UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja

TITULACIÓN DE LICENCIADO EN CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in
Ecuadorian public high schools

Trabajo de fin de titulación.

Autor: Mención:
González Sánchez, Fernando Mauricio

Inglés

Directora:
Camacho Minuche, Gina Karina, M.S. Ed

Centro Universitario Otavalo

2013

CERTIFICACIÓN

Magister.

Gina Karina Camacho Minuche.

DIRECTORA DEL TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

C E R T I F I C A:

Que el presente trabajo, denominado: "Factors that affect the English language teaching - learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools" realizado por el profesional en formación: González Sánchez Fernando Mauricio; cumple con los requisitos establecidos en las normas generales para la Graduación en la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, tanto en el aspecto de forma como de contenido, por lo cual me permito autorizar su presentación para los fines pertinentes.

Loja, junio de 2013

f) . . . .

CI: . . . .

CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

"Yo, González Sánchez Fernando Mauricio, declaro ser autor del presente trabajo y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales.

Adicionalmente declaro conocer y aceptar la disposición del Art. 67 del Estatuto Orgánico de la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja que en su parte pertinente textualmente dice: "formar parte del patrimonio de la Universidad la propiedad intelectual de investigaciones, trabajos científicos o técnicos y tesis de grado que se realicen a través, o con el apoyo financiero, académico o institucional (operativo) de la Universidad".

f. ....

Autor: González Sánchez Fernando Mauricio

Cédula: 1002239414

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The topic of this research is "Factors that affect the English language teaching – learning process in Ecuadorian high schools". Its purpose is to discover out the principal problems and difficulties that are currently affecting English students, teachers, and public institutions. This work was developed in public high schools in the city of Otavalo, Ecuador.

A quantitative method was used for this study, where 15 questionnaires and personal interviews were given to teachers of 5 different high schools along with the same number of class observations and student interviews.

The results obtained from the analysis showed that the level and proficiency of the English teachers are considerably low, triggering an inadequate educational process and poor results in student achievement in the language and motivation towards learning English.

The main conclusion reached in this investigation is that, as long the level of proficiency and professional education of teachers is not be radically raised and the requirements of higher scores, better quality controls, and monitoring from institutions, this situation it is not going to improve.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted and acknowledged that the level of English in Ecuador is very low, not only in the general population which is either not interested in learning English or does not like the language, but also for English language teachers and students.

According to findings of this research, English teachers and students have significantly low proficiency in the language, results that are in agreement with official statistics compiled by government education institutions, as is reviewed later in this paper. Institutions do not seem to consider the importance of the subject and the pertinent changes necessary to improve this situation.

The general objective of this research was to analyze the factors that are affecting the English language learning and teaching process in Ecuador.

Related to this purpose the specific objectives for the research were: determine the classroom conditions in which English lessons take place; identify the characteristics of in – service English teachers, and to determine teachers' instructional competence.

Previous studies have shown the importance of this subject for modern global education, for instance, Chop Ler (2010) conducted a study to find the causes of low proficiency in English in rural schools, having that students demonstrated a negative attitude towards English, therefore they were not willing to learn and the environment did not encourage the use of the target language.

It was established that the rural cultural setting did not favor the learning of English where the use of this language was considered useless and unpatriotic.

The study found limitations in the low number of students and teachers surveyed, and by the fact that neither students nor teachers understood the English used on the

questionnaires, needing translators to explain the questions.

A second study done by Andrade & Williams (2009) researched the relationship between anxiety and verbal reactions to the anxiety-provoking situations that commonly affect many foreign language learners. It was found that students were weakly to strongly affected by anxiety and that anxiety is likely to significantly hinder the performance of some students.

It is proposed that as long as anxiety can hinder performance and achievement, classroom anxiety is a topic which deserves continuing investigation, in order to implement measures that will minimize anxiety's negative effects.

The limitation found in this study was that students rated themselves after the anxiety provoking situation, not before, which may reflect their experiences in the course, not the attitude they began the course with.

An additional work that deserves mention here is the study done by Thi & Baldauf (2007) who did a research about the lack of motivation and the factors that are likely to contribute to low motivation and their levels of impact.

Factors investigated included students' attitudes towards English, their experiences of failure or lack of success, and incidents related to their self-esteem; the latter consisted of teacher-related factors, the learning environment, and other external factors.

Results emphasize the responsibility of students to overcome their own demotivation, but also placed more emphasis on the responsibilities of teachers who have a great impact on learners. No limitations were found.

Through this research, students, teachers, and institutions can be benefited taking measures to correct and improve educational policies, procedures, and monitoring, addressing the different factors considered as problematic issues among the English learning and teaching process.

Future investigations could take the present work as a base to extend and increase the scope developed in this study.

There were no methodological limitations in this study, but it would be advisable to improve upon this investigation by surveying a greater number of surveyed teachers, students and classroom observations, both of which would help to amplify these results.

The main conclusion reached in this research is that, as long the level of proficiency and professional education of teachers are not radically raised and the requirements of higher scores, better quality controls and monitoring from institutions are not modified and enhanced, this situation is highly problematic and unlikely to improve in the future.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

This research took place in the city of Otavalo, Imbabura province, Ecuador. The teachers who were observed, surveyed, and interviewed were from five public high schools with a large number of students. None of the teachers were native speakers, and almost all of them had graduated from the same university.

Procedures

Initially, bibliographic research was carried out in order to obtain the scientific framework of information gathered from books, Internet web sites, newspapers, and articles. From each independent theme three different authors or sources along with five previous studies were investigated.

Second, the literature review of this research was summarized with the selection of the bibliographic investigation; once this step was completed the field research started with the selection of five public high schools where the surveys and interviews were conducted. In each high school three teachers were selected who completed a questionnaire and a personal interview. All the questions asked in the questionnaires and interviews were previously designed by the team of the graduation program of the English school; they addressed teaching methods, classroom space, resources, number of students, monitoring, students' needs and levels; in addition, during the interviews the method of note taking was used to collect relevant related information about academic and professional experience, views and perspectives of English language teaching and other topics.

Additionally, a survey addressed to the students was used. This instrument was

useful to ask students about their thoughts their teachers, the English language, space, resources, and so on.

Finally, each teacher was observed in one teaching session in order to measure aspects such as the use of activities, teaching methods, percentage of English use in the class, resources and lesson plans.

The next stage was to distribute and tabulate the information obtained in the field research. The description, analysis, and interpretation of results were done quantitatively.

The quantitative tabulation consisted of organizing the questions from the teachers' questionnaire in accordance to the variables in which this study was based, those being variables concerning students, teachers, classrooms, and variables concerning educational institutions. Once the results were tabulated, descriptive graphics were constructed to support the information.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture of Ecuador (n.d), knowledge of the English language must be a focal point of education because English is the most widely used language in the world. It is a universal, globalized tool for international understanding and both cultural and technological development. Thus, being able to understand and use English is an essential need for students, who should acquire competent English language skills for their field of work and professional life. This is a fundamental consideration in educational processes at all levels.

Senescyt, (n.d.), reveals statistics collected by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education in 2011 based on the CRADLE project (Curriculum Reform and Development for the Learning of English) regarding students between ninth and twelfth grades whose evaluation scores were significantly low reaching only 65% of performance. Similar tests were conducted in order to test teachers' levels of English; the evaluations found extremely low levels of teaching performance according to internationally established testing parameters. These low scores would not be sufficient to allow them to teach at all, according to CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) standards.

In accordance with this data it is possible to establish that the lack of knowledge and proficiency reflected in students scores is closely related to the insufficient level of proficiency of English teachers who are not adequately trained and are lacking in the proper methodology and application skills regarding the national curriculum.

Presented below is theoretical support of topics related to factors that affect the English language teaching/learning process in order to assist in finding possible solutions to improve this situation.

Teaching Approaches and Methods

Dash & Dash (2007) describe the structural approach as a set of tools specialized in teaching at early years of language teaching that has to be obtained by means of intense practice; words, sounds and structures are the elements considered as tools. This approach gives importance to speech as well as hearing as fundamental parts to the process of English learning, focusing on the attainment of good accent and intonation.

In addition the same authors define the situational approach by means of practice the language in real life situations that offers understanding about several different contexts and actions of expression and meaning. The teacher can display practical setups to involve the class in the techniques and behaviors developed to draw the situations.

Similar is the concept of the Natural Approach that suggests language is a way of communication that has to be learned in real situations, using a lot of listening techniques and input, as it is analyzed in (Davies & Pearse, 2000).

Another related approach is the Notional Functional Approach which is based on notions as place, time person, and functions such as asking, describing, requesting, explaining, among others, and it is very used in conversational courses, according to (Wright, 2010).

Thanasoulas (2002) mentions that the Audiolingual Method was developed in the years of the World War II, was also known as the "Army Method", and was

characterized fundamentally in memorization features such as repetitive drills, learning vocabulary, structural patterns, using tapes, and visual aids.

Suggestopedia it is also an outdated but very interesting method which emphasizes the extra sensorial perceptions in order to retain the knowledge using music as a background, reaching a comfortable environment when students can be suggested to learn, as Thanasoulas (2002) mentions.

Yang (n.d.) describes several methods such as The Direct Method which is based on sessions of questions and answers activities using exclusively English, promoting students to achieve in this way the learned language.

Another method is the Total Physical Response Method which is based on imitations of actions of given instructions, talking and listening very carefully. Students are supposed to understand the words and then later using them to construct sentences.

Similar bases are found in the Communicative Language Method which gives importance to the understanding of the real meaning of words and sentences in context of being able to express contents in the proper currently used manner. To practice with native speakers in common and real situations is promoted in order to obtain the understanding of the desired purpose.

Teaching Techniques

Mukalel (2005) describes techniques as tools related to the teaching–learning process which the teacher uses to create a specific learning effect or component inside the principles or fundaments of a particular activity or method applied. These techniques can be organized and manipulated to be adapted to match the special characteristics and features of the selected teaching method or target group of students; for this reason the

success in the application of any techniques relies on the skills displayed by the teacher. The author considers questioning as one of the most resourceful techniques that can be part of any teaching method being a simple way to approach any kind of interaction or situation.

Furthermore, according to Jacob (n.d) techniques are considered as special tricks used by the teacher in order to achieve the objectives of a particular lesson; therefore techniques are seeing in a direct close relation whit the particular lesson objectives. An important technique to teaching English offered is Demonstrations, which are the activities of presenting different features and items exemplifying ideas, concepts and structures.

In addition Claxton (2008) analyzes role play and debate techniques, stating that Role Play is the one useful to display interactions involving real situations whit educational purposes. It is a very interesting method that requires not only the practicing of the language competency but also promotes discussions about social interests subjects. The role play activities create engagement from students in all the stages of the play, a high degree of motivation and creativity.

Debate is also a very useful technique that offers several benefits, specially developing communicational and conversational skills inside a frame limits of time and order, fomenting the exchange of ideas and the organized construction of speeches of argumentation, critical thinking and emphasizes the necessity of conflict solution, respect and tolerance.

Managing Learning

Clarity in the explanations, instructions and directions related to concepts and ideas about subjects referent to a lesson in the classroom are explained in Nath & Cohen (2012) where is established that students will be able to fulfill their tasks as long as clearer are the instructions given by the teacher; it is suggested that directions are best explained in a whole class format instead to a fewer groups ensuring the reception of the instructions. It is always useful to ask students to repeat the orders and reiterate them again as many times as necessary. In order to get students to perform their tasks properly it is advisable to explain every stage of the activities avoiding errors and missing details.

Scaffolding is considered as a strategy in which students can progress through activities specifically designed for them by teachers in order to improve student's use of language as it is analyzed in (Cummins & Davison, 2007). This strategy promotes the students encouragement to develop their tasks and teachers can provide assessment and feedback in several ways such as recasts like errors correction, recasting of utterances, and target like models, among others. The application of scaffolding offers solution to leaner's needs with proper types of feedback, assessment and involvement.

A completely different approach is offered in Raynaud (2010) where the aspect of notion of time is considered fundamental to the development of the class minutes and the activities performed. It is pointed that teachers must find a balance between the transition from one activity to another avoiding frustration and boredom from students , also it is necessary to create a sense of effectiveness in the performance of tasks in the determined given time, observing limits in every each activity. This can lead to a positive pressure on the students to show all their best qualities and efforts.

Lesson Design

According to Doff (2007) a lesson can be designed focusing on topics, structures and skills, some lessons can introduce combinations of these elements also.

Every lesson must be carefully presented and practiced, considering on what skill is going to be focused the lesson: listening, speaking, and writing or reading; ideally a lesson should include practice and activities whit more than only one skill.

The basis of a good lesson resides in its preparation, a written lesson plan is the best method to follow the exact procedures to be displayed in the class, this also is very helpful to determine in what extent the proposed contents were actually completed and examine better options to improve the class.

For Baker & Westrup (2000) a lesson consists in three different phases called PPP, (presentation, practice, production). The presentation phase is the moment when the new items and components of the class are introduced; this activity should make clear meaning, use and functions of the new contents.

Practice phase includes activities such as repeating listening, writing, among several different possible ones, in which students can work individually or in groups. Practice should involve a clear understanding of the new language items.

Production phase involves activities as homework that students have to do outside the classroom; this part is considered as a final rehearsal.

In contrast, Richards & Renandya (2002) describe five lesson plans phases, perspective or opening, stimulation, instruction, closure and follow up. The first one or the opening is considered as a review of the previous lesson and an introduction to the new lesson; stimulation deals whit activities and strategies to catch students attention

and interest to the contents that are going to be presented; instruction is the presentation of the activity, checking understanding, individual or group work and students involvement in the activities. Closure looks forward to check the students learning asking specific questions about how well they did in relation whit the new knowledge; finally follow up is a reinforce of the learned concepts introducing new ones.

Class Size

Talking about the number of students per class, Rotherham (2011) sustains that beyond than focusing in the size of the class it is far much more important the effectiveness and ability of the teacher. It is analyzed that the issues about the number of students in every classroom has a close relationship with school and district policies regarding cost – benefit issues which design the configuration of the schools and classrooms, but despite the fact that it would be desirable to have classrooms whit 20 students, this would not guarantee the quality of the education that resides exclusively in the effectiveness and skills of the teacher.

Similarly, Blatchford (2003) points that class reduction policies have been implemented in several countries, arguing that the evidences are limited and unclear about the complexities involved, anyway results shows that larger classes have an adverse effect on the quality of teaching and in the individual students performance and concentration, in the same way a large class is challenging in controlling discipline and general class management. In smaller classes it is seen that teachers take individual time whit the students, give them assessment, orientation, feedback and identification of specific individual needs.

Finally, it is recognized that a small class will not make a good teacher if they are not effective teachers, as same that large classes will present difficult challenging issues that most teachers are not prepared to face.

Jacobs & Hall (2002) propose ideas about how groups should be designed considering the number of students, where the configuration is based according whit the time and the activity; small groups constructions are recommended for short time availability due the fact that in smaller groups there is fewer options for students to lose concentration and therefore to been able to complete activities faster. Larger groups are good in performing big tasks that can meet variety of ideas, skills, backgrounds, etc. the criteria to selecting the groups constructions relies in elements like interests, language proficiency, sex, race, among others.

Assuming the importance of the group design and the class size and taking care of the advantages and disadvantages of every case can provide improvement in the class interaction and dynamics leading in better results.

Classroom Space

Regarding the subject of classroom space, West (2010) mentions that it is necessary to considerer the aspects of the physical space within the desks, chairs, furniture and other elements presented in a classroom, suggesting that the configuration can be changed considering the activity performed.

Horseshoe shape arrangement is proposed for debate activities as well that different arrangements can be displayed according to academic or disciplinary purposes: the classroom display reflects the personality and style of the teacher who obviously needs a personal space in front of the class to develop properly all the activities planned.

For Kress (2005) physical arrangement space is named classroom layout, this element is the criteria of the teacher to control the social relationships, the pedagogic style and reflects the common sense about how the students should work in the room.

Here the importance of the classroom layout is significantly recognized by the fact that the shape of the classroom display affects the factual learning of English as well the way that English is experienced by the students in the classroom. Unfortunately this fact is often not considered as important and even not considered at all as an element of impact in the teaching results. The classroom display should create also an attractive learning environment leading to a work and effort motivation perspective.

MacGregor (2007) analyzes the aspect of the architecture of the schools and classrooms, stating that such constructions often are structures without efficient notions of space, triggering in a lack of motivation, self esteem, attention, causing a negative impact in the students and in their learning and general knowledge achievement.

It is advised that schools should pay attention to spatial construction in order to improve different forms of learning exploiting best results of the environment reflecting a true ideology of education and psychology.

Seating Arrangement

Besides of the typical row desk arrangement configuration, Brandvik & McKnight (2011) offers different possibilities as the circle configuration when every student is facing others, useful for class discussions where the fear of facing a frontal position is not relevant. In cases of group work desks can be arranged in twos, threes or fours for small groups to get an effective communication although this display can be loud because the participation in each group. Again is proposed the horseshoe shape

adding the idea of the teacher having easy access to move from student to student and it creates the sense that the barrier between teacher and students has not longer exists. An important change in the classroom setting to avoid monotony and boredom is to move the class to another location.

In West (2010) the seating arrangement is differentiated according to a selected approach or style such as the orderly rows assumed as a traditional approach in where the teacher has a clear view of all students and easy access to walk between the desks rows; it is a behavior controlled set up and usually choose by traditional teachers.

Another layout is separate tables of small groups and the horseshoe shape. All seating dispositions work effectively according to the task and the teaching style.

Harmer (2007) considers elements like crowded classes, fixed furniture and students attitudes to propose seating patterns as teaching as a whole group, students working on their own or grouping them in pairs or larger groups, having their own sitting advantages and disadvantages.

Classroom and Teaching Resources

Realia, pictures, visuals, multimedia, demonstrations related literature and texts are described by Echevarría, Vogt & Short (2008) as classroom resources. Realia are the real life objects such as clothing, fruits, toys, tools that are helpful to make connections between their knowledge and the new language presented. Pictures are the photographs and images which depict any possible object, scene, situation or place; hand drawing, newspapers and magazines are useful to find examples to this purpose. Multimedia are all the available materials like recordings, videos and internet resources. Literature is the

written materials can be used to support contents about specific subjects as fiction, novels, history, etc.

Stemplesky (2002) focuses on videos used in classrooms as resource which relies for its effectiveness on the teacher who is responsible to select the video materials that address students' needs and interests. Video materials should achieve students' motivations engaging interest and stimulating the real use of the language; being video an element whit massive visual and audio components it is an important issue how well the teacher selects and determines the appropriate video features. A very important remark is pointed when calls the attention of the fact that video and television are only perceived as a source of entertainment but not of education, therefore again teachers has the great duty to help students to understand and appreciate the educational elements that are incorporated in every video presentation.

On other hand, Harmer (2007) discusses about the advantages of computers and specially the internet in education. Almost every web site has several useful features that can be exploited by English students, like virtual visits to interest locations, searching information, lyrics of songs, maps, etc, all of them sources of authentic English materials. The use of email communication is very beneficial and convenient to the proficiency of learning and practicing English as a second language. For example contacting people globally increases the student's interests and motivation.

Apart from internet, computers offer excellent possibilities through cd's or dvd's containing encyclopedias varying in contents such as nature, technology, history, science, documentaries that can be used and applied to educational purposes practicing English.

Classroom Observation

To Pham (2010) classroom observation is an important procedure that allows teachers to receive insights about their teaching and it is helpful to improve their conduction of the class and the strategies implemented in the context where students learn. It is suggested that observers should not be seen as intruders that would disturb or criticize teachers work, but colleagues that would help to construct a better classroom place.

Sadia (n.d.) explains that observations can be a very constructive and positive experience if they are collaborative and try to focus on the normal development of the teacher's class and on the evaluation of the theories and techniques used by the teacher, instead of the observer being a silent inquisitor, possibly creating anxiety and confusion.

Richards & Farrel (2005) state that observation provides a great opportunity for inexperienced teachers to see how senior teachers conduct a lesson, as well the observed teachers can enrich their knowledge receiving some advice or suggestion of a different point of view about solving a particular situation or problem; therefore, it is a very positive experience for both sides, having the chance to interact and share new ideas, expertise and to discuss concerns and difficulties. It is also explained that the points an observer can study are the timing, activities, techniques, participation and language.

Student's Motivation

Burden (2000) considers motivation in ESL/EFL classroom as one of the most important factors; consequently teachers have to appreciate its role in learning. Motivation is described as a phenomenon that includes several factors like the individual will, the need of achieving success, stimulation, experience, etc, all of them playing a

fundamental role that can start, sustain, intensify or discourage the conduct directed to the learning activity or the learning process.

Roast (2006) supports the idea of incorporate approaches and technology to generate students' motivation as part of being a successful teacher and also considers motivation as an important essence of language teaching methodology due the fact that motivation provides the energy to make the effort to sustain the activities developed in the learning process, giving the results and ultimate success.

Dornyei (2001) recognizes two types of motivation in the learning context: instrumental and integrative motivation. Instrumental is the desire to learn in order to achieve a specific goal or fulfill some specific need. Integrational is the one based on the objectives to learn the language to communicate and been identified whit all related elements to the target language.

In the same way, it is indicated that students with just instrumental motivation closeness, rather than integrational motivation, will have less success acquiring the language. It is also noted that intrinsic motivation been the one that looks to get the learning for its own sake and extrinsic motivation derived from external incentives.

Learning Styles

Felder (2010) defines learning styles as the strengths in the way students take and process information. This is characterized by the individual preferences and strengths they have in specific elements such as facts, data, algorithms, theories, mathematical models, etc. Some students reflect special inclination to visual forms like pictures or graphics, some others respond better to verbal forms.

Another important distinction is the preference of active and interactive settings,

opposite to introspective and individual styles for the learners. In the same way is mentioned that educational objectives need to be adapted to help students to construct stronger skills in their favorite ones and also on the less preferred learning styles.

Kelly (2010) differentiates three types of learners, visual, auditory and tactile/kinesthetic; it is a fact that most people learn using any of these three styles but each person always shows an affinity to one specifically. It is recognized that the tactile/kinesthetic learners are the majority among learners, which is the one most difficult to implement in class, but it is possible to implement strategies to work with this model such as role plays, debates, etc.

Although learners adapt most easily to a certain learning style, Kelly points out also that it is the responsibility of the teacher to help students succeed in each of the styles since, most likely, students will be asked to adapt to all of them at some point in their futures.

Shumint (n.d.) refers to learning styles as the individual attributes of the learner, related to their biological and psychological differences. It is important to recognize these factors in ESL/EFL education because of having students from many cultures and backgrounds among foreign language students and users. It is stated that learning styles besides of including the cognitive field also incorporates affective and psychological factors being in the end a "multidimensional" environmental element.

Students Intelligence or Aptitude to learn English

Ellis (1999) considers the ability of language aptitude as a gift to learning languages and as a set of abilities that enables some individuals to learn new language

features faster than others. There are special language tests that had been applied in order to measure these abilities.

Lightbown & Spada (2006) report that these kinds of intelligence tests show a link between intelligence and language learning, therefore an important IQ score can predict success in second language learning, despite the fact that IQ tests are more related to metalinguistic knowledge than communicative abilities

According to Carrol (1973) there are three components of language ability measures; phonetic, been the skill of memorize new language sounds; grammatical sensibility, the awareness of syntactical patterning of sentences in a language; inductive ability, the one that examines and identify patterns and relationships between meaning and grammatical forms.

This was the review about the factors considered that affect the learning and teaching of English as a second language; it was analyzed factors concerning students, teachers, classrooms and educational institutions. Whit this information is possible to draw the framework of reference to addressing properly this situation

Presented herewith are five studies that discuss factors affecting the English language teaching/learning process that will reinforce understanding of the topic, showing valuable investigations from prestigious researchers and academic scientists that have been working in the field of the EFL development.

Chop Ler (2010) formulated a study to find what causes the low proficiency in English on rural students. The objectives of the study were to obtain empirical data of the relationship between English proficiency of the students in relation whit the rural cultural factors and to provide suggestions and solutions to improve the proficiency of

English among rural students. The participants were considered among a group of twenty students and ten teachers coming from different ethnic groups with different socioeconomic backgrounds studying in six rural schools in Malaysia.

Open-ended questions were used in both interviews and questionnaires in order to obtain their views of the problems of learning and teaching English. Semi structured interviews sessions were handed out for the students while the teachers were given a questionnaire.

On the basis of this study, it was noted that there is a need for an effective English teaching methodology in rural schools. The students need to change their negative attitude towards the learning of English to a positive one.

The rural students consider the use of English as being unpatriotic and useless. This negative attitude must be corrected and students must realize it is a global language and should be encouraged to speak English.

The study by Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu (2006)explores how and whit what frequency secondary school teachers use instructional resources in teaching English language, if language teachers use appropriate methods in teaching English and also questions if secondary school students in Nigeria learn English language in an environment conducive to learning.

The population of this study included senior secondary school students in public secondary schools in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. 3000 senior secondary school students were randomly selected for the study.

The main instruments used for this study were a questionnaire and observation schedules. The questionnaire had four sections dealing with demographic items such as

school type and location; instructional resources/media used by the teachers frequently, methods teachers frequently adopted for teaching English language, and the school environment. The observations were conducted by assistants whom were trained to observe each classroom and some classroom proceedings during administration of the questionnaire noting the features or characteristics of the learning environment.

The study concludes that the public secondary schools in Nigeria are far behind in time offering multiple pathways to teaching and learning English as a second language. This fact explains why the system has been witnessing steady decline with the percentage of students who failed English Language examinations fluctuating between 55% and 75%. The effect of this is that secondary school students who find their way into the university are already at a disadvantage due to poor background and preparation in language education. Technologies such as audio and video recordings, language laboratories and computer can be more effective teaching tools for English Language lessons as they offer authentic learning experience when interwoven with existing curriculum.

Andrade & Williams (2009) researched about the relationship between anxiety and what are the characteristics of anxiety in terms of occurrence, duration, intensity, expectation, and degree of hindrance, besides of the physical, emotional, expressive, and verbal reactions to the anxiety-provoking situations that commonly affects many foreign language learners.

The participants in this study were students at six universities in Japan enrolled in first – and second-year conversational English courses taught by native speakers of English. There were 132 males and 111 females.

A questionnaire was used in this project. The questionnaire was administered in 31 classes by six instructors. Results reflected that an overall about 75% of the students in this study were weakly to strongly affected by anxiety to some degree.

The physical, emotional, expressive, and verbal symptoms of anxiety were similar to those reported in studies of non-Japanese students. One finding to bear in mind is that many students enter their university EFL classes expecting to experience an anxiety-provoking situation and that anxiety is likely to significantly hinder the performance of some students.

It is suggested that to optimize learning for all learners, teachers should be aware of anxiety-provoking situations and take steps to minimize their negative impact.

Alternatively, Goretti, Opolot-Okurut, Masembe, Samson & Byamugisha (2008) investigates the teaching of large classes in Uganda, the strategies that teachers have developed over time to deal with the situation, and the institutional responses to the challenges. It also explored the improvements that may result from engaging teachers in researching their own classroom practice and reflecting on it.

The study was constructed with teachers of mathematics and English, thirty five teachers and twenty schools adopted a descriptive survey, the schools had different characteristics such as rural and urban and varying class size.

It is concluded that while teachers can do is in their means to facilitate teaching and learning in large classes, they would still need institutional and policy support. The urgent support required include provision of basic infrastructure such as bigger classroom space, sufficient furniture and instructional materials providing schools with

the necessary resources and enabling teachers to develop the confidence and skills to improve the learning environment in large classes.

Thi & Baldauf (2007) researched to what extent is the lack of motivation a significant problem, what are the factors that are likely to contribute to demotives and their levels of impact. Participants in the study were 100 second-year EFL students from a University of Economics in central Vietnam. Stimulated recall methodology was used to collect retrospective data.

Students were asked to recall their English learning experiences, to think back across the whole learning process, and then to write a three part essay. The prompts were provided to focus students' attention on their own demotivating experiences, and avoided suggesting any specific source for demotivation.

The study conclude that a large proportion of students in the sample admitted to having experienced lack of motivation, and it is clear that not only does the phenomenon of demotivation exist in EFL learning in Vietnam but it is also a serious problem worldwide.

In all cases, it was evident that demotivation had a negative impact on students, preventing them from gaining expected learning outcome. Teachers were found having a strong impact on students' demotivation or motivation to learn.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretations of Results

The findings of the investigation are presented here regarding the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools.

This research was based on answers of twenty questions on a survey asked to fifteen teachers from five high schools of Otavalo, Ecuador. The findings were contrasted, compared, and commented on the basis of additional teachers' interviews, students surveys and classroom observations.

Quantitative Analysis

Factors Concerning Teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?

	High School Diploma	English Bachelors' Degree	English Master's Degree	Others
■ .	0%	87%	6,50%	6,50%
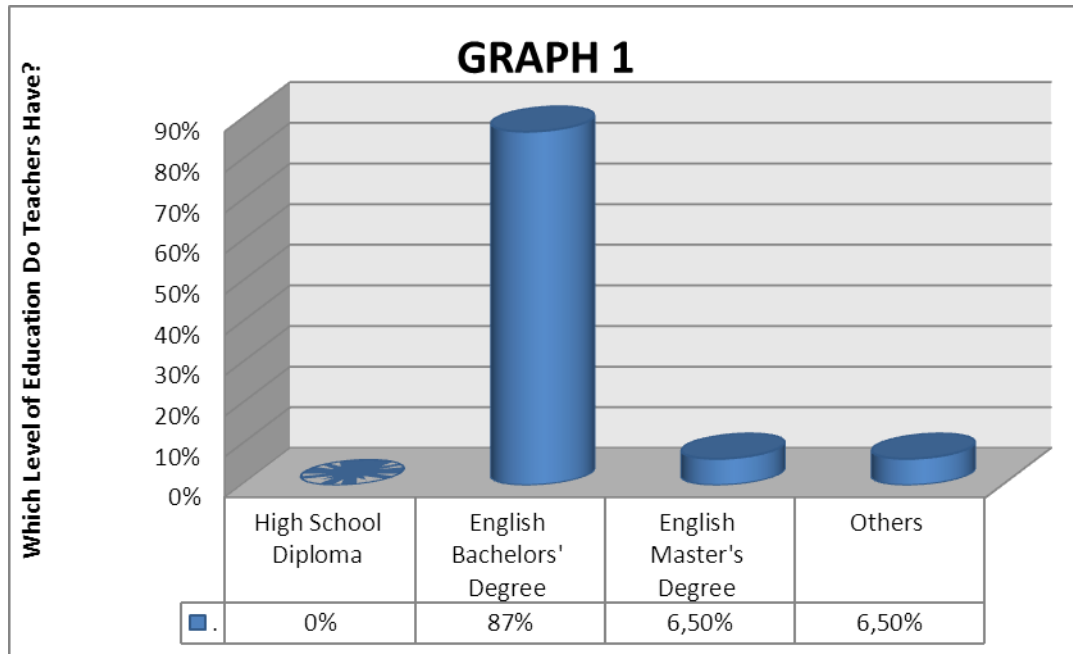
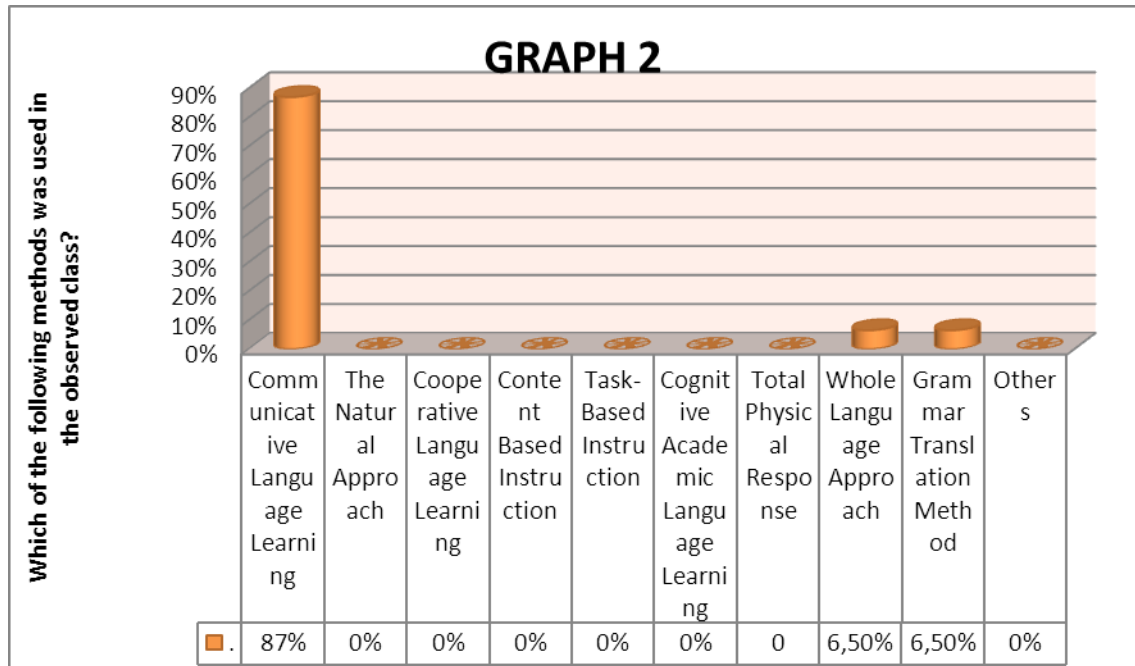Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Results of the first question showed that the great majority of teachers had English Bachelor's Degree with 87%, corresponding to 13 out of the 15 teachers interviewed, while only 6.5% or 1 out of 15 had English Master's Degree and others, meaning any other kind of professional degree. High School Diploma option was not selected in the survey applied to teachers. These findings offer clear evidence of the absence of high profile professionals working in public high schools.

Regarding teacher's interviews it was established according to the parameters of the instrument used for this purpose in this investigation, that most of them could be placed on the B1 level of proficiency according to CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) standards, corresponding to 8 out of 15 with a 53.3%, B2 level with 13.3% or 2 teachers, A2 level with 26.6% or 4 participants and just 1 on the C1 level with a 6.6%. These results are completely in accordance with the statistics collected by Ecuadorian Ministry of Education in 2011 based on the CRADLE project (Curriculum Reform and Development for the Learning of English).

It was also found that none of the 15 teachers were aware of the meaning of the ESL and EFL initials.

Which of the following methods was used in the observed

class?

GRAPH 2

	Comm unicat ive Langu age Learni ng	The Natur al Appro ach	Coope rative Langu age Learni ng	Conte nt Based Instru ction	Task- Based Instru ction	Cognit ive Acade mic Langu age Learni ng	Total Physic al Respo nse	Whole Langu age Appro ach	Gram mar Transl ation Meth od	Other s
▪.	87%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0	6,50%	6,50%	0%

Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

In the second question, 13 teachers chose the Communicative Language Method as their method used in class representing 87% of the total registers, adding a 6.5% or 1 response each for the Whole language Approach and Grammar Translation Method; all 7 remaining of the other methods were never selected.

It was anecdotic and noticeable that almost none of the teachers were aware of the names of the teaching methods at all; several of them asked what they were, and some showed clear anxiety when checking this question. Finally, it was evident that they chose the first option on the list, which happened to be the Communicative Language Method. This fact is in absolute opposition to the minimal considerations of learning styles and personal characteristics. For instance, Felder (2010) stresses how important it

is to considerer individual preferences and inclinations towards different learning styles, while Kelly (2010) explains the types of different learners and their specific style affinity. By not taking these elements into consideration, teachers are not addressing a basic pedagogical issue.

Contrary to what teachers mention regarding this question, it was possible to determine in the observed classes that the methods used by the teachers were different from the ones selected on the questionnaire, with Content Based Instruction being the most widely used method, with 46.6% or in 7 out 15 observed classes, followed by Task Based Language Teaching, with 40% or 6 observations, and Whole Language Approach with 2 observed classes, or 13.3%.

Do teachers use whole group activities to teach their lessons?

GRAPH 3

|	YES	NO	
■ .	100%	0%	0
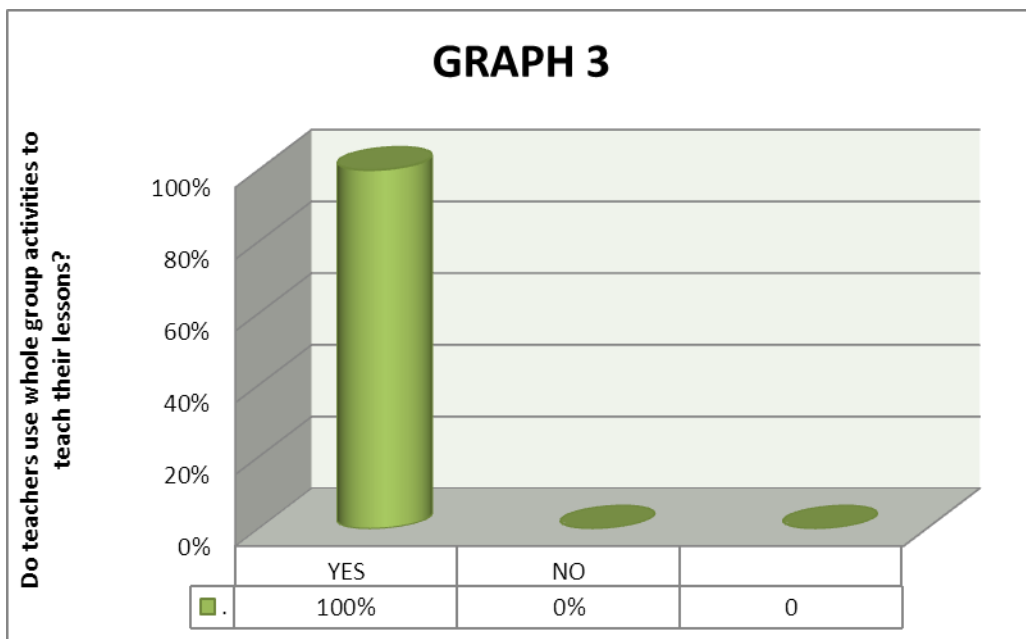
Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Regarding this question, it was found that 100% supported the use of whole group activities to teach lessons. In the observations it was evident that in almost all the lessons, depending on the topic, whole group activities were used. As Nath and Cohen (2012) suggests, whole group explanations and directions are better received than in small groups; evidently experienced teachers are aware of this fact, and they prefer to apply this method.

On the other hand, 6 out 15 students (40%), pointed out that the activities such as games and individual and group work that are used in class do not encourage them to learn English

Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?
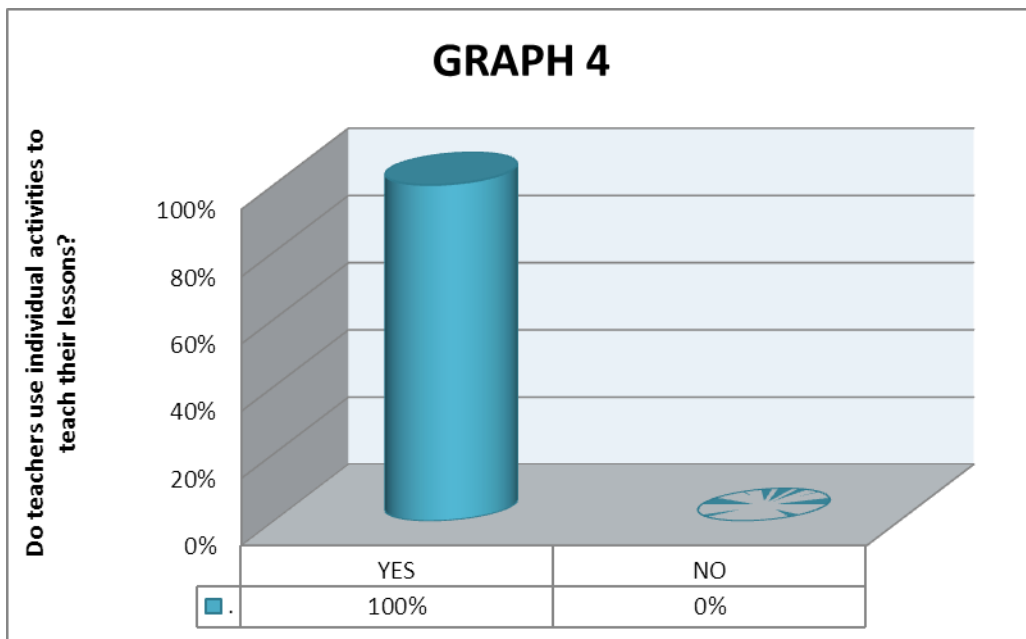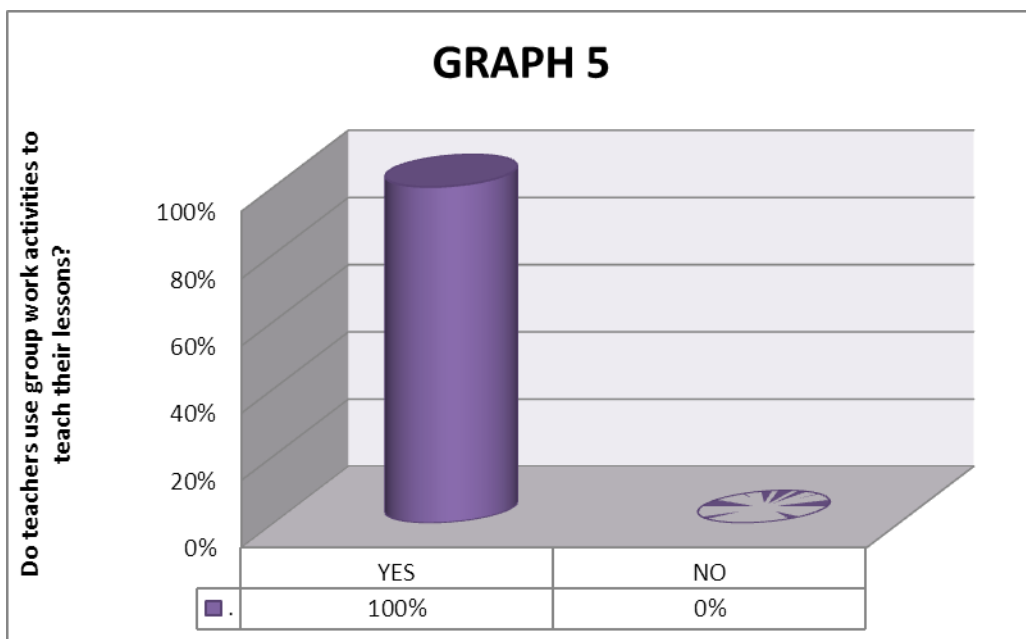

Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

As shown in the graphic, all teachers responded positively to the use of individual activities. This includes activities such as listening, speaking, repeating,

writing, and exercises on the blackboard, all of these were applied in the observed classes.

Students were asked for their opinion regarding the activities performed in class. Six or 40% declared as "easy", 20 % or 3 students marked "difficult" and again 40% as "very easy". The option "very difficult" was no selected

*Do teachers use group work activities to teach their lessons?*

Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

All surveyed teachers responded affirmatively to this question. It was observed that some teachers used the technique of role plays while others formed groups of students for reading or preparing an individual lesson. Claxton (2008) analyzes role play as useful to display interactions involving real situations with educational purposes; teachers used it for addressing presentations, likes and dislikes, music, and travels, among others.

As the cited author claims, group work does create motivation and engagement in students, favoring creativity and expression of ideas and opinions. It was noticeable that at the moment of announcing the group work activities, students took the moment as a break from the normal course of the class, which focused on the directions from the teacher, changing to interacting with their classmates; that created a more enjoyable atmosphere that seemed to engage students in the topic of the lesson.

Do teachers use English most of the time in their classes?

GRAPH 6

	YES	NO
■.	73%	27%
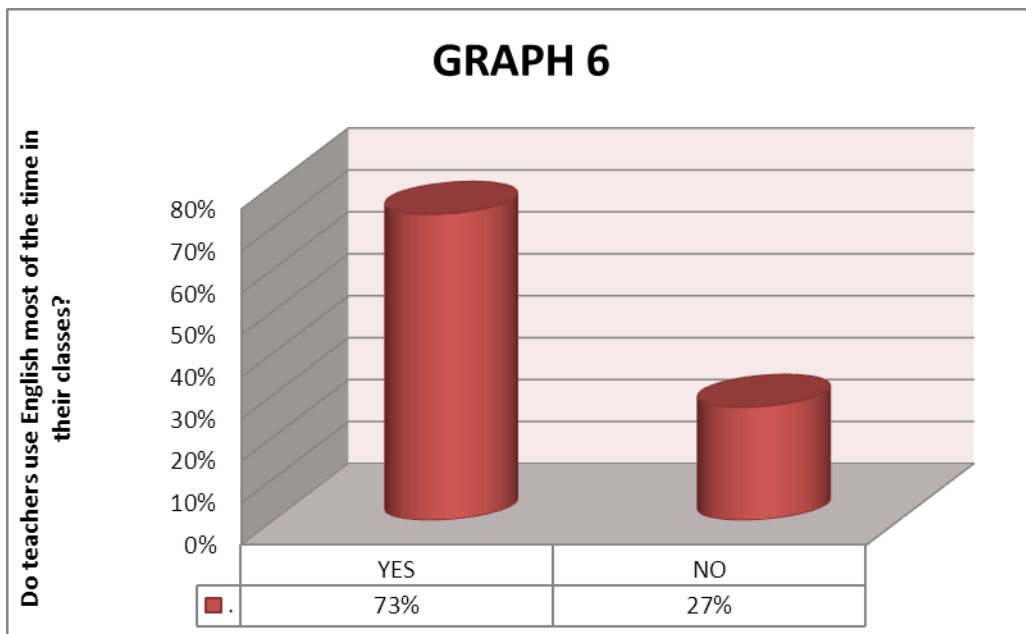
Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Teachers answered in the proportion of 11 out of 15 regarding the use of English most of the time in classes. It was observed that teachers did use English during the entire class, some of them exclusively, others using Spanish to clarify certain directions or definitions; interestingly, some students do not see this fact as something positive, they usually do not understand the directions from the teacher; some do not understand

any English at all, and it was common for them to ask for help to classmates with advanced English level, creating a noisy atmosphere of noise, loud and sometimes a lack of discipline.

Many students complained on the questionnaire and in the interviews that they are not at an appropriate level to receive a class exclusively conducted in English, and, at the same time, they did not feel comfortable having books that are written fully in English.

It is evident that the lack of English proficiency in students starts at the lower levels, in the early school years. Consequently by the time they arrive to high school they find no guidance that can bring them to superior levels of English language acquisition.

Regarding teachers, they showed a good level of speaking fluency during the classes, developing excellent management skills within the classroom, unfortunately, with the majority of teachers, this vision changed radically during the personal interviews, when they demonstrate a very basic and in some cases elementary level of English suggesting that they had not continued to work on their English skills after receiving their professional degree and that they simply repeat again and again the same lessons featured in the textbooks.

On behalf of students' perceptions, 11 participants or 73.3% assert that their teachers use English most of the time during classes.

Do teachers plan their lessons?
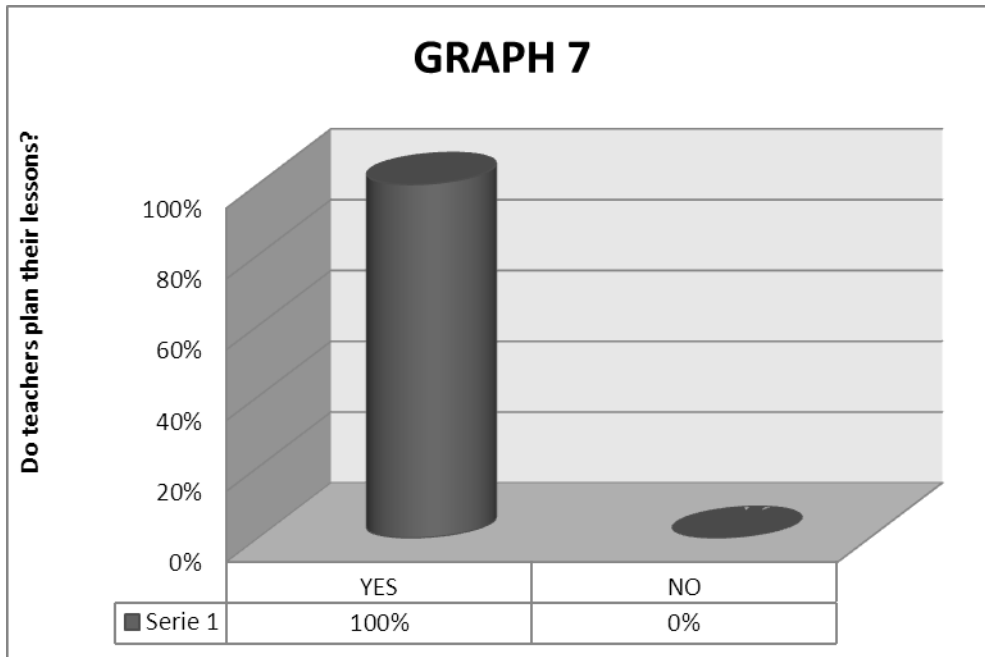
GRAPH 7

Do teachers plan their lessons?

|	YES	NO
■ Serie 1	100%	0%

Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

All surveyed teachers responded that they plan their class lessons. According to Doff (2007) the basis of a good lesson resides in its preparation; a written lesson plan is the best method of following the exact procedures to be used in the class.

Teachers are required by their superiors to plan their lessons daily, however, they did not apply a set of progressive steps to be used in the course of the class; they simply tended to follow the main idea of the lesson's topic and the supportive activities presented in the textbook. As Baker and Westrup (2000) explain, a lesson consists of three different phases called PPP, (presentation, practice, production). These three phases did not seem to be applied by teachers during their classes, despite the fact that reported that they believe planning is significantly important.

Do teachers considerer aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach their lessons?

GRAPH 8

	YES	NO
■ Serie 1	100%	0%

Y-axis label: Do teachers considerer aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback and instruction to teach their lessons?
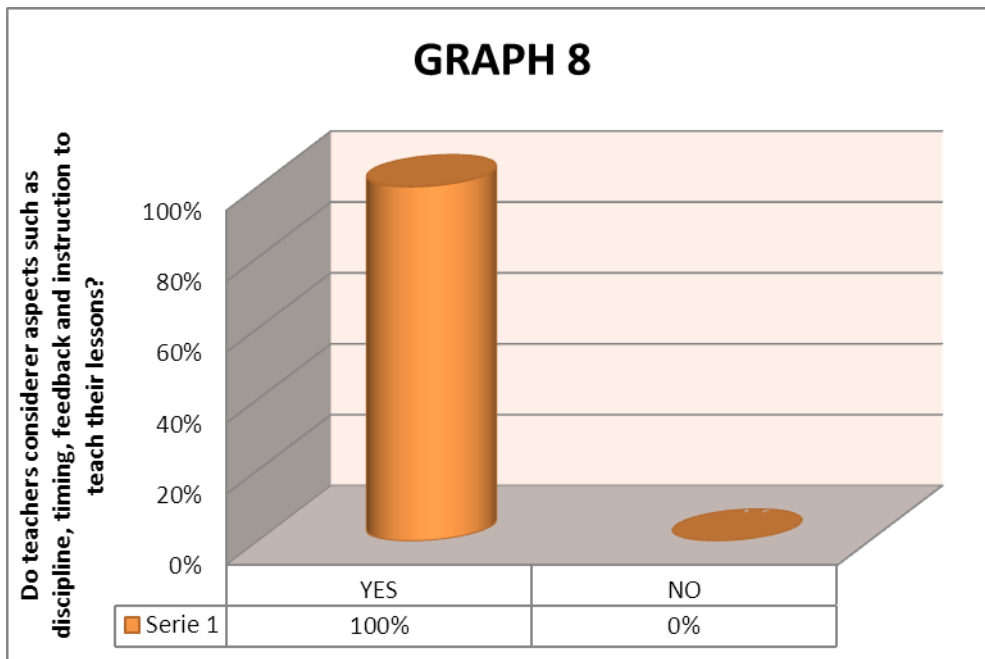
Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

All teachers answered affirmatively to this question, regarding basic classroom aspects such as discipline, timing, instructions, and feedback; however, it was not clear that teachers actually attended to all these elements.

One aspect that can be considered special or different in individual application is the way each teacher manages discipline. Each teacher deals with discipline in different ways. It is possible to find in some classes a total lack of discipline and a chaotic uncontrolled atmosphere.

Some classes are formal and serious and others have formal but relaxed environment. Only two students expressed that their teachers did not control discipline in class.

Regarding timing Raynaud (2010) says that it is the amount of minutes available to explain, perform, and practice the activities designed for a lesson. It is advised that each change or transition between activities should have balance and guidance.

Specific timing did not seem to be followed by teachers; they did not check, control or constantly followed the available time for each phase or activity of the lesson. they seemed more interested in filling the class hour as much as they could, sometimes improvising activities spontaneously, others trying to complete the set of activities in the lesson with no measure at all of time and just waiting for the end of the class. Thirteen students stated that their teachers gave them a determined time to develop their activities and tasks

Considering feedback, Cummins and Davison (2007) name it as a strategy that promotes and encourages students to develop and improve their skills. It was observed to some extent that all teachers tried to support, motivate, and guide students in their activities, but in contrast 8 out of 15 students stated that their teachers did not explain where they failed, what kinds of mistakes they made, or how to improve and correct mistakes.

Analyzing the aspect of instruction, 5 out of 15 students indicated that they did not understand their teachers' instructions.

Factors Concerning Students

Do teachers considerer students' needs to teach English successfully?
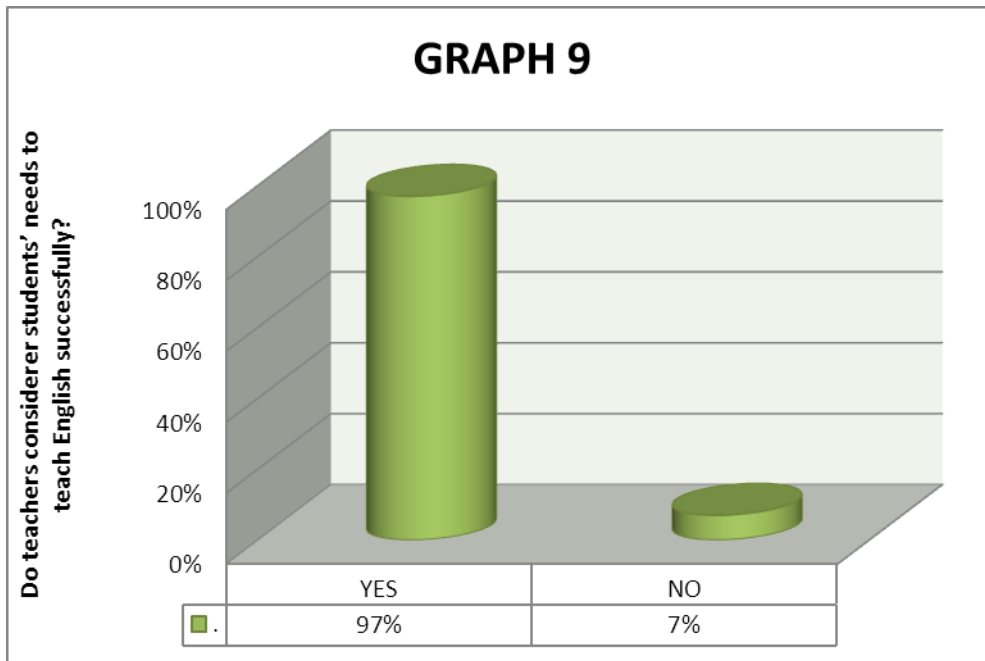
GRAPH 9

Do teachers considerer students' needs to teach English successfully?

	YES	NO
■ .	97%	7%

Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Regarding students' needs, 14 teachers, or 93% responded that they do care about this element, while just 1 teacher or 7% answered negative to this question. Taking a close look at the observed classes, it is possible to assert that teachers do not considerer students' needs whatsoever.

As Shumint (n.d.) affirms, it is important to recognize learning style factors in ESL/EFL education because students come from many cultures and backgrounds, and each learner has individual attributes related to his or her biological and psychological

differences. Definitely, there was no recognition of learners' differences, styles, or preferences; teachers just fulfill their tasks based on the textbooks, performing different activities and procedures but no learning styles concept was applied.

The most obvious way to justify this situation could be the large number of students in each class, an element that will be considerate later in this paper. It is clearly understandable that with a group of between 38 to 45 students it is very difficult and maybe impossible to consider individual preferences, styles, or differences among students. Forty seven or 7 % of the surveyed students agreed that they do not like the way their professors teach English, while 8 students or 53% stated that they were comfortable with their teachers' way of conducting English classes.

Do teachers considerer students' level to teach English successfully?
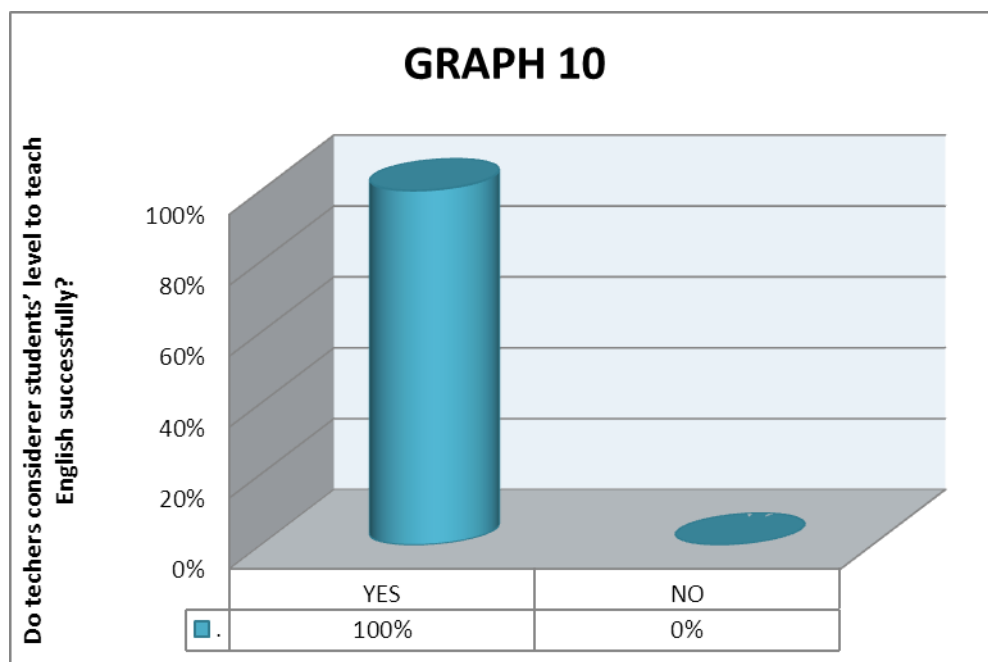
Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

As in many other questions, 100% of teachers stated that they consider their students' level of English. Along with other considerations that have been addressed here, observations were in complete contradiction with teachers' assessments. Thirteen of 15 observed teachers were found not to be considering their students' level of English, which corresponds to 87%. 47 percent of the students declared that their teachers do not use varied activities that allow them to interact with their classmates.

Which is the level of your students?
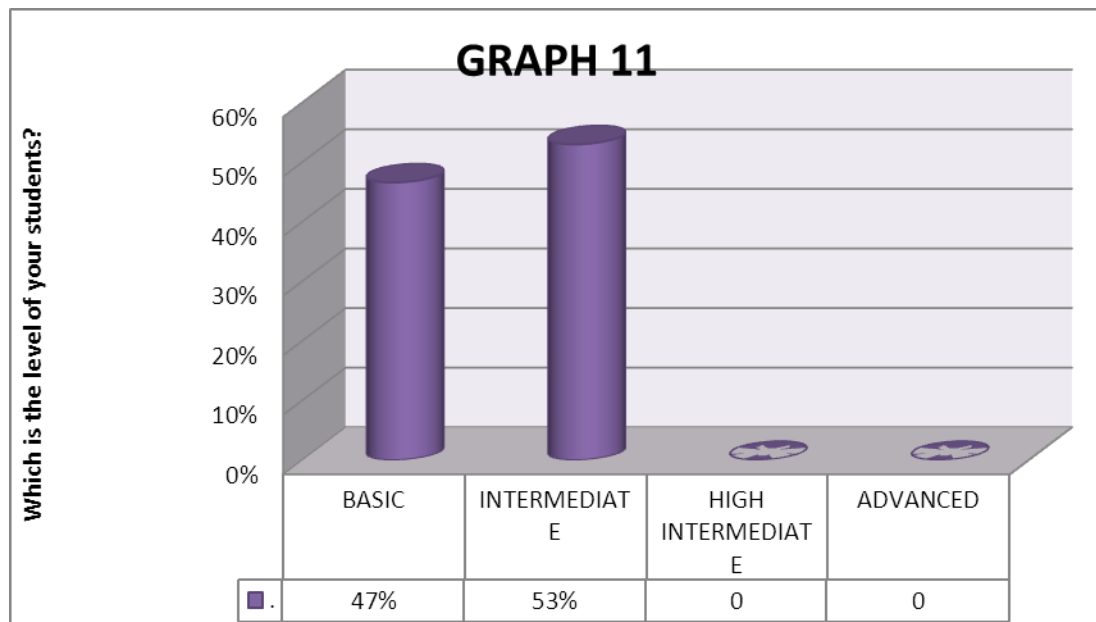
GRAPH 11

	BASIC	INTERMEDIATE	HIGH INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
■.	47%	53%	0	0

Y-axis label: Which is the level of your students?

Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Regarding students' levels, teachers deemed that their students were at the intermediate level with 53% or 8teachers; basic level with 7 answers or 47%. High intermediate and advanced levels were no represented in the answers. According to the observations and interviews of students, it is possible to establish that the basic level should have a higher representation in real numbers, probably around 80%.

Students showed a low level in all skills observed, especially in speaking and writing; they were not able to express simple ideas and write basic sentences correctly.

It seemed that teachers chose the intermediate option in order to defend their work with their pupils.

Chop Ler (2010)analyzes the causes of the low proficiency in English on rural students in Vietnam; it was found that students had a negative attitude towards the learning of English, considering the use of English as useless. The same attitude was found in the investigation conducted; many students expressed their dislike of English, often blaming bad teachers, and inadequate or lack of materials.

Regarding this research students were asked their opinion of learning English and 33% said they do not like to learn English and 67% or 10 out of 15 consented to like English learning.

Similar opinions were mentioned by teachers, some of them claimed that students do not pay attention and do not show interest in learning English, referring to it as a subject with no application to their future professions or interests.

Some teachers said they felt disappointed with students' behavior and conduct towards English; clearly this lack of motivation impacts on performance of both students and teachers.

Factors Concerning Classrooms

How many students are there in the observed

classroom?

GRAPH 12

|	10 - 15	16 - 25	26 - 30	31 - MORE
Serie 1	0%	0%	0%	100%
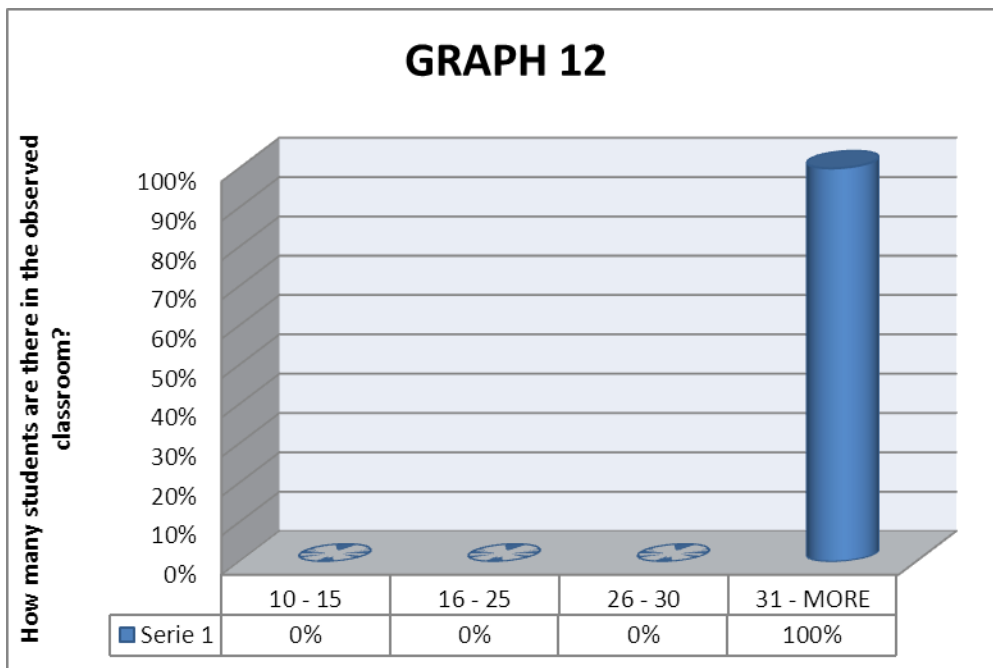
Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Unanimously teachers answered that they had more than 31 students in each class. This was corroborated in the observations where over crowded classrooms was evident, with 38 to 45 students in each class. Sixty percent of the students commented that the number of students in classrooms does not favor English learning for them; in contrast 40% stated that the number of students favors English learning.

Rotherham (2011) states that instead of focusing on the size of the class, the important element of analysis is the effectiveness and ability of the teacher, arguing that despite the number of students, the quality of the education resides exclusively in the skills of the teacher.

Nevertheless, conclusions tend to establish that larger numbers of students per class has a negative effect on education quality, students' concentration, performance and discipline, and classroom control and management, as is reviewed by Blatchford (2003), where it is also pointed out that not all teachers are prepared to face the challenge of dealing with large classes. It is evident that certain classes work normally and in an orderly way, while in others, the big number of students seems to overwhelm a teacher's ability to control the class.

*Do teachers feel comfortable working with this number of students?*
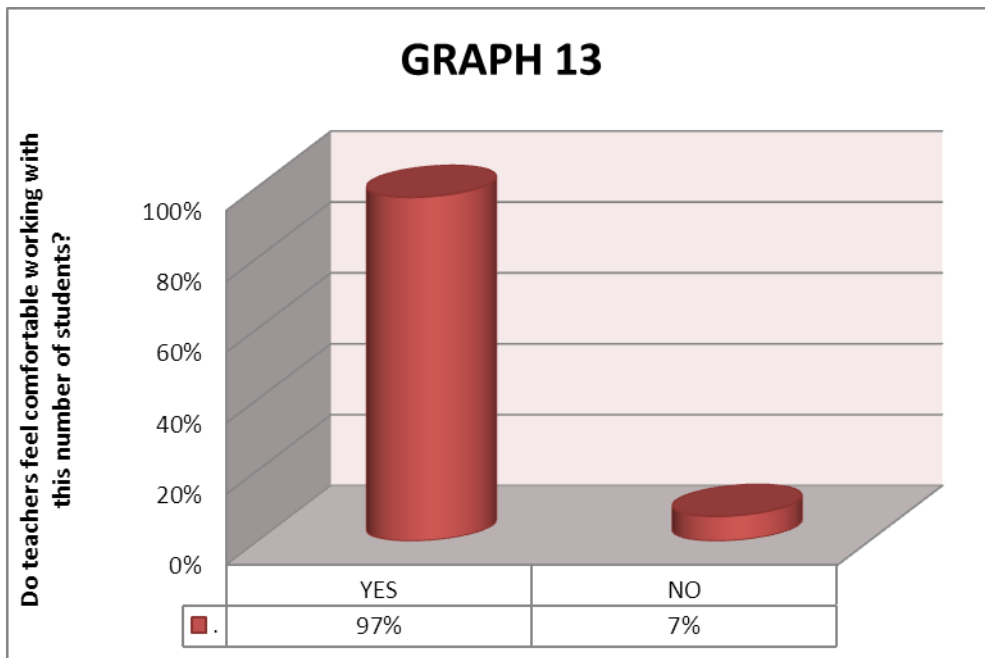
GRAPH 13

	YES	NO
■ .	97%	7%

Y-axis: Do teachers feel comfortable working with this number of students? (0% to 100%)

Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio

According to teachers' answers, 14 of them do not feel comfortable working with the number of students reviewed previously; just 1 responded to the contrary. It is clear that teachers see their classes as conflicting and challenging issues that they have to cope with every day. This seems to be one of the factors that contribute the most to teachers' lack of motivation; being a subject of language learning, it does not appear advisable to work with students numbers at around 40 per class, where teachers cannot give the required attention and monitor each one of their students.

The conclusion extracted from the observations was that because of this overcrowding factor teachers tend to simplify the contents and the complexity of the class to the maximum extent possible, avoiding the tracking of individual performance, creating deficiencies that are not addressed in the course of the years of high school education.

Do teachers have enough space to work with this group of students?

GRAPH 14

	YES	NO
■.	33%	67%

Do teachers have enough space to work with this group of students?
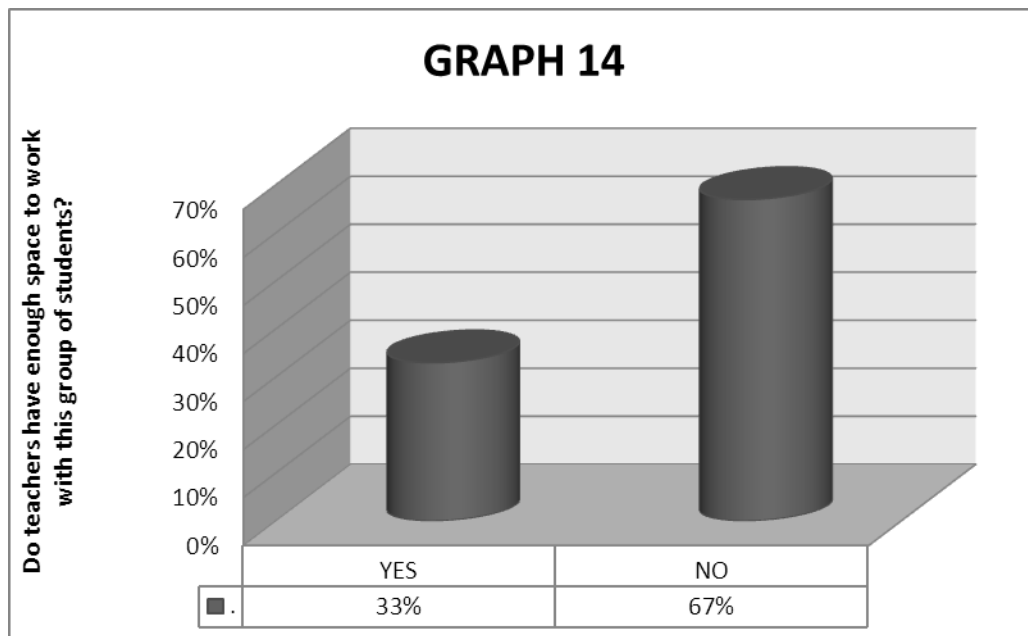
Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Regarding classroom space, 10 teachers declared that they do not have enough space to work with the number of students pointed out in the previous question. In all 5 institutions observed, the same structural design of classrooms was found, large deep rooms full of tables and chairs, with just the enough space for the teacher's desk and the area in front of the blackboard. Classrooms present an unfriendly, boring, and sometimes a poor educational environment in where students do not feel motivated enough to perform their assignments and duties.

We find this problem at all levels of education, which conducts to conclude that there is not interest or attention about how to improve to better space configuration arrangement favoring educational achievement.

In contrast, West (2010) proposes that a classroom reflects the personality and style of the teacher, and suggests that the configuration can be changed depending on the activity performed. Furthermore, Kress (2005) labels the physical arrangement of space as classroom layout; this element is the responsibility of the teacher in order to control the social relationships inside the class as well as how students experience the learning of English, having layout an important impact in motivation and teaching results.

Clearly this element has not been taken into consideration by English teachers and more importantly by education officials and government authorities who are not aware of the importance of this issue

Do teachers arrange students' seats in relation to the activities planned for their

classes?
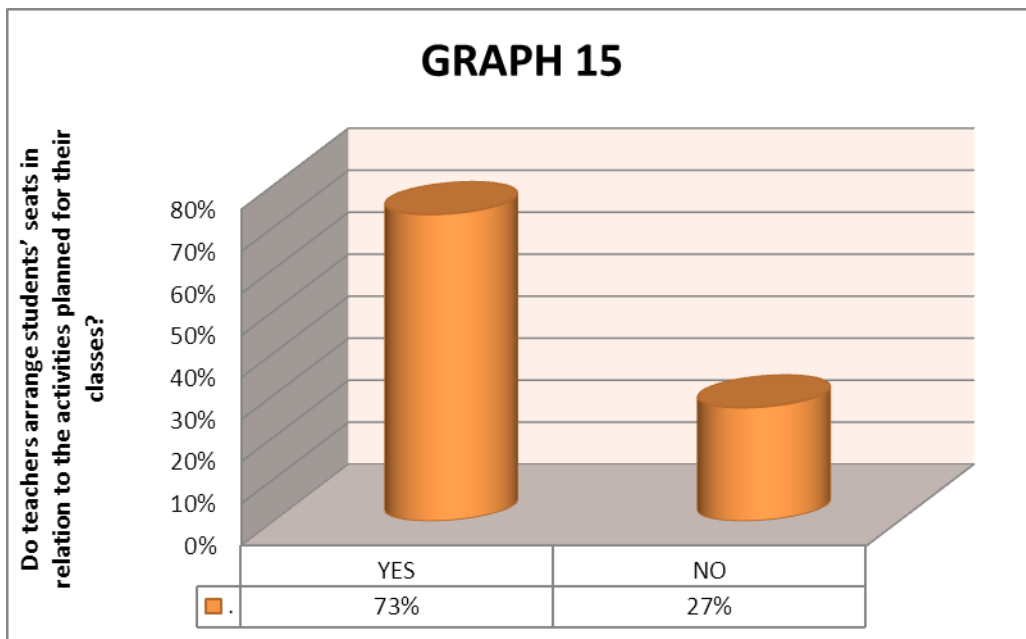
Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Regarding seating arrangement 11 teachers or 73% responded that they do arrange seats according to different activities in class; 27% answered negative to the question.

Despite the positive answers, in observed classes teachers did not change or modify seats in order to create different layouts according to activities or lesson plans; the row configuration of students' desks is always present.

On students' questionnaires, 9 or 60% of them said that they do not like the way their teachers arrange desks in class activities, while the other 40% gave a positive response to the question.

Having observed that teachers do not show much creativity to improve the elements of seating arrangement and classroom space, it seems that the problem is beyond the teachers' capabilities having overcrowded classrooms with barely enough space enough to move inside the classroom, it is simply impossible to offer creative alternatives under such conditions.

West (2010) considers the seating arrangement of orderly rows as a traditional approach where the teacher has a clear view of all students and has easy access to walking between the rows

On the other hand, McKnight (2011) offers other possibilities, such as the circle configuration, desks arrangement in twos, threes, or fours for small groups, and the horseshoe shape where the teacher has easy access to move among students. It is also suggested as the best way to avoid monotony and boredom the movement of the class to different locations.

In order to change or improve this situation, institutions should modify the physical space of classrooms with bigger rooms or optional halls, whereit would be possible to implement other approaches to the seating arrangement interaction dynamics.

How many students do teachers think is the appropriate number to teach English?

GRAPH 16

|	10 - 15	16 - 25	26 - 30	31 - MORE
▪ .	20%	67%	13%	0%
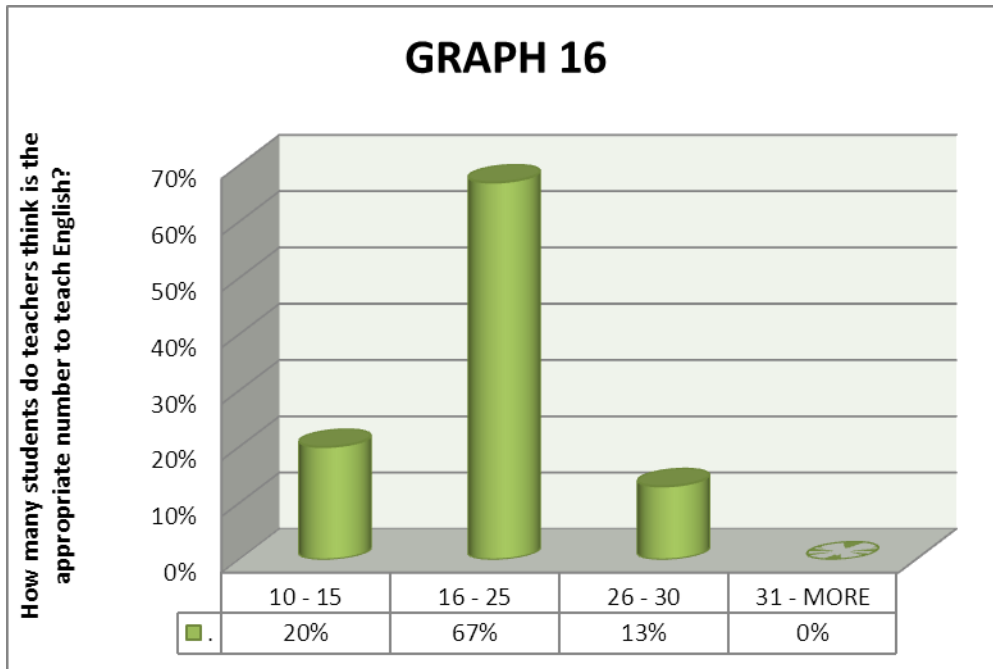
Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Teachers' opinions regarding the appropriate number of students in class mostly set the optimum at 16 to 25 students, with a 67% having this preference. Ten to fifteen students and 26 – 30 students' options were preferred by a 20% and 13% respectively.

Considering that every teacher has around 40 students it was obvious that teachers selected mainly the options which reflect less than the 50% of the actual number of students they are currently working with; this shows that teachers believe classes are over populated and both teachers and students are not satisfied with the situation, and this issue should be seriously assumed by authorities.

Do teachers use teaching resources (TV, Tape/Cd recorder, Computer(s), Projector(s),

Smartboard, and supplementary materials)?
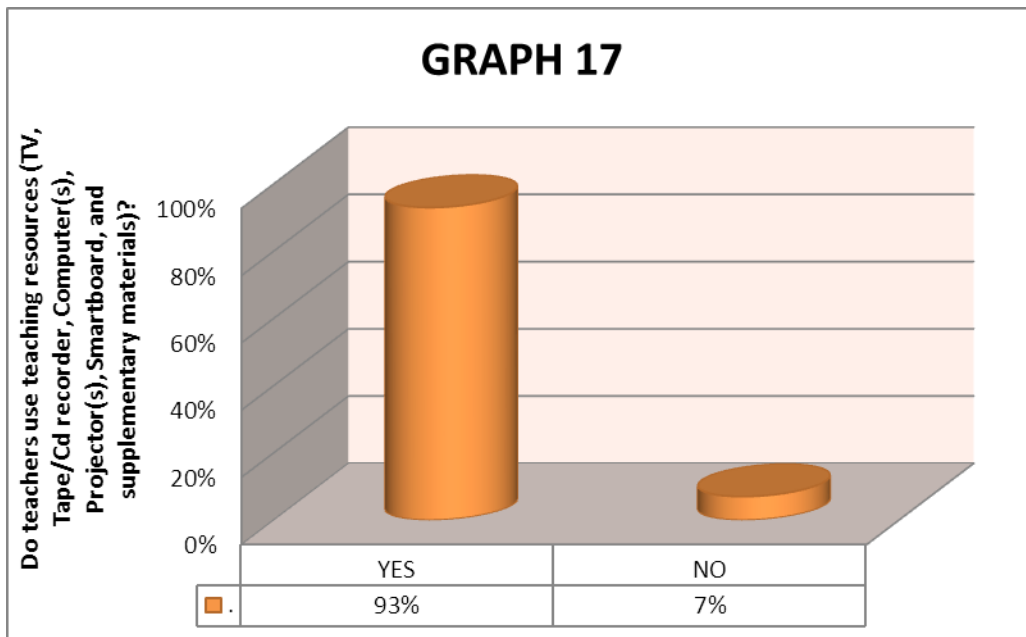
Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

According to teachers' responses, 14 of them or 93 percent, answered positive to the use of teaching resources and supplementary materials, while just 7 percent answered in the negative.

Interestingly, some of the teachers incorrectly considered the text books as supplementary material; others, despite the fact of having answered positively on the questionnaire, during the personal interview, stated that they did not use additional resources besides the textbook to teach their classes. Some teachers argued that they do not have enough time to prepare everyday supporting elements for each grade they

teach, so it is simpler to focus on the book, which they consider as a very good source for all class activities.

In the classroom observations, it was clear assessed that teachers were basing their lesson on the textbook only and none of them incorporated any kind of additional resource or supplementary material.

Regarding students' perceptions, 67 percent of them commented that resources such as TV, music players, computers or smartboards are not used in classes.

Apparently on rare occasions some teachers use CD players to incorporate audio lessons that are featured in the textbook, but that was not evidenced while this study took place.

On the other hand, by inquiries conducted along with the present study, it was confirmed that private high schools frequently use several of these elements as teaching resources with a high frequency.

Do teachers consider appropriate the resources they have in class?

	YES	NO
■.	33%	67%
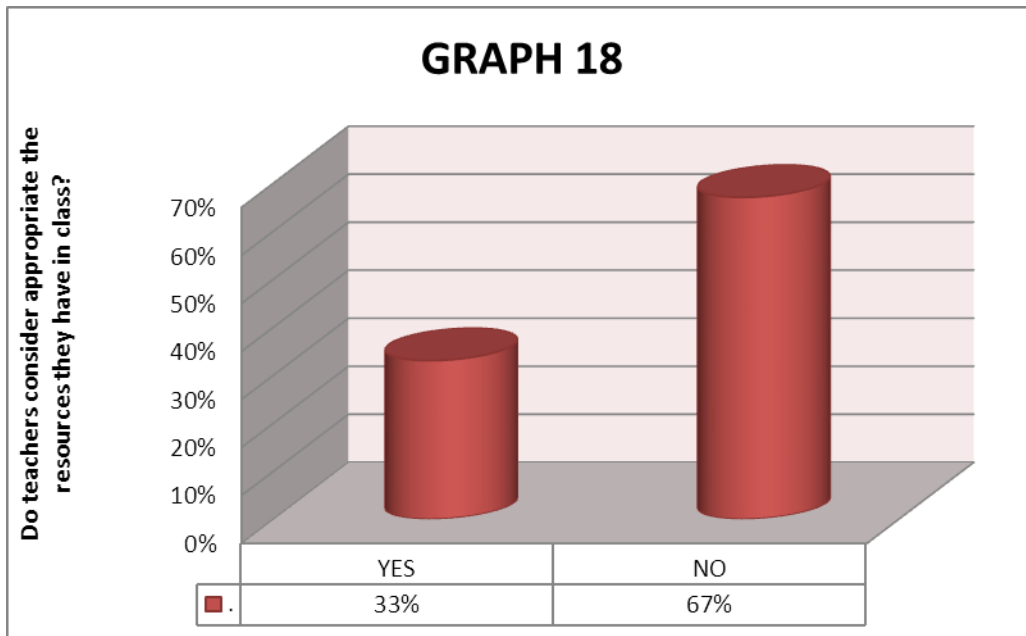
Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Ten teachers or a 67 percent consider that the resources they have in class are not appropriate, while only 5 teachers agree that the current resources they have are appropriate. In the 5 high schools visited, only 1 had an English laboratory with the audiovisual equipment which was used occasionally; teachers said they did not feel comfortable working with the equipment because they encountered too many technical difficulties. In the other 4 high schools there were not any resources other than the blackboard and the teachers' textbook.

Although there is a lack of investment in English educational materials, equipment, and resources for public high schools, interviews reported that teachers seemed resigned in front of this situation, and they work only with the textbook instead of preparing audiovisuals features from other sources.

Among the many resources that are useful to English classes, Stemplesky (2002) proposes using video in classrooms according to student's needs and interests, raising student motivation engaging interest, and stimulating the real use of the language, similar to this, Harmer (2007) explains the advantages of computers and the Internet, which contains several useful features that can be utilized by English teachers and students.

One of the main reasons for students lack of motivation for English in high schools is the lack of resources and deficient or uninteresting materials, as many of them claim in the interviews conducted; it is evident that the absence of involvement with technology and materials contributes to students' negative attitude toward English classes and teachers.

As it is stated in Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006) technologies such as audio and video recordings, language laboratories, and computers are effective teaching tools for English language lessons, as they offer authentic learning experiences to students, therefore, depriving students of the contact and interaction of these fundamental tools, public institutions fail to improve one of the most evident problems regarding English language teaching.

Factors Concerning Educational Institutions

Do the institutions review teachers' lesson plans?

GRAPH 19

	YES	NO
■	93%	7%
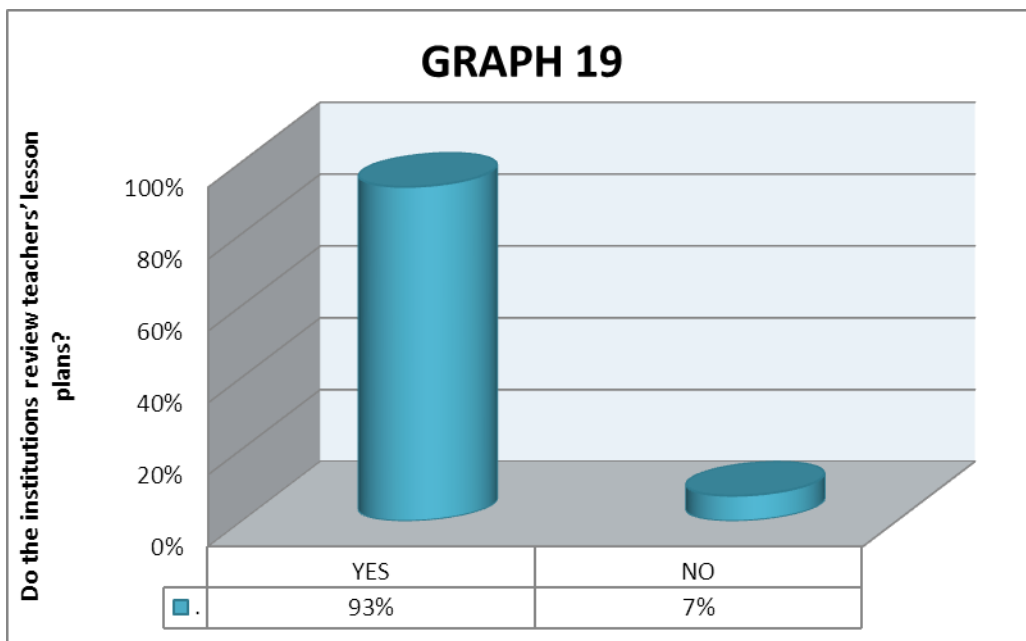
Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
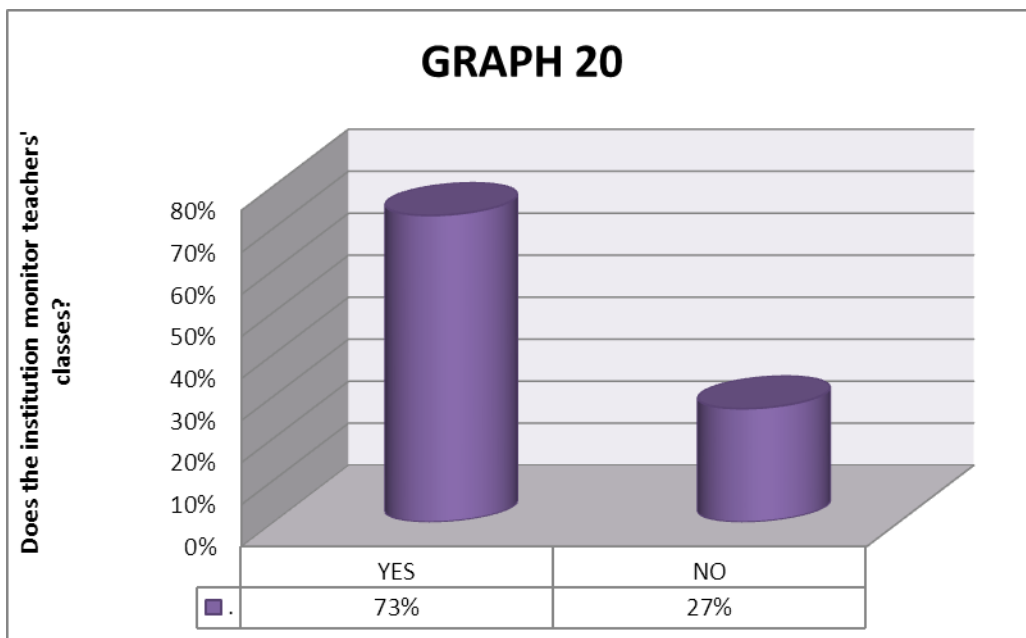Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

A total of 14 teachers, corresponding to 93% confirmed that their institutions review lessons plans, while only 1 of them answered negative to the question.

Regarding positive answers, 6 teachers declare that they receive a monthly review, 3 of them a weekly review, and 4 teachers stated other options, such as end of term or semester reviews.

In most cases, these reviews are conducted by a teacher called the Area Director, who is selected from among all the English teachers at each institution and who is replaced annually. This director is responsible for control and review of annual planning, lesson planning, test content, and other activities related to the subject of English.

Since the Area Director is a teacher who serves as a colleague and co-worker of the teachers who are being reviewed, impartiality cannot be assured, and it does not appear to offer the fairest critique of the teachers' planning.

Does the institution monitor teachers' classes?

GRAPH 20

	YES	NO
■.	73%	27%

Author: Gonzalez Sanchez Fernando Mauricio
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Eleven teachers answered affirmative about being monitored by their institutions, while just 4 or 27% responded in negative to the topic.

Regarding positive answers, 3 of them reported monthly monitoring, 3 as weekly monitoring and 9chose as "others" for frequency of monitoring.

Interesting results have been extracted from these responses; evidently teachers were not aware of the exact meaning of the concept of teaching monitoring. Some answers included information such as "every end of the year" or at the "beginning of the cycle", consequently, as in other answers, it was found that teachers are not familiar with basic educational concepts, and obviously, in most cases institutions are not monitoring teachers'.

Pham (2010) considers classroom observation as an important procedure that allows teachers to receive insights about their teaching, and it is helpful to improve their conduction of the class; likewise, Richards and Farrel (2005) states that observed teachers can enrich their knowledge by receiving some advice or suggestions from a different point of view coming from more experienced teachers or supervisors; moreover, an observer can verify the timing, activities, techniques, participation, and language in the classroom.

These concepts raise the question if institutions would conduct proper monitoring procedures, might some missing elements be followed by teachers during their teaching performance?

Conclusions

❖ This research reveals that the most important factor negatively affecting the English language teaching/learning process is an insufficient preparation of the teachers. Teachers lack English language proficiency as well as adequate teaching skills. They are largely unaware of proper teaching methods and of the various learning styles of their students.

❖ Teachers do not consider and recognize student levels and needs in order to conduct a successful teaching process addressing students' different learning styles.

❖ Important factors in the students' low level of skill in English are a lack of motivation and apathy toward learning the language, which, according to interviews and questionnaires, are partly result of dissatisfaction with the way classes are conducted by teachers.

❖ Classroom observation revealed extremely overcrowded classrooms, a problem which was considered by teachers and students as very serious and which they reported negatively affected teaching, learning, and motivation.

❖ This investigation gives evidence that there is minimal use of teaching resources such as technological devices or supplementary materials, and in some cases the total absence of any additional resource but the textbook; consequently this was found to discourage motivation in students.

❖ This research reveals that in public high schools there is a lack of control of teachers' lesson plans. There is no headmaster for English language teaching

who has a superior education degree, separated from the rest of the teachers, who

could therefore, grade, control, and properly conduct this task.

- ❖ The overall evidence gathered from this investigation suggests that there has not

  been sufficient monitoring of teachers in order to check, control, and improve

  teacher performance; this lack of monitoring may be responsible, at least in part,

  for the weaknesses and failures of the teachers who were reviewed.

Recommendations

In order to improve the level as well as the linguistic and professional skills of English teachers, universities which are training future teachers should incorporate native English teachers; as a result, local teachers will acquire a higher level of proficiency.

There should be an educational program with national involvement because of the importance of acquiring English, pointing out the great advantages that come from obtaining and using the language, in order to eliminate resistance and foster motivation for learning English.

It is absolutely necessary to address the problem regarding class size. Public high schools should not have classrooms with more than 25 or30 students at the maximum. By not addressing the existing negative outcomes, which were reviewed in this research, the problematic conditions will continue indefinitely.

English lessons should have the support of technological resources and supplementary materials, therefore, institutions should provide audiovisual equipment for students to interact with; this improvement will provide motivation and encouragement in English.

Institutions should perform better controls of teacher monitoring and lesson planning. It is necessary for this procedure to be conducted by professionals independently from the group of in service teachers, in order to get truthful and reliable results.

REFERENCES

Aduwa-Ogiegbaen, S. E., & Iyamu, E. O. S. (2006). Factors affecting quality of English
language teaching and learning in secondary schools in Nigeria. *The CBS
Interactive Business Network*, Retrieved from http://findarticles.com
/p/articles/mi_m0FCR/is_3_40/ai_n16726393/?tag=content;col1

Andrade, M., & Williams, K. (2009). Foreign language learning anxiety in japanese
EFL university classes: Physical, emotional, expressive, and verbal
reactions. *Sophia Junior College Faculty Journal*,*29*, Retrieved from
http://www.jrc.sophia.ac.jp/courses/pdf/ver2901.pdf

Baker, J., & Westrup, H. (2000). *The English language teacher's handbook: How to
teach large classes with few resources*. London: Continuum International
Publishing Group.

Blatchford, P. (2003). *The class size debate, is small better?*. Berkshire, UK: Open
University Press.

Brandvik, M. L., & McKnight, K. S. (2011). *The English teacher's survival guide,
ready-to-use techniques and materials for grades 7-12*. (2nd ed.). San Francisco:
Jossey-Bass.

Burden, P. R (2000). *Powerful Classroom Management Strategies*. Thousand Oaks,
CA: Corwin Press

Carroll, J. (1973). Implications of aptitude test research and psycholinguistic theory for
foreign language teaching. Linguistics 112: 5-13. In Krashen, S. D.
(1981). *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. (pp 19-20).
University of Southern California: Pergamon Press.

Chop Ler, E. (2010). Cultural factors affecting English proficiency in rural areas: A case

      study. *International Journal of Arts and Sciences*,*3*(10), Retrieved from

      http://openaccesslibrary.org/images/XEW139_Ee_Chop_Ler.pdf

Claxton, N. (2008). *Using deliberative techniques in the English as a foreign language*

      classroom: a manual for teachers of advanced level students. Amsterdam: IDEA.

Cummins, J., & Davison, C. (2007). *International handbook of English language*

      teaching. New York, NY: Springer Science Business Media.

Dash, N., & Dash, M. (2007). *Teaching English as an additional language*. New Delhi:

      Atlantic Publishers & Distributors.

Davies, P., & Pearse, E. (2000). *Success in english teaching*. Hong Kong: Oxford

      University Press.

Doff, A. (2007). *Teach english: A training course for teachers*. (20 ed.). Cambridge

      University Press.

Dornyei, Z. (2001). *Teaching and researching motivation*. Harlow, England: Longman

Ellis, R. (1999). *Learning a second language through interaction*. Philadelphia, USA:

      John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Echevarría, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. (2008). *Making content comprehensible for*

      english learners, the SIOP model. Los Angeles, CA: Allyn & Bacon.

Felder, R. (2010*). Matters of style.* Retrieved from

      http://www.englisharticles.info/2010/04/29/learning-styles/

Goretti, M., Opolot-Okurut, C., Masembe, C., Samson, J., & Byamugisha, A. (2008).

      Large class teaching in resource-constrained contexts: Lessons from reflective

      research in ugandan primary schools. *Journal of International Cooperation in*

Education, 11(3), Retrieved from http://home.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/cice/11-

3nakabugo.pdf

Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. (3rd. ed.). Cambridge,

UK: Longman

Jacob, M. C. (n.d.). *Classroom techniques for teaching English*. Retrieved from

http://www.hmpenglishonline.com/techniques.htm

Jacobs, G., & Hall, S. (2002). Implementing cooperative learning. In J. Richards & W.

Renandya (Eds.), *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current*

practice. Cambridge University Press.

Kelly, M. (2010).*Understanding and using learning styles.About.Com Secondary*

Education, Retrieved from http://712educators.about.com

/od/learningstyles/a/learning_styles.htm

Kress, G. R. (2005). *English in urban classrooms: A multimodal perspective on*

teaching and learning. (2 ed.). Cornwall, GB: Routledge.

Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. M. (2006). *How languages are learned.* (3rd ed.). New

York: Oxford University Press, USA.

MacGregor, J. (2007). Understanding and managing classroom space. *Curriculum*

*Briefing, 5(*2).

Ministerio de Educacion, (n.d.). *Diseño curricular por competencias*. Retrieved from:

http://es.scribd.com/doc/50413924/CONSULTA-EVALUACION-DE-

PROYECTO-CRADLE

Mukalel, J. C. (2005*). Approaches to English language teaching*. New Delhi: Discovery

Publishing House.

Nath, J. L., & Cohen, M. (2012). *Becoming an ec-6 teacher in Texas, a course of study for the pedagogy and professional responsibilities (ppr) texes*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub Co.

Pham, V. H. (2010). *Classroom observation as a tool for professional growth*. Retrieved from http://www.oea-vietnam.com/tintuc/44-704/classroom-observation-as-a-tool-for-professional-growth.htm

Raynaud, M. (2010). *Quality time-ESL: The digital resource book*. Bloominton, IN: iUniverse.

Richards, J., & Farrel, S. T. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning.* Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J., & Renandya, W. (2002*). Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice.* Cambridge University Press.

Roast, M. (2006*). Generating student motivation*. New York: Pearson Longman Education

Rotherham, A. (2011, march 03). When it comes to class size, smaller isn't always better *Time U.S*., Retrieved from http://www.time.com /time/nation /article/0,8599,2056571,00.html

Sadia , A. (n.d.). *Reflective teacher observation model for in-service teacher trainees*. Retrieved from http://eca.state.gov/forum/vols/vol45/no1/p16.htm

Senescyt, (n.d*.). Bases de postulación programa de becas para "docentes de inglés para 8º año de egb a 3º de bachillerato en establecimientos fiscales - enseña inglés".* Retrieved from website: http://www.senescyt.gob.ec /documents/10156/5c92efe1-c079-42e4-ae7a-071442454282

Shumint, K. (n.d.). Learning styles: Implications for ESL/EFL instruction. *English Teaching Forum, 37*(4), Retrieved from http://eca.state.gov/forum/vols/vol37/no4/p6.htm

Stemplesky, S. (2002). Video in the ELT classroom: The role of the teacher. . In J. Richards & W. Renandya (Eds.), *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice.* Cambridge University Press.

Thanasoulas, D. (2002). *The changing winds and shifting sands of the history of English language teaching.* Retrieved from http://www.englishclub.com/tefl-articles/history-english-language-teaching.htm

Thi , T., & Baldauf Jr., R. (2007). Demotivation: Understanding resistance to English language learning – the case of vietnamese students. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, *4*(1), Retrieved from http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/eserv .php?pid=UQ:23743&dsID=JnlAsiaTEFL2007_4_1__79-105Fnl.pdf

Yang, A. (n.d.). *English language learning & teaching methods*. Retrieved from http://www.ehow.co.uk/info_8234804_english-language-learning-teaching-methods.html

West, K. (2010). *Inspired English teaching: A practical guide for teachers.* Wiltshire, UK: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Wright, K. (2010). *Methods of teaching English.* Retrieved from http://thestar.com .my/education/story.asp?file=/2010/2/14/education/5597575&sec=education

ANNEXES

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja
MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA
CARRERA DE INGLES
TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

1. Which level of education do you have?

High school diploma ( ) Others: _____	English Bachelor's Degree ( )	English Master's degree ( )

2. Do you consider Students' needs to teach English successfully?

Students' Needs*(age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles)*
YES   ( )   NO   ( )

3. Do you consider Students' level to teach English successfully?

Students' Level *(Basic, Intermediate, High Intermediate , and Advanced)*
YES   ( )   NO   ( )

4. Which is the level of your students?

***Students' Level**			
Basic ( )	Intermediate ( )	High Intermediate ( )	Advanced ( )

5. Which of the following methods was used in this class?*(check only 1)*

Communicative Language Teaching	( )
The Natural Approach	( )
Cooperative Language Learning	( )
Content-Based Instruction	( )
Task-Based Language Teaching	( )
Cognitive Academic Language Learning	( )
Total Physical Response	( )

Whole Language Approach	( )
Grammar Translation Method	( )
Others _____	( )

6. Do you use whole- group activities to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____		

7. Do you use individual activities to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____		

8. Do you use group work activities to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____		

9. Do you use English most of the time in your classes?

YES ( )	NO ( )

10. Do you plan your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )

11. Do you consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )

12. How many students do you have in this class?

10 - 15 ( )	16 - 25 ( )	26 - 30 ( )	31 - more ( )

13. Do you feel comfortable working with this number of students?

YES ( )	NO ( )

14. Do you have enough space to work with this group of students?

YES ( )	NO ( )

15. Do you arrange students' seats in relation to the activities planned for your classes?

YES ( )	NO ( )

16. How many students do you think is the appropriate number to teach English?
(check only 1)

10 - 15 ( )	16 - 25 ( )	26 - 30 ( )	31 - more ( )

17. Do you use teaching resources (TV, Tape/Cd recorder, Computer(s), Projector(s), Smartboard, and supplementary materials)?

YES ( )	NO ( )
Which ones? _____	

18. Do you consider appropriate the resources you have in class?

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____	

19. Does the institution review your lesson plans?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
If yes, how frequently?		
Once a week	Once a month	Other_____

20. Does the institution monitor your teaching?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
If yes, how frequently?		
Once a week	Once a month	Other_____

Thanks for your cooperation!!!!!!

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA
CARRERA DE INGLES
STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

21. ¿Te gusta aprender Inglés?

YES   (   )   NO   (   )

22. ¿Las actividades (juegos, trabajos en grupo y trabajos individuales) que se realizan en clase te motivan a aprender Inglés?

YES   (   )   NO   (   )

23. Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

Muy fáciles ( )	Fáciles ( )	Difíciles ( )	Muy difíciles ( )

24. ¿Te gusta la forma de enseñanza del idioma Inglés que usa tu profesor?

YES   (   )   NO   (   )

   ¿Porqué?

_____
_____
_____

25. ¿Tu profesor realiza actividades variadas que te permiten interactuar con tus compañeros de clase?

YES   (   )   NO   (   )

26. ¿Tu profesor utiliza Inglés la mayor parte del tiempo en la clase?

YES   (   )   NO   (   )

27. ¿Tu profesor controla la disciplina en la clase?

YES   (   )   NO   (   )

28. ¿Tu profesor les asigna un tiempo determinado para el desarrollo de cada actividad?

YES ( )	NO ( )

29. ¿Luego de cada actividad realizada, tu profesor te explica en qué fallaste y en qué debes mejorar?

YES ( )	NO ( )

30. ¿Las instrucciones que da el profesor para realizar las actividades en clase y extra clase son claras?

YES ( )	NO ( )

31. ¿Consideras que el tamaño del salón de clase te permite trabajar de una manera cómoda?

YES ( )	NO ( )

32. ¿Consideras que el número de estudiantes te favorece para aprende de mejor manera el Inglés?

YES ( )	NO ( )

33. ¿Te gusta la forma en la que el profesor adecúa los pupitres para trabajar en los diferentes tipos de actividades?

YES ( )	NO ( )

34. ¿Se utilizan en clase recursos tales como televisión, grabadora, computadora, pizarras inteligentes, etc.?

YES ( )	NO ( )

GRACIAS!!!!!

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

CARRERA DE INGLES

OBSERVATION SHEET

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR(desde 8vo básica a 3ro bachillerato)**:**	

1. Does the teacher consider Students' needs to teach English?

Students' Needs(age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles)*
YES   ( )   NO   ( )

* It can be recognized based on the variety of activities (visual, audio, audiovisual, realia, and on-line) applied, and students' reaction to them.

2. Which is the level of the students? *(Check 1)*

*Students' Level			
Basic ( )	Intermediate ( )	High Intermediate ( )	Advanced ( )

* It can be recognized based on the material they are using or placement done by the institution.

3. Which of the following methods are used?

Communicative Language Teaching	( )
The Natural Approach	( )
Cooperative Language Learning	( )
Content-Based Instruction	( )
Task-Based Language Teaching	( )
Cognitive Academic Language Learning	( )
Total Physical Response	( )
Whole Language Approach	( )
Grammar Translation Method	( )
Others _____	( )

4. Which of the following activities are used?

Whole-group activities	( )
Individual activities	( )

Group work activities	( )

5. Which of the following aspects of the lesson plan were applied in the class?

Time	( )
Lesson topic	( )
Objectives	( )
Warm-up activities	( )
Introduction of the new topic	( )
Guided or individual practice	( )
Review/Assessment/Feedback	( )
Materials and resources	( )

6. Which of the following aspects have been considered by the teacher?

Discipline	( )
Feedback	( )
Activities management	( )
Time management	( )

7. How many students are there in the classroom?

10 - 15	( )	16 - 25	( )	26 - 30	( )	31 - more	( )

8. Do students have enough space to move and participate in dynamic activities?

YES ( )	NO ( )

9. Is the seating arrangement appropriate for the teaching-learning process?

YES ( )	NO ( )
NOTES: _____	

10. Which of the following resources are there in the classroom to facilitate teaching?

TV	( )
Tape/Cd recorder	( )
Computer(s)	( )
Projector(s)	( )

Smartboard	( )
Supplementary materials	( )
Others	( )

11. In which percentage does the teacher use English in class?

25 %	( )	50 %	( )	75 %	( )	100 %	( )

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

A1	Where are you from?
	Where do you live?
A2	Where did you learn English?
	How long have you studied English?
	Which subject was the most difficult during your major?
B1	How long have you been teaching English?
	Which skill is easier for you to teach?
	Would you like to continue studying? Why?
B2	What are the advantages or disadvantages of teaching English in a "non-English speaking country"?
	What are the main problems a teacher faces when teaching English in Ecuador?
C1	What social benefits are derived from learning English?
	What is the most important reward of teaching English as a profession?
C2	What are the benefits that come from teachers staying more time in the educational institutions?
	What is the difference between teaching English as foreign language (EFL) and teaching English as a second language (ESL)?

TEACHER'S LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:					
C2 ( )	C1 ( )	B2 ( )	B1 ( )	A2 ( )	A1 ( )