

Fostering student engagement towards English class through ESA Lesson Sequences in fifth  
graders

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A research report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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### **Contextualization**

This research took place at Centro Educativo Renovacion el Arca, which is a private school located in San Andrés Island. The institution offers Preschool and Elementary school levels, and it is cataloged as an inclusion school; that is to say, it is common to find students with special educational needs. The school's principal values are freedom and tolerance.

The school's pedagogical approach, as explained in their Institutional Educational Project (PEI), is constructivism, which states that learning is an active, contextualized process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring it. Knowledge is constructed based on personal experiences and hypotheses of the environment.

I worked with a group of 17 fifth-graders: 10 boys and 7 girls (5 of them with special educational needs), aged 10 to 13, from different sociocultural, family and economic backgrounds. In interaction with students I noticed that, although the students' families have the resources to register the children in a private school rather than a public one, the majority of students have difficult contexts in their family circle, which directly affects their performance at school.

Another important factor to reflect upon is that, even though this research took place in San Andres, which is considered to be a bilingual island, nowadays English use has decreased due to the influence of Spanish cultures. In my fifth grade classroom, out of seventeen, there were only five native students. Therefore, to avoid frustration among students, it was usually

necessary to use code switching, alternating English and Spanish to facilitate their comprehension.

At Centro Educativo Renovación El Arca there are no special institutional guidelines for teaching English classes. In fifth grade we use a book named Clap, Clap 5, and the teacher is free to use it the way he or she prefers.

The students' proficiency level was low before I started working with this group. The teacher who was in charge of the course during the last period shared with me his concern about the book, which he considered too advanced for the group. In view of this background, and in order to get to know the group better, I conducted a needs analysis survey with the following five questions:

1. Do you think learning English would be useful for your life?
2. Do you feel motivated to learn English at school?
3. In which of the four areas of English do you have more difficulty: listening, speaking, reading or writing?
4. Which are the activities you like best in an English Class?
5. Is English your favorite subject?

The results of the survey are shown in the figure below:

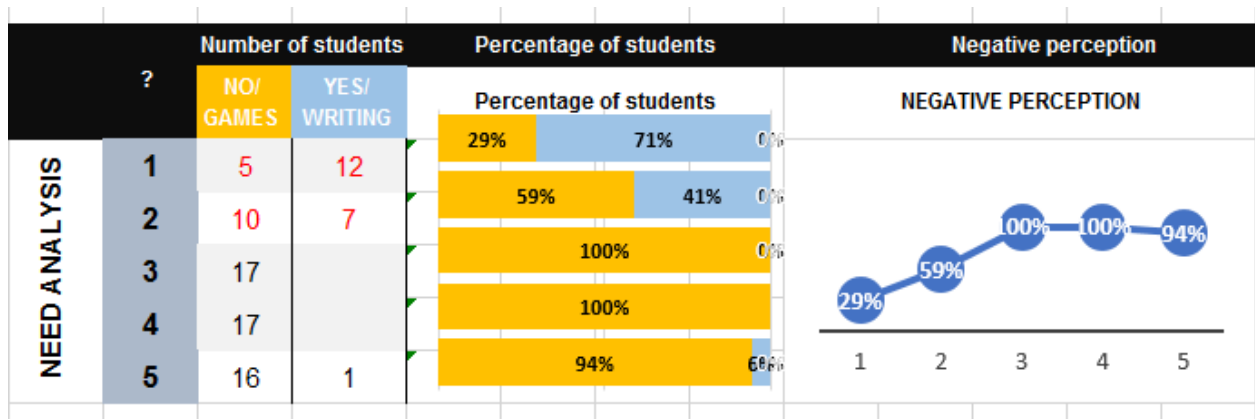


Figure 1. Needs analysis survey results

From the need analysis, we can notice that only 29% of students of fifth grade think English would be useful for their lives. 59% do not feel motivated to learn English at school; 100% expressed they have difficulties in all English skills; 100% would like learning through games, and 94% agreed that English is not their favorite subject.

In regard to the second question about motivation towards learning English at school, which shows a lack of motivation in most students, through direct class observation I could notice that students got frustrated when they did not understand something, losing confidence and interest for the class; this indicates that their low proficiency really affected their interest.

On the other hand, the group had indiscipline problems, which made the task harder. It was not only that they did not have a basic proficiency, but also their behavior was difficult to deal with. All these situations represented a challenge that I decided to face with this study.

### **Research Statement**

I started the classes with fifth grade in February 2019, working as a teacher at Centro Educativo el Arca, and in March, I was promoted to the role of Academic Coordinator. There were not special guidelines for teaching English classes in this school, so I considered this was the perfect opportunity to reflect upon the English teaching practices at the school, and at the same time, to carry out my research.

I was assigned three (3) teaching hours per week. First, I applied the need analysis through which I found out that students were generally not motivated to learn English. After that, I applied a diagnostic test that students initially did not want to take; after explanation and elicitation, they decided to take the test, and out of seventeen students, only one could solve it properly.

With those results, I decided to stop using the course book during the first period, because I thought it was too advanced for students, considering the difficulties that they had with using the language to express even the most basic information. Instead, I worked out a series of basic topics combining the function and form of the language as follows: personal information, the alphabet and spelling, talking about themselves; learning daily expressions, and understanding the main ideas in a short story.

I was set out to teach my classes. Nevertheless, I still faced the problem of students' negative attitude towards learning English that I identified through the needs analysis, as

explained in the contextualization section. Several questions came to mind: What was the reason? How could I help? Was it the teacher? How differently could I work?

As I was looking for motivating ways to teach my new group of students, I started reading about class sequencing, how important it was for successful English lessons, and how relevant it was to engage and motivate students towards English language learning. I started asking myself: what kind of class sequence different from the traditional PPP (Presentation – Practice – Production) could I use to get students more interested in my English classes?

Contemplating the different options to manage the situation, I found ESA (Engage – Study - Activate) by Jeremy Harmer (1998), which focuses on engaging students in learning, eliciting their interest, curiosity and attention during a class. That was exactly what I was looking for. After getting informed about ESA as an alternative to sequence learning activities, I decided to pose the following research question:

*What does the use of ESA procedure reveal about the levels of student engagement in a group of fifth graders?*

Accordingly, I proposed the general objective below:

*To explore the impact of using ESA lesson sequence over student engagement in a group of fifth graders.*



### Theoretical Framework

To carry out the present project it was necessary to review three main concepts: the first one is student engagement, the second one is ESA lesson Sequence and the third one is classroom management. All concepts will be described as follows.

In order to teach effectively, we need to involve, stimulate and provoke student's interest toward the information we are going to present (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Guthrie & Wigfield (2000) referred to student engagement in terms of three aspects: **Affective engagement**, which happens when students have a sense of belonging in the classroom, as well as interest, curiosity, or enthusiasm around specific topics or tasks; **behavioral engagement**, which happens when students have active participation in class activities that is evident in time-on-task; and **cognitive engagement**, which includes perseverance and the use of metacognitive and self-regulated strategies, like students asking to stay after school to think more about a specific topic that calls their attention.

In the same perspective, Parsons, Richey and Ward (2014) drew the following relevant statement regarding three tips about student engagement: First, **engagement is associated with student achievement**; about this, they cite an explanation of Skinner and Pitzer (2012): engagement is a robust predictor of students learning, grades, achievement test scores, retention and graduation; Second, **teachers can increase and decrease student engagement**; McColskey (2012) states that student engagement cannot be separated from its environment. He suggested that through cooperative, caring and social contexts students will be more

confident, willing to participate and to learn. Thirds, **there are varieties of ways to evaluate student engagement**; about this, they suggest the student self - report, the teacher report, and observation as ways to determine student engagement.

Given that the purpose of this study was to reflect on the implementation of a different lesson sequence apart from the traditional PPP (presentation, practice and production), the use of **ESA** (engage, study and activate) lesson sequence by Jeremy Harmer (1998), has offered an interesting and challenging focus that changed my way to teach. This way of sequencing lessons elicits student's engagement in all phases by providing activities designed to be interesting and help students stay focused on learning.

ESA is an element for successful language learning. Students need exposure, motivation and opportunities for language use, acknowledging that different students may respond more or less well to different stimuli. According to Harmer (2007), any teaching sequences need elements, regardless of class time; these elements are Engage, Study and Activate.

**Engage:** Engaging activities may include: games, music, discussions, stimulating pictures, dramatic stories, amusing anecdotes, etc. in other cases, the teacher would work to ensure students engagement with the topic; questions about making predictions or relations to their own lives are significant too. This stage is important because when students are properly engaged, they have a better involvement in the study and activation stages.

**Study:** In this phase, students are asked to focus on the construction of language itself, its use, sound and look (focus on form). Activities in this phase could be: presenting a new grammar pattern, repeating each element separately, putting a diagram on the board before

getting students to repeat sentences; at other times, we may show students examples of language and ask them to try to work out the rules. Such discovery activities ask the students to do all the intellectual work, rather than leaving it to the teacher.

**Activate:** These activities are designed to get students to use language as freely and communicatively as they can, without focusing on structure or using word lists. The objective in an activate activity is for them to use all and any language which may be appropriate for a given situation or topic. In this way, students get a chance to try out real language use without restriction. Activate exercises include role-plays, advertisement design, debates and discussions, describe and draw, story and poem writing, email exchanges, writing in groups, etc.

**ESA** has overlapping patterns with **PPP**. Some presentation occurs in engage (warm up), and in the study phase of ESA, as the teacher introduces the language to students. Practice occurs during the study phase, while students build their skills and abilities, and help students to activate learning, because students continue activating their skills during the producing stage of PPP. Even though the ESA lesson sequence has similarities with PPP, the ESA invites to different ways to keep students focused and fostering engagement, which leads to learning.

Something I like about ESA is that even though the three elements need to be present in the lesson sequence, this does not mean that they should always occur in the same order. It depends on what we want to achieve. The following are different ways of using ESA:

**Straight arrows:** Engage – Study – Activate

**Boomerang:** Engage – Activate – Study – Activate

**Patchwork:** Engage– Activate – Study – Activate – Study – Engage - Activate

For the purpose of this research, I used **straight arrows** for most of my lesson plans; this way is used with low levels due to the straightforward language. There was one lesson plan modified according to students' needs which became an approximation to what we call **patchwork**, given that I did an Engage – Activate - Study sequence. It is important to clarify that due to the limited time available per lessons, it was difficult to apply a longer sequence like the boomerang or patchwork complete structures.

In regards to classroom management, it is important to highlight that it deals with how things are generally carried out in the classroom: procedures, routines and structure. It is the teacher's responsibility and its main purpose is student learning. Root (2014).

When dealing with classroom management, we can face chattering in class, students not listening, disengagement from what's going on (passive resistance), blunt refusal to do certain activities or to do what they are told, constant lateness and even rudeness. Harmer (2007) recommends the following:

**Remember that is just a job:** He explains that teaching is a job, not a lifestyle. As professionals, we are supposed to respond as objectively as we can. There may be difficult moments, but emotional detachment is more successful than reacting emotionally.

**Deal with the behavior, not the student:** We should avoid criticism or exhibition by using sarcasm, insults or humiliating students that will cause bad reaction toward us as teachers. Harmer (2007) points that when the bad behavior occurs, we should act immediately and talk face to face and apart from the group with the implicated, trying also to get to the root of the situation, because we could help to solve it.

**Go forward:** The best way to deal with problematic behavior is to work out what will happen next. Harmer states that we should not focus on the now but on the future improvement.

**Use any means of communication:** Harmer proposes to talk students individually or via email, even by letter if necessary, all in order to get to the root of the behavior.

**Enlist help:** He also considers that we can ask for help from our colleagues, maybe checking our practice to notice if we are acting unconsciously in a bad way. Another thing to remind students is the behavior policy of the school.

**Prevention or cure:** He recommends agreement with students on behavior standards at the beginning of a semester, which may involve making a language-learning contract, where the teacher and students say what they expect and what is unacceptable.

The effectiveness of ESA has been documented in some studies, like the one carried out by Khoshsiman, and Shokri (2017). This study takes into account that ESA can be regarded as one influential and effective instructional technique in teaching speaking to EFL learners. They firmly argued that proper use of ESA, would significantly help teachers promote EFL learners' motivation to speak. Its first and foremost advantage would be its ability to emotionally engage learners in teacher-led discussion task and subsequently the learning process. This meaningful research ratifies my intention concluding that the employment of ESA elements has the potential to significantly influence students' motivation to speak.

Finally, Shokri (2017) confirms the positive role of Harmer's ESA elements applied on tasks with a focus on mastering reading comprehension of EFL learners. She states that her

study also supports findings on engagement concluding that students who are actively engaged in their learning have better reading outcomes than do passive learners.

### **Research Design**

The present investigation was carried out through action research, given that this design proposes inquiry about my own practice in an educational context through three stages: planning a change, acting - observing, and finally, reflecting. Corey (1953) argued that traditional research is done mainly by researchers outside the public schools and has little influence on school practice. He wrote:

*Learning that changes behavior substantially is most likely to result when a person himself tries to improve a situation that makes a difference to him... When he defines the problem, hypothesizes actions that may help him cope with it, engages with these actions, studies the consequences, and generalizes from them, he will more frequently internalize the experience than when all this is done for him by somebody else, and he reads about it. The value of action research is determined primarily by the extent to which findings lead to improvement in the practices of the people engaged in the research. Corey (1953)*

I completely agree with his statement. There is greater impact when you are part of the context object of study, because you are able to observe and reflect in action, and propose new alternative to what is ought to be changed.

Action research, as Kemmis & McTaggart (2000) stated, consists of a spiral of consecutive self-reflective cycles which implies planning, acting and observing, reflecting and finally the replanning, where we apply the new findings in our context. Being able to start a new cycle when necessary, action research leads to the improvement of our practice as teachers, fostering the development of practical solutions. As Sagor (2000) reflected: practitioners who engage in action research inevitably find it to be an empowering experience. Perhaps even more important is the fact that action research helps educators to be more effective at what they care most about: their teaching and the development of their students. I also consider important to mention what Mills (2003) says: knowledge gained through action research can liberate students, teachers, and administrators and enhance learning, teaching, and policymaking.

As the school Coordinator, I had the possibility to reflect on the institution's needs with respect to English teaching. At the institution, out of seven teachers, only two are native with knowledge of English, but they are not trained English teachers. There is one teacher per grade, and each one teaches English in their classroom, without guidance, using the book as well as they can.

The following table shows the stages of the study:

| ACTIVITY SCHEDULE                   |                                               |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| ACTIVITY                            | DATE                                          |
| NEED ANALYSIS                       | 04-02-19                                      |
| DIAGNOSTIC TEST                     | 04-02-19                                      |
| LESSON PLAN PREPARATION (PERIOD I)  | FROM 04-02-19                                 |
| LESSON PLAN IMPLEMENTATION          | 06/02/2019 UNTIL<br>29/03/19<br>(12 SESSIONS) |
| REFLECTION                          | MARCH 30 TO APRIL 2                           |
| LESSON PLAN PREPARATION (PERIOD II) | FROM APRIL 3                                  |
| LESSON PLAN IMPLEMENTATION          | 22/04/19 UNTIL 22/05/19<br>(9 SESSIONS)       |
| REFLECTION                          | 23-04-19 TO JUNE 25                           |

*Table 1. Stages of the study*

The data collection instruments that were implemented in this research were the following:

**Needs analysis survey:** Through this instrument, I identified the students' attitudes towards the language and the class, and evaluated the specific needs of the group. It was the initial tool for decision making regarding the instructional design. (Appendix A)

**Diagnostic test:** The diagnostic test displayed the students' level of English proficiency. It was important in order to recognize where to start in regard to the particular needs of the group. (Appendix B)

**Teacher's journals:** Through the journals, I described the lesson sequence for each session, as well as details about the class, students' behavior and engagement during the class, and my reflections as a language teacher. The journals were written taking into account participant observation and also a series of audio recordings for each session. (Appendix C)



**Interview (audio recording):** After the pedagogical intervention, I interviewed the students with the purpose of gathering information about their perceptions and opinions towards the lessons and their learning experience. (Appendix D)

My role as an action researcher is described by Vibeke, M., Sandaunet A.G. (2009) as a dual role, researcher and implementer. Another important contribution regarding my role, is the one made by Dezin & Lincoln, (2003) who consider the researcher as an instrument of data collection. Being the coordinator and the English teacher enabled me to examine the professional practice of the school in this area.

### **Implementation and Data Analysis**

The theoretical principles chosen for English teaching through this pedagogical intervention are found in communicative language teaching, which is aligned with the implementation of the three aspects of the ESA lesson sequence (Engage – Study – Activate). Doughty and Long (2003) stated the following principles as a guideline for implementing CLT.

1. **Using tasks as organizational principles.** This has to do with the focus on meaning by giving learners “a purpose to use grammar in a meaning context”
2. **Promoting learning by doing.** It refers to how new knowledge can be better retained in long-term memory if it is tied to real-world events and activities.

3. **Input needs to be rich**, since the learner needs to be exposed to the language from various sources to develop native-like language skills. That input, however, must be comprehensible to the students.
4. **Input needs to be meaningful, comprehensible and elaborated.** The assimilation of new knowledge heavily depends on how easily it can be attached to already existing knowledge.
5. **Promoting cooperative and collaborative learning** by pairing or grouping students together so that they can work cooperatively on a task. This practice promotes communicative interaction in the target language.
6. A **focus on form** approach that emphasizes a form-meaning connection, teaching grammar through communicative contexts.
7. **Providing error corrective feedback** is important for the learner, but it is a long term process. It depends not only on how the teacher provides the feedback, but also on individual learner factors.
8. Finally, **recognizing and respecting affective factors of learning.** It is essential for teachers to understand and provide learners with an environment where they can feel motivated.

These principles may be used in the different phases of ESA, with the purpose of promoting language use in real communicative contexts. It is important to understand that second language learning is facilitated when the learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication. The classroom is a community where learners learn through collaboration and sharing (Richards, 2009).

In the same line, the principles suggest language learning will result when creating interaction in the classroom; those interactions may happen through pedagogical tasks requiring the use of specific interactional strategies and specific types of language (skills, grammar, vocabulary), or through real-world tasks which reflect real-world uses of language like a rehearsal or a role play – interview (Richards, 2009).

Since that the purpose of the pedagogical intervention was to determine whether the use of the Lesson Sequence ESA (Engage – Study - Activate) would foster student engagement towards English class, and bearing in mind the results shown by the needs analysis and the diagnostic test, I considered necessary to plan the lessons for the first period as follows:

| FIRST PERIOD    |     |                                               |
|-----------------|-----|-----------------------------------------------|
| MONTH           | DAY | TOPIC                                         |
| <b>FEBRUARY</b> | 6   | Giving Personal information                   |
|                 | 15  | The alphabet and spelling                     |
|                 | 18  | The alphabet and spelling                     |
|                 | 25  | The alphabet and spelling                     |
|                 | 27  | Talking about themselves                      |
| <b>MARCH</b>    | 4   | Learning daily expressions                    |
|                 | 6   | Learning daily expressions                    |
|                 | 8   | Learning daily expressions                    |
|                 | 11  | Learning daily expressions                    |
|                 | 12  | Learning daily expressions                    |
|                 | 15  | Learning daily expressions                    |
|                 | 18  | Learning daily expressions                    |
|                 | 20  | Understanding the main ideas in a short story |
|                 | 27  | Understanding the main ideas in a short story |
|                 | 29  | Understanding the main ideas in a short story |

*Table 2. Contents for the first period.*

The pedagogical objective for the first period was to introduce students to the basic elements of communicative English. I wanted to achieve this objective by using the ESA lesson

sequence. I did not use the book until the last activity (Understanding the main ideas in a short story). I was worried about the students' proficiency level, so I needed to introduce students to the basic topics in order to move on to the second period with more challenging activities.

Below there is an example of the lesson plan for the first period:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Lesson Number:</b> 4<br><b>Institution:</b> Centro Educativo Renovación El Arca<br><b>Pre-service Teacher in Charge:</b> SHARLEY MORENO CHAVERRA<br><b>Grade:</b> 5<br><b>Date of implementation:</b> 25 – 02 – 19 <b>Time of the class:</b> 45 minutes |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>TOPIC:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Learning outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Pragmatic:</b><br/> By the end of the lesson the students will be able to understand and write spelled verbs. </li> <li> <b>Linguistic:</b><br/> The students will be able to recognize the sound and write the letters of the alphabet. </li> </ul> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                               |        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Engage</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |        |
| Procedure                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Time   |
| The teacher starts saying the alphabet and students are supposed to follow the sequence. The teacher gives students 2 minutes to review the letters, and after that, they practice singing the alphabet song. | 15 min |

|                                                                                                                                     |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Study</b>                                                                                                                        |        |
| Procedure                                                                                                                           | Time   |
| The teacher has a bag with all the letters, she goes singing to every student, they take one letter and say the name of the letter. | 15 min |

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| <b>Activate</b> |      |
| Procedure       | Time |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| The teacher calls students to the board, she says the letter for them to write, after that, the teacher spells some words for students to write on the board. At the end of the class students are supposed to spell some words for their classmates to write on the board. | 15 min |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|

### Assessment and evaluation

The evaluation criteria I used as a formative assessment were: engagement toward the class, participation, writing the contents completely, understanding of the topic, activity work and behavior. I did not want them to think about getting high grades at this moment, because it was not going to be possible, but I needed first their attention and motivation in order to create the context for acquisition.

### Resources

For this class I set out to continue the topic about the alphabet. As teaching materials I used the board and markers for students to write the letters or words I was spelling for them, I also used a bag with letters to play a game with them. Code switching and choral repetition are the main techniques to develop every class.

The following chart contains the topics given on the second period:

| SECOND PERIOD |     |                                   |
|---------------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| MONTH         | DAY | TOPIC                             |
| APRIL         | 22  | Introduction to the second period |
|               | 24  | Complex ways to say the time      |
|               | 29  | Complex ways to say the time      |
| MAYO          | 6   | Talking about special dates       |
|               | 8   | Talking about special dates       |
|               | 13  | Talking about special dates       |
|               | 15  | Organizing my School squedule     |
|               | 20  | Organizing my School squedule     |
|               | 22  | Organizing my School squedule     |

*Table 3. Contents for the second period*

Having introduced students to basic English along the first period, the pedagogical objective for the second period was to introde new strategies regarding classroom management

and classroom participation in order to get students more engaged and involved in the communicative practice.

Below there is an example of the lesson plan for the second period:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Lesson Number:</b> 12<br><b>Institution:</b> Centro Educativo Renovación El Arca<br><b>Pre-service Teacher in Charge:</b> SHARLEY MORENO CHAVERRA<br><b>Grade:</b> 5<br><b>Date of implementation:</b> 24 – 04 – 19 <b>Time of the class:</b> 45 minutes |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>TOPIC:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Learning outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Pragmatic:</b><br/> <u>By the end of the lesson the students will be able to tell the time using difficult expressions.</u> </li> <li> <b>Linguistic:</b><br/> <u>The students will be able to recognize and use the time expressions (a quarter past three, half past three, a quarter to four, four o'clock)</u> </li> </ul> |

|                                                                                                                                                                         |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Engage</b>                                                                                                                                                           |        |
| Procedure                                                                                                                                                               | Time   |
| Students watch a video about complex ways to tell the time, try repeating along with the video and practice the different hours from the images reflected on the board. | 15 min |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Activate</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |        |
| Procedure                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Time   |
| Students work in groups. For this class students were supposed to elaborate a clock at home using foamy or card board and brought it to develop the class. The teacher said the time and the groups showed the times in their clocks, after that, the teacher asked students individually. | 15 min |

|              |      |
|--------------|------|
| <b>Study</b> |      |
| Procedure    | Time |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Students keep working in groups to solve the activities of the page 21. Book Clap Clap 5, which implied matching the times with the drawing of the different clock and filling the gaps according to the time on the drawing. | 15 min |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|

|                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Assessment and evaluation</b>                                                                                                 |
| The evaluation criteria for this class consisted in the well development of the book activity and the interaction in group work. |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Resources</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| I prepared the class to use the Video beam with a Power Point presentation, which helped me to save time writing on the board; the classes were more dynamic because I could project the images from the book, complementary exercises or interesting videos about the topics. |

## Data Analysis

Before starting the pedagogical intervention, I implemented a need analysis questionnaire in order to gather information about the student's perceptions regarding English class.

**Need analysis:** This first instrument was important because it reflected the student's perceptions toward the English class. Below there are the student's responses to the need analysis:

- 1. Do you think learning English would be useful for your life?** 47% of the class agree they do not consider English useful for their lives.

2. **Do you feel motivated to learn English at school?** 71% of the students said they do not feel motivated to learn English at school, they see it too complicated and boring.
3. **In which of the four areas of English do you have more difficulty (listening, speaking, reading or writing)?** 94% of the students responded that they do not know the language, so they had difficulties in all the aspects.
4. **Which are the activities you like best in an English Class?** 100% of the students stated they want a class where they have opportunities to play.
5. **Is English your favorite subject?** 94% agree English is not their favorite class, and the other 6% which corresponds to one student expressed English was his favorite subject.

As we can notice, student's perceptions were generally negative.

In addition to the need analysis, I implemented a **diagnostic test** that showed the English proficiency level of this group of students (Appendix B).

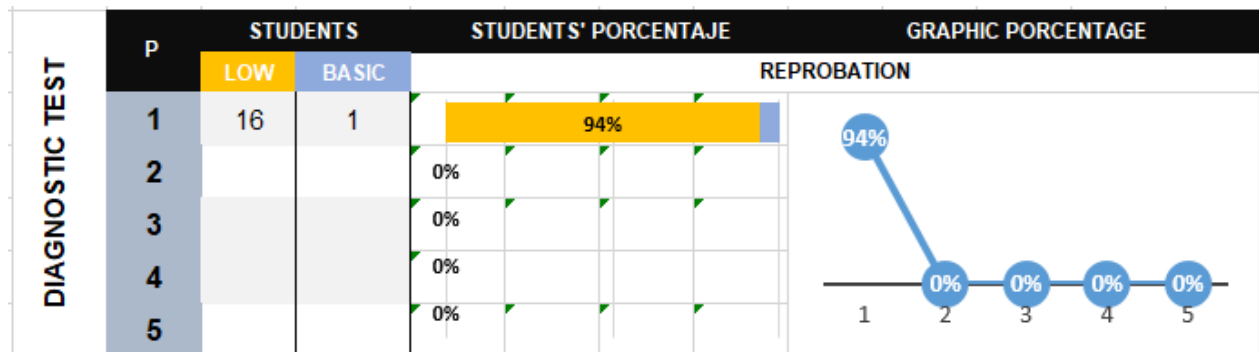


Figure 2. Diagnostic test results

This was a test with five sections in which students had to choose the correct option about (pronouns), writing the correct word: recognizing the senses, animals, colors and numbers.



The information gathered through the need analysis and the diagnostic test, led me to design the classes of the first period, and to collect information implementing a teacher's journal that I used to describe the class sequence and to reflect about the events that occurred during the class as the appendix C indicates.

Finally, for the last period, I did an Interview (appendix D) with the whole group which reflected the student's perceptions toward English classes after using the ESA Lesson Sequence, and applying its suggested engaging strategies to carry out the classes. The figure below represents the student's perception to the questions that follow:

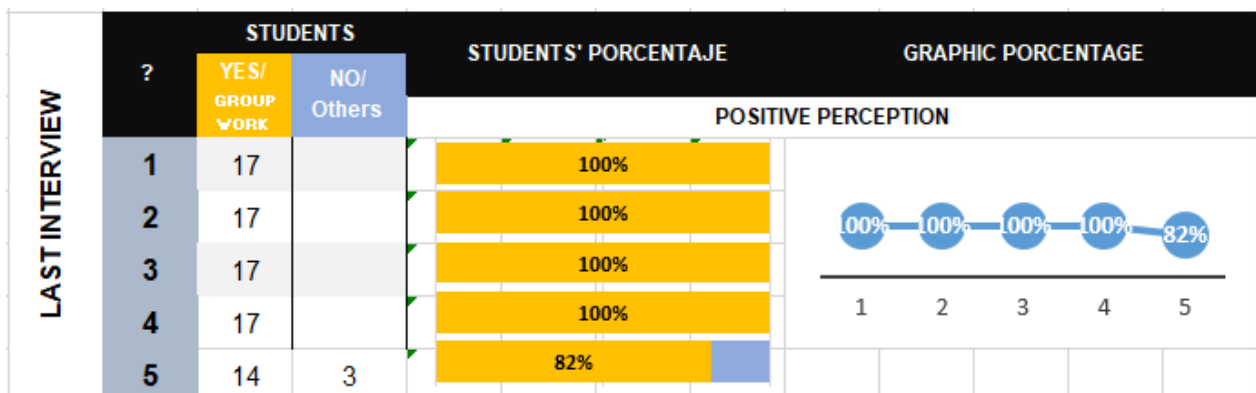


Figure 3. Final interview results

1. **Do you feel any progress in the English classes?** 100% of students responded that they had advanced a lot more in English.
2. **Do you think the new strategies in class elicit motivation?** 100% of students stated that the new strategies used during the classes, such as the use of stamps, and some rewards helped them to be motivated to work completely in the class and to learn.

3. **Are you motivated to learn in English classes?** 100% of students said they felt motivated to learn English because they were learning while doing interesting activities.
4. **Do you think learning English would be useful for your life?** In this case, and in contrast to the results of the need analysis, students changed their perception and express they would need English in different stages of their lives.
5. **What kind of activities do you like most?** The answer to this question was group work, matching, completing information on the board and working handicrafts. Although group work is not a kind of activity but a student grouping strategy, 82% of the students said they enjoyed working in groups to help one another. Native students liked to work in groups to help their classmates, and the continental students liked to work in groups because they received help from the native students to complete the tasks cooperatively. The other 16%, which correspond to three students, chose the other options.

The journals were analyzed through process coding, which is a method of discovery to the meaning of individual section data; the codes function as a way of patterning, classifying and later reorganizing them into emergent categories for further analysis, Leavy (2004).



UNIVERSIDAD SANTO TOMÁS

PRIMER CLAUSTRO UNIVERSITARIO DE COLOMBIA

### THE CLASS

#### ABOUT MY TEACHING

This class is the continuity of the previous one about **complex ways to say the time**.

Students start practicing along with the video, then I started to ask individually; after that, students played role with a classmate asking them: what time is it? The other student would answer with the time the first student put on the clock.

I was willing all time helping students while asking and answering about the time, they cooperate and participate actively. When any explanation, I used Spanish so they all can understand what I want to say.

After that, students listen an audio from the book about a girl saying different hours. The teacher ask students to repeat the different ways to say the time. Students enjoyed repeating with different tones.

 **USUARIO**  
INDIVIDUAL AND PAIR WORK

 **USUARIO**  
ROLE PLAY

 **USUARIO**  
CREATING RAPPORT

 **USUARIO**  
CODE SWITCHING

 **USUARIO**  
CHORAL LIKED BEST  
SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

Figure 4. Process coding

For each one of the journals, the collected codes were organized into the following groups: teaching techniques I use, challenges I faced, and objectives achieved, as a way to analyze my performance as a teacher. After that, I organized the codes into a chart, and I tried to identify the three aspects of engagement: affective, cognitive and behavioral (see table 4).

Finally, I ended with the recognition of two main categories that address my research question (see figure 5).

| AFFECTIVE    |                                                 |      | BEHAVIORAL                            |    | COGNITIVE                          |  |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------|--|
| PERIOD II    |                                                 |      |                                       |    |                                    |  |
| ANALYSIS No. | TEACHING TECHNIQUES I USE                       | CODE | CHALLENGES I FACED                    | CD | OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED                |  |
| 7            | CODE SWITCHING                                  | A    | STOP SHUSHING                         | B  | REFLECTION: THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY |  |
|              | CHORAL REPETITION                               | A B  | USING THE BOOK                        | C  | SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT            |  |
|              | CREATING RAPPORT                                | A    |                                       |    | WALKING TO EXCELLENCE              |  |
|              | PREPARING VISUAL AIDS: POWER POINT PRESENTATION | A B  |                                       |    |                                    |  |
|              | STAMPS: ELICITING WRITING                       | A B  |                                       |    |                                    |  |
|              | HONOR POINT: STRATEGY                           | B    |                                       |    |                                    |  |
|              | GROUP WORK                                      | A B  |                                       |    |                                    |  |
| ANALYSIS No. | TEACHING TECHNIQUES I USE                       | CODE | CHALLENGES I FACED                    | CD | OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED                |  |
| 8            | INDIVIDUAL AND PAIRS WORK                       | A B  | THE CHALLENGE OF TEACHING             |    | SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT            |  |
|              | ROLE PLAY                                       | A B  |                                       |    |                                    |  |
|              | CREATING RAPPORT                                | A    |                                       |    |                                    |  |
|              | CODE SWITCHING                                  | A    |                                       |    |                                    |  |
|              | CHORAL LIKED BEST                               | A B  |                                       |    |                                    |  |
|              | BOARD: FILLING INFORMATION                      | A B  |                                       |    |                                    |  |
| ANALYSIS No. | TEACHING TECHNIQUES I USE                       | CODE | CHALLENGES I FACED                    | CD | OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED                |  |
| 9            | INDIVIDUAL WORK                                 | A B  | THE CHALLENGE OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT | B  |                                    |  |
|              | CHORAL REPETITION                               | A B  |                                       |    |                                    |  |
|              | BOARD LIKED BEST                                | A B  |                                       |    |                                    |  |
|              | CREATING RAPPORT                                | A    |                                       |    |                                    |  |

Table 4. Coding chart

|                                                                                                               |                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| What does the use of ESA procedure reveal about the levels of student engagement in a group of fifth graders? |                        |
| Engagement through my teaching                                                                                | Engagement through ESA |

Figure 5. Emerging Categories

About the first category **engagement through my teaching**, the coding process revealed that the predominant aspects of engagement in the group teaching techniques that I implemented were the affective and the behavioral, as a way to lead students to engagement toward English class through a classroom environment where friendship, enthusiasm, help and classroom management are expected to be practiced.

At the beginning of the first period, I faced some difficulties due to the lack of confidence as a teacher and the lack of knowledge of students' contexts. Even though there was an affective emphasis in my teaching, there were challenges to communicate with them and help them engage in class.

With time, getting to know students helped me to approach them in a better way and improve my practice. After that, I started applying more engaging activities as suggested by the lesson Sequence ESA, and for the second period, the new strategies I implemented and the confidence I gained through the process resulted in engaging students toward English class.

I reflected that the affective and the behavioral aspects were important for this practice, because students' mood are linked with their attention span, so when I started to focus on these two aspects, I figured I was actually helping them not only in their concentration toward English class but in their disposition for learning.

Regarding **Engagement through ESA**, I consider important to clarify that, even though the sequence suggests an emphasis on engagement in the first stage, language teachers should understand that engagement should be developed during the whole class. ESA invites us to do something different from the traditional class sequence, introducing engaging activities that should be developed in the three stages in order to get students attentive and engaged in learning.

Although the first classes did not reflect a total engagement due to the challenges in classroom management, in the last lessons of the first period and the second period, there was an improvement in the implementation of the sequence which finally led to accomplishment.

It is worth mentioning that using ESA by itself is not a guaranty of student' engagement. in my personal experience, the interest for variety, choosing playful activities and the way of transitioning between stages play an important role at the moment of eliciting engagement, as I confirmed through the final interview, where students manifested how their perspective on engagement toward English class changed due the variety and activities implemented.

In this second category it is possible to evidence how the use of the ESA lesson Sequence helped in the improvement of behavior, attention and active participation of students by suggesting different and engaging activities.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

The present findings confirmed that, with the implementation of ESA lesson sequence, teachers are able to create an engaging classroom environment. This study represents an alternative for foreign language teachers for it showed how by using this lesson sequence appropriately and according to the students' needs, we can elicit engagement towards second language acquisition.

Addressing the research objective, there is a higher impact when using ESA as lesson sequence for our English classes in comparison with the traditional PPP. ESA invites teachers to come out of our comfort zone and challenges our creativity in benefit of students' engagement to provide them meaningful learning experiences. Through this research, the affective and the behavioral aspects of engagement were emphasized, not only for proposing learning activities,

but in order to create connections with students, promote a better learning environment, and developing rapport in the English classroom.

Regarding **student engagement**, this paper follows the contribution made by Jeremy Harmer through the ESA lesson sequence as a way to prepare and present engaging English classes which provoke students' attention and interaction, leading them to meaningful learning experiences. The other component for a successful class is found in **classroom management**. The information gathered through the reflective journal's codification showed several classroom management challenges. I addressed these challenges by focusing on the affective and behavioral aspects, which led me to a better understanding of the different dynamics that take place in the classroom and the importance of connecting with students in the affective level.

Even though teacher performance was not included in the analysis, I consider important to mention that other elements we should have into account in our performance are teachers' attitude, voice, gestures, confidence and constancy, as the research by Khoshsima, H and Shokri, H (2017) suggests, where the highest percentage of students (80%) preferred an **enthusiastic, friendly and helpful** teacher.

While developing this study, my teaching perspectives have greatly changed. I had a tendency to teach with an emphasis on the form of the language in a traditional way. However, during the instructional design, and after revising the syllabi, I transitioned to a communicative emphasis. Now I have realized that the communicative approach offers more possibilities for meaningful, long lasting learning. My teaching practice during this study brought me to

advancing to take students to a real communication, working the form when necessary in a different and creative way.

It is important to highlight the enriching experience of doing action research as a way to improve our teaching practices, taking advantage of the teacher as part of the classroom context. At the end of the process, we become capable of suggesting strategies in order to address the different concerns that appear in our daily practice.

Finally, in regard to further research, I consider important to inquire about the effectiveness of a different lesson sequence like the OHE (Observe, Hypothesize, Experiment) or the III (Illustration, Interaction, Induction) to promote student engagement with an emphasis on the affective and behavioral aspects. Besides, it would be interesting to inquire more about the different activities that could be incorporated to promote cognitive engagement.



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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Needs analysis survey**

The questions of the need analysis were:

1. Do you think learning English would be useful for your life?
2. Do you feel motivated to learn English at school?
3. In which of the four areas of English do you present more difficulty (listening, speaking, reading or writing?)
4. Which are the activities would you like more in an English Class?
5. Is English your favorite subject?

## Appendix B

## Diagnostic test

Nombre: Amel Doud Alouadi 12 Ans

Complete with am, is, are.

She is happy. ✓ 

 I am six years' old. ✓

We are friends. ✓ 

 He is my father. ✓

You are in house. ✓ 

 It is beauty. ✓

They are happy. ✓ 

Read and draw.



2 green eyes.  
1 red mouth.  
1 orange nose.

Complete with the colour.

 The bird is blue.

 The car is car.

 The house is.

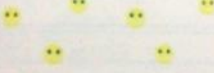
Write the numbers.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|

How many?

 There are 3.

 There are 5.



Write the correct word.

I hear with my ears. ✓

I have with my mouth. ✓

I smell with my nose. ✓

I see with my eyes.

See.  
Hear.  
Taste.  
Smell.

Read and circle the correct word.

 What's it? cat

 What's it? mouse

It's a cat/dog. cat

It's a rabbit /mouse. mouse

## Appendix C

### Teacher's Journal

#### I PERIOD - IMPLEMENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

##### ABOUT MY TEACHING

For this class I set out to continue the topic about the alphabet. As teaching materials I used the board and markers for students to write the letters or words I was spelling for them, I also used a bag with letters to play a game with them. Code switching and choral repetition are the main techniques to develop every class.

Students work individually, I elicited them to repeat and participate actively, working out a better interaction with them. I noticed that I have three (3) classes working the alphabet topic, it looks like students are not practicing at home, and I consider it important for them to learn the alphabet because through the alphabet I will be spelling every time they do not know how to write a word. The main accomplishment of the lesson is to identify the letters of the alphabet.

There was a student trying to sabotage the class sounding like an animal, I asked him about it, and then he stops that behavior, while I was with the bag asking other students about the letters, other students were a little talkative.

I noticed they wanted to participate in the activities, but then that participation becomes a disorder, I was shushing students during the **Active** phase of the class and it sounds really bad, so I need to work out to stop doing it, is not easy, I have to be aware of this.

**ABOUT THE STUDENTS**

Students were all in class, even though they participate actively, they also talk a lot in moments of changing the activities or when I was asking to different students. I think students are learning the topic because in spite of the disorder they respond well to the activities.

In this class, students enjoy playing activities like the bag with the letters; I think they do not want to write a word, they want to play the whole class. On the other hand, when there is a space of transition between one activity to another or a moment when I have to rate the activities or review the notebooks, students lose control and it's difficult for me to get the order again.

**ABOUT ME AS A LANGUAGE TEACHER**

As English teacher, I try to give my best finding information in different sources in order to motivate students in their journey. In my professional development, I consider myself as a beginner looking to apply the best strategies in order to get students to a better proficiency level.

One of my strengths is that I really want to help students to learn English, I work to motivate students to participate and acquire the language, and I consider that my limitation now is related with the management of students during the class, work in such a way that there is not space for distraction or disorder.

To improve my language teaching, I have to keep revising my day-by-day work in order to detect the things that need to be addressed or replaced for a better teaching development. I think

motivation and appropriate activities and material are two ways to help students and is what I am starting to work in.

My satisfaction as English teacher is to watch my students having a better development and comprehension of the topics, and get them to use the language.

Cordially,

**SHARLEY MORENO CHAVERRA**

English Teacher in process

I consider this was an important lesson to develop other classes or activities, because when a student did not know how to write a word, I spelled it for them in English and they were capable to write it well.

In this first period, I faced lack of motivation, laziness to write the contents, and bad behavior; those were my challenges.

From the beginning, I noticed the lesson sequence was attractive for them, since it elicit interest participation, but at the same time, I did not know how to elicit them to write or to a better behavior. I struggle with that the first period. I worked hard my interaction with students, always recommending them good behavior and cooperation during the classes.

## **PERIOD II - IMPLEMENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS**

### **ABOUT MY TEACHING**



Students start copying the structure of the class: date, topic, objectives and vocabulary. For this second period, I feel more confidence with the practice, I finally decide to start using the book the whole period and I started applying the following changes:

1. The first class of the second period on April 22th, I talked with students about the importance of good behavior, working activities on time and the rules we were going to apply during our classes like: we are kind, we have patience, we work hard, we respect others, etc. I also gave them the topics for parents to know the content of the period.
2. I prepared the class to use the Video beam with a Power Point presentation, which help me to save time writing on the board; the classes were more dynamic because I can project the images from the book, complementary exercises or interesting videos about the topics.
3. To elicit students writing, I brought small stamps to put in their notebooks for each activity, they finish on time with good transcription.
4. The main teacher asked me to write down on the board the list of students with bad behavior; every point on the board, correspond to five minutes less of the break, this strategy was supposed to make students have a better behavior, she calls it **the honor list**.

In this class, I set out to teach **complex ways to say the time**, they were all in class and I set them to work in groups.

I elicit students to write faster in order to make good use of the time; explaining them the necessity to work more activities.

The main accomplishment of this class was to take students to practice and manage complex ways to tell the time, I asked students to elaborate a clock to develop the class, and I consider they did it very well.

What I realize about this teaching experience is that when we prepare engaging activities that call students attention, they get interested in the topic and they respond with good attitude. Is something like: **If this activity is calling me to play, I will be available.**

### **ABOUT THE STUDENTS**

Students liked the dynamic and they were happy showing one another their clocks, at the same time, they wanted the class to follow, but I did not have enough time to develop the whole activity.

Students cooperate and participate actively, they were interested in the class, I can tell their behavior is improving and I consider it has direct relation with the kind of activities that engage students.

Even dough the activity did not finish, I accomplish the class intention in this first part. Students show understanding of the topic, I was very attentive and willing to help them in case of any doubt, congratulating them when any success.

### **ABOUT ME AS A LANGUAGE TEACHER**

As a language teacher, I am growing class by class; I consider that the awareness of my practice and the willingness to improve and help children will take me to excellence.

From this class I used new alternatives that are helping me to have a more attentive and cooperative class, today students wrote faster because they wanted the stamp on their notebook, which is something good.

I have to keep working things like stop shushing in class, creative activities that keep students engage like today and more alternative to manage groups.

Cordially,

**SHARLEY MORENO CHAVERRA**

English Teacher in process

For this second period I felt more secure and confident about my practice, I decided to apply new strategies to enhance interaction, elicit writing and good behavior. I talked with the students about behavior rules, the necessity of learning English and new strategies to work. My new lessons were reflected on the board through a video beam, so I saved a lot of time because I did not have to write (only for clarifications). This made the class more dynamic, because we could watch a video, participate with games on line, or fill information on the board.

Other excellent strategy were the stamps, the first five students who copy and work all the activities of the class received on their books or notebook a stamp with my sign and a number from 1 to 5; if the student get five stamps with number, he or she would win a candy. I clarify that not in all activities they would get a number; that was exclusive for the more challenging accomplishments. So the laziness for writing was over, finally they participated completely during the rest of the activities.

The strategy for bad behavior was the **honor list** recommended by the head teacher, on the board she writes down the name of the student with bad behavior, and every bad point became in minutes discounted from the break time. We got better reactions, even though we were always advising them about respect and good behavior.

## Appendix D

### Final interview

**The questions of the final interview were:**

**1. Do you feel there were any progress in English classes?**

**Dilan:** he feels they have advance in English class

**Jesus David:** they are learning a lot more

**Shania:** we have advance in the way of learning English

**Anny:** we have practiced and they have played at the same time

**Ammy:** Is easier with the video beam because we play and learn at the same time

**2. Do you think the new strategies in class elicit motivation?**

**Naishaly:** I like the dynamic with the stamps and games

**Maria Jose:** we have advanced with the strategies, because when you put candies or stamps we fell happy and we work better.

**Anny:** Before we didn't like to write, but now as we get chocolates and stamps, we write faster and enjoy class.

**Joaz:** I think those are good strategies because the stamps, candies and chocolate have motivate us to work good at class.

**Kianna:** when you give the stamps or the chocolates we get excited and we get to learn in order to get stamps.

**3. Are you motivated to learn in English classes?**

All students agree in an engaging class.

**Nishaly:** Before we weren't motivated to learn English but now we like it a lot.

**4. Do you think learning English would be useful for your life?**

**Maria José:** English is going to work for us to work and in our live

**Dilan:** we need to learn for out context in the island.

**5. What kind of activities you like most? Work group, matching, complete information on the board, handicraft.**

**Anny:** I like more the group activities because if we don't know the other one could help.

**Nishaly:** I like to write on the board

**Ammy:** I like handicraft activities because are loduc

**Maria Jose:** I like the activities using the computer because are more advanced and we learn more.

**Ian:** I like group work because we can help the classmates who don't know English.