students were given the opportunity to give feedback on the lesson, some students were perceived anxious and not convinced to share their own thoughts. I could see that while having the pair discussion some of them just agreed with their partners' answers but did not take the chance to comment on their actual learning needs and how to help their teacher improve it. Based on those experiences, teachers should make feedback consequential and a common practice within their lessons; indeed, giving feedback is not only finding mistakes but providing guidance for further steps. For example, a way to encourage self-assessment skills is to give feedback to peers by keeping balance between positive and negative comments; in other words, being supportive and not critical.

Students come from a variety of backgrounds and have a wide range of interests, choices, learning styles and needs. Neither a student nor a teacher should be labeled as

infallible. Research shows that students are mistakenly labeled as intelligent or not intelligent individuals as a result of assessment scores or group averages that may not fit all groups. It has been proved that using learning styles (Fleming and Stevens, 2015), as well as multiple intelligences (Gardner, 2015) approaches for learning may improve the speed and quality of learning, just as every individual processes and learns new information in different ways. As Prosser and Trigwell (1999) emphasize, teaching is about developing situations that make learning possible; the whole learning process is holistic as it is inclusive in terms of including a wide range of students and a variety of learning approaches to meet their diverse learning needs due to the fact that learning is a human right; a right that each individual has. Neither an individual looks similar nor may a student learn the same. Over the years, this perspective on teaching has led research onto special education as well; making education available to students who have physical, cognitive, language, learning, sensory, and/or emotional abilities that differ from those of the average students. In the EFL class, teachers need to use materials which are innovative, creative and learning-centered. The incorporation of audio, video and text materials is helpful; however, it is not simply including them in the classroom but must contribute to focus learners' attention on a task; moreover, these materials must be interesting and cope with the teacher's objectives and goals. Teachers make essential decisions while trying to choose material that will suit students best in a specific teaching situation. Wachs and Sheehan (2013) assures that teaching must aim at giving the blind learners knowledge of the realities around them, confidence to cope with these realities and the feeling that they are recognized and accepted as people in their own right. Visual or any other kind of support can be an effective way of enhancing and promoting confidence and learning. During the classes observation, I could perceive they were all given opportunities to develop learning within resources that might cope learning styles; nevertheless, the non-English speaking student had no resources that might help her develop any interest within the use of English; she had the same textbook and was prompted to copy English structures she did not understand as a way to keep her busy and not hanging around the classroom. On the other hand, while observing the classes, I could perceive the teacher spent many minutes explaining the new topic to this special needs student while the rest of the class was working in groups. In my opinion, the isolation of a student from the group while working in teams had a negative effect on her mood and led to decrease her self-esteem in a negative way. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child from 1989, education should allow children to reach their fullest potential in terms of cognitive, emotional and creative capacities. An inclusive approach not only consists of becoming flexible

at the core and adapting facilities regarding the special needs students but also involving students to support one another by identifying differences as opportunities and not teaching a subject and content separately. The teacher needs to identify her students' capabilities as well as being able to offer opportunities in which the non-English speaking students might have been included in a group and do a task. Treating students fairly and equally involves that when objectives and goals are settled, they must be planned with all students in mind; nonetheless, some of them cannot cope the core, objectives and goals have to develop understanding and respect for those differences by offering a wide range of strategies that might be used. Inclusive education should aim at the complete participation of all learners so as to strive for quality in education. Furthermore, students being immersed in simulated or real situations with partners who share the same knowledge level lead to trial and error language learning in a gradual process at different rates to develop motivation and create an effective classroom climate where the main goal is the use of new language with accuracy and fluency. Teaching a second language the way the students learned their mother tongue, within natural practice and in an improvised setting will provide a context so that language production may be meaningful and genuine since motivation includes confidence building where learners are willing to contribute.

Although somewhat different from the morning school where they got a fifteen-hour class period each week, the evening school had only five a week; as a result, there was some reluctance to speak English in the classroom which inhibited students' capacity to interact as well as low speaking achievement scores. In addition to an early immersion to language learning that will boost grammar awareness, citizenship and intercultural tolerance in students; all the students need to understand that they should use English to convey their opinions in a safe environment where the aim is learning. During the observed classes, an important number of students were actively participating while working in small groups; as they felt more relaxed the learning environment became noisy and lively from students speaking at the same time. Some of them did not hesitate to speak Spanish or find out words in a dictionary before an intervention. A teacher-centered class compared to a student-centered class seems to raise students' confidence, they could join the lesson positively and if they did not know a word or expression, the teacher and peers helped without being rushed or ridiculing any language error. On the other hand, the teacher was willing to speak English and did what was necessary to become understood. The use of body language, flash cards, and written target vocabulary all around the classroom allowed the teacher to be understood. Although, as mentioned before, some students

were reluctant to speak English, the teacher was tolerant and respected their own pace even though they would not finish a task. By doing lots of research, I found out that students do not need to respond in English immediately but should concentrate on its comprehension. A study conducted by Terrel in Martin (2000) asserts that students should be allowed to respond in L1 as a path to enable students to communicate and expand their abilities (pp. 48-50). Furthermore, Anderson (2008) refers to Asher's Total Physical Response language-teaching method which states that students do not have to answer verbally until they are ready, but to listen to commands and immediately respond with a physical action. To avoid language interference, the teacher should not force students with the production of an oral or written sentence as they have not yet internalized it. In addition to providing a natural environment, teachers should facilitate their speech so as to make verbal input comprehensible according to the students' level, age, learning styles, socio-economic factors, among others that may directly influence their learning approach. Through such reflections while planning a lesson, students will always respond to oral stimuli in such a way. Most students tend to rely on their mother tongue behind a second language, that is why Auerbach as cited in Hornberger (2010) conveys that the more exposure to English, the more quickly learners will use it; but taking into consideration socio-cultural factors and life experiences of the students so if they use L1, there should be a flexibility point where it is seen as a strategy to reduce anxiety and develop an affective environment; likewise; Chen as cited in Bailey and Preston (1996) who states that considering linguistic variations among students may help reduce interference from mother tongue too.

Reflection on Experience.

According to Reid (1991), reflection is reviewing an experience of practice to describe, analyze, evaluate and inform learning about it. In particular, while observing all those classes I could find as many similarities within my colleagues' teaching styles and mine. I was able to observe how students became engaged and their reactions toward a new topic or strategy. At several points during the observed classes, I noticed that students were completely silent and entirely engaged as well as noisy, moving all around and sharing input in a positive environment. There were also reluctant, problematic and shy students.

Even though few classes were teacher-centered and the students were silent while being taught, the teachers did also elicit students' participation to enable peer correction. On the other hand, students who are learning a new language need to be encouraged to talk and share their

ideas within large and small group settings, but focus on language forms and structures is as important as having the opportunity to interact. Cummins (1991) states that part of the failure of most students in developing the necessary language skills is related to the teacher-centered instruction (pp.161-175); in contrast, Millis (2012) refers to Coelho theory which states that student-centered instruction develops higher, meaningful, cognitive and communicative language skills.

I noticed that teachers were promoting positive and meaningful interaction through the use of language so as to develop communicative competence in students; however, some students felt reluctant and shy to participate. While planning the lessons a teacher must focus to engage students within tasks in a non-threatening environment, as the main objective in this process is fluency in spite of vocabulary or grammar constraints because students will learn and try new ways of sharing ideas and avoid communication breakdowns while they learn new topics or subjects. The observed classes showed close personal relationship with students, mutual respect, positive attitudes, and flexibility of rules, as well as student self-discipline. In addition, Nichols as cited in Garret (2008) mentions that it is important to empower and strengthen learners' sense of responsibility as they are able to share ideas by taking part in an interpersonal exchange, analyzing, reflecting and learning from peers.

The teachers facilitated feedback in various ways to better meet the needs of each student on the pace of the class. In addition, the teachers valued learners' input and encouraged shy students to participate too. While observing some reluctant and problematic students, I could reflect that although a teacher has an in-depth knowledge of strategies, methodology and techniques that could be used in order to engage all learning styles; the challenge nowadays is to reflect on practice, do lots of research so as to be able to make attentive changes and adaptations in the core. The more teachers understand their own practice as well as students' needs; the better they will be able to promote an inclusive environment where learners feel involved and valued. Reluctant and problematic students should be given the opportunity to discover their own strengths as they will need a high degree of support from the teacher to understand and use them effectively within the teaching-learning process. Alternatively, a flexible syllabus provides the opportunity for adjustment to learners' needs; therefore, while planning lessons, the teacher must ensure to take into consideration the various needs and life circumstances of all the students.

I believed that speaking the target language in an English class was the rule if you wanted to enhance oral interaction and develop communicative competence in your students; while research in this field demonstrates that when a teacher uses mother tongue in the classroom, the learner internalizes that knowledge to help scaffold learning (Cummins and Davison, 2002, p.280). While working in small groups, students tend to use L1 especially in learners with lower levels as it plays an important role in mediation and scaffolding new knowledge in memory. The L1 not only serves to support students within cooperative learning as Mahboob (2010) refers to Rinvolucris who states that there is no evidence that the use of L1 in a classroom constrains the learning of the second language (pp.57-59).

Even though morning and evening students were different due to socio-economic factors as well as amount of English classes in a week they received from school, both groups were engaged for the entire class period. On the other hand, they played an active role within each activity whether they practiced grammar through a writing activity, worked in small groups or did an individual task. The teachers were aware of offering their learners a wide variety of content based activities to challenge their own acquired skills. I was surprised that different topics related to culture, learners' interests as well as news or spare time activities would be used to integrate the uses of a specific grammar structure, develop target vocabulary or enhance oral production without having to make the English class monotonous, but where students feel engaged in live oral practice in a confident school setting.

On the other hand, I could perceive that some teachers tended to focus on their own learning style and neglected the other ones; however, choosing the right tasks for students is mainly based on training and observation rather than on a specific teaching standard. Indeed, the challenge is trying not to favor any teaching style as each student in our classroom learns at a different pace and level. For these reasons, teaching in an inclusive environment where we can find disabled, non-English speaking students among other types of constraints is nowadays a teaching challenge; moreover, the only way to improve our own teaching practices is by researching, reviewing literature about inclusive classrooms and make use of any technique we shall find as a valid resource so by trial and error, we can choose the most suitable for that group.

The systematization of pedagogical experiences while observing some colleagues' teaching-learning process became a reassuring experience regarding my teaching preparation as far as they contributed to my own growth. I learned as much from them and we shared a common interest: our love for teaching. After most of the observed classes, we had the opportunity to talk about our own teaching experience and knowledge in those matters.

Thus, effective teaching involves looking beyond the present and taking a long-term, holistic view at our students; this perspective makes it possible for teachers to improve our strategies, techniques and lesson planning as there is always something new to learn. Teaching individuals enables flexible teaching practices as many adjustments in our plans need to be made along the way. Teachers become proficient while coping developmental needs that best help us meet our teaching goals and aims. Lessons learned through observing my colleagues' English classes challenged me to become an independent problem-solving professional, in the way I need to be able to identify my students' weaknesses and strengths. I understood that each student has a unique and different way of learning and that the learners' active participation should be considered during the whole class period. In addition to expanding knowledge regarding teaching issues, I must develop my own professional identity by becoming creative and innovative while planning my lessons; as well as promoting rapport with the students in a way they do not feel in any way threatened or excluded in the classroom even when being amended.

Overall, this experience was extraordinarily important in a way I could obtain very valuable feedback, I achieved plenty teaching ideas from the observation; likewise, I was able to share some of my own, thus creating an extensive pedagogical exchange with some colleagues. It was an absolute beneficial experience, and I strongly believe that all university students willing to get a teaching degree should be encouraged to undertake this systematization of lessons learned before getting the teaching degree.

Teaching Environment.

The classroom is the place where the necessary skills that may enable a student succeed in professional life will be developed in order for him or her to become an outstanding

member of society. An accordingly teaching environment fosters positive learning. Furthermore, there are some external and intrinsic elements that might significantly influence students' focus and teachers' attitude as well as their achievement in class. Classroom and teacher's organization play an important role in students' discipline too. While doing the class observations, I could notice that teachers and students have an affective and warm relationship. Simon and Schuster (1999) mention that a good teacher influences and creates a warm and confident learning environment. Thus far, the teacher's role is not only to share knowledge but being a coach, mentor, monitor administrator, psychologist, assessor, resource provider, supporter and role model. Teachers at this school showed respect and good will toward the whole educational community. That is to say, there is no better resource for a school than teachers who are empowered and equipped to solve problems using their own talent and experience. Besides comfortable school facilities in terms of infrastructure, furniture and equipment to promote learning; classrooms were arranged in a way that they made learning available as teachers had the right of choice; it was a U-shaped classroom. A positive sense of ownership was perceived from teachers and students. Both parents and students could monitor learning performance by checking the school application available for mobile phones where they could communicate with teachers as well as watch records and grades.

Handling the process at this school was a valuable opportunity to deepen and develop knowledge of its mission as the whole teaching staff contributes to the creation of a holistic educational environment in which students are the central focus of the education process. Students are not seen as mere clients or passive learners but school effort aims at helping students be the most that they can be. The school was always willing to cooperate with my work, and gave me all the support I needed to fulfill my report. On the other hand, school authorities as well as the English Department Coordinator appreciated my contribution and positively evaluated it.

CONCLUSIONS

Fast and low learners may handle a specific communicative domain while enjoying and improving their knowledge and skills through means of a responsive teacher who is aware of all his or her students strengths and weaknesses and by providing repeated tasks where learners are directly exposed to them. These students should be often encouraged and reassured by the teacher.

Students dealing with constraints where the communicative competence is inhibited, showed naturally curious to see what their partners have done related to the grammar structure, vocabulary word or topic they have attempted to solve. Teachers not only grade or evaluate the structure but how students got to it; that is why, they need enough time to express and succeed within the learning of a foreign language.

Developing communicative competence in students through collaborative learning activities is possible whenever each student is engaged in a task that he or she masters no matter if the English level is not the same as the whole group, this helps to promote an inclusive environment where all the learners get involved.

The systematization of pedagogical experiences based on the development of communicative competence did also demonstrate that above any academic goal a teacher might want to accomplish, if it is not possible for him or her to establish authentic interpersonal relations with students; thus contributing to his or her own's growth; a well developed communicative competence may not be enhanced.

Teaching in a classroom where students' experience within a foreign language was enriched through trips, after-school activities, and exposure to English language at home due to parent's higher income or any other external factor is not the same as an environment where students are exposed to a foreign language within the class period only.

Developing communicative competence is harder but not impossible as students are immersed in the language through after school activities; an English speaking teacher who

enhances communication in L2 within activities where the focus is promote communication, among others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

English Department Coordinators should make sure that each teacher at school is aware of all his or her learners' own pace and level in order to provide activities where they can interact in an empathetic environment. Students need to be given enough time and space for their expression. This whole process needs training as well as continuous attention from teachers. Moreover, teachers should provide learners the path where they can interact in a safe and confident environment. This way, students will be able to learn and succeed within the learning of a foreign language.

Teachers should offer an inclusive classroom to every student at school where their weaknesses may be seen as opportunities to improve; moreover; let the other students respect those differences and include those classmates in their working teams in order to be able to value their input even though their capabilities may not be the same. Teaching in an inclusive classroom demands special attention from teachers as they find students debilitated by a special need, emotional disturbance or having problems at home which are factors that may influence the comprehension of certain specific information taught in classes. A teacher who is being sensitive with his or her students needs will validate the given information by them by making them feel secure and enhance their success. It is necessary to keep records on these students' development in order to choose the right resources for them.

Students with special needs should use books according to their current level in order to influence on their willingness to learn by motivating them not only by feeling confident by completing tasks but also keeping track on their own improvements.

Teachers should make use of student-centered strategies and offer a wide range of opportunities where learners can share their own ideas, opinions and thoughts. If practiced on a regular basis, they would foster good interpersonal relationships and may contribute to their own growth. Cooperative learning strategies have good results on diverse classes as they enhance mutual respect, cooperation and every individual within a group is valued.

Teachers should make each student feel important and let them experience success by validating their own strength; no matter their socio-economic level, ethnics, religion or any other

factor that may make them different from the average students in the classroom. Students need to feel engaged within each lesson; likewise, teachers need to be perceived supportive as students require to be observed during all the learning stages even though they are perceived reluctant, shy or not motivated. By doing this, the teacher is giving attention to information conveyed beyond what is seen or heard and that may be useful to become empathetic with those students. A good teacher is empathetic and willing to teach no matter any constraint.

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ANNEXES

Preparation	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	N/A
Evidence of familiarity with plans				
Evidence of awareness of goals of activities				
Organization of lesson				
Sequencing of activities				
Links between activities				
Evidence of creative application of plans				
Evidence of contextualization of activities				
Readiness of materials				
Incorporation of aspects of culture				
Faithfulness to plans				
Comments:				

Technique/Methodology	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	N/A
Eye contact				
Voice projection				
Movement				
Elicitation of student response				
Effectiveness of corrections				
Involving other students in correction				
Appropriateness of feedback				
Effective structure of drills/activities				
Comments:				

Rapport with Students	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	N/A
Animation				
Evidence of student interest				
Means of fostering participation				
Level of participation of students				
Evidence of creativity to stimulate interest				
Evidence of authentic engagement with students				
Comments:				

Timing of Class	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	N/A
Beginning and ending class on time				
Pacing				
Ability to adapt to student needs				
Ability to recognize when to move on				
Clear and efficient presentation of directions				
Comments:				

Student Speech	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	N/A
Elicitation of complete sentences from students				
Frequency of response from each student				
Encouragement of extended responses from students				
Encouragement of creativity from students				
Comments:				

Teacher Talk	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	N/A
Ease and fluency				
Pronunciation				
Balance between teacher and student speech				
Comments:				

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Classroom Observation Checklist

Name _____ Date _____
 Class Observed _____ Time _____
 Observer _____ Department _____

All items marked **Not Observed must be explained in Comments*

	Could Improve	Acceptable	Excellent	Not Observed
Class Structure				
Reviews previous day's course content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gives overview of day's course content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Summarizes course content covered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Directs student preparation for next class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments				

Methods				
Provides well-designed materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employs non-lecture learning activities (i.e. small group discussion, student-led activities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invites class discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employs other tools/instructional aids (i.e. technology, computer, video, overheads)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivers well-planned lecture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments				

Teacher-Student Interaction				
Solicits student input	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involves a variety of students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates awareness of individual student learning needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments				

Content				
Appears knowledgeable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appears well organized	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explains concepts clearly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relates concepts to students' experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selects learning experiences appropriate to level of learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments				

Other Comments -Note either effective or ineffective teaching practices observed
 -Attach additional pages if necessary

Observer Signature _____ Date _____

