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

TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

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DEDICATION

To the time; a strange concept that gave me the love of my parents, my brother, my sister and the great and unique love of Alegría.

To my mum, because of her persistence and capacity to love and care.

To my father, who has taught me a lot

To my brother, I will always care for him.

To my sister, I will always support her.

And to you, Alegría, the great happiness of my life, thanks for being who you are, for loving me the way you do, I will love you every time I open my eyes.

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RESÚMEN

El presente estudio investigó la influencia de clases numerosas en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en colegios del Ecuador. Esta investigación se basó en una muestra de población compuesta por 5 profesores y un total de 211 estudiantes entre 13 y 17 años, seleccionados de dos colegios ubicados en Quito. Los colegios fueron: Patrimonio de la Humanidad y Eloy Alfaro. Los datos fueron recogidos mediante la administración de un cuestionario llenado por los estudiantes; dicho cuestionario contenía tres temas principales a ser analizados: aspectos académicos, aspectos sociales y aspectos psicológicos; factores que están estrechamente relacionados con el proceso de enseñanza- aprendizaje.

El enfoque general de este estudio es cualitativo y cuantitativo y las técnicas utilizadas fueron el cuestionario y la toma de notas. Los datos obtenidos a través de los cuestionarios aplicados a los estudiantes fueron explorados, explicados, descritos y analizados utilizando instrumentos tales como gráficos de resultados porcentuales y respaldo de literatura previa. El análisis de los resultados proporciona evidencia de que el gran número de alumnos y la falta de conocimiento de la dinámica en el aula afectan el proceso de enseñanza- aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en colegios públicos ecuatorianos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: clases numerosas, aspectos académicos, aspectos sociales, aspectos psicológicos, cuestionario.

ABSTRACT

The present study has investigated the influence of large classes in the English teaching learning process in Ecuadorian high schools. This research was based on a population sample composed of five teachers and a total of 211 students ranging from 13 to 17 years selected from two high schools located in Quito. The high schools were: “Patrimonio de la Humanidad” and “Eloy Alfaro”. The data were collected by administering one survey answered by the students; the mentioned survey contained three main matters to be analyzed: academic aspects, social aspects and psychological aspects; factors closely related to the teaching-learning process.

The general approach of this study was qualitative and quantitative, and the techniques used were: surveys and note taking. The collected data obtained from the students’ survey was explored, explained, described, and analyzed by using charts and percentage figures. The analysis of results provided evidence that the large size of the classes and the lack of knowledge of dynamics in the classroom affect the English teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools.

KEYWORDS: Large classes, academic aspects, social aspects, psychological aspects, survey.

INTRODUCTION

The current research “The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools” is an attempt to analyze the academic, social and psychological factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in these high schools, which are overcrowded classes with a minimum of 35 students.

The first section is a deep description of all the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process such as: classroom conditions, academic characteristics and psychological elements that exist in the classroom, followed by the description, analysis and interpretation of the results obtained through the survey taken by the total number of students who participated in this research; and finally, the section of recommendations aimed to promote future studies that could enrich the current investigation in order to strengthen the teaching- learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools.

The teaching of English in Ecuador has had very low results in spite of the long time this subject has been part of the national curriculum. The level of communicative competence of students, who finish secondary education, does not let them be competent to apply for jobs which require an intermediate or even a low English level, or to apply for national or international scholarships.

The factors that influence this serious problem in Ecuadorian schools are: low qualification of teachers – results of the TOEFL test –, and the lack of information about academic, social and psychological aspects involved in the teaching-learning process. To research and analyze the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process would be beneficial not only for students from public high schools, but also to teachers and institutions because it would bring new tools to manage different aspects in the whole educational process, giving new chances for training courses and indeed, bringing good results, methodologies and technologies for students.

Three teaching-learning factors were considered in the current research: the academic, social and psychological aspects that are registered in the class. They were deeply described, analyzed and interpreted by mean of a standardized survey contained 21 questions, nine of them regarding the

academic aspects, five of them regarding social aspects and 7 of them regarding psychological aspects. Students answered qualitatively according to a given range.

The objectives were: What instructional implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process? What social implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process? and What psychological implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process? They were achieved largely in a 90% due to fact that there was a little rush at the moment of applying the surveys; consequently, the register of the data is closely linked to the time the student took to answer every single question.

As a background, it is worth mentioning that some studies concerning factors that affect the English teaching-learning process in large classes have been conducted, as the one by Khaki in 2010 that focused his study on finding out the very common expectations of students where the class is large in number. The researcher found that students like to be called by their first names. This study also proves that an English teacher should move all around the class and that the sharing of experiences of teachers and students highly motivates the students as well. Besides, this study revealed that more than 90% of students reported that they expected additional activities over which the ones of the textbook.

In relation to achievement in English language and teacher's guidance Adams in 2007 focused his study on determining as a hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the achievement in English Language of students of large classes with teacher initiated/guided student-peer-assessment and those without it. As a conclusion, the study has clearly demonstrated that if teacher peer assessment is well planned, utilized and recorded, it provides immediate feedback to the student and possibly his/her parents. Therefore, this fact allows the student to address his weaknesses and then improve on his/her strengths almost immediate.

Finally Sekiwu in 2009 developed his study on the basis of the question: Can teachers plan for achieving proper teaching in large classes? In his study Sekiwu concluded that teaching and learning become a problem where instructional materials are few, classroom space is limited, and the teacher can hardly follow up on the performance of every student. The solutions for these problems include

the provision and sharing of instructional materials, constructing more classrooms and encouraging student centered methods like giving assignments, examinations and homework

Regrettably, in Ecuador there are many shortages in the English language learning, especially in students who finish high school. In the ministerial agreements No.2511 and No.1944, it was determined a five hour class period a week to teach English at the secondary level. After more than 15 years using the textbooks “Our world through English” SENESCYT and the Ministry of Education's CRADLE Project concluded that Ecuadorian students in general, at a national level, do not have a deep understanding of the English language.

The findings of this fact mainly focused on the need of institutional and policy support. Besides, it becomes extremely important the current research on some important factors, such as students' needs and level of English, methods and techniques used by the teachers, class size, and seating arrangement which will provide useful help to create a positive environment to develop the English teaching-learning process.

Although the sample of five English teachers and consequently five classes were small, the total number of students could be considered a suitable sample to find out about significant patterns of the teaching-learning process.

Regarding the limitations this research faced, two were the most important. First, the denial of some institutions made it difficult to apply the survey. Second, the information that teachers and students' surveys provided was somewhat limited.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

This research was carried out in two high schools - "Patrimonio de la Humanidad" and "Eloy Alfaro"-in Quito Ecuador in 2014. The students attending these institutions were both, male and female with a ratio on 1:1. The sample was drawn from 211 students of five classes. The students ranged from 13 to 17 years and the classes they attended ranged from 10th basic education to 2nd years of senior high school. The sample was appropriate for the purpose of the study since the total number represents a media of 42,2 students per class.

Procedures

The general approach of this study was qualitative and quantitative. First bibliographic information was gathered from resources such as: books, articles and previous studies available on the internet and libraries in order to be used for supporting the description, analysis and interpretation of results.

The gathered information involved the importance of English as a foreign language in Ecuador, teaching approaches and methods, class size, managing learning, managing large classes, activities for working with large classes, classroom space and seating arrangement, learning styles and different level of proficiency. Additional information about the influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process studies was gathered as well.

During the process of field investigation five classes were surveyed by mean of a standardized questionnaire contained 21 questions, nine of them regarding the academic aspects, five of them regarding social aspects and 7 of them regarding psychological aspects. Students answered qualitatively according to a given range – Totally agree, Agree, Partially agree or Disagree-.

The collected information was tabulated and represented graphically using charts to show in percentages the way teachers and students answered according to suggested questions.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

There is no subject so interesting and important to human being as the knowledge of language, and not just for communication, but for understanding other cross-cultural characteristics; therefore, there is no other closer link between all, social, moral, educational, and political relationships than language.

Learning a second language involves giving the student means to use language in the classroom that best suits the situation. These means have to deal with managing activities and learning, to explain learning points and to move efficiently from one stage of a lesson to the next. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize on teachers' instruction and training in accordance with international standards that allow students of public education to make their English knowledge noticeable and effective. On this ground, the SENESCYT is offering scholarships to EFL teachers of public high schools to improve their teaching-learning process by giving them the chance to study abroad.

Not only in Ecuador but worldwide the number of English learners has exponentially increased at an overwhelming rate along with the rapid development of many countries in the world – 1 billion approximately- (British Council 2,000). Because of this, communication in English plays an essential role in the teaching learning process. Thereafter, due to the large number of students, lack of quality in teaching, low number of teachers and resources, the problem about the size of language class at any educational level tends to be a great deal. It is very common for teachers, either at primary or at secondary schools to teach classes with more than 30, 40 or even 50 students; so much research has been conducted in such environment in order to facilitate teachers to cope with the problems arisen by the increase of the students in the classroom.

Teaching Approaches and Methods

Díaz-Rico & Weed (1995) state that the Grammar Translation method was used since the medieval Europe. This method focused on translating every single word from Latin or Greek into the target language, paying close attention to grammatical rules. One of the main characteristics of this methodology is the development of reading and writing skills but no communicative ones. In this tendency, House (2011) mentions the main characteristics of this method:

Students translate whole texts and memorize grammatical rules and exceptions for deductive application, as well as bilingual vocabulary lists with isolated words and their native language equivalent. The skills to be developed are reading and writing, while little or no attention is given to listening and speaking, since the method was originally intended for facilitating access to the literary texts of dead languages, and interactive communication in the target language is therefore not a goal in the classroom. Classes are taught in the students' mother tongue. (p. 30)

To conclude with this, Richards & Rodgers (2001) observe the sentence as the basic unit of teaching and language practice. They say that in the Grammar translation method much of the lesson was dedicated to translating sentences into and out of the target language; this is a distinctive feature of the method, especially taking into account how difficult for students the translation of entire texts could be.

Concerning the Direct Method according to Díaz-Rico & Weed (1995) began in the nineteenth century. In this method, students are involved in the target language through listening to discourse and answering questions. At the beginning, they use simple sentences that afterwards form more complex sentence patterns. Another characteristic is that students are not allowed to translate since they are supposed to understand the target language. Grammar is taught inductively with no rule explanations. Teachers are supposed to teach new vocabulary through mimics or other resources that do not allow translation. To this respect House (2011) states that in this method, students are prompted to think in the target language without involving LI in the language learning process. This method includes a full

immersion program in which students are not allowed to talk in their first language. Additionally, teachers have to use different resources when teaching vocabulary since translation is not allowed. Among these resources are: pictures, gestures or demonstrations so that, this method is an attempt to set up conditions that imitate mother tongue acquisition.

In the Audio-lingual Method, Díaz-Rico & Weed (1995) observe the use of this method in the decades from 1930 to 1970. It focuses on communicative skills, which were developed through the listening of particular sound patterns and the repetition of them acquire a correct pronunciation and the understanding of second language. This methodology was developed taking into account the way kids acquired their first language; they were taught to learn their mother tongue as a process of habit formation. This method used ordered structures in dialogues that created pattern, which turned into habits. The weakness of this method was the lack of creativity at the moment of talking since patterned drills were used. It is important to say that this method is used to teach idioms and greetings that are normally patterned. Similar observations are the ones from Richards & Rodgers (2001) who stated that the Audio-lingual method or Audiolingualism primary objective was to reach oral proficiency, leaving a second role for the study of grammar or with a little grammatical explanation however, the number of classes also limited of ten or less are considered optimal. In this method many procedures are repeated such as hear a model dialogue containing key structures that are the focus of the lesson. Pattern drills dialogues are taught to be memorized by students, expecting them to minimize mistakes production.

According to House (2011), the silent way pedagogical approach was created by mathematician Caleb Cattegno in the early 1960s. This methodology is part of a humanistic approach to language learning which gives no place to repetition in language learning. Consequently, students are not forced to speak, but are allowed a silent period for understanding the spoken language before developing the skill of speaking when they feel they can produce spoken language.

The method uses a group of wooden or plastic colored blocks in order to avoid the mother tongue. The rods are a way to spark language awareness in the

learners, as they can represent words within syntactic structures, phonemes or syllables, or can be used for storytelling, for example. The very name of this approach highlights the fact that the teacher remains mainly silent, sticking as much as possible to mime and gesture, and students are given the space to learn to talk. There is also typically a set of wall charts containing words of functional vocabulary that the teacher can point at. The use of the vernacular is avoided. (p. 33)

As described by Díaz-Rico & Weed (1995) in the silent way no first language is used. Simple situations allow learners to observe and describe the performed actions. The teacher has to be in silent the majority of the period of classes; he has to concentrate on fluency and encourage personal production. Additionally, the teacher has to provide a little amount of vocabulary since students are able to produce much language. It is necessary to say that students are expected to commit errors as a normal part of the process.

House (2011) mentioned that the Total physical response approach was developed by an American professor called James J. Asher in 1960 and this approach involves responding to commands given by the teacher by means of action. The complexity of command grows over time as learners acquire more language. Total physical response is an approach to second language acquisition based on the way how children learn their mother tongue, it depends on three elements that consist of listening and understanding preceding speaking, showing understanding by physical movements, and not forcing speaking in learners. It is important to mention that reading and writing skills are also developed. Furthermore, students are tested in groups at the beginning and then they have to be evaluated individually. At the last stage of this process, students are given a list of commands that they had learned to practice using them. The list of commands is given to allow learners to interact manipulating them (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 1995).

The main characteristics of Suggestopedia, also known as Desuggestopedia, are the “decoration, furniture, arrangement of the classroom, the authoritative behavior of the teacher.

Additionally, one of the most representative elements is the use of music to relax learners". (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 100). The objectives of Suggestopedia are to deliver advanced conversational proficiency quickly. It bases its learning claims on the student's mastery of prodigious lists of vocabulary pairs and suggests to students that it is appropriate that they set such goals for themselves. Moreover, for Díaz-Rico & Weed (1995) Lozanov based this method on the suggestion of self-perceived limitations of the learners, and providing a relaxed state of mind that could facilitate the intake of material. This method uses soft baroque music which is supposed to create a level of concentration that increases memorization capabilities. Students are asked to close their eyes and peripheral learning is used to absorb information without a conscious effort. The teacher assumes the role of complete authority in the class and most instruction takes place in the target language. Some of the methodology used is role play and drama which help to overcome shyness from learners.

Class size

According to Nash (1976):

Class size is important since it helps the teacher to establish programming priorities. Since it is a part in which the teacher sets his or her priorities about what kind of activities are the best to perform inside or outside. When planning space is involved, it is necessary to say that activities must be related to the classroom. Additionally, the activities have to match needs and the isolation of the important learning behavior characteristics of young learners. Space planning: To plan space is also considered a practical way, since it can be used in workshop sessions for groups involved in space planning. To develop the activities, the formation of general objectives is necessary; the description of the activities in terms of the learning potential enables the teacher to express the specific objectives in practical terms and to maximize the usefulness of the equipment in the classroom. (p.95)

On this ground, Blatchford (2003) states that there are some important factors to consider when teaching large classes. They are generally a relaxed environment involving humor, discussion of social issues and personal interaction. Classroom control that is the time the teacher uses to control discipline usually tends to be shorter in smaller classes and longer in larger classes; also, teaching interaction where the teacher receives sustained attention and is able to offer immediate feedback; knowledge of children is important for the teacher; they can feel the main advantage of having a small class when they personally know every single student; and, finally support for reading is crucial when having a small class, even the possibility to have daily reading sessions which is not possible in a larger class.

Managing learning

Managing learning involves the importance of giving instructions feedback and timing to avoid time wasting and uncertainty. On this ground, in order to give the instructions every student's attention has to be caught, so that they know what they have to do. It is also necessary for the teacher to give a correct feedback during the lesson. According to Brookhart (2008)

Feedback is an important component of the formative assessment process. Formative assessment gives information to teachers and students about how students are doing relative to classroom learning goals. From the student's point of view, the formative assessment "script" reads like this: "What knowledge or skills do I aim to develop? How close am I now? What do I need to do next?" Giving good feedback is one of the skills teachers need to master as part of good formative assessment. Other formative assessment skills include having clear learning targets, crafting clear lessons and assignments that communicate those targets to students, and -usually after giving good feedback- helping students learn how to formulate new goals for themselves and action plans that will lead to achievement of those goals. (p. 1, 2)

Managing large classes

Thompson as well (2007) says, that room arrangements are very important in overcrowded classes, it is imperative to pay attention to traffic patterns, and arrange the furniture in your class to accommodate the students. One of the most important facts that can solve the problem of an overcrowded class is the teacher's attitude which is the most important factor in coping with the demands of a large class. Careful planning, a strong connection with students, and interesting lessons are the determining factors in the success of the teaching learning process. Besides, according to Byram (2000) large classes are broadly considered to be problematic for language learning. Class size itself does not necessarily have a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning. What matters are teachers' and students' perceptions and assumptions about large classes, teacher's methods and the ways of organizing interaction, and giving attention to individual learners and adequately assessing students' work. The conception about large classes varies depending on the country, while in Britain, a class of 30 to 40 students is considered large; in China average numbers can be 50 to 60.

Activities for working with large classes

According to Baker, J., & Westrup, H. (2000) language learning is the capacity to communicate using the language. This is closely linked with all material presented by the teacher; even with a large class, there are many ways of planning your lessons so that the students have time to practice too. They also mention some activities to be developed:

Questioning techniques

Teachers always expect to ask questions and students always are expected to answer questions.

Closed questions

Teachers ask students a lot of Yes/No questions. This happens because it is the easiest way for the teacher to quickly understand the student's response.

Open questions

A more helpful, but more challenging questioning technique is to ask open questions. They usually start with 'What... 'When.....'Why...'Who..., 'How... and there may be several possible correct answers to open questions. These questions test the students' understanding.

Elicitation

Elicitation is when the teacher asks a series of simple questions that lead the students towards finding the answer for themselves. This often involves asking the students to use their imagination or transferring their feelings to the situation (p. 119)

Classroom space and Seating arrangements

Fisher, J., Hoover, G., & McLeod (2003) claim that the organization of the space also affects the way students behave and move around the classroom as well as how much attention they pay to instruction. A high quality instructional program requires efficient use of space, where students can work alone, in groups and with the teacher. On this ground, Gower, Phillips, & Walters (2005) state that the position of the teacher and the way the teacher organizes the positions of the students in class is of great importance. Bear in mind that concepts of personal space vary from culture to culture. For example, Arab people when they talk to each other, like to get closer than Northern Europeans. In multicultural classes, teachers and students sometimes cause unease or even offend other students because they get too close. Or some students may think that people who like to keep a greater distance are cool and even unfriendly.

Different levels of proficiency

Leaver & Shekhtman (2002) mention that while all students at all levels of proficiency need to develop all components of communicative competence, students at lower levels appear to need the compensation aspects of strategic competence. Superior-level students, however, possess a reasonable amount of strategic competence and, to a lesser extent, sociolinguistic competence, which they must continue to develop. What they may need is more attention to linguistic and discourse competence,

especially in formal language. They also mention that communicative competence involves social and sociocultural competence components and emotional competence. While all students need most of the components of at any given time, there is a changing balance that occurs with proficiency gain.

Harley (1990) remarks that proficiency could be tested through comparison between native speakers of a language and second language learners. It could reveal which aspects of second language (L2) proficiency were acquired most rapidly and help elucidate the ways in which proficiency becomes developmentally differentiated.

Similarly, an investigation on issues such as the relationship between different aspects of first and second language (L1 and L2) proficiency or the relationship between age and L2 acquisition could point to significant implications for the conceptualization of the nature of proficiency. For example, if discourse skills were strongly related across languages, but grammar skills were not, this implies a distinction between grammar and discourse and generates hypotheses regarding the causes of the cross-lingual discourse relationships. For example, it might be that discourse is more strongly related to general cognitive abilities than is true for grammar. Similarly, differential acquisition rates for different aspects of proficiency by older and younger learners can provide evidence relevant to theoretical conceptualizations of the nature of proficiency. Thus, a variety of strategies were employed to investigate the interrelationships among components of the construct of language proficiency (p. 10)

Large classes

Large classes are often alleged as one of the major obstacles to ensure quality education, not only because of the lack of resources a class with those characteristics has, but also for the academic, emotional and social elements that take place in there. Certainly, many research studies point to the disadvantages of large classes and promote small classes as a factor to ensure quality education.

Despite these studies, large classes are a day-by-day situation in many schools and many countries. These classes are often the direct result of inadequate subsidy and the absence of political and academic will to provide a sufficient number of teachers and classrooms that would guarantee a quality education.

Khaki (2010) focused his study on finding out the very common expectations of students in the classroom where they are learning English at a variety of different paces and besides, the class is large in number of students. The study is mainly focused on six different areas: classroom management, establishing collaboration, range of tasks, giving feedback, classroom English and home assignment. 60 students of tenth grade from government-aided school were selected to get required information. They were sampled using purposive non-random sampling procedure. To collect data, one questionnaire containing nineteen closed-ended questions was developed. This study revealed many findings at a time regarding the expectations of students in large multilevel classes, for example more than 90% of students like to be called by their first names. This study also proves that an English teacher should move all around the class. Sharing experiences like activity is highly preferred by a considerable number of students (40%). It shows that the sharing of experiences of teachers and students highly motivates the students. Besides, this study revealed that more than 90% of students reported that they expected additional activities over which the ones of the textbook. This study also focused that limited use of mother tongue in English classroom it is bearable and accepted, but the teacher should introduce some new words every day in simpler and shorter expression. In case of feedback, feedback at a personal level in the classroom is more preferable. The study reveals that most of the students like challenging activities, neither too easy, nor too difficult. Thus, it is essential to provide different tasks to different students, so that they can adapt them at their own pace.

Adams (2007) in his study established two hypotheses. Ho1: There is no significant difference in the achievement in Mathematics of students of large classes with teacher-initiated/guided student-peer assessment and those without it. Ho2: There is no significant difference in the achievement in English Language of students of large classes with teacher initiated/guided student-peer-assessment

and those without it. The research was carried out adopting the pre-posttest quasi experimental/control groups design. Two instruments were designed by the researcher and two research assistants. These instruments are namely Onuka Mathematics Achievement Test and Onuka English Language Achievement Test. The research was conducted on experimental and control groups. 280 students were involved in the investigation. At the beginning of each lesson a short test of the knowledge gained in the previous lesson was given. The scripts were collected and redistributed to the students after they had worked the solutions on the board, however, ensuring that no student got and marked his/her own paper. The teacher worked out the solutions on the board and then asked the student to randomly exchange their notebooks and mark strictly under his supervision with support of the research assistant. The results were organized and recorded at the end of the lesson. The teacher then proceeded to teach. The exercise lasted for eight weeks. A pre-test was given to each subject group (experimental and control) at the beginning of the investigation. At the end of the eight weeks, a post-test was administered to find out whether or not the treatment had had any effect on the students' performance in the respective subjects. A pre-test was given to each subject group (experimental and control). As a conclusion, the study has clearly demonstrated that if teacher peer assessment is well planned, utilized and recorded, it provides immediate feedback to the student and possibly his/her parents. Therefore, this fact allows the student to address his weaknesses and then improve on his/her strengths almost immediate.

Sekiwu (2009) developed his study on the basis of the question: "Can teachers plan for achieving proper teaching in large classes?" The method he used was a cross-sectional survey research design. The population study included head teachers, teachers and students from the selected schools (10 government aided and 10 private secondary schools in Uganda Kampala district. 400 students in senior one and two, 142 teachers and 20 head teachers were picked. Head teachers were purposively selected based on their role and experience in school management and because of these teachers takes the overall supervision of all the teaching-learning process in the schools of the research. Author's recommendations are based on the fact that the increasing number of students has led to large classes, which are not easy to teach effectively, therefore, the ability to teach effectively and enhance learning

is part of quality education that Ugandans need apart from schools with increased number of students. Teaching and learning become a problem where instructional materials are few, classroom space is limited, and the teacher can hardly follow up on the performance of every student. The remedies put in place to address these problems include the provision and sharing of instructional materials, constructing more classrooms and encouraging student centered methods like giving assignments, examinations and homework

Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu (2006) based their study on three questions (a) Do secondary school teachers use instructional resources frequently in teaching English language? (b) Do the English Language teachers use appropriate methods in teaching English Language frequently? (c) Do secondary school students in Nigeria learn English language in an environment conducive to learning? The main instruments used for this study were a questionnaire and observation schedules. The researchers designed the questionnaire by generating a list of items, which solicited students' responses on teaching strategies, instructional resources/media used by the teachers and the teaching-learning environment. The specifications for each of the two data collection instruments used in the study were as follows: (a) Questionnaire: This instrument had four sections dealing with demographic. (b) Observation: Research assistants were trained to observe each classroom and some classroom proceedings during administration of the questionnaire noting the features or characteristics of the learning environment. Based on their results they claimed that the public secondary schools in Nigeria were far behind time in offering multiple pathways to the teaching and learning English as a second language. Public secondary schools in Nigeria should be provided with adequate and a variety of instructional media, technologies such as audio and video recordings, language laboratories and computers. These instructional media can be more effective teaching tools for English Language lessons as they offer an authentic learning experience when interwoven with existing curriculum.

Furthermore, Nakabugo. Opolot. Masembe. Samson, and Byamugisha (2006) conducted a research in Uganda, research that was undertaken in two phases. The sample consisted of 31 female and 4 male teachers. The first phase was the baseline survey in 20 schools among 35 teachers. The second phase was the reflective action involving ten teachers in five schools in order to develop

further the strategies they had identified as having greater potential to facilitate teaching and learning in their large classes. The method was constant comparative. Data for the baseline was generated from interviews with the thirty five teachers, twenty school administrators and one hundred lesson observations with classes ranging between 70-80 learners were observed. Both categories of interviews were conducted using structured schedules. The findings of the study focused on the institutional and policy support. The urgent funding required include, but not restricted to provision of basic infrastructure such as bigger classroom space, sufficient furniture and instructional materials. Increasing the number of teachers to allow at least two teachers per class, providing schools with the necessary resources and enabling teachers to develop the confidence and skills to improve the learning environment in large classes seems to be paramount. It might also be necessary to revisit the lesson duration for lower classes from the current 30 minutes.

Description, Analysis and Interpretation of Results

This section submits a detailed description, analysis and interpretation of the results after field observations and survey application. The aim is to analyze the most relevant factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools.

In the next chart, there is the data collected about the academic aspects that took place in the class. What instructional implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process?

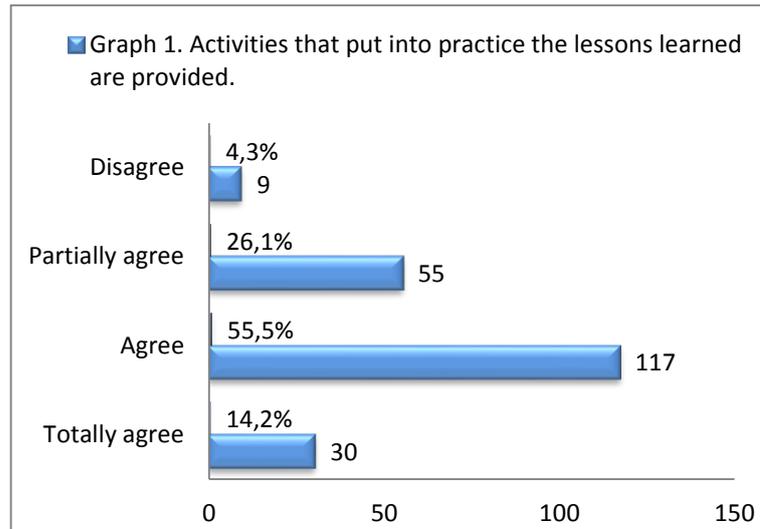
Chart 1. Academic Aspects

A. Academic Aspects						
N°	In classes with several students	Totally agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Total
1	Graphic 1. Activities that put into practice the lessons learned are provided.	30	117	55	9	211
		14,2%	55,5%	26,1%	4,3%	100,0%
2	Graphic 2. Activities that allow practice skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are performed.	64	92	53	2	211
		30,3%	43,6%	25,1%	0,9%	100,0%
3	Graphic 3. All students are aware and participate in class activities, including students in the back row.	18	50	99	44	211
		8,5%	23,7%	46,9%	20,9%	100,0%

4	Graphic 4. Several activities in class are used; such as group activities, individual activities, pair activities, etc.	85	79	33	14	211
		40,3%	37,4%	15,6%	6,6%	100,0%
5	Graphic 5. Activities such as: role plays, quizzes, debates, games, etc. are used	36	61	59	55	211
		17,1%	28,9%	28,0%	26,1%	100,0%
6	Graphic 6. It can be cheated during the exams	22	29	74	86	211
		10,4%	13,7%	35,1%	40,8%	100,0%
7	Graphic 7. Other subjects' homework can be done.	14	45	72	80	211
		6,6%	21,3%	34,1%	37,9%	100,0%
8	Graphic 8. The class space allows you to properly develop the activities assigned by the teacher.	35	88	69	19	211
		16,6%	41,7%	32,7%	9,0%	100,0%
9	Graphic 9. I can not receive adequate feedback from the teacher because of the high number of students.	26	86	66	33	211
		12,3%	40,8%	31,3%	15,6%	100,0%

Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire



Author: William Llumipanta

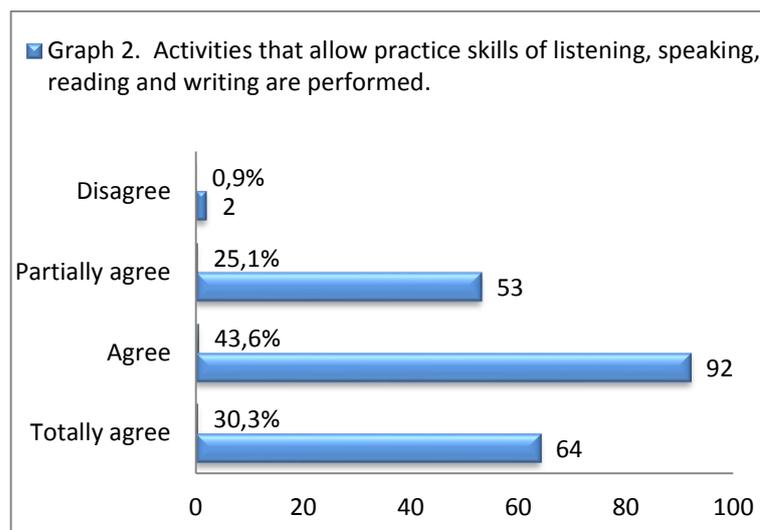
Source: Students' questionnaire

Graph 1 shows that a total of 30 students (14.2%) totally agree about the class activities; while 9 of them (4.3%) disagree about the performance of the mentioned activities. Whereas the highest percentage -55.5%- agree about the activities provided. It is worth mentioning that 55 students (26.1%), more than a quarter of the total are partially agree about the activities linked with the lessons.

Considering class activities, there is a major limitation at this stage, due to the poor methodology applied by teachers, the low level of knowledge and the different learning styles.

In addition, teachers are not aware of the influence of group and individual activities in the teaching learning process. As suggested by Baker & Westrup (2000) language learning is the capacity to communicate using the language and this capacity is closely linked with all material presented by the teacher; on this ground, Jones and Jones (2001:29) state that high expectations, active engagement of students, cooperative learning and the incorporation of various aspects of students' cultures are important figures in effective teaching.

In the surveyed classes, 14.2 % of the students considered activities dynamic, entertaining, and motivating. Consequently these activities involving role play, mingling activities and individual activities can cope students' needs through the teaching-learning process.



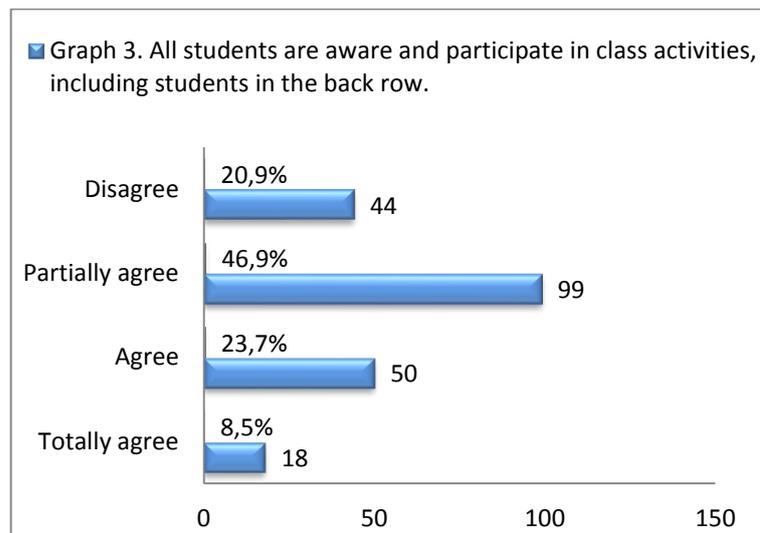
Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

Graph 2 shows that a total of 64 students (30.3%) totally agree about the class activities that permit practicing writing, listening, speaking and reading skills. In addition, the highest percentage of students - 43.6 %- agrees about the activities to practice the four skills. On the other hand the results registered in the survey sheets show that 25.1% of students partially agree about the activities that allow practice the four skills. Finally two students (0.9%) disagree about the activities that allow practice the four skills.

It is worth to mention that 25.1% of the students considered the activities developed in class unsatisfying. This great level can be explained when managing large groups. It was noticeable the level of discomfort of the teachers due to the lack of space to develop more activities; besides, it was observed that none of the teachers were using any kind of audiovisual material at the moment of the survey. Additionally as David and Pearse (2000) mentioned, achieving good results is quite difficult when instructing large groups, since the learners may not be able to see or hear the teacher well and vice versa. Thus students' individual practice is reduced because the teacher has to monitor many pairs or groups and feedback cannot always be given individually to learners' written work. All the classes where the surveys were applied have the same problem related to physical space whether or not the space was sufficient the tone of the voice of the teacher plus the one of the students made it really hard

to get a one shot understanding of what the instruction was. The same authors suggest getting cooperation from almost every learner of the group, forming teams, with the stronger students functioning as monitors, and adjusting the course objectives to the real situation in order to satisfy the students.



Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

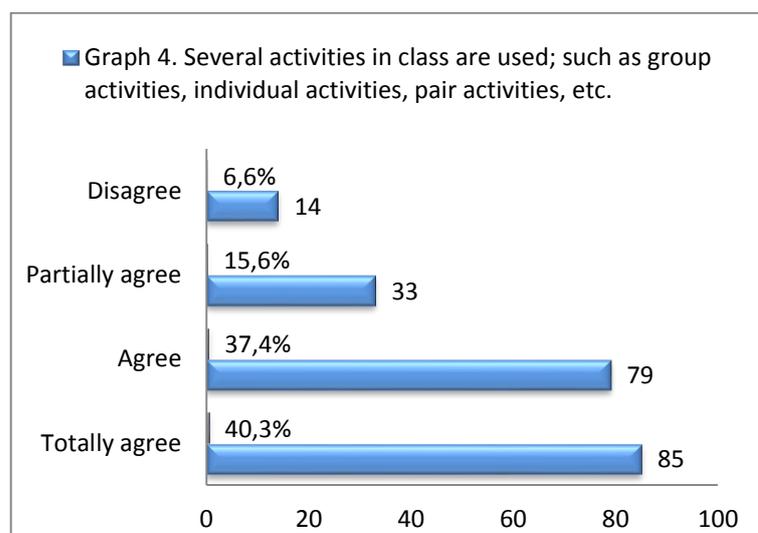
Graph 3 shows that 18 students (8.5%) totally agree about awareness and participation in class activities. Based on the surveys 50 students (23.7%) agree about awareness and participation in class activities. It is worth mentioning that the highest percentage of students - 46.9%- partially agrees about awareness and participation in class activities, which shows a very high level of discomfort in the classes. Finally, from students' survey it can be noticed that 44 students (20.9%) disagree about awareness and participation in class activities.

Based on the surveys it can be said that in the classes where the number of students is large - 36 to 49- the teachers had difficulty providing the students with individual practice. The teachers in those classes where the surveys were applied barely moved along the class so it resulted really hard for the students to get acquainted to the rhythm of the class.

As mentioned by the Center for effective parenting (2011) participating in classroom activities provides a remarkable opportunity for learning new skills. Participation helps students make deep and

significant connections in the mind that are important in learning. On this ground participating in class involves several types of behavior such as: paying attention, being on-task, responding to questions and the teacher should care about the problems with classroom participation. These problems can include low grades, incomplete work coming home as homework, and low grades on classroom papers. One of the signs that can show lack of participation is when the student does not know how to do homework, this. Teachers typically assign homework as a drill or repetition of skills already taught in class.

When instructing large groups. Broughton et al (1980) say that the teacher needs to consider the best way of making the learners actively participate in the entire lesson. What said by Broughton et al is supported by the evidence of eight classes where the teachers could sustain the students' attention to the lesson and their active participation during the class in spite of the fact that they do not agree with number of students (36 to 44) they work with.



Author: William Llumipanta

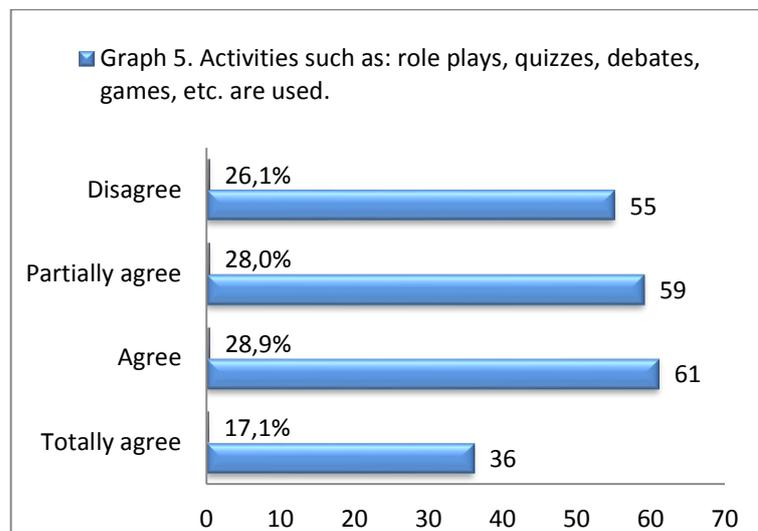
Source: Students' questionnaire

Graph 4 shows that 85 students (40.3%) totally agree about the different activities performed in class. From the results it can be noticed that 37.4% of students agree about the different activities performed in class. On the other hand with 15.6% and 6.6% students partially agree and disagree about the different activities performed in class respectively.

It was evident that the space of all the classes was not sufficient to develop group activities, as a matter of fact the students just use the textbook and performed some of the activities and tasks described into it.

In addition, Harmer (2001) says about whole group activities that these tasks allow the students to share an emotion of happiness or amusement. It means that these activities make students participate in EFL lessons while working in the same activity all them together. On the same basis Richards and Bohlke (2011) say that when these tasks are skillfully done, teachers are able to achieve the objectives of a lesson in a quick and effective way because they can absolutely control the organization of time.

Richards and Bohlke (2011) state that individual help them to learn at then own pace and enable teachers to provide individual support. However, it was really difficult for the teacher to give individual support because of the number of students.



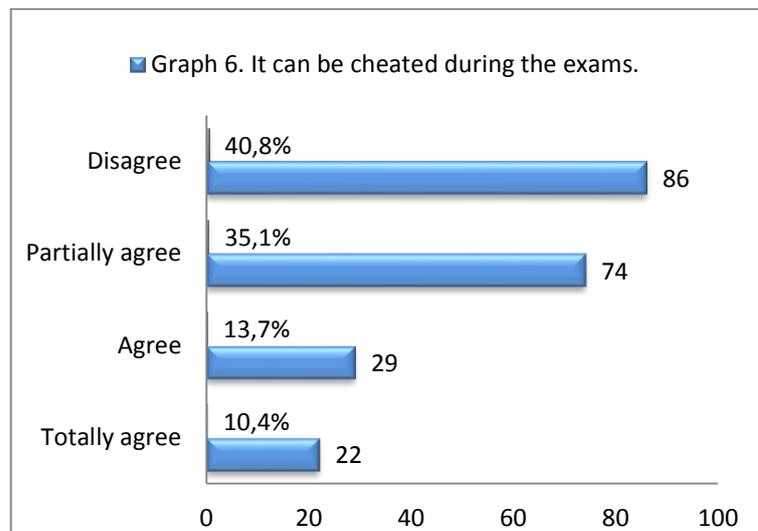
Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

Graph 5 reveals that a total of 36 students (17.1%) totally agree about the performance of activities such as: role plays, debates, games, etc. The percentages of student who agree, partially agree and disagree about the performance of activities such as: role plays, debates, games are very

similar (28.9, 28 and 26.1 %) respectively. Those percentages clearly denotes a divided opinion about the question.

One of the main reasons those activities are not correctly performed or not performed at all is the time it takes to prepare such tasks. As mentioned by Richards and Bohlke (2011) grouping students may be time-consuming. Nonetheless, they affirm that learning in group is very common in all types of teaching. They also state that group work in language classroom enhances students' speaking, encourages their self-esteem, and motivates them to produce language in a risk-free environment. Besides, as mentioned by Diaz (1999) group work promote interaction, cooperation, and communication among students. It is important to remark that some of the teachers mentioned that varying the type of activities allow students to exchange information and interact between them, so that it is possible to avoid routine in the classroom.



Author: William Llumipanta

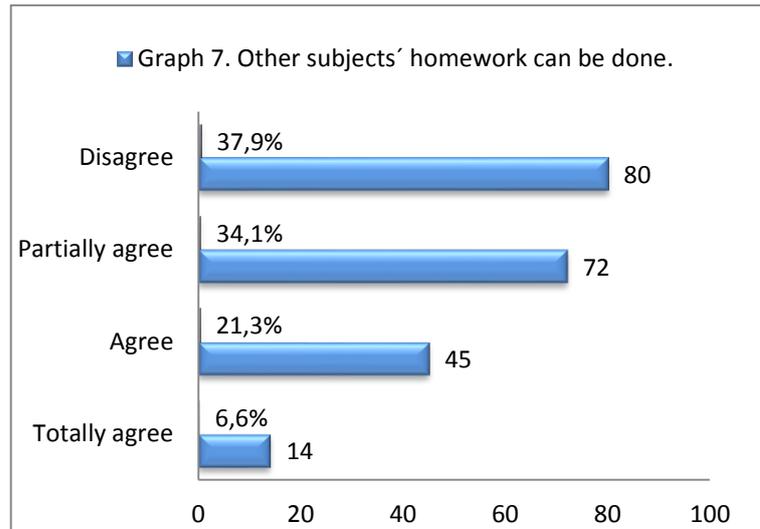
Source: Students' questionnaire

Graph 6 reveals that a total of 22 students (10.4%) and 29 students (13.7%) totally agree and agree respectively about the chance of cheating during exams. The conditions under the survey was taken clearly show that large classes environment and the chances of cheating are aspects closely related to discipline, seat arrangement and classroom space.

On the other hand 74 students (35.1%) and 86 students (40.8%) partially agree and disagree respectively about the chance of cheating during exams. The answer to this question is highly influenced by the teacher since this question was the most asked to the teacher even though the directions to answer the survey were really clear about not asking anything to them.

As stated by Savage (2010) the arrangement of students' desks should be done in accordance with the objectives of a class. This author also says that arranging desks in rows helps a lot of teachers to monitor learners and maintain classroom control. Furthermore according to Byram (2000) large classes are broadly considered to be problematic for language learning. Class size itself does not necessarily have a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning. What matters are teachers' and students' perceptions and assumptions about large classes, teacher's methods and the ways of organizing interaction, and giving attention to individual learners. When the teacher wants to prevent cheating, it can be possible to call to a supervisor to roam the test room frequently.

It was clearly noticeable the chances students have to cheat on exams, due to the proximity one another. The space between the lines were barely 40 cm or even less, it was hard to pass between the only one possible seating arrangement the classes could have, so it is evident that the students could have it easy at the moment of quizzes, test or exams.

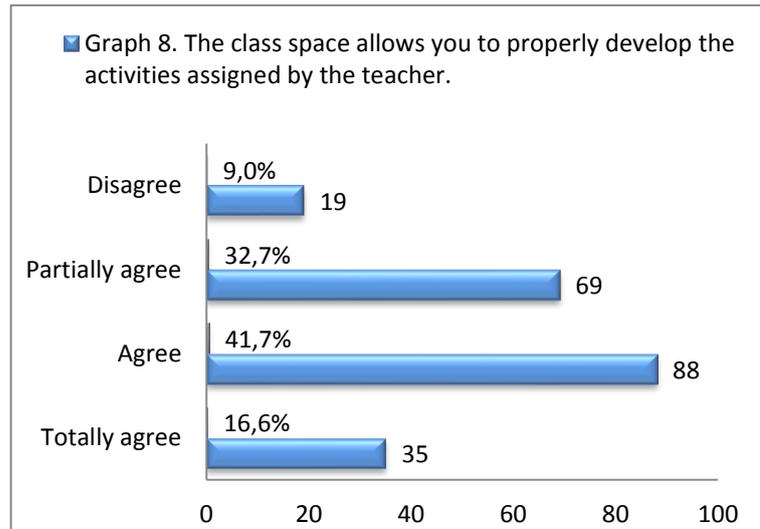


Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

Graph 7 shows that a total of 14 students (6.6%) and 45 of them (21.3%) totally agree and agree respectively about the possibility to do other subjects' homework in class. This data represent more than a quarter of the total of students who imply; besides disrespectfulness, the lack of awareness and participation throughout the teaching-learning process. On the other hand 34.1% of the students partially agree about the possibility to do other subjects homework in class. Finally 37.9% of students disagree about the possibility to do other subjects homework in class.

This item is directly related to class arrangement and class size. As mentioned by Wohnwill & Vliet (1985) students need ample space because crowding causes problems. The consequences of density conditions that involve either too many children or too little space are: excess levels of stimulation, stress arousal, a drain on resources available, considerable interference, reductions in desired privacy levels and loss of control. As mentioned before a large class can be the perfect environment to develop other tasks not related to the subject, in addition to this, the students at the moment of the surveyed had other notebooks on their seats and some of them were call off to keep them in their bags.



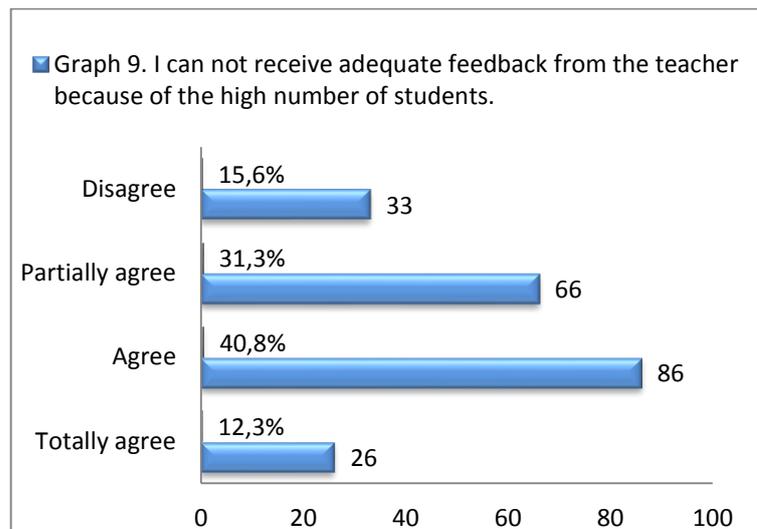
Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

Graph 8 shows that a total of 35 students (16.6%) totally agree about the space in class while 41.7% agree about the space and the chance to develop activities assigned by their teacher. In contrast 32.7% of students partially agree about the fact space allows them properly develop activities assigned by the teacher and finally 9% of them disagree about the space giving the possibility to properly develop activities assigned by the teacher.

According to Nash (1976) class size is important since it helps the teacher to establish programming priorities. When planning space is involved it is necessary to say that activities must be related to the classroom. Additionally, the activities have to match needs and the isolation of the important learning behavior characteristics of young learners. Space planning is used in workshop session, to develop the activities, the formation of general objectives is necessary; the description of the activities in terms of the learning potential enables the teacher to express the specific objectives practical terms and to maximize the usefulness of the equipment in the classroom.

On this ground, Watson (1999) says that it is difficult to provide a comfortable learning environment when a teacher has a lot of students in a small classroom. It can be said that the environment in some surveyed classes was not beneficial to teaching as the students could not do activities around the class.



Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

Graph 9 points out that a total of 26 students (12.3%) totally agree on not receiving adequate feedback from the teacher. Similarly 40.8% of students agree on this fact, which implies a serious problem in one of the main elements of teaching-learning process being feedback.

From the surveyed classes 31.3% of students partially agree on not receiving adequate feedback from the teacher while 15.6% of them disagree on not receiving adequate feedback from the teacher.

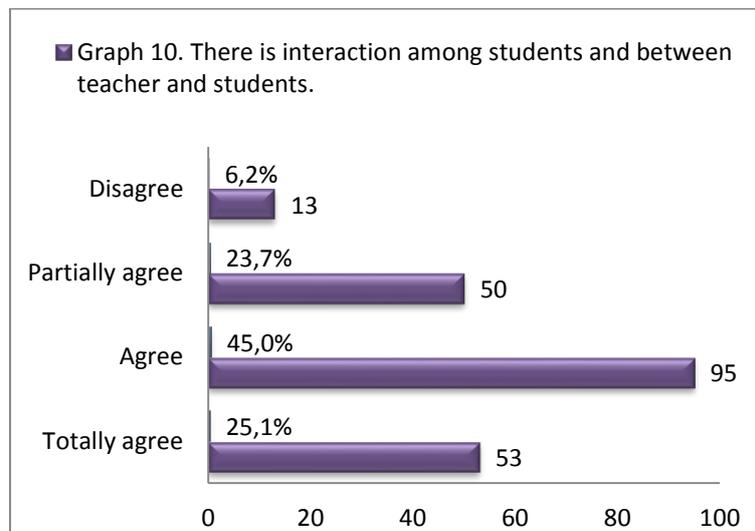
It is extremely important to mention that managing learning is directly related to feedback. As stated by Johnson et al (2005), good classroom management skills require teachers to understand in more than one way the psychological and developmental levels of their students. Knowing such factors will help to guide the teachers' decision making. Without this information, educators will find themselves doubtful, uncertain and unprepared. Indeed, Watson (1999) states that through feedback, teachers can correct the students' utterances, acknowledge their response, ask for clarification of their response, and give backchannel prompts. Consequently if students do not get a good grade of feedback, they are not able to improve the language acquisition.

Chart 2: Social Aspects

B. Social Aspects						
N°	In classes with several students	Totally agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Total
10	Graphic 10. There is interaction among students and between teacher and students.	53	95	50	13	211
		25,1%	45,0%	23,7%	6,2%	100,0%
11	Graphic 11. I have the opportunity to interact with more people.	72	88	41	10	211
		34,1%	41,7%	19,4%	4,7%	100,0%
12	Graphic 12. The teacher does not remember the names of all students.	33	78	62	38	211
		15,6%	37,0%	29,4%	18,0%	100,0%
13	Graphic 13. The atmosphere is less tense and there is less chance that the teacher makes constant questions to the same student.	49	77	62	23	211
		23,2%	36,5%	29,4%	10,9%	100,0%
14	Graphic 14. I can use my cell phone or other electronic device without getting caught by the teacher.	21	33	54	103	211
		10,0%	15,6%	25,6%	48,8%	100,0%

Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire



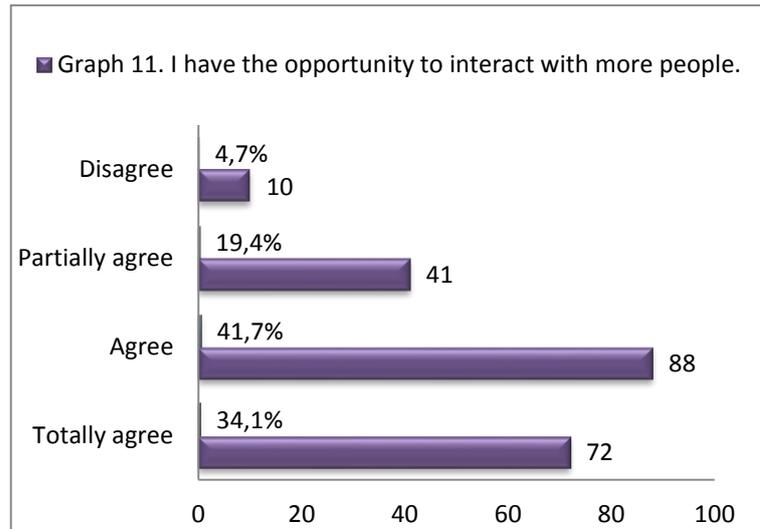
Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

The graph 10 indicates that a total of 53 students (25.1%) totally agree about the interaction in class, while 95 of them (45%) agree about interaction among students and between teacher and students. Concerning students surveyed 23.7% of them partially agree about interaction among students and between teacher and students and finally 6.2% of them disagree about interaction among students and between teacher and students.

As mentioned by Webb et al (1985) a key feature distinguishing cooperative settings from other learning settings is the opportunity for interaction among students. Yet, a look at the last several decades of research on classroom interaction and achievement reveals that researchers have only recently begun to devote much attention to interaction among students in cooperative groups. Latest studies of student interaction in small groups have revealed some significant relationships between student interaction and achievement.

The level of interaction among students and the teacher as seen on the classes was very low. The number of students did not let the teacher fully interact and applying group activities is really hard to do due to the physical space.

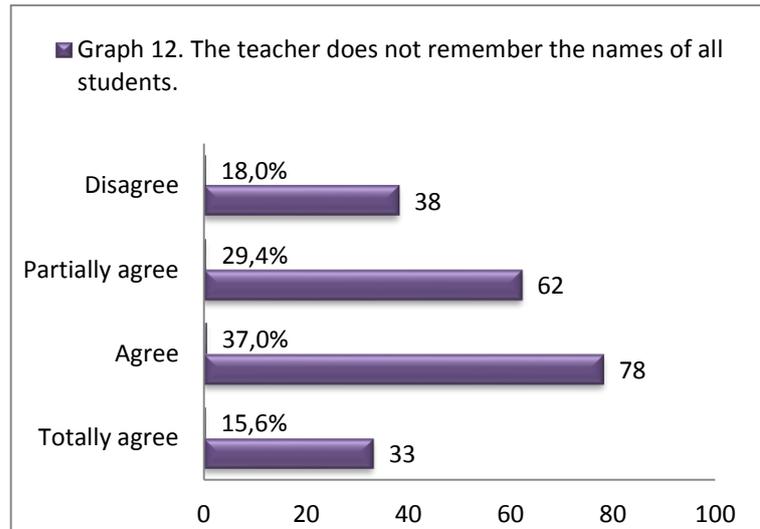


Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

As the graph 11 shows, a total of 72 students (34.1%) totally agree about the opportunity to interact with more people, while 88 of them (41.7%) agree about the same fact. In addition from students' questionnaire a total number of 41 (19.4%) partially agree about the fact of interaction with more people and finally 10 students (4.7%) disagree on the chances to interact with more people.

This consideration is closely linked the number of students in the classroom which is that Jeffries and Huggett (2010) state when instructing small groups, the engagement between learners, the teacher, and the content is encouraged. What Jeffries and Huggett point out was observed in the classes where there were 36 to 45 students and the most of them 75, 8 % considered they have good opportunities to get in touch with other people; however, it is important to notice they probably misunderstood the question that is lead to the capacity to get acquainted with other people using English.

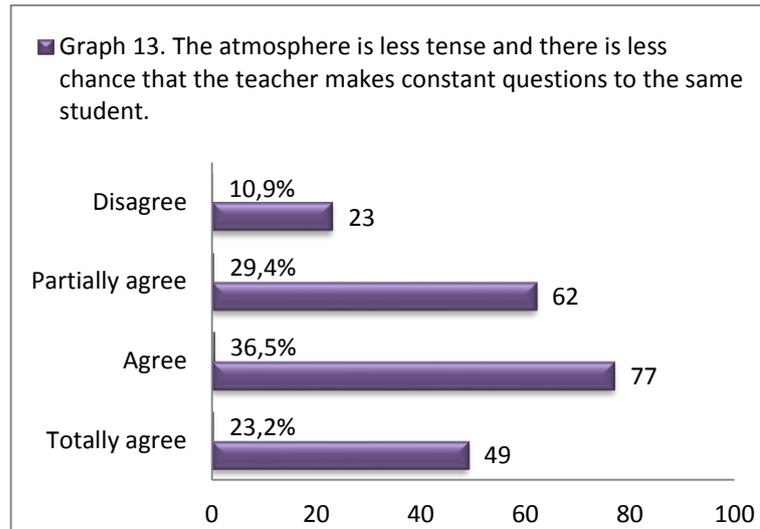


Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

As the graph 12 indicates a total of 33 students (15.6%) totally agree about the fact the teacher does not remember the names all of students. It is worth mentioning that 37% of students surveyed agree on this fact as well. This data is quite important since students feel more comfortable and relaxed when calling by their names. On the other hand 62 students (29.4%) partially agree about the fact the teacher does not remember their names and finally 18% of them disagree on this question.

On this ground Blatchford (2003) states that there are some important factors to consider when teaching large classes and they are: generally relaxed environment involving humor, discussion of social issues and personal interaction, classroom control that is the time the teacher uses to control discipline; it is shorter in smaller classes and longer in larger classes, teaching interaction where the teacher receives sustained attention and is able to offers immediate feedback, knowledge of children is important for the teacher; they can feel the main advantage of having a small class when they personally know every single student and finally support for reading is crucial when having a small class, even the possibility to have daily reading sessions which is not possible in a larger class



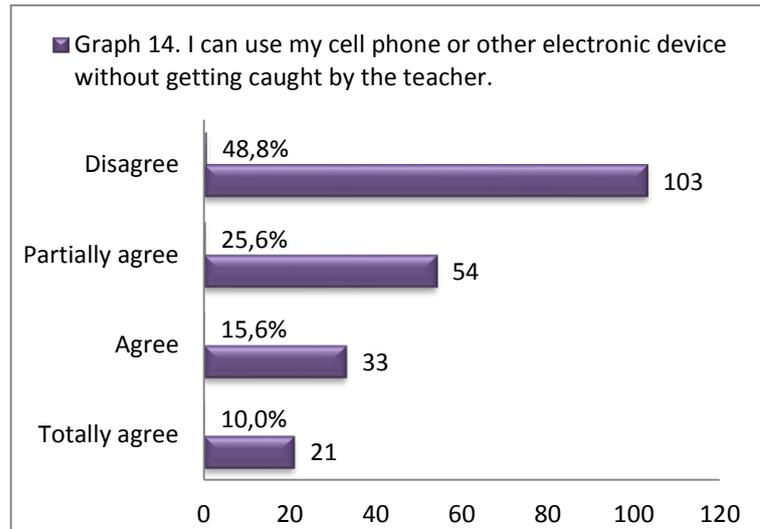
Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

According to graph 13 a total of 49 students (23.2%) totally agree about the relaxed atmosphere in class and the less chance to interact, due to de large number of students, while 77 of them (36.5%) agree about this fact as well. On the other hand more than a quarter 29.4% of students partially agree about the relaxed atmosphere in class and the less chance to interact, due to de large number of students and finally 10.9% of the surveyed students disagree about this fact.

An important consideration is that Watson (1999) states that the overall size of the classroom and the number of students determines the teacher's influence on the classroom space. What this author says was observed in five classes where the space was influenced by the teachers because of the amount of the students and the size of the classroom; that is to be able to work on their tasks, make questions and receive a continuous feedback from different students can be more likely to happen.

As witnessed in the surveyed classes there was a certain level of stress and uncomfortable atmosphere since the overcrowded space. Moreover due to the big size of the classroom in some cases, and the great number of students in all the cases, the level of participation is extremely low and of course every single student cannot be considered and engage in class participation



Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

From the results, graph 14 shows that a total of 21 students (10%) of them and 33 (15.6%) totally agree and agree respectively about the use of cellphone and other electronic devices without getting caught by teacher. On the other hand, from the total number of students surveyed, 54 of them (25.6%) and 103 (48.8%) partially agree and disagree respectively about the use of cellphone and other electronic devices without getting caught by teacher

On this ground, Duncan et al (2012), states that difference in final grades between phone users and nonusers is highly statistically significant, but causality cannot be determined from this data. It could be that students who are already more disciplined are more likely to turn their phones off during class or that students who are busier outside of class are more likely to use their phones in class. Still, the observation and interview data suggest many undergraduates likely overestimate their ability to multitask. If students miss some instruction while engaging with digital devices, they may end up earning lower grades overall.

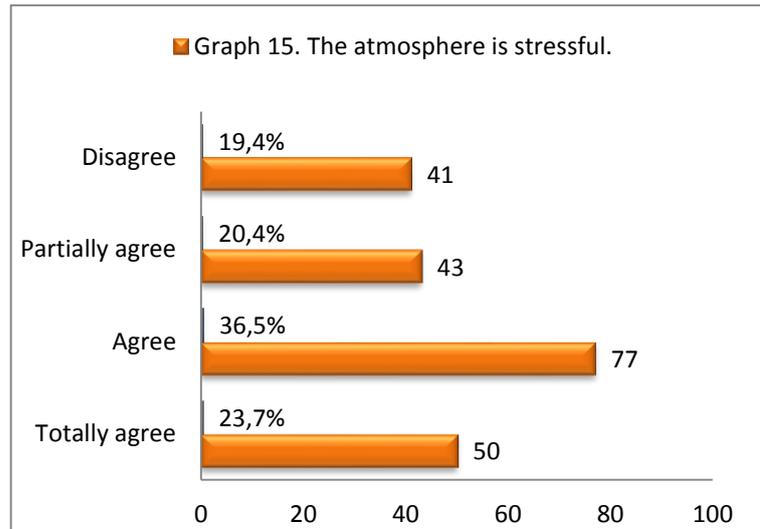
In some cases the big size of the class make almost imperceptible for the teacher to realize when they are playing, texting or calling. This was evident meanwhile the survey was applied because a great number of students hold their cellphones over the table and some of them even use them once they had finished the survey.

Chart 3. Psychological Aspects

C. Psychological Aspects						
N°	In classes with several students	Totally agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Total
15	Graphic 15. The atmosphere is stressful	50	77	43	41	211
		23,7%	36,5%	20,4%	19,4%	100,0%
16	Graphic 16. I feel uncomfortable when talking in front of my peers.	36	71	68	36	211
		17,1%	33,6%	32,2%	17,1%	100,0%
17	Graphic 17. I have less opportunity to express myself.	22	77	81	31	211
		10,4%	36,5%	38,4%	14,7%	100,0%
18	Graphic 18. I do not like to participate because I feel shy.	36	56	72	47	211
		17,1%	26,5%	34,1%	22,3%	100,0%
19	Graphic 19. The teacher does not pay attention equally to all students.	33	51	63	64	211
		15,6%	24,2%	29,9%	30,3%	100,0%
20	Graphic 20. I feel like I can compete fairly with other students.	61	84	51	15	211
		28,9%	39,8%	24,2%	7,1%	100,0%
21	Graphic 21. I feel relaxed because I can be unnoticed.	43	74	65	29	211
		20,4%	35,1%	30,8%	13,7%	100,0%

Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire



Author: William Llumipanta

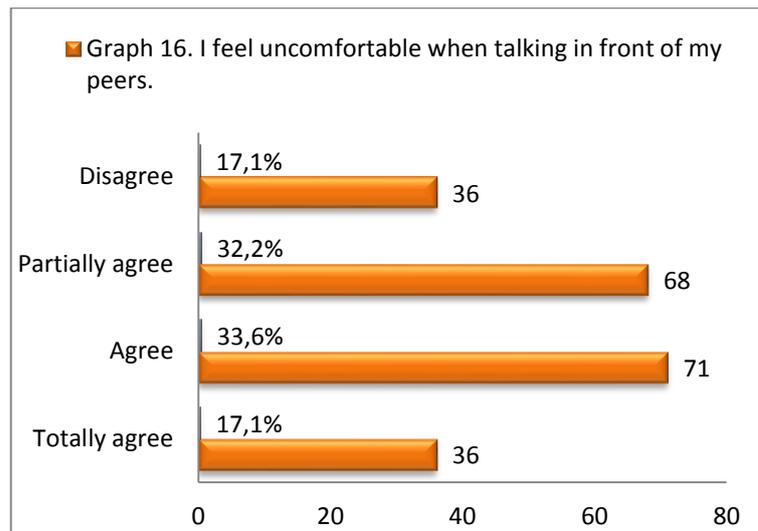
Source: Students' questionnaire

As graph 15 shows, a total of 50 students (23.7%) totally agree on having a stressful environment in class. 77 students (36.5%) agree on having a stressful environment in class. Of the total students who take part on this research 43 of them (20.4%) partially agree on having a stressful environment in class and finally 41 students (19.4%) disagree on having a stressful environment in class.

On this ground (Selye. 1974, as cited in Wilson, 2002) mentions that while limited amounts of stress can have a positive influence on motivation and creativity, excessive pressure has an overwhelming and debilitating effect. Too much work and not enough time to meet the needs of all students are two constant themes in any examination of teacher stress. Most teachers are intrinsically conscientious and dutiful in meeting their students' learning needs, which drives them harder than all other external pressures (Forlin. 1998). The perception of their inability to meet the needs of all their students is a common stressor for teachers. Not only the teacher but also the student can have a large amount of stress in class. Moreover according to Burke (2011) stress on a student in high school is expected, but every year the amount of stress placed on the student increases. Students need to learn what the cause of their stress is and they need to learn how to neutralize it. Some stress in a student

helps that student focus better on their task at hand, while too much stress causes the student to go into a state of overload.

It is worth mentioning the atmosphere in the surveyed classes was quite tense and stressful since the lack of space and the large number of students plus the attitude to the teacher towards some of the students.



Author: William Llumipanta

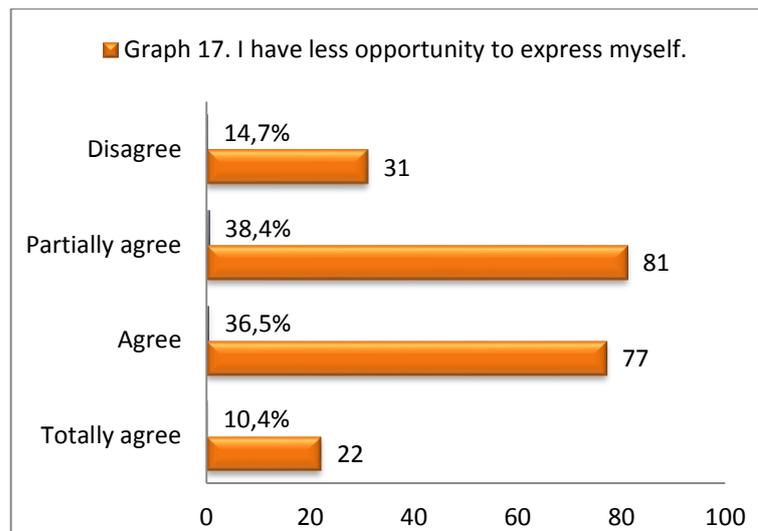
Source: Students' questionnaire

Graph 16 shows that 36 students (17.1%) totally agree about feeling uncomfortable when talking in front of their peers, while 71 students (33.6%) agree on this fact as well. It means than more than a half of the students surveyed do not feel themselves confident and relaxed during class time. On the other hand 32.2% and 17.1% of the students partially agree and disagree respectively about feeling uncomfortable when talking in front of their peers.

The great percentage of disconformity it is clearly evident due to the big number of student, which makes students feel no confidence at the moment of talking. Furthermore Jones (2008) establishes some learning relationships were most students will not do their best in classes when they feel that teachers do not have an interest in them or care about their future. Students can feel whether the teacher cares or is simply "going through the motions." All of the characteristics that we know about building relationships are essential to contribute to highly engaged classroom instruction.

Students show increased effort in classroom activities when teachers take an interest in students as individuals, get to know them by name, and talk to them not only in the classroom but during other activities in the school as well. Another aspect taken into consideration is the creation of the classroom environment. Good instruction can take place in a variety of settings.

Classrooms should be physically comfortable for students with respect to temperature, space, furniture, and structural organization. Not only this recommendation was not evident in any class observed but also the conditioning of every single classroom was really precarious; one of the walls in one classroom was merely of wood and this wall helps as a division to another classroom, windows in all the cases were painted in white or another color in order to avoid distractions to the students, and desks just have enough space for one single text over them, this conditions summing the lack of space create a really hard-to-work environment not just for the student but also for the teacher.

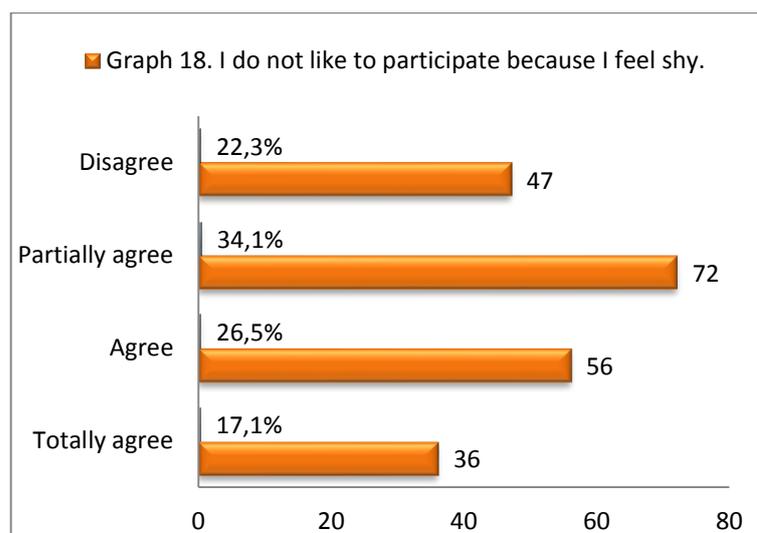


Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

As noticed in graph 17 a total of 22 students (10.4%) totally agree on having less opportunity to express themselves. From the students surveyed 77 (36.5%) agree on this fact as well. In relation to this question 81 students (38.4%) partially agree and finally 31 of them (17.7%) on having less opportunity to express themselves.

There is a great deal of elements that take part in this question. Besides the large number of students and the less chance to express opinions or ideas, the different levels of proficiency play a main role in the possibilities to participate in class. For instance Leaver & Shekhtman (2002) mention that while all students at all levels of proficiency need to develop all components of communicative competence, students at lower levels appear to need the compensation aspects of strategic competence. Superior- level students, however, possess a reasonable amount of strategic competence and, to a lesser extent, sociolinguistic competence, which they must continue to develop. What they may need is more attention to linguistic and discourse competence, especially to formal language. At the end it can be noticed that language competence and level of students play a main role in students' participation.

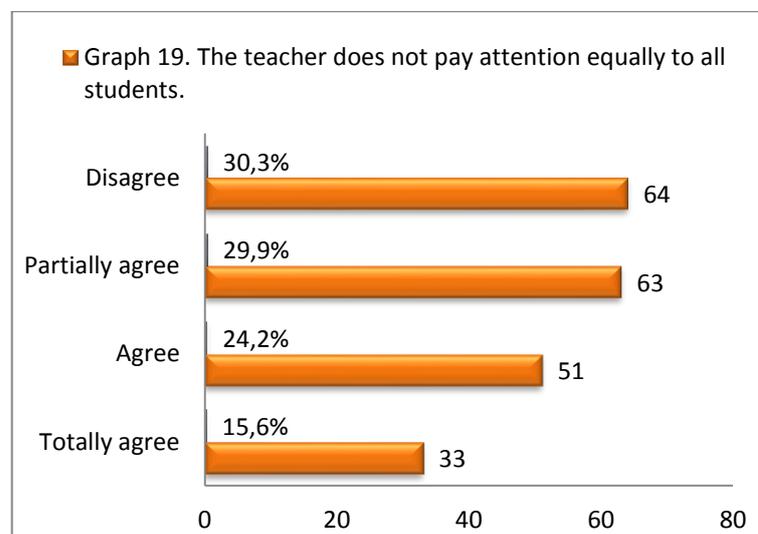


Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

Graph 18 is closely related with motivating students' participation. As it is shown in the graph above, 36 students (17.1%) totally agree on feeling shy when participating in class, 56 of them (26.5%) agree on this fact as well. The number of students who partially agree is 72 (34.1%) and finally 47 of the students surveyed (22.3%) disagree on feeling shy when participating in class.

One of the main reasons for this reaction, besides the large number of students is the lack of motivation provided by the teacher, as mentioned by Weimer (2006) motivating students to participate in classroom discussions is a complex subject. There are some students who assume they do not have to participate as long the assigned work is completed on time, test scores are good, and attendance is satisfactory. As a matter of fact, they prefer other students do the participating, since they think participation does not improve the classroom experience. There is one important aspect to be considered in the current research, and this is the large number of students observed in every class. If we take into consideration the time every class lasts - approximately 40 minutes- then; of course, individual participation results almost impossible to be done. Consequently, even though a good number of students prefer to listen and observe rather than engage in the class discussion, it is a good idea to provide students written material, so that they come up with a brief comment, analyze and critique the activities in class. This will confirm that student is engaged and responded to class.



Author: William Llumipanta

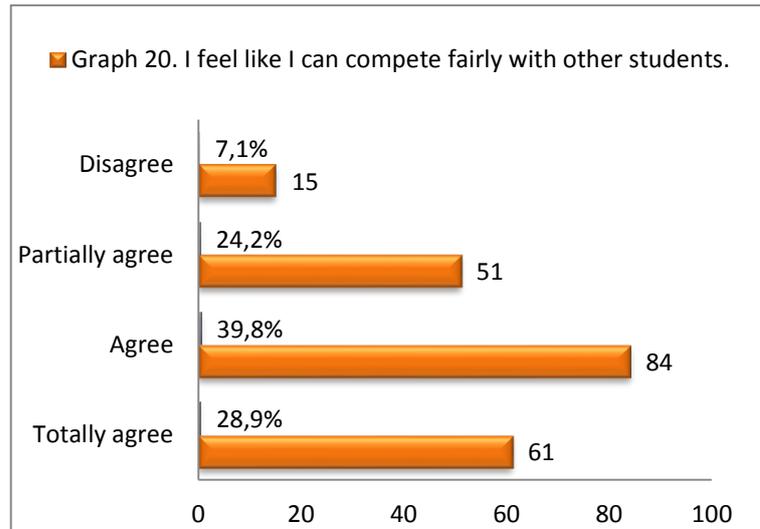
Source: Students' questionnaire

Graph 19 shows that 33 students (15.6%) totally agree about the teacher's attitude or preferences toward some students. Similarly, 51 of them (24.2%) agree about this fact as well. From the surveyed students 63 of them (29.9%) partially agree about this statement and finally 64 of the

total number of students disagree about the teacher's special attention toward any student. As witnessed in the surveyed classes the teacher did not remember the name of some students what can be assumed as a lack of interest on the student. This factor is very subjective due to the student's expectancy and needs; there are cultural and psychological elements that take part in this process, students generally have very high expectations on the teacher but not considered the great number of students he or she has to deal with.

As mentioned by Richards and Bohlke (2011) there are students with different needs; some of them have similar needs and goals, while others have completely different ones. A common thought is that teachers are well aware of their students' needs, level, understanding, and learning styles. But most of the cases this does not happen, especially if the teacher deals with a large class. As observed in the surveyed classes it is really hard for the teacher to know every single student by their name, even worst knowing his or her needs. This "certain uncertainty" makes the language acquisition process, a never ending story with a few results at the end of the high school life.

On the other hand, it is remarkable what Jeffries and Huggett (2000) say when teaching to a small number of students. This group enables the teacher to evaluate the students' comprehension and the application of the content of the course through the progression of it. As a result, it is primarily the teacher's responsibility to engage the students in the teaching-learning process, which is opposed to the common thought of the teacher that expects students to come to class naturally and automatically engaged.

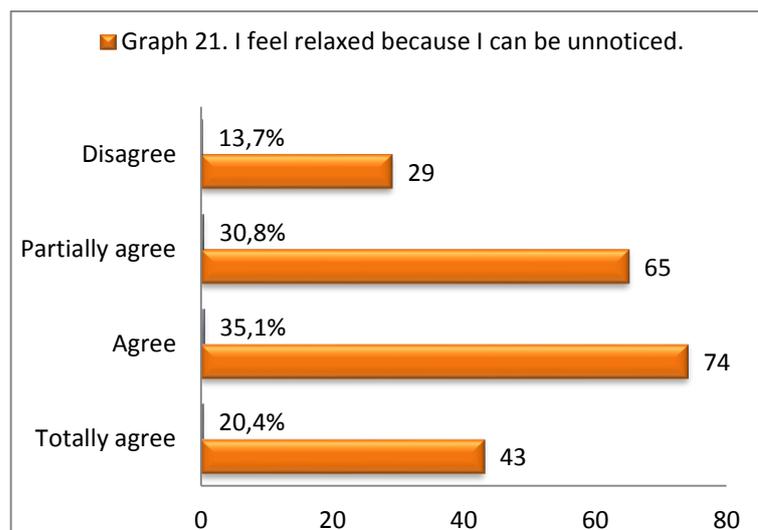


Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

From the surveyed students the graph 20 shows that a total of 61 (28.9%) totally agree about fairly competition with other students, 84 of the (39.8%) agree about this fact as well. While it is worth mentioning that 51 students (24.2%) partially agree about felling fairly competition with other student. And finally from the surveyed students 15 of them (7.1%) disagree about felling fairly competition with other student.

As it can be noticed, more than a 30% of students consider very difficult to compete in classes, this perception can be product of the large number of students and the short time of every class period. Participating in classes can be deeply intimidating, especially in the classrooms of the public high schools filled with a large amount of classmates, most of them barely t know. In this atmosphere the student needs to put more effort in order to succeed. Teachers really appreciate students participation because it allows them to get to know students on a more personal level and can involve students in the subject more thoroughly. As mentioned by Weimer (2010), there are some students who seem to assume that as long as the assigned work is completed on time, test scores are good, and attendance is satisfactory, they shouldn't be forced to participate. It's not that they don't think participation improves the classroom experience, they just prefer that other students do the participating.



Author: William Llumipanta

Source: Students' questionnaire

The graph 21 shows that 43 students (20.4%) totally agree on feeling relaxed because they can be unnoticed. A great number of students – 74 – (35.1%) agree on this question as well, while 65 of the surveyed students (30.8%) partially agree on feeling relaxed because they can be unnoticed. Finally from the observed classes, 29 students 13.7% of the total; disagree on the statement of this question. As already mentioned the large number of students plays a main role in the great percentage –more than 50% - of students who considered they can be unnoticed during the class time.

On this ground it is really important to consider students' needs due to the fact they feel more interested in the lesson and focused their attention on learning English as much as they can. However, some students got bored and lost their interest and motivation to learn the foreign language in those classes where their needs are not considered. Moreover as Davies and Pearse (2000) say, the achieving of good results with large groups is quite difficult since the learners may not be capable of seeing or hearing the teacher and then individual practice is reduced. For instance students' enthusiasm, involvement, and willingness to participate should take into consideration, since it affects the quality of class discussion as an opportunity for learning. The challenge of the teacher is to engage all students, keep them talking to each other about the same topic, and help them develop perceptions into

the material. Roby (1988) warns against falling into quasi discussions - encounters in which students talk but do not develop or criticize their own positions and fail to reflect on the process and outcomes of the session.

CONCLUSIONS

- This research shows that one of the major factors that affect the teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools is the poor or wrongly applied teaching methods and techniques.
- This research indicates that the lack of feedback provided by the teachers is the factor that mostly affects learners' language-learning process. Teachers do not give enough input and feedback to the students due to the large number of them in each class.
- Most of the time, teachers do not take into consideration different learning styles or the level of proficiency of their students, making the development of the teaching-learning process difficult; affecting students' development.
- The physical space limits interaction and affects negatively the teaching learning process making it difficult to arrange seats to carry out role play, group work, or any other group activity.
- Regarding class size; some students had difficulty hearing or seeing the teacher well and vice versa, making that reading, speaking and writing activities cannot be developed adequately or even develop at all.
- The absence of teaching aids such as: CD player, videos, computers, postcards, and other resources affects negatively on the teaching-learning process and consequently on students' competence in the English language.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is highly recommended that teachers of public high schools should be trained in accordance with the CEFR, which is the regulation taken into consideration for the language proficiency and curricula design of the Ecuadorian public high schools.
- In-service teachers in the public education should have a continuous updating program, continuous training courses and periodical evaluations in order to improve their instructional skills and their teaching ability to benefit students' learning process in large classes.
- The use of feedback should be more continuous in the class; this allows the learner to attempt to correct themselves and consequently improving competence in English. It is very important to use correction codes in sub skills such as writing or speaking.
- Teachers of public high schools in Ecuador should use a variety of teaching resources and supporting materials such as visual, audio and realia, to provide students with a fulfilling learning experience; coping their different learning styles.
- Teachers should take into account students' needs in order to offer them a motivating learning process, achieving engagement from them.
- The physical classroom conditions are a major concern in the teaching-learning environment. The conditions of the classrooms should change allowing more space for different seating arrangement and a greater variety of activities that will increase students' concentration and motivation to learn.
- There are many ways and teaching techniques to be used in class. Teachers should structure activities involving cultural patterns of the L2 in order to support student-to-student or group interaction, these activities give the chance to gauge what each student has learned, and it demonstrates student' progress in language acquisition.
- It is recommended that educational institutions and authorities reduce the number of students in English classes so that a beneficial teaching-learning environment can be created. Therefore learners and teachers have opportunities to effectively interact and improve the teaching-learning process.

- Teachers in large classes should rearrange the classroom space in the most convenient way so that students feel comfortable and confident to interact with the whole class and with their teacher as well
- Ecuadorian government should invest more of the per-capita income in the educational system, so that high schools could have a well-equipped language laboratory and educational resources that enable teachers to offer students useful means for learning English.
- Teachers need to imply more resources and more planning time for students to become socially, culturally and actively competent in English language.

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ANNEXES

Theme	Pg. Nº	Information	Form Nº 1
Teaching Approaches and Methods	29-38		
Citation in APA format:			

Title of the Study:		
Citation in APA format:		
Item	Information	Form N°
		1
Research question(s), objectives, or hypothesis:		
Subjects or participants:		
Setting or place:		
Methods:		
Results:		
Author's/Authors' Conclusions & Recommendations:		
Limitations identified by the author(s)		

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 la influencia de las clases numerosas en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje del Inglés.

La información que usted brindará a continuación se usará únicamente con fines académicos-investigativos. Le rogamos contestar honestamente de acuerdo a la siguiente escala de referencia.

Muy satisfactorio:	Totalmente de acuerdo
Satisfactorio:	De acuerdo
Poco satisfactorio	Parcialmente de acuerdo
Nada satisfactorio	En desacuerdo

Datos Informativos:

Nombre de la institución: _____

Tipo de institución: Pública () Privada ()

Curso: 8vo. () 9no. () 10mo. () 1ro. Bach. () 2do. Bach. () 3ro. Bach. ()

Ciudad: _____

Instrucción: Marque con una X según su criterio.

A. Aspectos académico

En clases con bastantes estudiantes:		Muy satisfactorio	Satisfactorio	Poco satisfactorio	Nada satisfactorio
1	Se realizan actividades que permiten poner en práctica lo aprendido.				
2	Se realizan actividades que permiten practicar las habilidades de escucha, habla, lectura y escritura.				
3	Todos los estudiantes están atentos y participan en las actividades desarrolladas en la clase, inclusive los estudiantes de la última fila.				
4	Se utilizan actividades variadas dentro de la clase; como por ejemplo, actividades en grupo, actividades individuales, actividades en pareja, etc.				
5	Se utilizan actividades tales como dramatizaciones, concursos, debates, juegos, etc.				
6	Se puede copiar durante los exámenes.				
7	Se puede realizar tareas de otras materias.				
8	El espacio de la clase te permite desarrollar adecuadamente las actividades asignadas por el profesor.				
9	No puedo recibir una retroalimentación adecuada por parte del profesor debido al número elevado de estudiantes.				

B. Aspectos Sociales

Nº	En clases con bastantes estudiantes:	Muy satisfactorio	Satisfactorio	Poco satisfactorio	Nada satisfactorio
10	Existe interacción entre los estudiantes y entre el profesor y los estudiantes.				
11	Tengo la oportunidad de relacionarme con más personas.				
12	El profesor no recuerda el nombre de todos los estudiantes.				
13	El ambiente es menos tenso ya que hay menor probabilidad de que el profesor realice preguntas constantes al mismo estudiante.				
14	Puedo usar mi teléfono celular o algún otro dispositivo electrónico sin ser descubierto por el profesor.				

C. Aspectos Psicológicos

	En clases con bastantes estudiantes:	Muy satisfactorio	Satisfactorio	Poco satisfactorio	Nada satisfactorio
15	El ambiente es estresante.				
16	Me siento incómodo al momento de hablar frente a mis compañeros.				
17	Tengo menos oportunidad de expresarme.				
18	No me gusta participar porque me siento tímido.				
19	El profesor no presta atención por igual a todos los estudiantes.				
20	Siento que puedo competir sanamente con otros estudiantes.				
21	Me siento relajado porque puedo pasar por desapercibido.				



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

¡Gracias por su colaboración!
La Universidad Católica de Loja

Loja, abril de 2013

Señor(a) Director(a)
Presente.

De mi consideración:

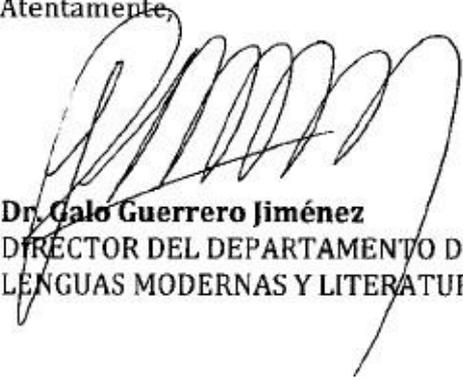
Reciba un cordial saludo de la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja –UTPL y del Departamento de Lenguas Modernas y Literatura a la vez que le expresamos nuestros deseos de éxitos en sus importantes funciones.

Durante varias décadas la UTPL viene ofreciendo la formación de docentes en el área de Inglés en la Modalidad Abierta y a Distancia, quienes al finalizar sus estudios realizan un trabajo de investigación que les permite conocer la realidad educativa de nuestro país y de esta manera contribuir con alternativas de mejoramiento a la enseñanza-aprendizaje del Inglés.

En esta ocasión los estudiantes están trabajando en el tema relacionado con *los factores que influyen en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en colegios del Ecuador*. Por este motivo, solicitamos su permiso para que los estudiantes puedan hacer observaciones en la institución educativa a la que usted muy acertadamente representa, así mismo solicitamos que por su intermedio se les comunique a los docentes de su institución para que colaboren y permitan realizar las observaciones sin ningún inconveniente, ya que esto contribuirá al enriquecimiento de nuestros profesionales en formación dando como resultado el mejoramiento en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje.

Agradecemos su valiosa colaboración que es muy importante para lograr los objetivos planteados en la investigación mencionada.

Atentamente,


Dr. Galo Guerrero Jiménez
DIRECTOR DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE
LENGUAS MODERNAS Y LITERATURA





UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

Loja, abril de 2013

Señor(a) Docente
Presente.

De mi consideración:

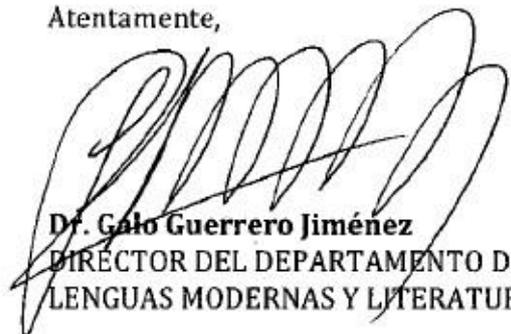
Reciba un cordial saludo de la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja –UTPL y del Departamento de Lenguas Modernas y Literatura a la vez que le expresamos nuestros deseos de éxitos en sus importantes funciones.

Durante varias décadas la UTPL viene ofreciendo la formación de docentes en el área de Inglés en la Modalidad Abierta y a Distancia, quienes al finalizar sus estudios realizan un **trabajo de investigación** que les permite conocer la realidad educativa de nuestro país y de esta manera contribuir con alternativas de mejoramiento a la enseñanza-aprendizaje del Inglés.

En esta ocasión los estudiantes están trabajando en el tema relacionado con *los factores que influyen en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en colegios del Ecuador*. Por este motivo, y contando con la respectiva autorización del (la) rector (a) solicitamos su colaboración para que los estudiantes puedan hacer una observación de las clases de Inglés que usted imparte en esta prestigiosa institución educativa ya que esto contribuirá al enriquecimiento de nuestros profesionales en formación dando como resultado el mejoramiento en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje.

Agradecemos su valiosa colaboración que es muy importante para lograr los objetivos planteados en la investigación mencionada.

Atentamente,


Dr. Galo Guerrero Jiménez
DIRECTOR DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE
LENGUAS MODERNAS Y LITERATURA



Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja
Titulación de Licenciado en Ciencias de la Educación
Mención Inglés

Autor:

Centro Universitario:

Lista de docentes observados:

N^a	Docente (Nombres Completos)	Correo electrónico del docente (opcional)	Institución a la que pertenece	Número telefónico de la institución
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				