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**Factors that Affect the English Language Teaching-Learning Process In Ecuadorian Public High Schools**

TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACION

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Loja, Marzo de 2014

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## DEDICATION

The present work is dedicated to all those people who have helped me in order to

accomplish my goal. Mainly, I want to dedicate this thesis to my parents Teo España

and Jenny Solis who have always persuaded me to continue my studies with

perseverance and good attitude. I am sure they will be proud of me because even when

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darkness is near; I became more responsible and fighter because of her; that is why I do

my best and have stronger feelings.


Elizabeth España Solis

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# CONTENTS

**RESUMEN EJECUTIVO**

Esta investigación está basada en los factores que afectan el proceso de enseñanza- aprendizaje en los colegios públicos del Ecuador. Su principal propósito es analizar los factores que influyen en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. Por lo tanto, las variables consideradas en este estudio se relacionaron con factores como estudiantes, maestros, profesores, aulas de clase e instituciones educativas.

El presente estudio se realizó en cinco colegios públicos en Quito donde quince profesores y quince estudiantes de primero, segundo y tercer año fueron seleccionados como principales participantes. El procedimiento general para llevar a cabo el presente estudio fue cuantitativo, por esta razón, el uso de cuestionarios, encuestas y observaciones fueron consideradas como instrumentos principales.

Los resultados indican que los obstáculos son preocupantes en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje debido a que no existe un buen conocimiento del idioma Ingles para ensenar, métodos fundamentales de aprendizaje, técnicas importantes, recursos de instrucción esenciales, entre otros, lo que ha disminuido la creatividad de los educandos pero también su motivación para aprender un idioma extranjero. Como conclusión, los resultados muestran que hay algunas barreras importantes que superar para estudiantes y profesores.

PALABRAS CLAVES: factores, estudiantes, colegios públicos, influencia, resultados

.

**ABSTRACT**

This study is based on the factors that affect the English Language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools. Its main purpose is to analyze the factors that influence in the English teaching-learning process. Therefore, the variables considered in this study were related to factors such as students, teachers, classrooms, and educational institutions.

The current study took place in five public high schools in Quito where fifteen teachers and fifteen students from first, second, and third years were selected as main participants. The general approach to carry out the current investigation was quantitative, for that reason, the use of questionnaires, surveys and observations were considered as main instruments.

The findings indicate that the obstacles are overwhelming to the teaching-learning process as a reason that the lack of a satisfactory English level to teach, significant teaching methods, valuable techniques, essential instructional resources among others  has narrowed learners' creativeness but also their motivation for learning a foreign language. As a result, the findings show that there are several important barriers for both teachers and students to conquer.


KEY WORDS: factors, efl students, public high schools, influence, findings.

## INTRODUCTION

English has become the first and most important language to teach in educational establishments. However, the teaching and learning process has not been widely researched in the field of education, especially, in Ecuadorian public high schools where the most essential teachers' and students' problems have not been solved even when they need specific attention in order to establish better learning and teaching procedures.

For that reason, the purpose of the present study was to analyze the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools emphasizing on teachers' instructional level, students requirements, physical conditions of classrooms, and educational institutions where English lessons take place.

The researched topic has not only created a great interest in our country, but also in other countries where previous studies related to this topic have been developed to try to solve the most important problems in classrooms. An interesting study was conducted by Zhao (2009) whose purpose was to explore the effect of anxiety on EFL learners, as well as its analysis between male and female students. Students experienced a higher level of anxiety while they worked under pressure and also when the interaction and communication was very active during individual or group activities. Furthermore, the existence of anxiety could mainly be attributed to students' English proficiency, especially when students are afraid to connect statements properly, and use correct grammar structures. One of the most significant factors is the high expectations that parents have on their children. Instead of being encouraged to be more competent in classes, children can gain anxiety and feel frustrated. On the other hand, anxiety could transform into a positive role if the

students see it as part of motivation, and inspire them to keep on learning as well as obtaining good scores. The teacher's challenge consists of controlling the learners' anxiety to maintain a manageable level. Also, they wanted to find the best way to transform anxiety into a positive learning effect. The real influence of anxiety could not be widely described because of the fact that it was done in one high school; more research is needed to support these findings and work toward real conclusions.

The next study was carried out by Ogiegbaen & Uyamu (2006), whose purpose was to evaluate how frequently teachers used instructional resources, and appropriate methods to lead students to learn in public secondary schools in Nigeria. The results showed that teachers maintain the same old instructional and methodological system. Moreover, they did not use the adequately time because they had no knowledge on how to manage groups according to the requirements. There was a big lack of useful resources and technology. Consequently, learners were deprived of vital accessibility to media, unaware of modern technological appliances. Pupils did not receive classes according to the new instructional methodology. The only supporter of information and explanations was the teacher, even when he or she also needs to discover additional language principles. As limitations, researchers could not establish more effective results due to a lack of indispensable knowledge of the usage of instructional tools.

Finally, the goal of the written research made by Attupal (1980) was to determine if gender, motivation, and experience affected the choice of language learning strategies from students of the Universities of Thailand and Vietman. The judgments concerning experience must be carefully interpreted because there can be another kind of research tools which may be better applied in order to support the most appropriate learning strategies. The results revealed that motivation and

experience were shown to be as the major effects, while gender did not represent a serious influence. The factor of motivation contributed enormously to the use of language learning strategies between both groups and could lead to some benefits of learning a language. Most of these results seem to be unconvincing because there are some other supplementary reasons that may impact on the choice of these strategies, like watching movies or singing songs, for example. Unfortunately, the information obtained was not enough to determine some other variables due to the lack of a wide number of participants.

Regarding the benefits, the current study constitutes an important support for professors and people who are involved in the instructional field. It will also benefit all individuals who are interested in changing traditional methods and instructional ways of teaching; moreover, for students who need to be informed about how the educational system could be improved. It will also be of great and unconditional support, especially, for present and future generations of researchers who want to identify additional factors that affect the learning and teaching process based on the ones described in this thesis.

The most relevant limitations encountered in this research were that even when the results obtained constitute an important support in order to determine the most important factors that affect the teaching and learning; it does not represent broad evidence due to the small group of participants. For future investigations, it will be necessary to use a larger number of participants in order to achieve better results. Moreover, it is remarkable to mention that while doing this thesis it was very difficult to find accessibility to some public educational institutions where the researchers could arrange the investigations but also participants who were willing to be observed.

METHOD

*Setting and Participants*

The present research work was done in Quito. To carry out this study 15 students and 15 English teachers from first, second, and third years of five public high schools in Ecuador were chosen. The institutions were located in the south of the city. The average age of the students was between 12 and 16 years old. All of the participants especially students had low economic conditions. All the teachers had enough experience to teach English and several years working in the same institutions.

*Procedures*

In order to carry out this research it was necessary to take the most relevant information from different sources such as books and journals focusing on the requirements of the study. Then, the information obtained was ordered and documented according to the needs of the current study. However, only the most remarkable data of each topic was considered and summarized in order to develop the literature review.

The general approach of this research is quantitative. Also, the techniques used to carry out this research were three surveys, observation, interview, and note taking process, and the instruments used to support the information obtained were observation sheets, questionnaires, and an interview format.

It is important to indicate that two types of questionnaires were used in order to develop the quantitative analysis. Firstly, the Teacher's questionnaire was used to develop the main quantitative analysis, for that reason, the questions were carefully chosen and divided according to the factors to be studied. Second, the student's questionnaire was used to support and give additional details about the research.

Also, the observation technique helped the researchers to prove if the information supplied by teachers and students was reliable, but also, to add some important specifications that were not mentioned in any of the surveys.

To carry out the field research in public high schools, fifteen classes were observed during four weeks in order to experience the real environment where the English classes took place. The observation sheet contained 11 items concerned with the development of each class.

Then, 15 questionnaires which included 20 questions were distributed to English teachers taking into account several features concerned with academic instruction, methodology, techniques, level of proficiency, students' needs, application of different work-activities, the use of English, lesson design, classroom size, classroom space, teaching resources, and monitoring. After that, 15 questionnaires were delivered to students from different classrooms with 14 yes/no questions focused on the students' point of view about the way English teachers manage their classes and how techniques and methods are applied. Finally, teachers of each class were interviewed in order to determine each teacher's level of proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference.

After the data was collected, the teachers questionnaire was used with the purpose to do the main analysis by using questions 1,5,6,7,8,9,10,11 to analyze factors concerning teachers; questions 2, 3, 4 to analyze factors concerning students; questions 12,13,14,15,16,17,18 to analyze the factors concerning classrooms, and questions 19, 20 to analyze factor concerning Educational institutions. Then, questions were tabulated and the percentages of each question was calculated and represented by statistical charts. The evidence obtained from observations could also

help to establish factual conclusions. The researchers also gave their personal

opinions and experiences about the whole process.

Discussion

Literature Review

The importance of English language usage has been increasing in all over the world because it is considered as ¨The universal language¨. In Ecuador, teaching English has become a challenge as a result of the new requirements of the society and the modern educational curriculum. Nowadays, the government of our country has given much importance to teaching English. It mainly focuses on its importance by creating innovative projects which can improve the English level in public high schools especially for the less-educated and trained learners.  Unfortunately, the lack of English teachers, a limited number of professionals with a good level of English proficiency, and the inadequate teaching methodology have made difficult to get good results. In addition, the physical conditions where the teaching process is applied needs to be renewed according to the necessities of the present time. However, there will be a great opportunity to change these facts through the correct formation of human talent, the application of latest models of knowledge and curriculum, teacher´s experiences and so on.  The education is the basis of the development of any country for that reason it is essentially important to encourage teachers to work efficiently by the application not only of main skills, knowledge and techniques but also with personal interest, motivation and devotion.

*Approaches and Methods*

Because English makes the world a more accessible place, the value of having different approaches and methods can easily increase a successful teaching and learning process. There have been several studies about the importance of applying certain kinds of methods and approaches according to the students' skills and learning styles. One of them is the Communicative Approach. Harmer (2001)

says that CLT focuses on real communication and interaction; so the students have enough exposure to real experiences with English language. At first, the use of traditional communicative methodology was criticized due to the lack of teacher´s intervention. However, it is also necessary to recognize that Communicative Language Teaching has left remarkable ideas about how to apply communicative activities in the classroom.

Another important approach is TBL which is based in the applications of tasks or problems that the students need to solve instead of language structure. Nunan (1989) states that "We cannot always be acting as a controller if we want students to 'manipulate, comprehend and interact' with a task". He argues that neither teacher nor students follow the traditional roles unlike they participate, interact and act as themselves so the use of tasks continue being part of learning process even when some critics of Task Based Learning think that  it is not involved in the whole pedagogical methodology.

Similarly, Total Physical Response Method ensures an active participation of teacher and students mainly working on students understanding  and includes them in listeners and performers roles. Asher (1977) argues that learning process in adults and children can be parallel and establishes that grammar structures and vocabulary can be learned by the use of imperatives and drills and considers them as the most important ways of learning. He also emphasizes the active role of the teacher as the principal connector with learners being that person who decides in which activities students have to work on, what kind of supporting material they have to use and what they have to reinforce. In the case of learners, they also have the responsibility to monitor their own learning. They are in charged to produce new language combinations and verify their own progress.

Olsen and Kagan (1992), comment that Cooperative Language Learning is viewed as a socially-structure method that puts particular attention in small groups of learners and their continuous action of exchanging information between them. While it happens, they contribute with communicative interaction too. It is considered one of the most attractive perspectives because teaching is based on work-teams for learning. Consequently, it is recognized that the application of this method has increased a more positive relationship between learners and their tutor and maximized their learning and achievements. Pupils are strongly involved in healthy, psychological, and cognitive activities

Richard (1996) explains that Grammar Translation Method instead sees illustrative grammatical rules and applications as essentials parts in order to make students produce good oral and written language structures lessening errors from the beginning levels. Therefore, presentation of meanings, explanations, directions and readings have to be translated into their first language according to the grammatical structures they have learned in sequence otherwise, it could not be possible to determine levels of complexity. It is considered a typical methods for teachers because instructions are often given in a native language.

Content-Based Instruction is one of the principal approaches in language. Richard (1996) says that it has become progressively more popular as a mean of rising linguistic skills. This is also connected with educational itinerary. For the period of the lesson learners are focused on learning about something, it depends of the topic and the students' advantages, it is the most natural tool that students are using to increase their knowledge about another language that is different from mother tongue.

*Teaching Techniques*

Allen (1965) comments that the technique of repetition is one of the most suitable and practical for learners. Furthermore, Handley (2001) establishes that teaching techniques constitutes useful resources for teachers; they help students to learn with much more facilities, provide ideas about how teachers should motivate students and the most important teachers' role in a foreign language. A vital viewpoint is that the tutors learn about students' interest, goals, learning style, purpose for learning English language, etc. It also let teachers know the better way to teach them without inhibitions. In addition, Lozanov (1999) establishes that the teachers' successes are brush over different activities with the different abilities as listening, reading, writing, and speaking. All of them constitute de essence in language teaching. A better teaching means that the teacher must be expert in discipline, show enthusiasm, emphasize concepts, and critical thinking, encourage questions from students, is creative and act as a constructivist technique, these allow students find out their own discoveries. Besides, Grower (1995) considers correction an important technique and in EFL students need to put into practice the difference between error and mistakes; a mistake is a variation such as slides of the tongue or the pen, learners are able to correct them; even native speakers make mistakes constantly, when the correct structure is usually recognized. The teacher must correct students and permit them to learn more from their own errors. Finally, even when correction is not easy to decide on what and how much, it will depend on the application of different activities and perspectives

*Lesson Design*

Lesson design is the most useful feature for teaching being that the one which allows educators plan their lessons and solve problems in class and provide the best learning to the students. Richards (1998) comments that a lesson design serves as a

guide for managing a good lesson and allows teachers to provide appropriate instructions too.  The typical mechanisms or stages for accomplishing efficient lessons must be concentrated on objectives, anticipatory set teaching input, modeling, checking for understanding, guide, practice, monitoring, lesson closure and individual practice. When a teacher designs a lesson, she or he has to focus on the students and create stimulating activities through listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills.

Wardberg & Rohwer (2010) suggest that efficient physical condition into the teacher's classroom, value the magnitude of having a hard lesson design, it may enhance student learning significantly. Most of the trainers have already known that the useful lesson design's knowledge can increase the student's motivation, compromise, and a positive atmosphere in the learning process, but also reduce s or projective class organization issues.

Gower, Phillips &Walters (1995) claim that the writing of lesson plans functions as an aid to planning a working document and record;  it lets trainers think and organize learning stages logically,  follow a sequence, and serve as an evidence of a procedure. Therefore, those authors agree that a well-made lesson plan must contain: aims, an adequate procedure, approaches and activities, a description of specific materials, students' information, and probable difficulties presenting in classrooms.

Harmer (1991), on the other hand, emphasizes that the most of training courses for designing lessons have just five essential components: description of the class, main objectives, content, skills or type of language to be taught. However, it is extremely essential to complement with the use of good physical and additional resources which may determine the success of the class.

*Managing Learning*

Teachers, as tutors and leaders, should keep in mind many important details in order to manage the class correctly. Harmer (1991) states that the application of appropriate and organized techniques is not an easy task because not all the students receive the information in the same way that is why teachers have to manage their groups intelligently, using an appropriate language and grouping techniques for learners adequately according to the requirements of the lesson. Also, Teacher should find out the best way to feedback learners in the right moment making them feel comfortable and interested. Despite the fact that language correction is vital in their progress, it is absolutely much better if they know what their achievements have been. At the end of the process, if teachers have done the best in the class, it is going to be much more rewarding and their efforts will be always a success.

In addition, Savage & Savage, M. (2010) confirm that lessons must be planned focusing on the time and students' awareness. Time seems to be fundamental if instructors want to accomplish their goals, so tasks ought to be neither too long nor too short. If the activities are too long, students might feel bored. On the other hand, if the activity does not last enough, they may feel unsatisfied.

Furthermore, Gower & Walters (1983) remark that giving instructions constitutes one of the main parts during the learning process; if the students understand what they have to do and how, it could be much easier and satisfactory. Only vital, necessary, and direct information has to be given; if a student sees such information as confusing or conflicting she or he can lose interest.

*Class size*

Students' class size is a remarkable point not only in large groups but also in smaller groups because it let us choose the adequate process, techniques, lesson plan,

learning style, that we will use into the English class. Harmer (2007) claims that smaller classes have some advantages, one of them is when there are a few students, they have more probabilities to talk during the class and teachers will adapt the students' necessities for that reason some students decide on private lessons.

However, Wilkins (1974) explains that large class also compensates in learning and teaching procedure. For example, we find wealth in human resources and students interact to each other, but the large class also can present logistical problem when managing class and it is not easy to arrange lesson like in smaller classes.  Consequently, teachers need to take care of  how they put in order the lesson activities and taking into account the main features of physical space around classrooms to apply certain activities.

*Class space*

Class space can be so significant for the students, not only in their studies. Wilkins (1974) comments that physical space controls the satisfaction, sense, feeling and so on. He also suggests that the teacher should arrange the atmosphere of their class; being as, it will arrange a good environment and physical conditions, so that the pupils can feel the class as their own territory avoiding the anxiety into the English environment.

Moreover, Gaddy, Foseid, & Marzano (2005) mention that the most of the time principal teachers employ existing space to organize seating arrangement therefore, they act as themselves with creativeness and enthusiasm. In conclusion, classroom appearance and the place as itself is vital for the teachers' development and serve as a good mean to establish communication with learners

*Seating arrangement*

Another energetic strategy for trainers is seating arrangement which allows students interact with other people. If they seat in the same place every occasion and for a long time they get bored and unmotivated. Harmer (1998) states that there are different seating arrangement types; for example: traditional arrangement is the most used only when plenty illumination exists and accessible natural light from position window is possible, the horse or semi-circular arrangement is convenient in smaller classes and seminars; to make students sit in a circle is less dominating, offers superior feeling of equal opportunity when the teacher stays out at the frontage. All the seating types, changes the atmosphere in a class and create a good condition in a class and it is a complement that can break a new ground, the students invent, experiment, grow, take risk, break rules, make mistakes and have fun ".

*Classroom and Teacher's Resources*

Students' performance depends on how well teachers employ their resources. Sometimes, it is evident that many teachers do not work with valuable materials in their classrooms. Gower & Walters (1995) confirm that there are certain kinds of materials like the board, tape recorders and books that cannot be omitted because they constitute the main aid for teachers. Sometimes they appear to be too much conventional but they are necessary at the same time. Boards are indispensable for writing specific details and tape recorders are the most useful tools and teacher's eternal partners; most of published materials, books especially, are enclosed with CDs that contains the same information and are always enclosed to books; the difference is that books can help learners to organize grammar structures and written paragraphs while audio programs support listening skills and pronunciation. Audio programs can be used as a way to make students feel relaxed by music and sounds

too. Overhead projectors and videos are beneficial to present information visually: documentaries, sequence pictures, diagrams and some others can be played. Publishing materials like: magazines and newspapers must not be forgotten because they are essential resource for learning vocabulary, new expressions and phrases. Nowadays, technological advances are enormously used. The Net has made everything easier. Computers became the first tool in the educational field but it is not the essential one. We are clear that without the help of teachers it could be unmanageable to improve skills for that reason the best resources in English classes are students and teachers who make interaction real and convincing.

*Classroom Observation*

Classroom observation is a common method for obtaining success in teaching, an observation can represent a significant component for education program, it is the most effective and beneficial over all the other features implicated in this teaching-learning procedure. At first, training teachers observing a fellow teacher in action as a way to enrich experience in which many skills and tricks are learned. Besides, Gebhard & Oprandy (1999), remarks that a notable point into observation is to evaluate teaching because it helps to learn how to teach with more sense. A purpose of observing is to become a good observer and listener but there are important goals like to build about our teaching reminisce knowledge data, investigate reasons, teaching attitudes, beliefs and classroom activities. Nunan (1989) says that teachers or observers obtain more experience through the application of innovative techniques and considers observation a useful tool to collect descriptions, take notes, and etc.

*Student's motivation*

Several psychologists have classified "motivation" focusing on learner's reactions to different factors. Gardner and Lambert (1972) talks about two types of motivation: Integrative and Instrumental. He emphasizes that students who do their best to learn a language and get good scores for accomplishing specific goals like getting a job, be able to read newspapers and magazines are concerned with Instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation, on the other hand, refers to learn a language just for communicating with people from different cultures. Other psychologists' as Skehan (1989) sees motivation as "temporary" dividing it into Intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation follows personal challenges and does not need punish or incentives because students feel satisfied with the tasks they do. Extrinsic motivation, on the contrary, is more mechanic. Students just work hard to gratify their teacher and scape from punishment. However, friendship, integrativeness, self-confidence, self-esteem are also main ways to determine motivation. When students feel well and secure, they seem to be more cooperative, competent and highly motivated.

*Learning Styles*

It is obvious that there are certain preferences for learning according to each individual's personality type. Willing (1008) reaffirms the theory that learning styles concern psychological functions and aspects that can be sometimes alterable. Concrete learners acquire information better by games and films; analytical learners by working on problems, communicative learners by observation and the ones who are authority-oriented are more conventional and prefer to be guided by teachers.

On the other hand, Reid (1987) stresses that learning styles are divided in the following modalities: Visual learners who are identified by their like for working with charts, auditory learners are better with lectures and audiotapes, kinesthetic

types enjoy responding physically and tactile learners love studying on building models.

In the case of Witkin (1962), he argues that learning styles can be qualified through the concepts of field dependence and independence. Field-independent pupils can recognize important language features meanwhile field-dependent ones depend extremely on external features and do not care about specific details of the language. As it was mentioned above, it is uncertain to talk about the correct learning style to use in classrooms but teachers must be attentive and responsible to establish the ones.

*Students' intelligence and aptitude to learn English*

Lightbrown (1999) affirms that the intelligence and aptitude are related, and in some cases are in contrast to some human mental points of view. Intelligence has been measured in certain types of tests and has been associated with successful education processes. Researchers have found a variety of them (IQ TEST), and a diversity of language learning methods. On the other hand, Skehan (1998) supports that aptitude is strongly related to talent for learning languages. The important assumption is that the human talent exists in specific language learning but it is necessary to say that abilities can also facilitate the process even when everybody knows that a talented person will be good at all.

The Educational field is the one which must be improved constantly according to the demands of international standards. For that reason, investigations and procedures have been applied in different settings around the world in order to get results that license teachers improve their methodology and manage their professional ground effectively.

The objectives of the study of Attupal (1980) were to decide whether gender, motivation and experience affected the choice of language learning strategies from the Universities of Thailand and Vietman. The main instruments employed were two hundred sheets of questionnaires distributed to first and second-year students. Nearly all the results were unconvincing and indicated that gender does not contribute to affect the choice of learning strategies but with respect to motivation and experience, they were measured as major effects, especially in Thai students. These kinds of stimulus lead to some benefits to learning a language. However, some other causes should not be ignored as watching movies or singing songs for example. In conclusion, the results obtained from this research should be carefully interpreted because information covers only a small proportion of students and not all the remarkable variables have been studied and proved.

The study of Ogiegbaen & Uyamu (2006), sought to analyze how often teachers use of instructional resources and appropriate methods to conduct students to learning in public secondary schools in Nigeria. The leading instruments of the present study were questionnaires and observation schedules. The questionnaire consisted in four sections with a list of items referring to the frequency of teaching strategies and instructions in the classroom. Additionally, observation schedule looked for evidences during the process of responding the questionnaire and learning environment. In order to make the activity of observation some research assistants were trained. Unluckily, when the process finished, researchers noticed that it existed an extreme dependence on old traditional materials like textbooks, chalkboard and lecture methods.

There were also evidences of teachers maintaining the same instructional procedures and inappropriate period of teaching. As a result, obviously, learners used

to see their teachers as the only ones dispensers of knowledge even more when they have no technological support and feel deprived of useful tools. In summary, Nigerian students have been prejudiced because of the lack of modern and effective teaching tools which might help them to progress in second language communication.

The purpose of the study of Zhao (2009), focused on the effect of anxiety on EFL learners and its impact between male and female students. About a hundred and fifteen second-year high school students from art and science class of Shandong high school in China were required. Firstly, questionnaires assessing students' level of anxiety were distributed, then achievement tests "as the finals exams of the semester" which purposes are to measure students' abilities. Results found that "anxiety" is very common in English-speaking classrooms because it is powerfully related with proficiency. It is also verified that in classrooms where the communicational activity occurs regularly, students experiment more anxiety. Finally, another factor that cannot be overlooked is the high expectations of Chinese parents. Sometimes, students learn under pressure just to please them and cause the opposite effect on learners. Afterwards, anxiety is not bad at all when it may establish motivational effect and can keep on maintaining efforts on learning.

The study of Birjandi and Ahangari (2008) which purpose is to know if the effects of Task Repetition related to accuracy and fluency of Iranian EFL learners can cause a great impact in their oral discourse shows that task repetitions are essential in order to notice errors and reinforce pronunciation. In order to develop this type of investigation a hundred and twenty students from eighteen to twenty years old were selected at Tabriz Islamic University. They reached the best scores in PET examinations. These 120 students were divided into six groups randomly. Each

group worked on a special task type and their performances on the first attempt and second attempt of the same task were recorded and scored. The basic instruments were a PET (Preliminary English Test) exam, a second level ESOL exam and a one-way ANOVA test in order to evaluate homogeneity. The exams were carefully designed and so that conditions for each task type were as close as possible to being identical for all of the participants, and on each occasion.

The repetition of the task was one of the most important parts to know how it worked on students. The results given showed that all groups had almost the same level of proficiency. Furthermore, it is mentioned that tasks repetition has beneficial effects on learners' performance and improves learners' oral discourse. Students are able to notice their problems and try to correct them in the second attempt. Task repetition stimulates vastly to the fluency and complexity. In conclusion, the findings of this research supported some versions where it is asserted that task repetition may help to develop the process of integration of speech capacities. It is also suggested that learners can be helped through repeated experience of the same tasks, and teachers may be able to use the same tasks for different purposes.

Finally, Otoshi and Heffernen (2008) looks for predicting the main factors that learners consider to be extraordinary to accomplish good oral presentation in EFL classrooms. This research took place a private university of Japan where three hundred and four freshman students participated in 2005. Investigators organized a kind of attitude survey based on a questionnaire consisted of thirty items across the following evaluation criteria of oral presentations: eye-contact; voice; English; originality of content; clarity; powerpoint, body language; and time management. In order to spread the responses from the participants' items were categorized into positively and negatively phrased statements. The results revealed that there are three

strong factors for obtaining good marks in oral presentations: 1) Clarity and a good tone of voice: both of them works together and strongly stimulate a good understanding and cause positive effects on audience. 2) Even when the participants tend to be tolerant to grammatical errors, these ones influence enormously in accuracy and pronunciation and must be corrected in advance by the help of peers and teachers. 3) The third most important factor is the adequate interaction that exposers have to manage with the audience; it involves the right eye-contact, sufficient attention to the audience's response In the case of interaction even when it is not still determine how much of these activities can be used. Although, students are clear about how to make oral presentations better, they commented that teachers should take time to demonstrate them how to employ tools and strategies effectively. Students wanting to improve their competence in this area of language study will surely benefit from such training. The use of oral presentations helps to learner's expansion the improvement of communicative skills.

Description, Analysis and Interpretation of Results

This section presents the quantitative analysis of the factors concerning teachers, students, classrooms, and educational institutions, which are involved in the teaching-learning process. The teacher's questionnaire was used as the main instrument in order to carry out the current analysis; the student's questionnaire, and the observation sheet were used as supporting tools in order to give factual results and concise conclusions.

The results obtained from the questionnaires and surveys were quantified; then they were contrasted with the observations done in the public high schools. This information is presented in twenty graphs below.

*Factors Concerning Teachers*

*Which level of Education do teachers have?*
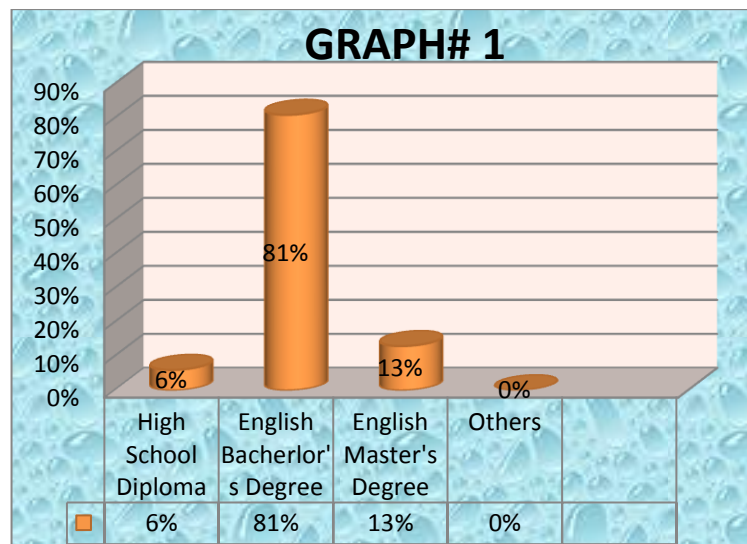


**GRAPH# 1**

| | High School Diploma | English Bacherlor's Degree | English Master's Degree | Others |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 6% | 81% | 13% | 0% |

Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 1 shows that 81% of teachers have an English Bachelor's Degree and only 13% of them have an English Master's Degree, which means that teachers have the required level of education to teach English in high schools. In contrast, the 13%

of teachers who had an English Master's Degree showed a better level of fluency and pronunciation. The most worrying factor comes from the 6% who were working just having a High school diploma, for that reason, their proficiency level was even lower than the rest of the educators.

Although, almost all teachers admitted to have taken extra courses that allowed them to improve their English teaching skills, during the interview, it was noticeable that most of them at times did not have words to provide specific answers to the asked questions; also, many teachers were not able to connect long ideas to give appropriate explanations. All the evidence mentioned before shows that the teacher's job involves more than daily reception and interchange of essential knowledge.
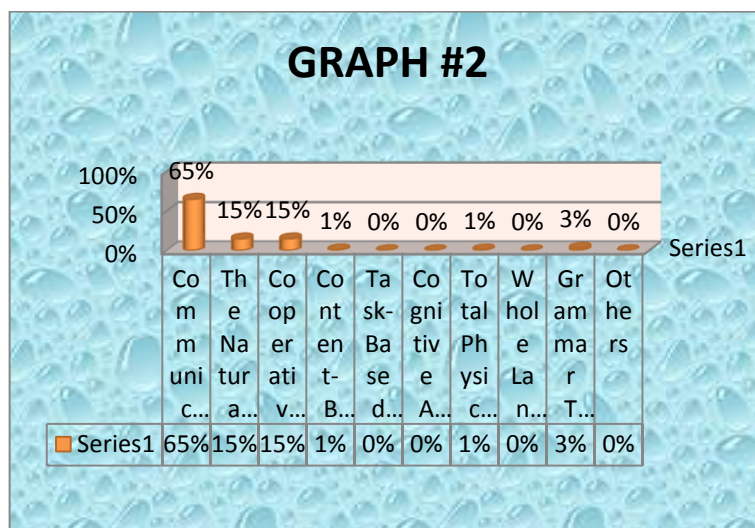
Therefore, the results demonstrate that most teachers did not have enough fluency level or level of proficiency to communicate in English properly and sometimes they tried to avoid talking about difficult topics. Furthermore, most of them confirmed to have studied in public universities, they also accepted to have received too few hours practicing the language with native speakers. According to their opinions, foreigner teachers hardly ever are hired in public universities, because of low salaries that teachers receive in our country.

On the other hand, educators commented that  main authorities of institutions are in the obligation of hiring foreign professionals who could give teachers an adequate training, reinforcement and improvement to their way of teaching because teaching a  foreign language implies to develop supplementary abilities and aptitudes which are very different from the ones used to teach Spanish.

Finally, based on the teachers' questionnaire, it was found that the English education programs have not been effective and beneficial to the teaching – learning

process in the students' level; and also, learners said that teachers need to enrich their

experience in which many skills and tricks are used but it only could happen if all

teachers are well trained.

*Which of the following methods was used in the observed classes?*



| | Comm unic... | The Natur a... | Co op er ati v... | Co nt en t- B... | Ta sk- Ba se d... | Co gni tiv e A... | To tal Ph ysi c... | W hol e La n... | Gr am ma r T... | Ot he rs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Series1 | 65% | 15% | 15% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 3% | 0% |

Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 2 shows that the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method

has 65% of usage; so it means that CLT is the most common used method in

classrooms. According to Harmer (2001), this method emphasizes on the use of real

communication with less teacher's intervention. According to the observations done,

it was evident that teachers often used this method, but it was used in the wrong way

because teachers frequently were the main participants and sometimes answered their

own questions, for that reason, it caused an obvious lack of genuine contact among

learners.

Moreover, it was found that 15% of tutors worked with the Natural

Approach, and another 15% used the Cooperative Language Learning Method. Olsen

and Kagan (1992) highlight that Cooperative Language Learning is viewed as the

one that pays specific attention on small groups of learners and the exchanging of

information between them. Advantageously, it was observed that the usage of this method in real classrooms gave excellent results. In some cases, it was fantastic the way that pupils interacted with each other and worked together with their partners. Maybe, that is the main reason several trainers tried to involve their students in activities like those where they felt engaged with factual knowledge, and teachers also were glad when they realized that students were interested and excited in learning the new topic.

On the other hand, the method of Content Based Instruction is used by only 1% of the teachers. Brinton, Snow & Wresche (1996), specify that according to this method students integrate some language skills with an academic content which is used in the second language. The choice of topics depends on the students' interests and preferences but it is important to know that it will last a short or long period of time. In contrast, it was observed that professors used only textbooks and old stuff to teach their lessons without considering learners' choices.

In addition, observations made in classrooms show an opposite idea of what teachers say because nearly all of them used Grammar Translation Method as the first aid in order to explain their classes. Richard (1996) affirmed that this method had the purpose to teach students how to read and write by teaching them rules and applications, but also, by translating lessons to the first language. Subsequently, observations confirmed that teachers used Spanish and English at the same time. Also, teachers emphasized on the use of English - Spanish dictionaries to solve problems with learners' understanding, which let students to acquire the custom to write, and understand every word, phrase or paragraph with the help of translation, increasing the pupils' dependence on dictionaries and teachers. Also, it is important to say that it was really evident that several teachers did not know the real meaning

or goals of the methods mentioned before because classes had a combination of different activities and methods.

Finally, according to the student's questionnaire, most of students argued about the way teachers explained their classes. They think that professors must prepare an innovative material in order to avoid the use of dictionaries in classes; they suggest the use of drawings like flashcards and mimics. Moreover, they would prefer to change their textbooks for others which would contain current topics and would allow them to learn according to their level of English knowledge.

*Do teachers use whole-group activities to teach their lessons?*
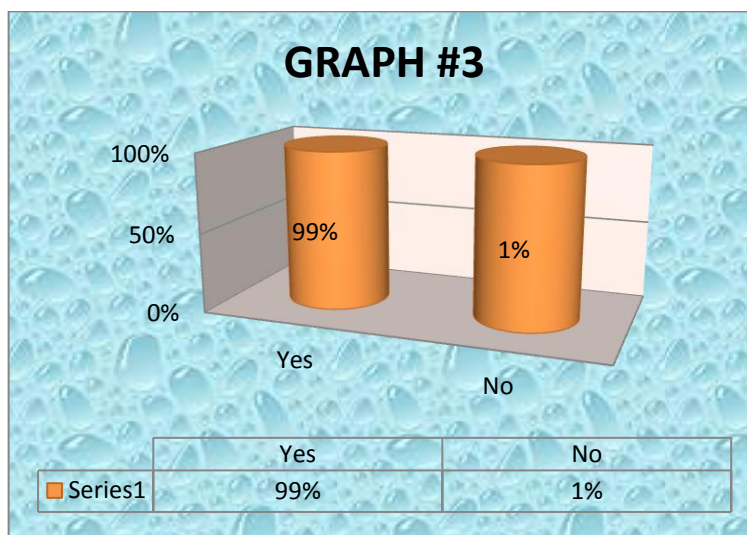


**GRAPH #3**

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Series1 | 99% | 1% |

Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

It is clear in Graph 3 that in 99% of classrooms the application of whole group activities is practiced, while 1% of teachers did not use them. During the observation it was noticed that teachers teach, reinforce, and give feedback in a general way. Also, most of the time, students are in charge of repeating together at the same time everything what the teachers say.

Additionally, it was found that there are certain factors, which influence the use whole group activities like the size of the class and the number of students.

Several teachers said that whole group activities can help them to manage homogenous groups and apply certain techniques which involve an entire participation from students. Also, activities like those mentioned before can save time in the case that repetition needs reinforcement and timing is not enough. Harmer (2007) comments that whole group learning lets students have the opportunity to talk during a lesson; for that reason, an important element to support the use of this kind of activities is the interaction among all learners with their teachers. In addition, Hess (2001) emphasizes on the importance of the use of whole group activities because they ease the communication among learners and teachers.

However, most of teachers just use them in order to save time and effort even when they do not have enough information about how to apply them especially in big groups or how to take advantage of the environment of certain classes. As a result, teachers and students sometimes waste time and energy and essential information can be missed or misunderstood.

Besides, it is also important to consider that there are some disadvantages in whole group activities, for example when the activities are applied to the whole group, it is possible that some students will not participate in the same amount as the rest of the students or misunderstand the real meaning and objective of the topic during the class.

Observations demonstrate that almost all teachers worked in classrooms using whole-group activities every time they could, without worrying about the advantages or disadvantages of big and small groups. Occasionally, not all classes are adequate to apply activities to whole groups because in the case of big groups it is hard to make all students participate, answer, and understand at the same time and in the

same way. It was evident that a large amount of teachers used these activities to explain grammar, give feedback, and apply techniques of repetition.

*Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?*
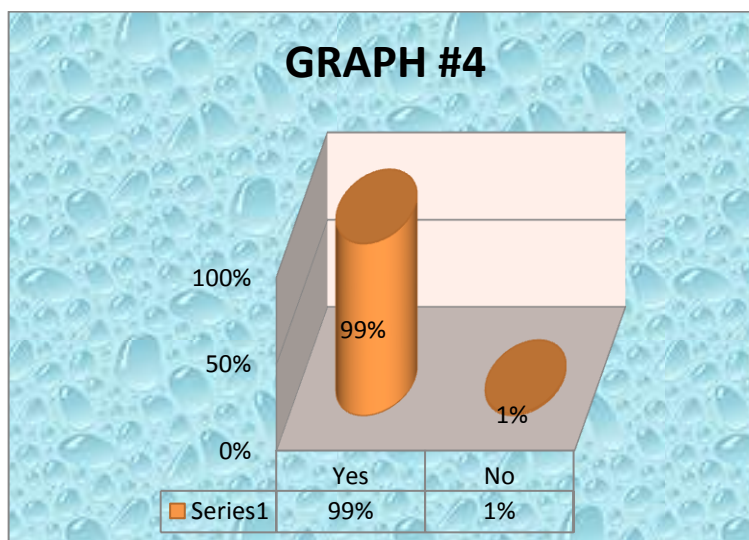


Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
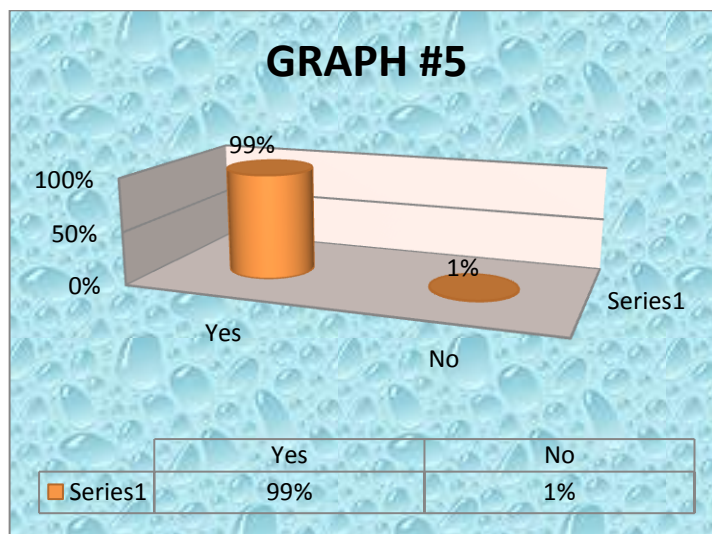Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 4 confirms that 99% of teachers considered important to apply individual activities to teach their classes, while 1% did not. Teachers said that individual activities allow them to know if each student is able to understand, comprehend, and participate independently from others. Teachers see individual activities as the principal way to recognize each student's errors, weaknesses, strengths, and to check their knowledge.

It was observed that through individual participation from students in class, teachers could work with them taking into account their preferences and aptitudes to learn; also, teachers could know if students were increasing their knowledge. Besides, teachers said they prefer to apply individual activities in order to control discipline especially in big groups.

Furthermore, according to teachers' general opinion, it is better if every student is worried about their own tasks, topic or homework. They also said that generally, learners work in silence because it leads them to enhance concentration in a better way.  However, it was observed that the action done from teachers in order to control each student's progress was not enough because teachers did it superficially due to lack of time, and sometimes for other factors as the big size of the class, the tiny classroom space, and the quantity of work that teachers have with other courses. In fact, most of the teachers said they prefer to use these kinds of activities to introduce new topics and grade presentations or examinations.

In all cases, it would be necessary that all professors consider the main characteristics of each classroom to apply the most appropriate activities and techniques, but in the case of individual activities, they can be used in every lesson to determine specific aspects that cannot be identified using whole-group or group-work activities. It is extremely necessary to evaluate, analyze, and consider each student's weaknesses and strengths because not all students learn information in the same way.

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

**GRAPH #5**

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| ■ Series1 | 99% | 1% |

Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 5 specifies that group - work activities are applied by 99% of teachers who considered these kinds of activities useful and important. When teaching a class, teachers agreed that these activities allow leaners to interact with their classmates in the classroom.

Also, they considered important that students share knowledge and have interest during lessons and explanations. One of the most remarkable features of group-work activities for teachers is that students not only interchange information, but they also are able to correct mistakes and give feedback to each other. However, teachers also commented that group-work activities sometimes can disturb learners' concentration while they are learning since it increases dependence on classmates' understanding. Sometimes, learners admitted to have lost interest while they are working in groups, because everyone wants to be the leader and some important ideas may be rejected. Additionally, working in groups can increase indiscipline, especially when all the students want to talk at the same time.

The observations permitted to conclude that almost all teachers used group work activities even when sometimes it was not necessary. One of the disadvantages of working in groups was that teachers could not control each learner's participation so students mislaid their attention for that reason a great number of students wasted time talking in Spanish or doing other activities

However, the implementation of group-work activities in classrooms can be beneficial in the learning process especially because pupils learn to work in teams and cooperate with the rest of the class, as Wilkins (1974) confirms that "the solution that is usually offered is not to treat the class as a single learning unit, but to split it

up into smaller groups, so that both teaching methods and objectives need undergo little or no modification."

On the other hand, there is only 1% of teachers who did not use group work activities because they think that students do not learn appropriately or in the same way. Moreover, these teachers considered group-work activities as a waste of time, because sometimes students do not get along well or they just refuse to cooperate with the rest of the group avoiding responsibilities.

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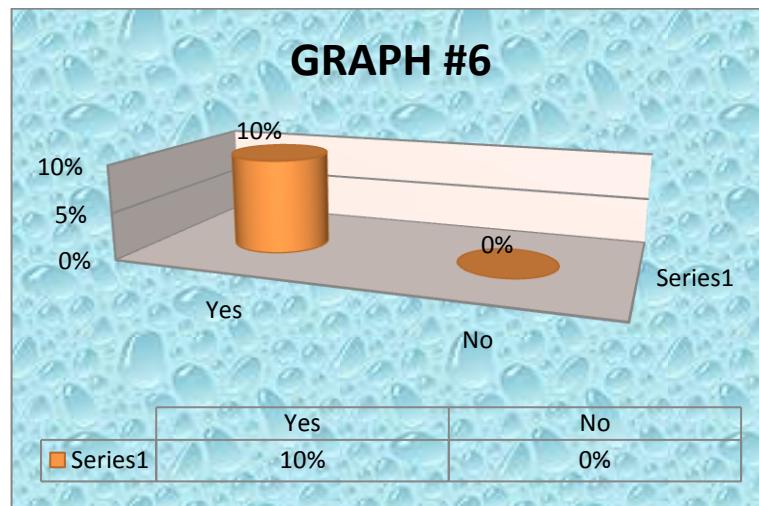


GRAPH #6

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Series1 | 10% | 0% |

Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 6 evidently shows that according to the Teachers Questionnaire 100% of the teachers used the English language in their classrooms. Unfortunately, most of them used only Basic English to teach their lessons and to give instructions; they also used a mixture of English and Spanish to explain their classes. In most of the cases, grammar and vocabulary tasks were directly given in Spanish, while listening and reading exercises were described in English.  Moreover, teachers found it difficult to communicate with their students completely in English, because their level of pronunciation was very low and poor. In most cases, it was noticed that the same

word was pronounced very differently in each classroom. Also, they made a lot of mistakes and expressed confusing ideas using the same kind of words and grammatical structures to make students understand them. Therefore, students were just listening and practicing the same basic information.

Due to this limited ability, learners just perceived what the teacher said. When teachers tried to use new ways to express their ideas, there was a clear sign that neither teachers nor students were able to interact and understand each other, because it was not usual. Sometimes, the introduction of new topics and lessons seemed to be very complicated because in several cases tutors made complete translations in their native language or asked learners to do it too. One of the most difficult tasks for teachers was to give understandable definitions of new vocabulary which increased the students' dependence on using dictionaries to find out the meaning of new words.

In addition, it can be said that most English classes were so monotonous because of the absence of new ideas and creativeness from teachers to make topics attractive for learners. There were not teachers who could talk with their students fluently or students who wanted to dialogue with their teachers in English, both of them seemed to be ashamed with the idea to use English for giving opinions or facts. It could happen because both of them were not accustomed to use English as the main language in classes consequently, they did not have enough knowledge or practice to organize discussions, debates, or conversational activities.

According to the opinions of some learners, teachers should apply more English in classes by using clear and well-connected ideas but also with topics that students are most identified with. Similarly, they said that most professors preferred not to use English all the time in order to avoid misunderstandings especially, with the students who do not like English or do not know much about it. Unfortunately,

the main authorities do not do anything to modify the real circumstances even when the Government knows about the essence of the problem and the possible solutions to be taken into account.
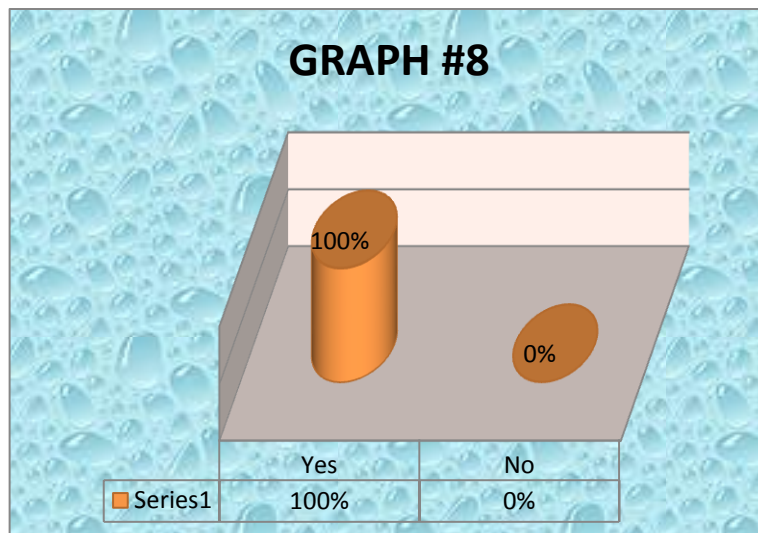
*Do teachers plan their lessons?*
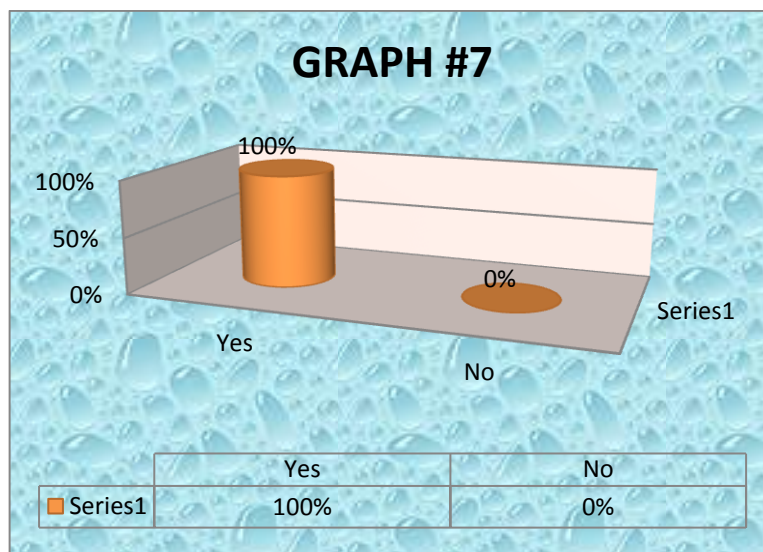
**GRAPH #7**

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Series1 | 100% | 0% |

Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

One of the vital requirements for teachers is the use of a lesson plan which let teachers organize and focus on the leading parts of a lesson or topic. Graphic 7 specifies that 100% of teachers plan every class in order to get good results in students' learning process. Though, it was noticed that most of them just prepared and structured lessons plans as a requisite obligated by the principals and coordinators of the school, because they did not use their written ideas during classes. Certain factors as procedures, methods, introduction, and presentation of the topic were not given in a specific order and the time was not listed. Moreover, lesson designs did not have an explicit arrangement. Teachers just explained English classes by improvising or using the teacher's guide from their own books.

Harmer (1991) & Rivers (1981), stress that lesson plans are thought to help the teacher to resolve problems and difficulties, provide a structure for a lesson, a "map" for the teacher to follow, and a record of what has been taught, but it can be impossible to do it, if tutors do not give them real importance and usage.

Finally, based on the observations done it can be said that professors did not use lessons plans to give their classes because they were just spontaneous during their instruction, and they did not use the different resources they had to teach their students in a better way.

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



**GRAPH #8**

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| ■ Series1 | 100% | 0% |

Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

Graphic 8 emphasizes that 100% of teachers take into account aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach their lessons. Although, discipline is one of the most significant factors in classes, the groups were not easy to be controlled by teachers because they were too big. While teachers tried to explain something or clarify any doubts to one of the students, sometimes it was very difficult to control the rest of the group. Consequently, time was wasted. In many

classrooms, instructors did not regulate the time according to the activities they had organized for learners, which caused the groups to have a bad level of English.

Tasks and topics were given in a free way without seeing if the time was enough or not. It was seen that teachers taught their lessons and gave feedback to students by employing the same traditional methods and the repetition system. Commonly, students opened their books, read the units, and the teacher corrected mistakes without explaining reasons or the correct steps. Frequently, teachers were not direct and clear. It was very common to see students wondering what they had to do even when teachers had already given commands. Subsequently, it not only means that teachers could not make students understand their commands, but also it means that students were not able to recognize instructions due to their low level of English.

According to the students' opinions, nearly all teachers did not give additional explanations or examples to reinforce their language acquisition. Due to the number of students, it was very difficult to realize if all learners understood the class. In fact, there were learners who committed several mistakes without teachers' corrections. Moreover, the observations determined that there were several students who were afraid to speak up because sometimes the explanations were not clear for them.

On the other hand, teachers commented that time was not enough for them, and even worse for applying certain techniques such as feedback and repetition in classes. They emphasized the necessity to lessen the number of students per class in order to improve the control of discipline, the use of instructions and to improve the quality of learning.

*Do teachers consider students' needs to teach English successfully?*
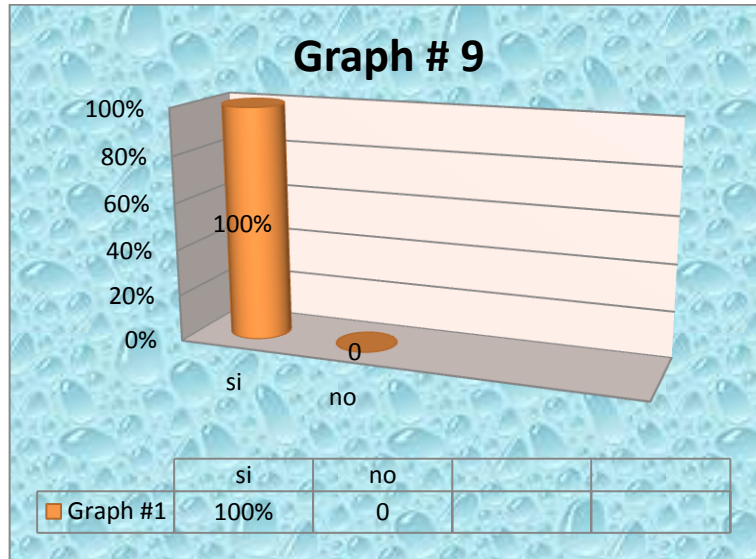


Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 9 indicates that 100% of teachers think that it is important to consider students' needs to teach English successfully. According to their opinion, teaching and learning need to be taken care of both by the educators and learners, in order to attain the language and learn as much as possible.

Referring to the observations, it can be said that teachers did not consider the learners' requirements, and the students confirmed it in their questionnaires. Not all of them had the same aptitude, learning style or personality to take part of the class; however, teachers used the same repetitive way to teach. Consequently, there were some students who felt bored and absent-minded while others did a greater effort to learn.

Additionally, students commented that they wanted to feel motivated by the use of non-conventional ways to teach and participate in classes. Also, they commented that the most remarkable and essential needs for them were the desire to

learn effectively and to be treated as individuals with their own characteristics, failures, and positive qualities because they did not only want to increase their knowledge, they also wanted to feel convinced of what they know so they can be able to interchange mistakes, give feedback to each other, and feel comfortable. Additionally, teachers might be also benefited from students' cooperation and the interchange of ideas with the rest of the class.

Furthermore, in the opinion of Wilkins (1974), it is very necessary to consider physical aspects as main students' needs because if students do not feel relaxed during classes, their attention can be disturbed. Some students commented that they need a good environment to study, a place where they can feel relaxed; good chairs, enough space to move, but also one of the most important needs they considered relevant is that teachers can work in an organized way during classes.

Also, it was seen that in some cases, learners are not privileged with teacher's patience and they showed shyness. It resulted embarrassing and uneasy for teachers and students to ask questions and solve doubts, due to the lack of a good relationship between them in class. In this way, it is important to say that not all students were in the same capacity to understand and receive the information, so they preferred to be in silence. There were also students who had strong attitudes and seemed rebellious. Teachers sometimes did not consider these kinds of attitudes and they had strong arguments with learners.

*Do teachers consider students' level to teach English successfully?*
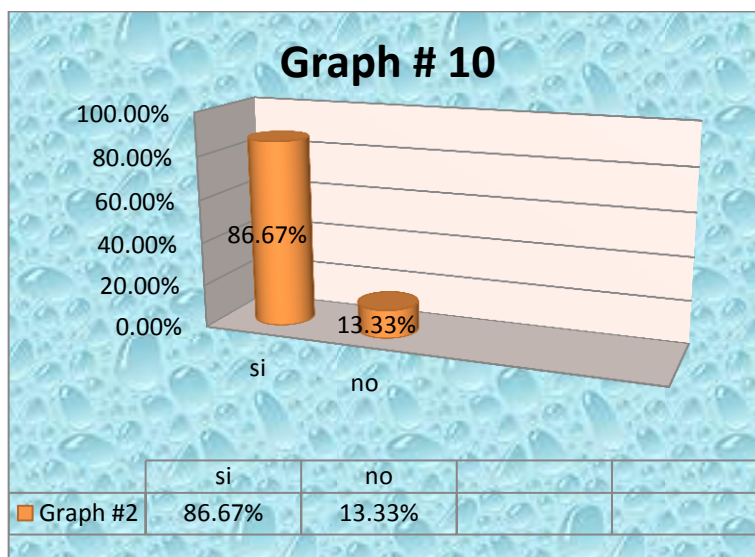
**Graph # 10**



| | si | no | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ Graph #2 | 86.67% | 13.33% | | |

Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 10 shows that 86.67% of teachers believe that it is important to consider students' level to teach in class, in contrast, there are 13.33% of educators that revealed that it is not important to consider students' level as a main influence.

According to the 15 observed classes carried out in the different public high schools, it could be seen that teachers transmit knowledge in the same manner without considering the students' level or needs. Not all the students had the same English language skills. There were a great percentage of learners who did not understand the most difficult instructions and consequently they lost the total sense of the given class.    Moreover, some classmates were trying to guess what the teachers meant or simply they asked for repetition until they got main ideas.

Additionally, one of the most worrying factors in the observed classes was that teachers attend to classes with the purpose or the mentality to work and not to enjoy their classes that is why both teachers and students do not feel encouraged to practice English. Therefore, learners pass to the next school-year with a strong lack of knowledge that is even worse.

It was also observed that there were a lot of students that took extra classes independently from their high schools in order to avoid problems with grades and teachers in the educational institutions. Moreover, learners said that English courses helped them to comprehend the language and improve their English level because instructors from public high school did not give concrete explanations in classes. On the other hand, there were students who did not have enough economic resources to afford extra classes or additional courses, so they had to adapt to their teacher's explanations and use extra help such as dictionaries or support from the classmates who knew more about the language.

The most important finding gotten from the students' observation was that pupils recognized that teachers did not consider the learners' level; they also believed teachers were not giving enough practice in the English learning process. For that reason, learning English was not important for them, the students just wanted to pass the grade and no more; finally, they said their English level was low due to the poor methods and techniques applied in class.

According to some teachers, who know about The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), said that it could provide a useful way in order to validate language abilities according to certain standards and characteristics but it might also help to define proficiency levels of learners.

*Which is the level of their students?*
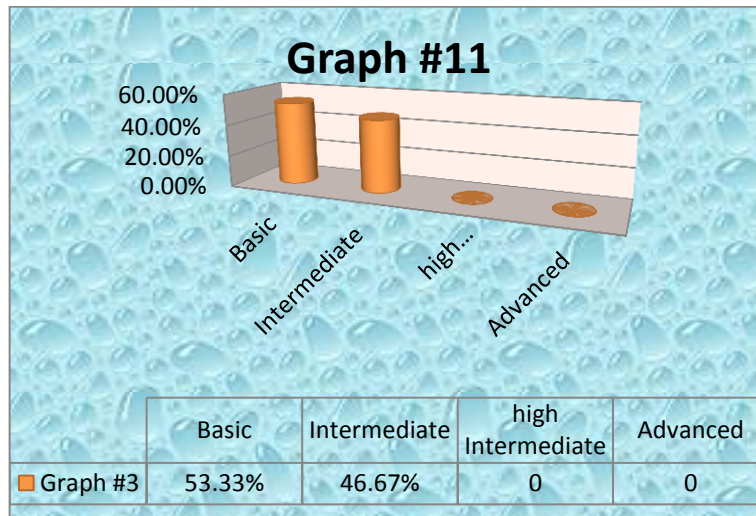
**Graph #11**

| | Basic | Intermediate | high Intermediate | Advanced |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ▢ Graph #3 | 53.33% | 46.67% | 0 | 0 |

Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
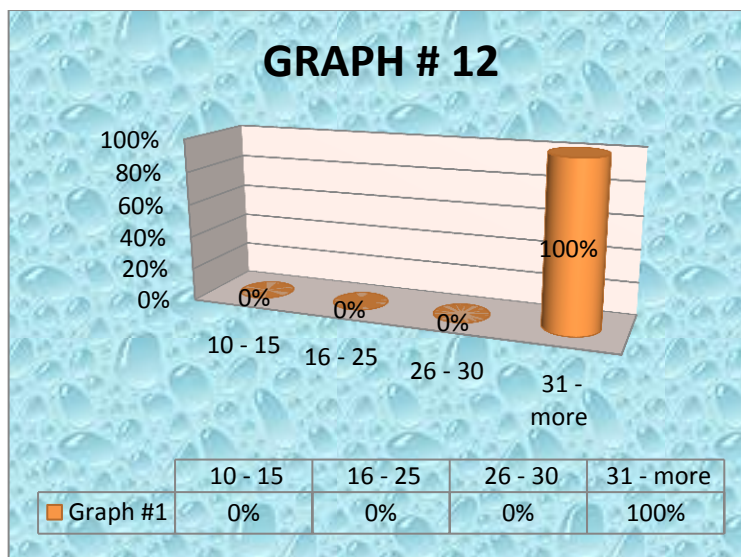Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 11 shows that 53.33% of students have basic levels, the 46.67% have intermediate levels, and there are 0% of them who have high intermediate or advanced levels. These percentages show the hard reality of English education in Ecuadorian public high schools, where most of the students' main levels are basic and intermediate, even when they are in high courses. This condition is the main reason why students have a low English level and do not understand teachers' main instructions. The consequences are presented not only when the pupils leave from high schools, but also when they try to go to other countries to study or interchange knowledge with native speakers.

Based on the observations done, it could be seen that students used English only to transmit main instructions and information using single words or a mixture of both English and Spanish. In some cases, it was noticeable that there were students who did not know how to structure elementary statements using common verbs. Besides, when teachers asked them to give opinions about any topic, they were not able to join simple sentences and give reasonable and comprehensible responses.

However, nearly all of students who had basic or intermediate levels admitted to have received English courses in language institutions, because they could not acquire a good level of English language in the same high schools where they regularly study. In addition, the reality of education shows us that it is very difficult for pupils to obtain respectable skills to communicate in English, because even the teachers get confused with the language in some cases.

*Factors Concerning Classroom*

*How many students are there in the observed classroom*?



Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
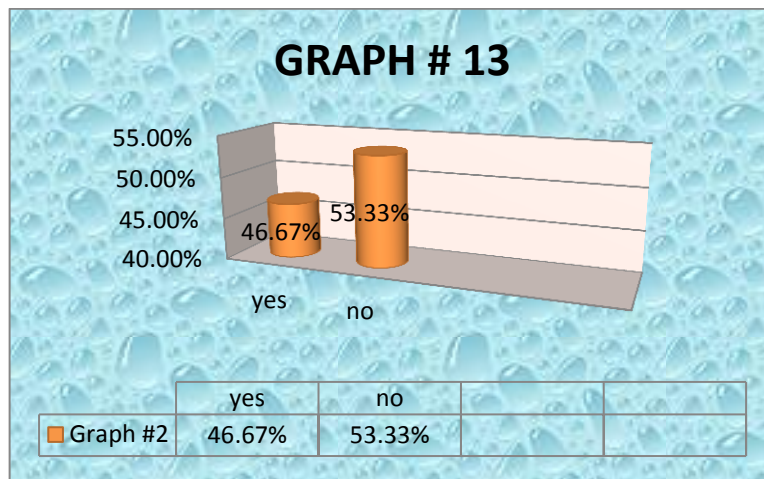Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

As shown in graph 12, the information obtained during 15 observed classes indicates that 100% of teachers work with more than 31 students in public high schools. Much of the data analyzed in class is focused on a great problem when professors teach to a lot of students; the results confirmed that a big class does not provide a way to achieve the objectives of the lesson and does not help students to improve their language skills. As an example, Harmer (2007) claims that smaller classes have more probabilities to talk during the class and teachers will adapt to the students' necessities; however, Wilkins (1974) explains that large classes also

compensate in learning and teaching procedure so the number of students constitutes a great influence in teaching lessons.

Sometimes, if a group is too big; teachers can get tired and worried, because the main objectives cannot be accomplished because classrooms are cramped and students do not feel comfortable so that not only the indiscipline can increase but also the tiredness of both teachers and students.

Also, in the observed classes, there were certain classrooms where the students started to participate from their own seats, in order to complete sentences or structure statements, because the limited free space was full of schoolbags. Most students expressed their complaints about the big number of students; they think that the ideal number of students per class should be between16 to 25 students. Besides, teachers said that working with so many students it's so difficult and exhausting, but they try to get accustomed to teach to big classes although it is really complicated.

*Do teachers feel comfortable with the number of students they are working with?*



**GRAPH # 13**

| | yes | no | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Graph #2 | 46.67% | 53.33% | | |

Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
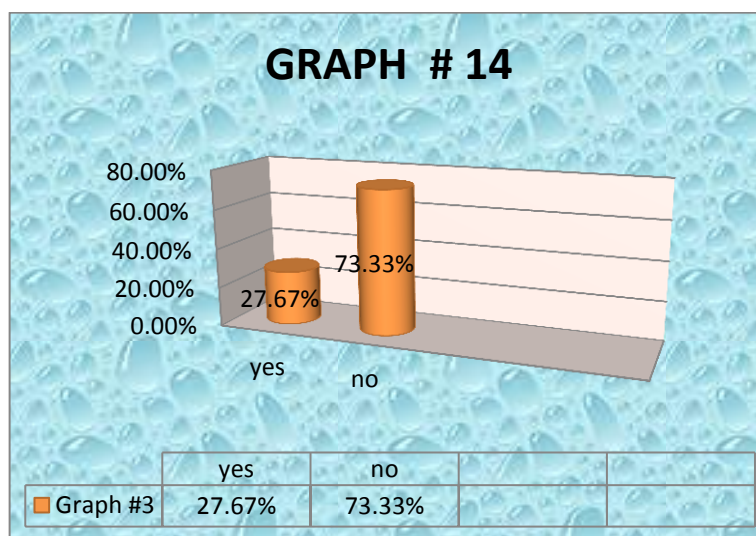Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 13 shows that 53.33% of the public high school teachers did not feel comfortable working with more than 31 students. On the other hand, 46.67% of public high school teachers indicated they felt comfortable with this number of

students; however, they also considered that working with this group of students sometimes does not help to the teaching – learning process because teachers cannot get all students' attention.

In addition, in the observational classes, it was seen that teachers had difficulties in checking out the students' classwork, and also not all the students paid attention to the teachers when they were explaining a topic. For that reason, it is not easy to know how many students actually learned the lesson. According to Harmer (2007), a few students have more probabilities to talk during the class, and the opportunity to increase their vocabulary, and teachers have to adapt the each learner's necessities. On other hand, Wilkins (1974) said that a large class balances in the learning-teaching procedure, but he also explains that it is not simple to organize the lesson as in smaller classes.

In summary, the number of students has not been taken into account in order to give explanations of a topic or to organize a lesson, because teachers think that it is difficult to implement new strategies for all pupils.

*Do teachers have enough space to work with the group of students they have been assigned?*



**GRAPH # 14**

| | yes | no | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Graph #3 | 27.67% | 73.33% | | |

Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 14 reveals that 73.33% of teachers think that the space is not suitable to work with the group of students they have been assigned.

This given fact makes us know that most of the teachers considered that the classroom space is not adequate to teach. Most of them affirmed to work in the same position almost every day; as a result, almost all classes became boring. Another problem was that teachers did not control discipline in the classroom because of the limited space.

Also, the students' questionnaire demonstrated the learners' perceptions about the space, and how they want to work in their future classes. Many students indicated they lose interest in learning because of the limited space in the classroom. According to Wilkins (1974), physical space controls the satisfaction, sense, feeling, and concentration of the students. It also shows that teachers have to take care of significant aspects of the class atmosphere. Therefore, it is demonstrated that classroom space plays an important role and influences enormously in order to get a better understanding during the class.

In addition, public high school teachers consider that class space is an important point in the teaching-learning process, because they want to be able to create different spaces and zones within a classroom; a music area, discussion or conversation center, great table for cooperative jobs, spaces for projects, multimedia spaces, and an individual work area. However, it sometimes gets a little bit complicated to work in these areas because public high schools do not have enough physical space to create all these areas.

Furthermore, teachers indicated that working in smaller spaces is so difficult, because most of the times learners lose concentration, start talking too much with

their partners, and begin to perform other activities; hence, teachers have to create new strategies to control the student's discipline.

On the other hand, 27.67% of the educators indicated that the space where they work is comfortable because they got accustomed to be in those little spaces and they can check in the students' classwork with more facility.

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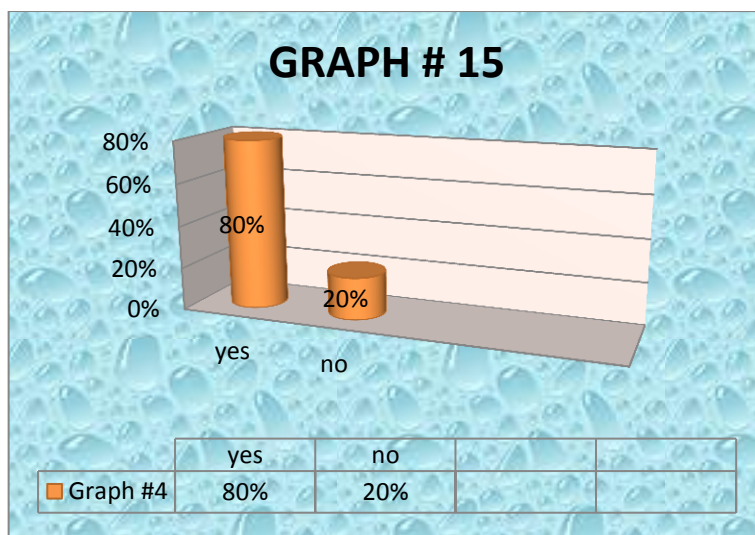


Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 15 shows that 80% of the teachers arrange the students' seats for better learning in the classroom; on the contrary, 20% of the educators do not care about the use of seating arrangement in class.

According to the students' questionnaire, it was found that most students think that their teachers do not put the chairs in manageable positions, in order to develop different activities or for dynamics, because even with these kinds of activities students are sitting in the same order, in the same place, and in the same direction.  In conclusion, pupils are not sure if seating arrangement is an essential part of the daily

class due to the lack of its application and practicability to improve students' learning.

Additionally, in the students' questionnaire, it was found that most of them think that their teachers do not reorganize the chairs in special positions in order to change the environment of the class and get the students' interest. It is clear that students get bored more often if they are sitting all the time in the assigned places and even worse in the same direction with the same partners. Students recognize that the application of different sitting arrangement might become a significant technique in order to increase the enthusiasm and also have a good environment in the class. It also would allow establishing a genuine interaction among learners and teachers, though, these activities can be also limited because of cramped spaces of classrooms.

In fact, working with different activities that allow students interaction with each other in the class is almost impossible because of other factors like the limited space that classrooms have. Besides, most teachers say they do not have time to change seats or even worse, they do not have an idea of how to do it, because of the lack of techniques to manage the group.

According to Harmer (1998), there are different types of seating arrangements which permit to have a good atmosphere in a class, and create a good condition, and also complement the students' learning procedure. Nevertheless, teachers admitted that space in public high school' classrooms is very limited to adapt different positions into them, they also pointed out that personal teaching styles depend on the different ways of organizing learning space. The creativity of teachers for working in very small classrooms or very big ones has to be treated carefully. Students commented that physical space and its control plays an important role during the teaching learning process.

However, the observations showed that there was just one class where the teacher applied seating arrangements and got good results because students not only learned with the closest classmates, they also interacted and interchanged ideas with all the members of the class. So at the end of the class, pupils became friendlier and the teacher felt rewarded so it is obvious that it is a good technique to spread over a class.

Certain seating arrangements activities would permit all the participants to work together in a better way. According to Gower, Phillips &Walters (1995) stresses the importance of students looking at each other while they are interacting. At times, it could be a good chance to ask for help and also create a better environment during classes. However, teachers have to be aware about some problems that sometimes exist when the students try to copy from their classmates. *How many students do teachers think is the appropriate number to teach English?*
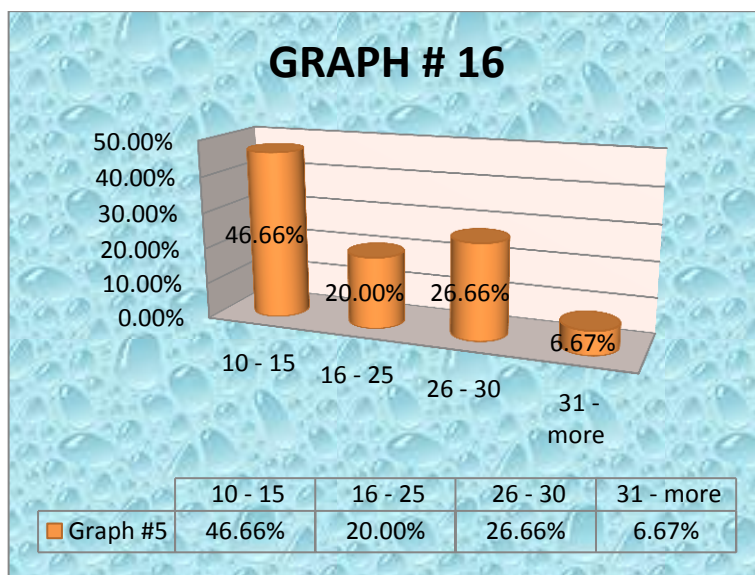


**GRAPH # 16**

| | 10 - 15 | 16 - 25 | 26 - 30 | 31 - more |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Graph #5 | 46.66% | 20.00% | 26.66% | 6.67% |

Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 16 indicates that 46.66% of the teachers thought that from 10 to15 students are adequate to teach a class, 20% of the teachers said that from 16 to 25 learners are enough to teach in the class, 26.66% of teachers revealed that from 26 to

30 students are sufficient to work in the class, and finally the 6.67 % of teachers declared that from 31 and more students are satisfactory to teach English.

Related to this question, most teachers said that it is better to work with few students in the class. Unfortunately, it is impossible with the number of the students who want to enter in public high schools each year. For this reason, educators try to teach or use new ways to increase the students' knowledge without caring about how many students a class has.

According to Hammer (2007), the smaller classes have some compensation, one of them is when there are a few students, they have more probabilities to have dialogues during the class and teachers will adapt to the students' requirements; for that reason, many of the students go to private schools. However, teachers also know that the number of students per class is increasing due to overcrowding and low economical possibilities to access private education.

Besides, data obtained from students' questionnaire, permitted to know that learners do not work comfortably when there are many students; the most significant reason is because the attention of the students is dispersed around the classroom, and most of them feel tired due to the exorbitant amount of learners in the classroom, almost all of them prefer to teach to small groups of learners, because communication and interaction activities get easier and active. In their opinions, big groups are more difficult to control and also need extra effort to manage while smaller groups are ordered, disciplined, and can learn better and faster at the same time.

*Do teachers use teachers' resource (tv, tapes, cd recorder, computers, projector (s) smart board and supplementary materials?*
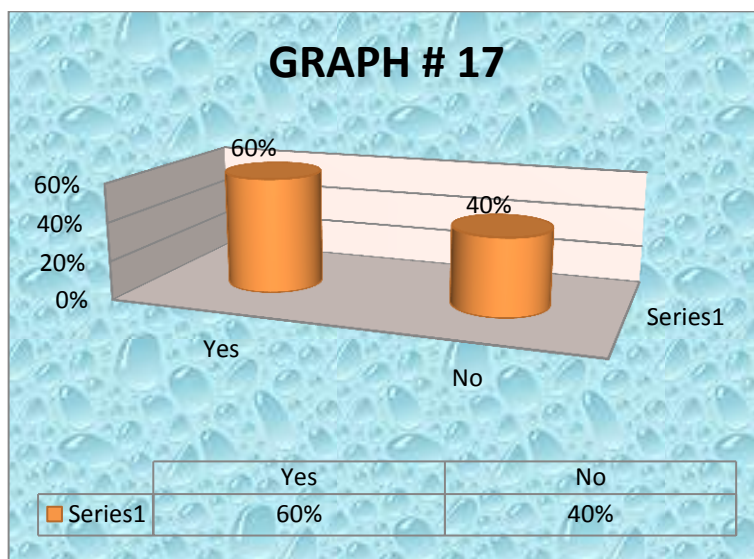


**GRAPH # 17**

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Series1 | 60% | 40% |

Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 17 indicates that there are 40% of teachers who do not use teaching resources in their classes due to the absence of good materials in their institutions; while 60% of them only have essential resources to work with such as board and markers and in the best cases tape recorders.

In the observations done, it was seen that books are not renewed and there is one projector for more than six courses with big amounts of students. Also, there is no evidence of English laboratories or smart boards.  In public high schools, the creativity of English trainers plays a greater role due to the lack of innovative resources. In the case of supplementary materials the same teachers are the ones who provide their own material and work with the things they have at home, for example, flash cards, newspapers, magazines, and other materials.

Besides in the questionnaire applied to students, most of them pointed out the necessity to have better materials as an urgent requirement. New and motivated resources are indispensable to acquire new ways of learning in their daily class.

Maybe, as a reason that many students did not have access to advanced and new resources, they did not want to interact in class. They said that they wanted to have different activities in class with the use of different classroom tools.

Gower & Walters (1995) confirm that there are certain kinds of materials that are important in the teaching and learning process as the board, tape recorders, and books that cannot be omitted because they constitute the main aid for teachers, but there are other tools that teachers can imply in their lesson to motivate students' learning procedure. Unluckily, most public high schools do not have enough economical resources to invest in technological appliances and tools such as computers and internet; even when they constitute the main way to establish contact with real English language and its world in the present times.

It was also seen that public education is deprived from the indispensable learning supplies although the government has emphasized that the educational system has changed and improved but these changes have not been observed yet.

*Do teachers consider appropriate the resources they have in class?*
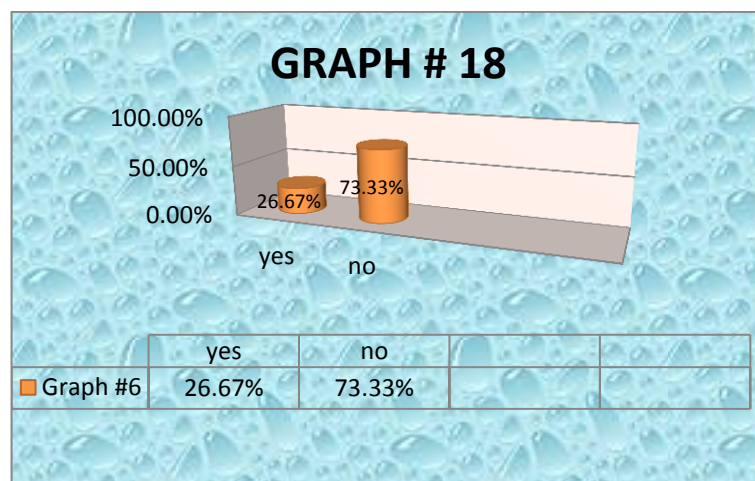


GRAPH # 18

| | yes | no | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Graph #6 | 26.67% | 73.33% | | |

Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
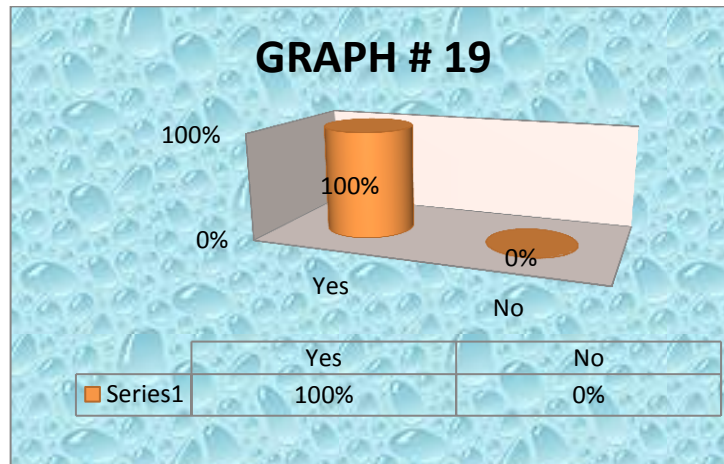Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

From graph 18, it can be seen that 73.33% of teachers do not consider appropriate the resources they have in class; on the other hand, 26.67% of educators think that the resources they have in the class are adequate and useful.

Based on the survey applied to the teachers of the observed classes, it was found that most of them mention the need to design several types of supporting materials, taking into consideration different learning styles, and mostly learner's preferences. Subsequently, the results established that learning English is more pleasurable for the pupils when they carried out different activities and through a wide variety of teaching aids.

In relation to the survey applied to the learners, it was found that learning English through several supporting materials is much more motivating, rewarding, and easier for students. From the students' surveys, it is determined that the majority of the students were unmotivated to learn English because of working with all the same monotonous materials, for all classes and activities. Unfortunately, the observed public high schools do not have good and affordable materials; so it was also observed that the most teachers persuade their students to create their own material to work during class, but it does not represent a good academic support if teachers do not check and correct the students' classwork.

*Do the institutions review teachers' lesson plans?*



Author: Elizabeth Espana Solis and Adriana Montufar Alvear
Source:Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 19 evidently represents the fact that 100% of the authorities in charge of reviewing lesson plans do it all the time. Even though, this seems to be true, it is necessary to mention that the majority of lesson plans were not reviewed carefully, or even worse, they were not reviewed completely.

It is possible that surveys confirmed that authorities usually check lesson plans, but many of the observations done show the opposite. The idea of checking a lesson plan is to realize if teachers can develop it effectively using the best structures and covering the students' major necessities. Nevertheless, a great amount of observed classes determined that lesson plans had a lack of direction and did not satisfy learner's expectations. Consequently, it is notable that neither principals nor teachers from public high schools are not working hard in order to change the way of traditional teaching.

*Does the institution monitor teacher's classes?*



**GRAPH # 20**

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| ■ Series1 | 99% | 1% |
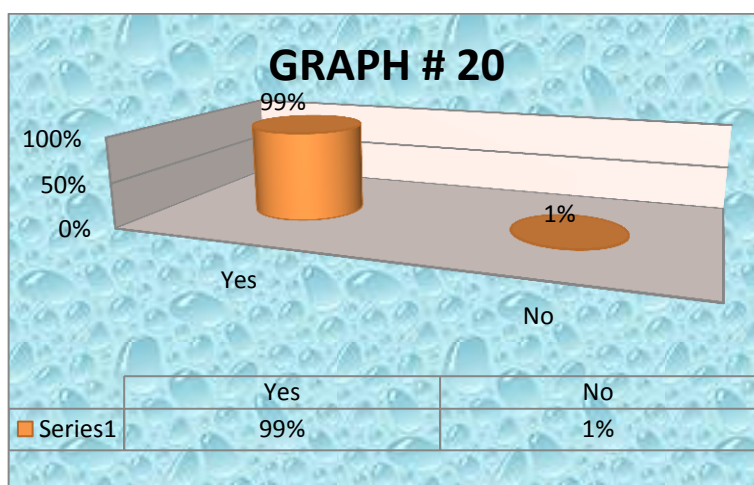
Authors: Montufar Adriana & España Elizabeth.
Source: Teacher's questionnaire

According to the results showed on the graph above, 99% of teachers confirmed that their teaching is being monitored constantly and just 1% are not being monitored. However, the observations made in each classroom demonstrate that no one supervised the English classes, that is why teachers did not use lesson plans, or took into account some important details and features while they were teaching.

The majority of public high schools have coordinators and people who revise lesson plans and organize teachers' schedules, but there is not a persistent review of what they do in classes and how they do it. As it is shown, just 1% of the teachers admitted that there is not monitoring. Moreover, there are a lot of academic coordinators who only received written lesson plans, and then, they signed them without revising what is happening and how is a class planned. It can be also added that principals were not at the institutions most of the time, they often assigned other people to observe and monitor classes, but it was not done. Supervisors are expected to give their best in order to control and manage teacher's classes, because on this way students realize how important the education for the main authorities is; also, the teaching learning process can be improved.Teachers affirmed that monitoring their

classes is not necessary, because they are so professional to carry out their own work correctly; they also said that they are responsible and efficient.

However, the observations done showed that teachers did not want to be observed during the teaching process; in the majority of classrooms, professors appeared to be uncomfortable because of the presence of researchers. Some students argued that some teachers just talked in English when an authority is in the class.

## CONCLUSIONS

- The physical condition of public high school classrooms is extremely bad; there is not enough space to apply certain seating techniques and movement, so that, students do not feel comfortable and interested to learn and participate.

- Teachers only design a lesson plan as a part of the requirements in public high schools, most of them do not follow its structure or take into account some important details and features while they are teaching.

- Teachers found Communicative Language Teaching and Cooperative Language Learning Methods as the most useful and applicable in classes as a reason that they permitted them to establish real communication and also cooperation between students with teachers' less intervention.

- The big number of students per classroom did not let teachers arrange a meaningful application of whole-group, pair-work and group-work activities which could lead both teachers and learners to benefit the teaching-learning process.

- Learning Styles were not taken into account while teaching even when they could increase learners' motivation and improve the way that students acquire knowledge.

- Teachers' level of education was acceptable; most of them had a Bachelors and master's degree, but there are several teachers who only have a high school diploma.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommendable for the principals of the public high schools to consider the number of students in each classroom since it is hard to deal with large classes, and subsequently the teaching-learning process is affected.

- The government should do a great investment in order to create more public high schools where instructors will work adequately but also with a suitable environment, so they can feel respected and comfortable.

- Lesson plans should be designed taking into account the learners' weaknesses and strengths, but also the different levels of English that students have.

- Class monitoring should be continuous in order to improve teaching and solve students' main concerns involved with their understanding, learning difficulties, and requirements.

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**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 (   ) | English Bachelor's Degree (   ) | English Master's degree (   ) |
|---|---|---|
| Others: _____ | | |

Do you consider Students' needs to teach English successfully?

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

Do you consider Students' level to teach English successfully?

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

Which is the level of your students?

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

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 _____ | ( ) |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) | |
|---|---|---|
| Why? _____ _____ | | |

Do you use individual activities to teach your lessons?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) | |
|---|---|---|
| Why? _____ _____ | | |

Do you use group work activities to teach your lessons?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) | |
|---|---|---|
| Why? _____ _____ | | |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
|---|---|

Do you plan your lessons?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
|---|---|

Do you consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach

your lessons?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
| --- | --- |

How many students do you have in this class?

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

Do you feel comfortable working with this number of students?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
| --- | --- |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
| --- | --- |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
| --- | --- |

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

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

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
| --- | --- |
| Which ones? _____ | |

_____

_____

Do you consider appropriate the resources you have in class?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
|---|---|
| Why? _____ _____ _____ | |

Does the institution review your lesson plans?

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

2. **Does the institution monitor your teaching?**

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

**Thanks for your cooperation!!!!!**

**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA**

La Universidad Católica de Loja

**MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA**

**CARRERA DE INGLES**

**OBSERVATION SHEET**

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

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.

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.

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 _____ | ( ) |
| | |

Which of the following activities are used?

| | |
|---|---|
| Whole-group activities | ( ) |
| Individual activities | ( ) |
| Group work activities | ( ) |

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 | ( ) |

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

| | |
|---|---|
| Discipline | ( ) |
| Feedback | ( ) |
| Activities management | ( ) |
| Time management | ( ) |

How many students are there in the classroom?

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

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

| YES | ( ) | NO | ( ) |
|---|---|---|---|

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

| YES | ( ) | NO | ( ) |
|---|---|---|---|
| NOTES: _____ _____ _____ | | | |

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 | ( ) |

In which percentage does the teacher use English in class?

| 25 % | ( | 50 % | ( | 75 % | ( | 100 % | ( |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | ) | | ) | | ) | | ) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

## TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

| A1 | Where are you from?<br><br>Where do you live? |
|---|---|
| A2 | Where did you learn English?<br><br>How long have you studied English?<br><br>Which subject was the most difficult during your major? |
| B1 | How long have you been teaching English?<br><br>Which skill is easier for you to teach?<br><br>Would you like to continue studying? Why? |
| B2 | What are the advantages or disadvantages of teaching English in a "non-English speaking country"?<br><br>What are the main problems a teacher faces when teaching English in Ecuador? |
| C1 | What social benefits are derived from learning English?<br><br>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?<br><br>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   ( ) |



**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA**

*La Universidad Católica de Loja*

**MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA**

**CARRERA DE INGLES**

**STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE**

| EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION: | |
|---|---|
| DATE: | |
| YEAR: | |

¿Te gusta aprender Inglés?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
|---|---|

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
|---|---|

Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

| Muy fáciles ( ) | Fáciles ( ) | Difíciles ( ) | Muy difíciles ( ) |
|---|---|---|---|

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
|---|---|

¿Por qué?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
|---|---|

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
|---|---|

¿Tu profesor controla la disciplina en la clase?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

¿Consideras que el número de estudiantes te favorece para aprender de mejor manera el Inglés?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
| --- | --- |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
| --- | --- |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |
| --- | --- |

**GRACIAS!!!!!**