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**Enhancing Fluency in Speaking Through the Use of Collaborative and Self- Directed  
Speaking Tasks**

University de la Sabana

Master in English Language for Self-directed Learning (Online Program)

Chía, 2013

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**Enhancing Fluency in Speaking Through the Use of Collaborative and Self- Directed  
Speaking Tasks**

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Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master in English Language for Self-directed Learning (Online Program)

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## **Abstract**

The main object of this research project is to improve the oral fluency in English language in some young learners aged 14-16, who are tenth graders from a public school called Antonio Nariño in the city of Cartagena, Colombia. In this work the interventions were developed in ten weeks; during this time ten lesson plans were carried out. In every class students were responsible for their learning through the implementation of the self-directed learning method, and thanks to the collaborative work in speaking tasks, they were able to feel more comfortable and motivated for interacting. After implementing this strategy the results suggest the success of the teaching procedures used.

*Key words: Collaboration, Self-direction, Task, Fluency and Speaking.*

## **Resumen**

El objetivo principal de este proyecto de investigación es mejorar la fluidez oral en el idioma Inglés en los estudiantes de décimo grado de una escuela pública llamada Antonio Nariño en la ciudad de Cartagena. Son jóvenes estudiantes de edades comprendidas entre los 14 y 16 años. En este trabajo las intervenciones se desarrollaron en diez semanas, durante este tiempo diez lecciones se llevaron a cabo. En cada clase los estudiantes fueron responsables de su aprendizaje, ellos desarrollaron el método del aprendizaje auto-dirigido y gracias al trabajo colaborativo en las tareas de habla pudieron sentirse más cómodos y motivados para interactuar. Después de implementar esta estrategia los resultados sugieren el éxito de los procedimientos de enseñanza utilizados.

*Palabras claves: Colaboración, Auto dirección, Tarea, Fluidez y Expresión oral.*

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## Introduction

As a result of the globalization phenomenon, the planet moves around a single economic system. Nowadays we can state that thanks to the technology, telecommunications and the financial and political movement, we live in a global village; something similar to a planetary society without frontiers. A world where people are interacting frequently and this is only possible by using a lingua franca, which can serve as a bridge for commercial transactions and for interchanging information. English is assuming that increasingly vital role outside countries where it has an official status. Some scholars like Widdowson (1994), Seidlhofer (2001), and Jenkins (2007), have pointed out that the use of English as a lingua franca has become the fastest-growing in the world.

This situation has created the necessity to foster in schools the learning of English and mainly the capacity to communicate competently, that is why new approaches, methods and strategies are being used at present. Today language teachers are looking for the best way to improve their students' communicative skills, and at the same time scholars are trying that students become aware and get involved in their own learning process. The self-directed learning arises as an interesting alternative for getting this goal, according to Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner (2007), who highlight three important reasons for using this method:

1. To enhance the ability of adult learners to be self-directed in their learning.
2. To foster transformational learning as central to self-directed learning.
3. To promote emancipatory learning and social action as an integral part of self-directed learning.

We think that with the development of this new methodology, we will contribute to have a more student-centered class. We also consider that it will make possible to see students sharing information and building knowledge with classmates and even with teachers. This collaborative work, according to Johnson and Johnson (1986), Chickering & Gamson (1991) and Goodsell, et al (1992), tends to help learners to learn more of what is being taught, retain the information longer and also to be more satisfied with their classes.

Taking into account that people use to associate the knowledge of a language with the capacity to communicate orally, it is very important to develop the ability for speaking. This skill is highly valued by students, even more than the other skills; that is why they use to worry and feel anxiety about their oral production. On the other hand, teachers often find it hard to teach, but they recognize that it is always an advantage to be able to communicate with other people and we know that in today's world it increases job, education and travel opportunities.

Having in mind this scenery and the benefits provided by the two selected teaching strategies; collaborative work and self-directed learning, we consider that this paper is really important. It aimed to demonstrate how by means of this new implementation some students from Antonio Nariño high school in Cartagena, Colombia were able to improve their capacity to interact fluently.

### **Research Question**

How can fluency in speaking be fostered through the use of collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks?

### **Research Objectives**

- To implement a set of collaborative and self- directed speaking tasks which aim at enhancing fluency in speaking.

- To verify if a set of collaborative and self- directed speaking tasks are a useful resource to enhance fluency in speaking.
- To promote collaboration and self- directed learning in the foreign language classroom.

### **Rationale**

Learning a foreign language implies the acquisition of different communicative competencies that lead to a successful language performance whose main aim is to communicate and socialize ideas, feelings and cultural backgrounds in order to continue growing within personal and professional fields. However, developing speaking fluency skills within a majority monolingual context like the Colombian one becomes a real challenge for both teachers and students, because class time is limited, there are few chances to practice outside the classroom and students rarely have activities that promote this skill after class.

The national government has implemented some plans and actions trying to get the cherished goal of having a bilingual Colombia. Immersion courses in San Andres, virtual courses and training courses for e-tutors with the British Council, methodology courses and courses for improving communicative competence with the University of Cartagena and Centro Colombo Americano, and diagnostic tests applied by ICFES (Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación Superior) are some of the actions carried out by the educational authorities. However, the results and the improvement showed by students are not consistent with these efforts.

Although we have advanced in the proficiency levels of our students, it is still necessary to develop on them the essential skills for interacting competently in an everyday

more globalized world. The present society requires professional people with the capacity of leading teamwork, persons engaged with their own training, able to recognize the value of cooperation and solidarity among professionals. This requirement and the statements of some researchers like Totten, Sills, Digby & Russ (1989) who have pointed out that the fact that students are actively exchanging, debating and negotiating ideas within their groups increases students' interest in learning have lead us to think that the collaborative work may be a beneficial strategy for language learning and because of the nature and requirements of the exercise may help to improve the oral fluency, too.

We believe firmly that by engaging learners in discussions and taking responsibility for their learning, they are encouraged additionally to become critical thinkers. There lies the importance of applying self-directed learning, because self-directed learners demonstrate a greater awareness of their responsibility in making learning meaningful and monitoring themselves (Garrison, 1997). Moreover, we need students disposed to try new strategies, people with wishes to change, young people who see problems as challenges, hence they enjoy learning. According to Taylor (1995) this is a typical characteristic of self-directed learners, he also found them to be motivated and persistent, independent, self-disciplined, self-confident and goal-oriented.

On the other hand, in planning speaking activities, lessons or tasks is necessary to check the language to be used in a task, to decide if activities will be carried out individually, in pairs or small groups, to monitor students as they complete tasks and provide them with feedback. Teachers must also be aware of the 3 areas of knowledge that speaking encompasses: Mechanics, functions and social/cultural rules and norms. In fact, it

is advisable to inform the students of these areas, so they are aware of the purpose of the activities.

All These considerations and needs are valuable reasons to think that through the self-directed learning we may get students have the necessary aptitude and disposition for English language learning. Meanwhile, the collaborative work will help by creating the necessary spaces for students' interaction and the chance that they can monitor, teach themselves and assist each other. Based on this proposal, it is expected that learners can improve their oral production; not only regarding coherence and accuracy, but also and for the purposes of this research, their fluency.

## **Literature Review**

### **Task- based Approach**

The best method for English teaching and learning has become a permanent research object for scholars. The task-based approach (TBA) to language teaching, also known as task-based language teaching (TBLT) has emerged as an important alternative for English teaching, and its popularity has increased since the last decade of the 20th Century. The emergence of the TBA is connected to what became known as the 'Bangalore Project', Prabhu (1987). It stated that students were just as likely to learn language if they were thinking about a non-linguistic problem as when they were concentrating on particular language forms, which means students will not have to focus on language structures but in tasks where they will have to face or solve problems; in fact in this approach units of analysis are not based on linguistic forms, but on concepts of task.

The proponents of TBA argue that the most effective way to teach is by engaging students in real language use in the classroom, so teachers should provide students with a natural context for language use and this is possible only through tasks. The concept of task is used in many fields, but specifically in foreign or second language teaching it is defined as "a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward" Long, (1985) p. 89. According to Long, some examples of tasks are painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, taking a hotel reservation. In other words; we can say that task is meant as a lot of things people do in everyday life. Richards and Rodgers (1986) p.289 define task as:

An activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape,



listening to an instruction and performing a command may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative . . . since it provides a purpose for a classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake.

The above definition is very much related with the kind of tasks that were implemented during the interventions carried out with the target students of this research. The speaking skill can not be worked in isolation, it is associated to other skills and it is often the consequent answer or result of processing some information.

On the other hand, Prabhu (1987) proposes a simpler definition: "An activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process" (p. 32). On the other hand, Prabhu (1987) proposes a simpler definition: "An activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process" (p. 32). This characterization of task is very similar to Richards and Rodgers' definition; tasks are seen by them as results of processing information.

Similarly, Ellis (2003), p.16 defines a pedagogical task as:

a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A

task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes.

Ellis' definition does not see the task as an outcome, but as a necessary work plan for getting an outcome. Although Ellis' view about tasks is really more complex than previous authors, it is very much related with the type of activities developed by the students who participated on this research.

Finally, Nunan (2006) p.17 describes a task as “a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning”. The author also explains that a task should “have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, middle and an end” (p. 17). Despite this definition sees the task as a whole communicative process, able to work perfectly alone. Undoubtedly it is a more elaborate concept and deep than previous ones, however it was taken into account in the designing and applying of our interventions.

### **Collaborative Learning**

Working individually or in groups is either a personal decision based on learning styles and preferences or a social and/or academic option that might be seen as a strategy to get specific outcomes or even success. Nevertheless, it is necessary to learn how to work collaboratively and that is why it is worthy to define the term collaboration as a “coordinated, synchronous activity that is the result of a continued attempt to construct and maintain a shared conception of a problem” Roschelle & Teasley (1995) p. 70, and

collaborative learning as a “situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together” Dillenbourg (1999) p. 1.

Collaborative learning is aimed to explore and take advantage of the strengths of each of the participants to put them together harmonically like in an orchestra. With each one’s contribution to the final melody, a space for joy is released. Moreover, collaborative learning enhances critical thinking skills which train learners to cope with different social, cultural and professional issues in a globalized world. This is supported by Cohen (1994) when stating that “shared goals and tools can strengthen positive student interdependence” (as cited in Van Boxtel, 2000, p.4).

As any other process in life, collaborative learning involves pitfalls that should be considered to guarantee positive results. Collaborative learning in speaking tasks, which is the target of this study, might become meaningless if participants are not equally involved and committed with the common goal within the group or when negotiation is not considered. Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs (1986) introduced the principle of “least collaborative effort” claiming that: “in conversation the participants try to minimize their collaboration effort” (p. 28), and this is quite common when learners feel they have the possibility to hide behind those who have stronger speaking skills. Thus, collaborative speaking tasks should be carefully thought and stated to allow each of the participants contribute with their own skills, knowledge and personal experiences which enrich and feed the final product. Continuous monitoring and feedback from peers and teachers might minimize such situation.

### **Self- directed Learning**

Researchers have dedicated numerous and committed studies to learning strategies throughout human development. Therefore, approaches to this important field have been

broadly discussed and validated for the purpose of solving a never-ending task for specialists: successful learning. At this point, special attention has been paid to learners' own involvement in learning processes; that is to say learners' decision to undertake systematic procedures as a means to achieve erudition challenges which broadly outlines self-directed learning (SDL).

Firstly, learners being able to initiate by themselves strategies which enable them to reflect on their own learning objectives, materials to be implemented, and results, are considered to be self-directed learners. Knowles (1975) has broadly explained that self-directed learning involves learners' decision to carry out learning schemes, which could be taken independently or by someone else's assistance, allowing learners to identify learning objectives, establishing appropriate resources and self-evaluate either effective or unsuccessful results (as cited in Du, 2012, p.6). Similarly, referring to adopted strategies by adult foreign language learners to lead their own learning, Ellis (1994) denoted that knowing "what and how" to learn, choosing the required resources and goals to achieve that learning and reflecting about all these components, certainly are self-directed tactics.

Furthermore, literature about SDL shows important elements to be taken into account as part of planning appropriate and successful SDL strategies. Here, Merriam (2001) has clearly stated that having learners being aware of their needs and concerns, the promotion of learners' faculty to be self-directed learners, content, stages in the learning process and personal issues such as creativity, constitute central purposes and procedures within SDL.

Finally, studies have explored the advantages of SDL after learners being involved in such process. For instance, Du (2012) has declared that learners' efficiency levels are evidently increased. Moreover, learners' enthusiasm, participation and recalling as well as metacognitive skills are considerably strengthened due to SDL. All in all, regarding

existing evidence provided by researchers, the benefits of SDL are clear and lead to supported application inside our teaching and learning contexts.

### **Oral Fluency**

The current society which is looking for bilingual individuals has demonstrated an extreme need of people who can use the language in an accurate and fluent form. Therefore, the present study seeks to promote oral fluency through the use of some tasks that would make learners collaborate using English as a foreign language.

According to Brown (2010), fluency has been defined in a variety of forms. In the first definition proposed by Hartmann and Stork (as cited in Brown 2010) the most important characteristics of fluency are stated as the following:

a person is said to be a fluent speaker of a language when he can use its structures accurately whilst concentrating on content rather than form, using the units and patterns automatically at normal conversational speed when they are needed (p. 86).

Furthermore, Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985) define some characteristics of fluency as “the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, and the use of interjections and interruptions.” (p. 108). Even so, Richards, et al (1985) p. 108-109 go beyond and take into account the most important characteristics of fluency portraying them as the person’s level of communication proficiency included in main effective communication characteristics and stated in the following points:

1. Producing written and/or spoken language with ease.
2. Speaking with a good but not necessarily perfect command of intonation, vocabulary, and grammar.

3. Communicating ideas effectively.
4. Producing continuous speech without causing comprehension difficulties or a breakdown of communication.

The authors consider the importance of having in mind what they called the big “G”, or grammar, when addressing fluency. Additionally, Brown (2010) states that the big “G” is tied to fluency although it is necessary to understand it in context. A fluent person is the one that is able to produce grammatically correct sentences, but this does not include the skill to write or speak fluently. Bearing in mind the previously mentioned statements, it is important to understand fluency, not in contrast to accuracy but as the complement to it.

In contrast, authors such as Cohen (1994) have explained that it is not easy to assess fluency because it is not possible just to simplify it with terms such as speed or ease of speech. A fluent person is not the one who has a native speech because even for a native speaker, speaking easily does not mean producing oral language appropriately. Kato (1997) discovered that some students he labeled as fluent were not good at having good grammar control and selecting appropriate vocabulary.

An important proposal is stated by Brown (2010), who explains a more integrated approach to fluency by including explicit aspects he considers to be vital for fluency development:

Table 1  
*Brown’s Expanded View of Fluency. (Brown, 2010)*

<b>Communicative Language Tools</b>	<b>Communicative Language Choices</b>	<b>Communicative Language Strategies</b>
Paralinguistic features	Settings	Using speed to advantage
Kinesics language features	Social roles	Using pauses and hesitations

Pragmatics	Sexual roles	Giving appropriate feedback
Pronunciation	Psychological roles	Repairing competently
Grammar	Register	Clarifying effectively
Vocabulary	Style	Negotiating for meaning

Fluency is a crucial part of learning a language and it is not the imitation of a native speaker's speech but the correct use of the language with the speaker's own pace. According to Binder, Haughton and Bateman (2002) speaking fluency also helps learners improve their learning process by contributing to three types of learning outcomes. The first is retention and maintenance which is described as the ability to retain knowledge after a course has finished. The second is endurance described as the ability to resist distraction for long periods of time. Finally application, the ability to apply what has been learnt in different situations and with more creativity.

### **Measuring Oral Fluency**

As previously stated, fluency can be defined as the facility to express ideas taking into account factors like speech rate, silent pauses, frequency of repetitions, and self-corrections which make the speaker go on with the conversation line Schmidt (1992).

Fluency does not mean to be able to speak without interruptions or hesitations, even native speakers make pauses when talking; the key is to speak with confidence and security where listeners do not keep too much waiting to hear the end of the ideas, Jones (2007). Similarly, fluency in learners can differ depending on the surrounding conditions; if they feel confident, the result could be better than in threatening circumstances. According to

Garcia- Amaya (2009), it is feasible to include diverse variables to measure fluency not only qualitatively but also quantitatively as:

- Words per minute.
- Words per second
- Syllables per second.
- Length of pauses measured in seconds, de Jong (2011).

In combination with the production of “hesitation phenomena” unfilled and filled pauses can be considered. The hesitation phenomenon refers to the faltering in speech from learners when they are speaking; this is closely related to psychological factors like anxiety, stress and even motivation as stated by García-Amaya, (2009).

The factors considered above make possible to measure learners’ fluency performance through objective variables. Some researchers have proposed a variety of instruments to measure Fluency. Table 2 shows a fluency-measuring instrument designed by Bloom and Cooperman (1999).

Table 2

*Fluency Friday Plus: Timed Sample. Bloom and Cooperman (1999)*

<b>FLUENCY FRIDAY PLUS: Timed Sample</b>	
Student: _____	
Age: _____	
Sample Date: _____	
Speaking Condition: play _____ monologue _____ conversation _____	
Communication Partner: clinician _____ parents _____ peers _____	
Was the student asked to use a fluency strategy prior the sample? Yes or No	
Instructions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use stopwatch to time the speaking sample (1 or 2 minutes): only time when student is speaking, turn stopwatch off when student stops talking or when you talk.</li> <li>• Use clicker or mark with a pen the # of students during a period of time</li> <li>• Divide # of stutters by # of minutes to get stuttered words per minute (swpm) (ie: 9 stutters in 2 minutes = 4.5 swpm, or 10 stutters in 1 minute = 10 swpm)</li> </ul>	
Sample 1: _____ swpm	



Sample 2: \_\_\_\_\_ swpm

Sample 3: \_\_\_\_\_ swpm

Types of stutters used: (mark with X)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Word repetitions 3x or more and rapid
- \_\_\_\_\_ Interjections used as starters
- \_\_\_\_\_ Syllable repetitions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sound repetitions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prolongations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Blocks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Multicomponents of these

Further description of stuttering: (visible tension, pitch rise, 2ndary behaviors)

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In the same vein, there are some authors who have researched the term fluency. According to Lennon (1990) the concept of fluency can be referred to in two perspectives; the broader one describes fluency as a global oral proficiency to speak in the target language, whereas the narrow perspective considers fluency as one element of oral proficiency that is evaluated in most of language proficiency tests.

Thus, the present study has taken into account this narrow perspective to consider the measurement of fluency and its review on research literature. Measurement of fluency has been a topic of debate between researchers that claim it is not tested with objectivity, since the parameters to evaluate it rely on subjective judgments and perceptions of the tester, cramming literature of impractical assessment strategies and highlighting the need for the establishment of clear components to assess fluency, Hieke (1985).

Research on fluency measurement on second language learners `speech has been reported to follow three approaches. The first one dealt with temporal aspects of speech production, Lennon (1990), Mohle (1984), the second with temporal aspects combined with

interactive features of speech ( Rikkenbach ,1991) and the third with phonological aspects of fluency Hieke, (as cited in Kormos and Dene`s 2004).

Conclusions from these studies revealed that the use of relevant quantifiers of temporal aspects of speech production enhance the objective assessment of a subjective concept like oral fluency and the similarities led to a selection of set of predictors of fluency :

- a. Speech rate: number of syllables articulated per minute.
- b. Mean length of runs: average number of syllables produced in utterances between pauses of 0.25 seconds and above. According to Leeman (2006) mean length of run is an “increasingly common measure of fluency” and it has been used in several studies (Rikkenbach, 1991, Towell et all, 1996, Freed, 2004, Wolf, 2008)
- c. Stalls. Encompass silent pauses and filled pauses, progressive repeat and drawls, according to Hieke (1985) empirical research shows it accounts for the figure of 90 percent of representation in interruptions
- b. Repairs: false starts and bridging repetitions.
- e. Parenthetical remarks: Brown (2010)

For the effects of this study the researchers have decided to work on the design and application of ten self-directed collaborative speaking tasks in order to **foster** fluency. The advance or improvement will be measure in quantitative terms, by counting the number of words and hesitations produced by students per minute. In addition, students and teacher’s perceptions regarding oral fluency will also be collected through questionnaires and reflection notes.

The responsibility, the curiosity, the motivation, the desire for learning and facing the challenges are benefits that we hope to get by means of applying the self-directed learning

and just that is what we need to start to work in the searching of the expected results. Those aspects will be assistances that will join with some benefits of collaborative work like the satisfaction with classes, the knowledge sharing, the mutual aid and mainly the frequent interaction among classmates that we hope to become in a daily exercise which contribute to decrease the anxiety and increase the practice of speaking and hence the fluency.

It is important to highlight that the improvement of oral production has been studied in several investigations in Colombia. Some of them have focused their strategy in games, Urrutia & Vega (2010). They managed students to communicate orally and to gain confidence in speaking by improving the classroom environment through the games practiced in class.

Nevertheless, peer interaction has been the most used action; Parga (2011) worked with poor young learners from a public school from Bogotá, Colombia. They were students aged 12-13, who had serious negative influence on their classmates. Thanks to the joint establishment of rules for cooperative interaction with their corresponding roles, functions and times, it turned into positive mediation, featured by peer monitoring, peer correction, and peer feedback. Previously Gutierrez, D. (2005) had carried out a research with a group of ninth grade students at the Institución Educativa Distrital Britalia, in Bogotá. In that study three interactive tasks, a free conversational activity, and basic oral activities were designed and implemented. The problems of the lack of an interactive and communicative context and speaking skills were addressed in this project. An approach to task based learning proved to be effective for the population of this study.

Gomez, J. (2010) carried out a research more related with our study. She considered peers could be active agents in the construction of knowledge; then she proposed new ways to arrange groups in the classroom so that the arrangement could certainly contribute in the

development of students' language learning process. The innovation in our research and the difference with previous studies lies in the fostering of the self-directed learning as a means of promoting in students the motivation, the necessary aptitude and disposition for English language learning.

## **Research Design**

### **Type of the Study**

This study belongs to the field of action research given its explicit characteristics. It occurred within a specific classroom situation, it was conducted by the teacher as a classroom participant, and it aimed at solving a problem observed during the teaching practice by implementing an action plan that was later evaluated. As Nunan (1988), for example, explains “Action Research is problem focused, mainly concerned with a single case in a specific situation, and tries to find solutions to the problem in focus” (p. 149). Thus, the center of attention in this type of research is to develop the teaching situation and the teacher-researcher rather than to generate new knowledge. Thus, action research generates findings that tend to be useful inside a specific context but not applicable to many different situations.

Although we focus in a single problem, we also take into account the guidelines of Burns (2007) who argues that action research works simultaneously on action and research. According to her, the action aspect requires some kind of planned intervention, deliberately putting into place concrete strategies, processes, or activities in the research context. Interventions in practice are usually in response to a perceived problem, puzzle, or question that people in the social context wish to improve or change in some way.

### **Context**

This research was carried out by a group of six Colombian teachers who shared some common patterns in their teaching contexts. The research members worked in different

cities or towns of Colombia, such as Bogotá, Cartagena, Sincelejo and Santuario (Risaralda), having as a result a general context which included five public schools and a private university in which students had an average of four hours of English instruction per week

### **Researcher's Role**

The teacher had to play several roles during the time of the interventions. The first one was as a leader; he was responsible for whole organization; he was the person in charge of designing the learning objects and choosing the best materials and strategies, by taking into account his students' learning styles, likes and needs in order to ensure the best results.

Because of the typical immaturity of this age and the low proficiency level evidenced by the students, sometimes it was necessary to assume the tutor's role in order to monitor the learners' productions and providing timely feedback. During the intervention and for the research purposes it was necessary to be a good observer for having impressions that could help in the qualitative analysis.

Finally, encouraging learners was an essential role for getting the desired objectives. It was important to cheer students up to do their best, motivate them, and enhance their self-esteem in order to promote their participation in the activities planned for class.

### **Participants**

It is really important to highlight that the actors of this study kept a permanent active role. Each researcher selected ten participants in order to obtain a final sample of sixty students selected at random. The sixty participants were teenagers who were in secondary school and university levels, whose ages range from 14 to 20 years old. Considering our current population, it can be stated that some of the participants had a medium or low social

status, so their possibilities to access technological resources were limited mainly to the institution facilities.

In the specific case of this report, the ten selected students were tenth graders who lived in a very poor district of Cartagena, Colombia and study in Antonio Nariño high school. They were a heterogeneous learners group formed by six women and four men whose ages ranged between 14 and 17 years old.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The chosen students for this research were minors; that is why it was necessary to ask for their parents' permission in order to develop this study (See Appendix A). All of parents received full information about the objectives of the project and the importance that it would have for their children. Participants were guaranteed anonymity in the results of the study.

### **Instruments for Data Collection**

The present study involved the use of three valuable instruments:

1. **Measuring Sheet.** This instrument was used for measuring fluency and was used with the oral productions of every student during the ten interventions. It was divided into three parts: oral fluency scores, meaning scores, and communication scores. For the purposes of this research we only focused on the first one, which showed the number of words per minute, spoken of each student, the average number of words per participation specified on time, and the number of hesitations and interjections per minute (See Appendix B).
2. **Students' Surveys.** This tool was designed in order to know the students' perceptions about the activities developed during every class and the way they

had perceived them. They had three basic options for answering: absolutely, kind of, and can be better. For completing the format, learners had to describe their strengths during every intervention and in which areas they had to improve. (See Appendix C).

3. **Reflection Notes.** This instrument was designed with the purpose of recording the teacher's impressions about the students' performance in every intervention. It was applied just after every class and by means of it the professor could record the students' achievements and the improvement observed in oral fluency. Additionally, this tool provided the teacher with the opportunity to identify the students' weaknesses and opportunities for improving. (See Appendix D).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

During every intervention, the researcher recorded students' participation in order to measure fluency in speaking. After that, the form designed for registering number of words and number of hesitations was implemented. At the end of every session, there was an opportunity for the teacher to reflect upon the learners' performance and the effectiveness of the applied strategies. Students also had a similar opportunity to express their views about the work done and how they had felt in the class by using the format designed for that purpose (self- evaluation).



## **Pedagogical Intervention**

### **Instructional Design**

As previously mentioned, ten interventions were developed and took place during the second semester of 2012 starting in August of that same year. Each intervention was planned by following an official planner format proposed by the educational authorities of Universidad de la Sabana. It included relevant stages that need to be considered when preparing a language session: lead in, presentation, practice, and self- evaluation (Appendix E). The first intervention was used as a diagnostic test in which learners exchanged personal information about their childhood. They talked to their classmates about their most eventful memories by using the simple past tense and adjectives. In the following intervention, pupils worked collaboratively by asking and answering indirect questions. In that class they were exchanging information about their cities or towns.

The third intervention provided the students with the chance to share information with their classmates about interesting places that they had known. In this opportunity they practiced the use of adverbs before adjectives. The next intervention was dedicated again to talk about places, but in this occasion students had to prepare a commercial in order to convince the group to go on a trip to that place.

In the fifth intervention students practiced the vocabulary worked in class for comparing houses and apartments. They also had discussions in which they contrasted the advantages and the disadvantages of living in a house or in an apartment. Then we had the sixth intervention in which after watching an environmental video conference, students participated in a discussion in which they made suggestions about possible actions to have people committed to go green.

After vacation period, during the seventh intervention students had time to share with all their classmates what they did and how they spent their time off. The eighth intervention was one of the most motivating for students, because they had the chance to record TV news videos in which they told their classmates what they were doing when something extraordinary or strange happened.

In the ninth intervention, learners had the chance to practice the formulation of wh-questions and the future tense by working in pairs and simulating a telephone conversation in which they had to arrange a date or an appointment. In the final intervention, students were recorded during an interview which they shared information about themselves by asking each other questions about their likes, dislikes, and free time activities.

## **Data Analysis**

This report presents qualitative and quantitative analysis; it is a hybrid study considering it has psychometric and naturalistic procedures for processing the information in a systematic form. There is information that was quantitatively analyzed: number of words per intervention and number of hesitations; but there are also important insights which were qualitatively analyzed, for example teachers' notes and students' checklists. Hence, all data were recorded for having a quantitative study and then a qualitative one; this dissection allowed to take advantage of the strengths of every kind of enquiry, in order to have a better and deeper understanding of the studied phenomenon. If we had carried out only a quantitative analysis or just a qualitative one, we would not have gotten the necessary variety of data and the multiplicity of observations and views which certify the validity of this research.

### **Procedures of Data Analysis**

In this report two kinds of analysis were developed; a qualitative or naturalistic and a quantitative one or psychometric. In order to carry out the first one, two instruments were essential: Teacher's reflection notes and student's surveys. Teacher's perceptions were valuable for having a holistic view from students' interventions after every class. By means of that tool teacher had the opportunity to reflect about the effectiveness of the strategies applied and the possibility to change or add something new for next intervention, in order to get better results and continue improving the oral production.

Student's surveys provided large and considerable information, too. Based on their answers, it was possible to identify how learners were feeling and what they thought about the activities and methodology applied by the professor. Having in mind the recurrence of

some topics detected in students and teachers' comments, some categories emerged from data and they were used to make the qualitative analysis. Some of them are: working together, Self-responsible learners, motivation, self-confidence, and fluency awareness.

In order to have the quantitative or psychometric analysis it was necessary to measure the students' oral fluency. Their interventions were recorded and the number of words and hesitations were measured and analyzed by means of the instrument called Measuring Oral Production. Data obtained from that tool were analyzed by means of tables and figures, in order to have a whole view of the students' performance through interventions. Finally, with the students' self-evaluation checklist was possible to know the students' view and feelings after each class. This tool played an important role, too, because it let the professor make the necessary changes.

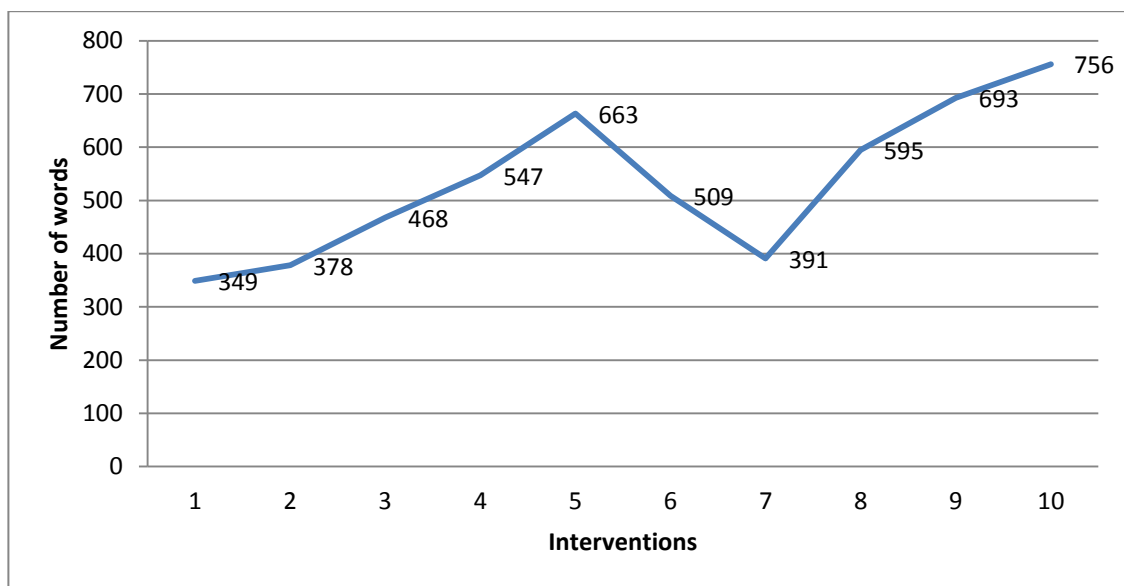
Table 3  
*Measuring Oral Production Chart*

Student	Pre-test		Int. 1		Int. 2		Int. 3		Int. 4		Int. 5		Int. 6		Int. 7		Int. 8		Post-test	
	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
	W	H	W	H	W	H	W	H	W	H	W	H	W	H	W	H	W	H	W	H
1	31	4	34	3	45	4	54	5	64	3	49	2	36	2	57	1	67	1	72	2
2	39	3	42	3	48	2	54	3	66	2	52	2	44	2	57	0	69	3	74	1
3	36	5	35	4	49	4	56	3	68	2	53	1	40	1	59	2	71	0	75	3
4	34	3	36	2	39	2	50	4	62	3	43	2	38	0	53	1	65	1	70	0
5	36	1	41	2	47	2	54	2	68	1	51	3	40	1	57	2	71	2	76	0
6	29	1	36	1	48	3	57	2	70	2	52	0	33	1	60	3	73	2	78	0
7	41	3	44	2	46	2	52	3	66	0	50	1	45	2	55	1	69	1	78	1
8	35	2	36	2	50	3	61	3	72	1	54	0	39	1	64	0	75	2	82	2
9	36	4	38	3	47	3	56	4	65	0	52	0	40	0	68	2	68	1	77	1
10	32	1	36	1	49	2	53	2	62	0	53	1	36	1	65	1	65	0	74	1
<b>Total</b>	349	27	378	23	468	27	547	31	663	14	509	12	391	11	595	13	693	13	756	11

The table 3 illustrates the number of words (#W) and hesitations (#H) produced in every intervention by the ten students who participated in the study. As hesitations, the

pauses or faltering found in speech were included. There was a pre-test in order to get acquaintance of the real state of the students before the application of the strategy. The table also shows the eight interventions that were developed with the aim to improve oral fluency. The results of the post-test applied after interventions appear at the end of the table, they evidence the improvement reached by students after the implementation of the strategy.

Figure 1  
*Number of words per intervention*



The figure 1 presents an insight of the students' participation in every intervention; we can see the total of words spoken by them during the recordings.

Regarding the number of words produced by students, we can say that there were positive results. If we take into account that on the first intervention the students' total number of words was 349 and at the end they were able to speak 756, we might evidence an outstanding achievement: participants were able to produce more than double. However,

we cannot ignore that during interventions 6 and 7 there was a decrease in the oral production, which might be attributed to the complexity of the tasks in that moment.

On the other hand, figure1 shows that students got their best performance in interventions five, nine and ten; nevertheless, intervention eight was very meaningful because it meant a revival after having the intervention seven, which despite it was better than one and two, it had showed a decrease in the oral production. It is important to highlight that intervention eight was carried out after vacation time and students spoke freely and willingly.

Figure 2  
*Number of hesitations per interventions*

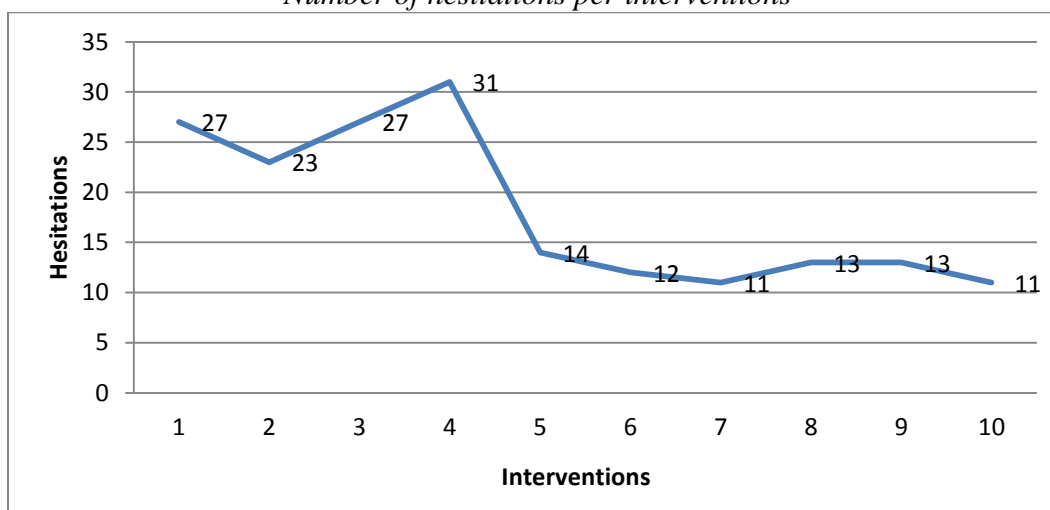
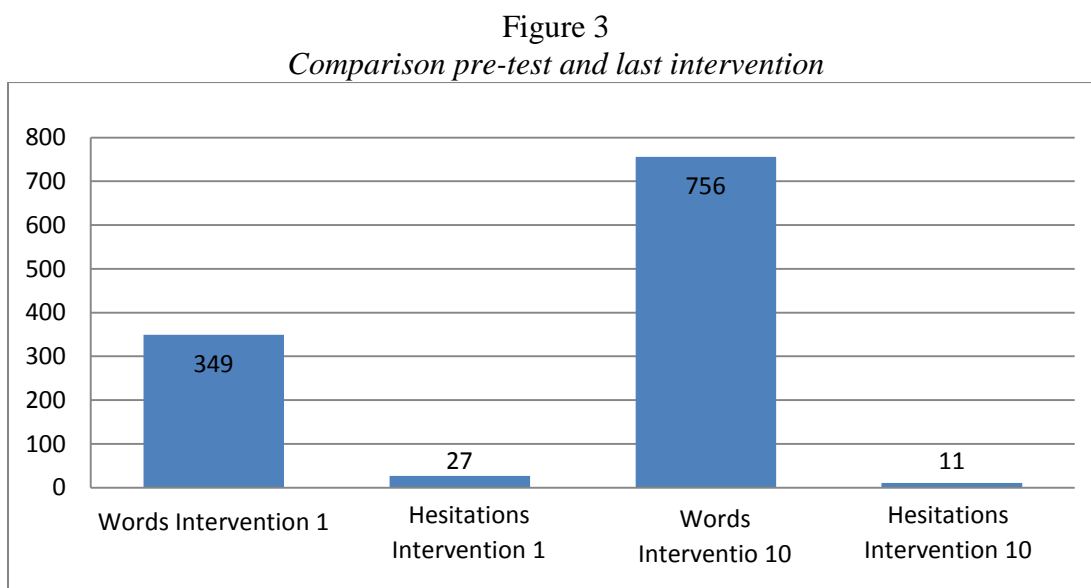


Figure 2 shows that the number of hesitations per intervention was oscillating; it sometimes increased and in some others decreased. However, the final result is positive if we compare the first intervention, in which students made a total of 27 hesitations and they had only spoken 349 words, and the last intervention, where they produced 756 words and they only presented 11 hesitations.

In the same way, the figure 2 shows that in intervention two there was an increase in the number of words and a decrease in the number of hesitations, but that situation was not

constant. After that, the graphic shows a slight increase in the number of hesitations in interventions three and four, which is consistent with the increase in the number of words and inexperience of students or lack of practice in this kind of exercises. At the end of interventions students were noted more careful and equally were able to increase their oral production and reduce the number of hesitations.

Figure 3 illustrates the impact of the interventions on oral fluency:



We can see that learners produced 349 words during the pre-test and they made 27 hesitations, meanwhile in the last one they produced 756 words and they only made 11 hesitations. This is a very positive result, and evidences the success of the strategies applied.

### **Categories from Qualitative Data**

The qualitative data allowed us to get different views and having the chance to triangulate the information. The instruments used were students' survey and teacher's reflection notes. From their analysis the following categories emerged: Working together,

Self-responsible learners, Motivation, Self-confidence and Fluency awareness. The table 4 presents the relation of these categories with our research question:

Table 4  
*Categories from Qualitative Data*

CATEGORY	HOW CAN FLUENCY IN SPEAKING BE FOSTERED THROUGH THE USE OF COLLABORATIVE AND SELF-DIRECTED SPEAKING TASKS?	HOW IS IT SUPPORTED BY THE DATA GATHERED?
<b>Working Together</b>	<p>The synergistic work in performing tasks encourages the use of the target language and promotes the interaction. Improves the self-esteem and favors the acquisition of social skills.</p> <p>Etiquette rules are set in order to have a respectful group work and decrease the fear to the criticism and the feedback.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Ahora es chévere trabajar en grupos, porque nos ayudamos.”</i> (Student 1, Student Survey 4)</li> <li>• <i>“Ya los compañeros no se burlan, ahora son más respetuosos.”</i> (Student 8, SS 7)</li> <li>• <i>“cuando trabajamos en grupo intercambiamos ideas.”</i>(Student 9, SS 8)</li> <li>• <i>“The collaborative work has been very important for promoting interaction and it has been an effective strategy for enhancing fluency in students”</i> (Teacher’s Note 4)</li> </ul>
<b>Self-Responsible Learners</b>	<p>Based on discipline, students develop their education by playing an essential role in the whole learning process.</p> <p>Students get aware what they are doing, they understand the requirements of every task and they respond accordingly; they learn to solve problems by themselves.</p> <p>Learners plan and check their performances; they learn from their mistakes, value their achievements and try to correct their mistakes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“I studied alone at home and practiced very much.”</i> (Student 4, SS 5)</li> <li>• <i>“I practiced English in internet.”</i> (Student 3, SS 8)</li> <li>• <i>“Los ejercicios eran difíciles, pero los hacíamos porque las instrucciones eran claras.”</i> (Student 6, SS 4)</li> <li>• <i>“Veíamos los errores con nuestros amigos y con el profesor y tratábamos de no volverlos a hacer.”</i> (Student 9, SS 7)</li> <li>• <i>“Students have begun to assume a different role in their learning process, which makes them feel very good, because they are observing the results of their effort”</i> (TN 4)</li> </ul>
<b>Motivation</b>	<p>Motivation is the necessary engine for learning; only motivated students are able to accept the challenge for accomplish the requirements of the proposed tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Ahora si me gusta esta clase.”</i> (Student 6, SS 4)</li> <li>• <i>“La clase así hablando es más bacana”</i> (Student 2, SS 8)</li> <li>• <i>“Cuando uno está hablando en inglés uno quiere seguir.”</i> (Student 8, SS 4)</li> <li>• <i>“Students are so motivated; they are</i></li> </ul>



		<i>experiencing a new way to learn English."</i> (TN 7)
<b>Self-Confidence</b>	When students trust in themselves, they set their own goals. Self-confidence creates an appropriated environment for learning, for speaking; even for solving problems. It additionally improves the communication between learners and teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"A mi ya no me da pena hablar en inglés delante de mis compañeros"</i> (Student 4, SS 8)</li> <li>• <i>"Quiero mejorar mi pronunciación y estas actividades me están ayudando mucho."</i> (Student 5, SS7)</li> <li>• <i>"Todos podemos hablar en inglés, hasta con el profesor."</i> (Student 7, SS8)</li> <li>• <i>"Now students believe they are able to learn to speak in English."</i> (TN 9)</li> </ul>
<b>Fluency Awareness</b>	Students have increased their capacity for expressing, relating words and producing ideas. They have improved their speech; nowadays they speak more easily and spontaneously.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Antes yo no era capaz de hablar nada."</i> (Student 4, SS 8 )</li> <li>• <i>"Nosotros nos equivocábamos bastante y no podíamos hablar."</i> (Student 5, SS 8 )</li> <li>• <i>"Cuando el profesor mandaba a hablar nadie quería."</i> (Student 7, SS 8)</li> <li>• <i>"Ahora todos quieren participar en las actividades orales."</i> (Student 10, SS 3)</li> <li>• <i>"I like the students' performance; they are increasing their fluency after every intervention."</i> (TN 9)</li> </ul>

**Working Together.** While implementations were being carried out, the collaboration among students and the teamwork improved impressively. Learners started to recognize their strengths and help each other: *"Ahora es chévere trabajar en grupos, porque nos ayudamos."* (S 1, SS4). They also began to interact respectfully by using the target language, which promoted a safe environment and influenced positively in the quality of their interventions: *"Ya los compañeros no se burlan, ahora son más respetuosos."*(S 8, SS 7), *"Cuando trabajamos en grupo intercambiamos ideas."*(S 9, SS 8). Before interventions they did not like to work in pairs or groups, after that they enjoyed it: *"It is incredible to see the students helping each other cheerful and respectfully, I had never seen that before."* (TN 4).

**Self-Responsible Learners.** They were always very responsible and interested in their learning process: *“I studied alone at home and practiced very much.”* (S 4, SS 5). They also paid special attention to the information and guidelines offered by the professor; requirements of the activities were always comprehensible for them: *“Los ejercicios eran difíciles, pero los hacíamos porque las instrucciones eran claras.”* (S 6, SS 4). This is something very important for teachers who dream that their students work by themselves, but that can not be a spontaneously achievement. It should be the result of a process of awareness where learners understand the importance of assuming an active role in their training; and at the same time professors provide the input necessary for doing tasks and solving any possible problem: *“I was always helping my students, I thought that they could not do a task without my help. Now I know that with very clear instructions and with learners assuming responsibility in their learning, the results may be more meaningful.”* (TN 8).

**Motivation.** This was another very significant category during interventions. Speaking tasks were something challenging but appealing for them: *“La clase así hablando es más bacana”* (S 2, SS 8). For most of them oral exercises were something new, but fortunately they became interesting for them: *“Ahora si me gusta esta clase.”* (S 6, SS 4), *“Cuando uno está hablando en inglés uno quiere seguir.”* (S 8, SS 4). This was very important, because motivation is like an engine that boosts all the other categories: *“I had always wished that my students spoke in English very much and they were always afraid or reluctant to do it, now I am so happy, they enjoy it and my classes are more attractive for them.”* (TN 8)

**Self-Confidence.** When students started the process, they felt very nervous, they were afraid to speak in front of their partners *“Cuando el profesor mandaba a hablar nadie*

*quería.*” (S 7, SS 8). After some classes they perceived a safer environment in their classes, which led them to feel more confident and consequently they participated freely: “*A mi ya no me da pena hablar en inglés delante de mis compañeros*” (S 4, SS 8). This is a determining category in the future of a person, because it is a key way in which people find success. Self-confident people inspire confidence in others; in this case their classmates and professors “*Now students believe they are able to learn to speak in English.*” (TN 9), but in their professional lives they will gain the confidence of others: their peers, their bosses, their customers, and even their friends. Self-confident students trust their own abilities and control their learning process, they may do what they wish, plan, and expect “*Quiero mejorar mi pronunciación y estas actividades me están ayudando mucho.*” (S 5, SS 7).

**Fluency Awareness.** Thanks to the positive results evidenced during interventions, participants additionally began to believe in the methodology applied and they noticed that they were improving their oral production: “*Antes yo no era capaz de hablar nada.*” (S 4, SS 8). At beginning, participation and the number of words per intervention were not good, but the progress evidenced by some students motivated the other students: “*I have been able to perceive how the interventions have influenced positively the students' participation, and what I like the most is that they are aware of that.*” (TN 7)

The above statements are consistent with the answers in the students' self-evaluation where it was observed how the number of “absolutely” checks increased and the number of “kind of” and “can be better” checks decreased.

Table 5  
*Self-Evaluation Total Students' Selections per Intervention*

	Intervention 1	Intervention 2	Intervention 3	Intervention 4	Intervention 5	Intervention 6	Intervention 7	Intervention 8	Intervention 9	Intervention 10
Absolutely	26	31	35	41	55	48	43	56	82	73
Kind	44	51	37	29	31	41	30	42	16	22

of										
Can be better	40	28	38	40	24	21	37	12	12	15

Table 5 shows how students' interest was increasing throughout the interventions. At first they answered more "kind of" and "can be better" than "absolutely"; which makes us think that there was a little insecurity at first, but at the same time when we look at the number of "absolutely" selected at the end, it is possible to perceive how their comfort and performance in every class was enhanced by means of the strategies applied.

Students' answers such as: *"I liked working in teams or groups", "I was able to work collaboratively while doing the speaking activities", and "I played a specific role with responsibility"*; show that they were aware of the importance of their role in the success of the implementation; not only for them but also for their classmates. From a pedagogical view, teamwork and solidarity among students became important methods for promoting the respectful interaction and a propitious environment for providing and receiving feedback: *"One of the most important things I have observed is the chance the students are giving each other for working together, for helping, for practicing, etc. The teamwork and collaboration are playing a very important role in their learning process."* (TN 5)

## **Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications**

By analyzing the recordings from the first intervention, comparing them with the final presentations, and bearing in mind the initial difficulties faced by the students, it is impossible not to recognize the incredible positive influence that the implementations had in the students' communicative competence, mainly in the oral fluency and the oral production capacity.

It was really satisfying to see the students engaged with all the activities proposed by the researcher. Learners understood the importance and the responsibility of their role, not only in their own learning process, but also in their classmates' in order to get good results. Undoubtedly, students were much more motivated when they realized that all of them were immersed in a safe environment, where they were helping each other to improve. From that precise moment, they started to speak more and they made fewer hesitations, they began to participate better and more freely.

Undoubtedly that this research project' results agree with other similar projects mentioned on this paper. However, the gotten support by means of the self-directed learning strategy represents the greatest success, because students were trained to continue with the learning process by themselves, so their learning will continue, even after class. This for sure will give them advantages and benefits in their social life.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

We can state that collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks constitute fundamental strategies for fostering fluency in speaking in any language class. Although it is very significant to show the good results obtained after ten interventions, it is also essential to recognize that it was a hard work based on the promotion of collaboration and

self- directed learning in the foreign language classroom. The strategy might be used by any language professor and perhaps they will get very similar effects as the increase of motivation and self-confidence. These feelings of emotions exert an influence upon learners; they stimulate their performance, as we could see on this study where fluency in speaking was eminently benefited.

### **Limitations**

Although the outcomes of this research were positive, we cannot deny that there were some aspects that might have limited the extent of the goals. The first limitation clearly identified was time because only ten interventions were applied, and probably it would have been more beneficial if we had been able to carry out more interventions; in fact the last three interventions were interrupted for a while because of vacation period.

The second significant limitation was related to students' difficulty when accessing internet or even using a computer after class; some of the activities that students had to do in order to further their knowledge required the use of these technological tools. Another possible limitation might be the sample size; if it had been larger, more data could have been collected, as well as more viewpoints, and perhaps the results would have been based on a more significant population.

### **Further Research**

Having in mind the sample used in this research and the limitations previously mentioned, it would be very important to continue with the improvement of the teaching and learning process in Colombian schools; that is why it is an imperious necessity to follow improving this strategy, by thinking of most of the Colombian public schools, where teachers work with 35 or more students. Maybe it would be interesting to start another research project, by trying to implement the same strategies but with larger groups.

Likewise, it would be very interesting and beneficial to find the way to implement these mechanisms since the preschool in order to measure the results in a long term; maybe we might have much better results.

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## Appendix A Consent Form

### DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING TEACHING STRATEGIES TO FOSTER SELF-DIRECTED LANGUAGE LEARNING IN COLOMBIA RESEARCH PROJECT PART 2 (On-going Work) Scaffolds 2012

#### CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

Cartagena, 01 de Agosto de 2012

Señores:  
Estudiantes 10°  
Institución Educativa Antonio Nariño  
Cartagena

Apreciados estudiantes:

Actualmente estoy realizando una investigación titulada: ***“How can fluency in Speaking be fostered in a group of 60 Colombian students through the use of collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks?”*** Este estudio busca mejorar la fluidez oral a través del trabajo colaborativo y el fortalecimiento del aprendizaje autodirigido, como herramientas importantes para elevar la autoestima y garantizar el aprendizaje. Cabe anotar que dicha investigación hace parte de mi trabajo de grado de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés para el Aprendizaje Autodirigido –Programa Virtual- de la Universidad de La Sabana.

Por lo anterior, respetuosamente solicito su consentimiento y colaboración como participantes de mi propuesta de investigación, que se llevará a cabo durante los meses de Agosto, septiembre y Octubre. Durante este tiempo ustedes responderán dos cuestionarios, completarán unos ejercicios de reflexión en relación con las estrategias utilizadas en las actividades de producción oral, y presentarán dos exámenes orales uno al comienzo y otro al final de la investigación, los cuáles no tendrá incidencia en las notas de clase.

Igualmente, se les garantizará el uso de seudónimos para mantener su identidad en el anonimato en todas las publicaciones que la investigación origine. Cabe anotar que el proyecto no tendrá incidencia alguna en las evaluaciones y notas parciales y/o finales del curso, por tal razón si usted firma la carta de consentimiento acepta voluntariamente participar del proyecto de investigación. Así mismo, usted puede decidir rehusarse a responder, participar, o abandonar el proyecto. Sin embargo, su participación voluntaria será de gran ayuda para llevar a cabo este proyecto de manera exitosa.

Agradezco de antemano su valioso aporte para llevar a buen término mi investigación.

Atentamente,

Acepto participar

\_\_\_\_\_

Nombre \_\_\_\_\_

Docente investigador

Firma \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B**  
**Measuring Sheet**

**Participant's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Intervention #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Oral fluency scores**

Number of words per minute	
Average number of words per participation (specify on time)	
Number of hesitations/ interjections per minute	

**Meaning scores**

Number of overt errors (verb tenses and conjugation)	
Number of incomplete sentences per minute	
Number of broken words per minute	
Number of repetitions per minute	

**Communication scores**

Is there evidence of collaborative work?	
Is there evidence of interaction in the speaking tasks?	
Is there a communicative message in interventions?	




Adapted from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0028393201002019>

## Appendix C Students' Surveys

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Lesson N°: \_\_\_\_\_

### SELF EVALUATION

	<b>ABSOLUTELY</b> 	<b>KIND OF</b> 	<b>CAN BE BETTER</b> 
I followed all the steps proposed during the class.			
I liked the speaking activity proposed by my teacher.			
The activities offered helped me speak in English.			
I was able to use English to communicate with my partners.			
I was able to speak without hesitation.			
I was able to speak in English with fewer interruptions.			
I felt embarrassed while speaking.			
I liked working in teams or groups.			
I was able to work collaboratively while doing the speaking activities			
I played a specific role with responsibility			
I enjoyed speaking in English during the class.			

**Comments:**

My strengths were

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Areas I can improve

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**Appendix D**  
**Teacher's Reflection Notes**

Teacher's name:	Lesson N°:	Date of lesson:
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1. What were the greatest achievements while carrying out this intervention? Why?
2. Were the objectives reached? Explain. How did you realize of this? Support.
3. Would you modify something taking into account the purpose of enhancing fluency?
4. What was your personal perception regarding students' performance while speaking in English?
5. Have you observed improvement in oral fluency while implementing collaborative and self- directed tasks?
6. What other actions can be taken as part of your research validity?


Appendix E  
Lesson Plan Sample

**DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING TEACHING STRATEGIES TO  
FOSTER SELF-DIRECTED LANGUAGE LEARNING IN COLOMBIA  
RESEARCH PROJECT PART 2 (On-going Work) 2012**

**LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE FOR INTERVENTION**

Adapted from Dr. Joan Rubin 's Lesson Planner, ICELT lesson plan template and Weekly Planner 2012-02  
Department of Languages and Cultures, Universidad de La Sabana

<b>Name of co-researcher:</b> Student V	
<b>University Code Number:</b> 201111380	
<b>Institution:</b> Institución Educativa Antonio Nariño	
<b>Date of Class:</b> DAY: 13 MONTH:09 YEAR:2012  <b>Week No.</b> <u>  6  </u>	<b>Time of Class:</b> 6:30 a.m <b>Length of class:</b> 110 minutes
	<b>Time Frame:</b> One class period
<b>Class/grade:</b> Tenth	<b>Room:</b> English Classroom

<b>Number of students:</b> 33	<b>Average age of Students:</b> 16								
<b>Number of years of English study:</b> 4	<b>Level of students</b>  A1  B1 B2 C1 C2								
<b>Lesson Number</b>  <table border="1" data-bbox="107 695 764 827"> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	<b>Research Circle Leader:</b> Carolina Cruz
1	2	3	4						
5	6	7	8						

**Set Lesson Goals**

**Task:** Students will participate in a discussion after observing an environmental conference. They will make suggestions about possible actions to have people committed to go green.

**COMPETENCES:**

- Make suggestions about actions to be environmentally friendly.
- Turn taking in oral communication.

**OBJECTIVE:** To have learners involved in a discussion to make polite suggestions about environmental issues.

<p><b>Language Goal</b></p> <p>Students will be able to make suggestions as a means to establish actions to be ecologically responsible.</p>	<p><b>Assessment Criteria</b></p> <p>There will be a report on the amount of information that students obtain from peers and how that data was obtained.</p>	
<p><b>Learning to Learn Goal</b></p> <p>Students will be involved in oral interaction by using auxiliaries to make suggestions.</p>	<p><b>Assessment Criteria</b></p> <p>Students will interact with peers by taking turns and providing the required information.</p>	
<p><b>Identify a topic for the lesson:</b> Going green.</p>		
<p><b>Materials and Resources</b></p>		
<p>You Tube™ Video</p>	<p>These videos will show some tips to go green.</p>	<p>Annex 1</p>
<p>Conference</p>	<p><b>Rationale:</b> The video will help students to relate with the vocabulary and additionally will invite them to have a change of mind and aptitude.</p>	<p>Annex 2</p>
<p>Going Green Useful Words</p>	<p><b>Rationale:</b> These words will allow students to socialize and design a mind map about the topic.</p>	<p>Annex 3</p>
<p><b>Assumed knowledge</b></p> <p>Students are familiar with the modal auxiliary verb <b>should</b> to make suggestions in affirmative and negative way.</p>		

### Anticipated problems and planned solutions

- ❖ Some students may have problems because of lack of vocabulary. Collaborative work and use of dictionary may help to solve this issue.
- ❖ Some students may be reluctant to interact orally with their Classmates. A lot of confidence and a safe environment should be promoted by the teacher.

### Description of language item / skill(s)

<b>Form</b>	Modal auxiliary verbs: "should"
<b>Meaning</b>	Giving advices or making recommendations
<b>Use</b>	To have learners involved in a discussion to make suggestions or recommendations about environmental issues.
<b>Skill(s) and sub skill(s)</b>	Speaking
<b>(For CLIL) <u>Content</u> <u>Communication</u> <u>Cognition</u> <u>Culture</u></b>	<b>Content:</b> Environmental Problems and Solutions. <b>Communication:</b> Talk about the environmental damage produced by human beings and providing important tips for saving the planet. <b>Cognition:</b> Recognize the harmful factors for environment and the most suitable actions for helping to save it. <b>Culture:</b> Enable students discuss respectfully their views about environmental issues.

### Sequence the lesson to accomplish your goals

<b>Teacher's role</b>  <small>(facilitator, model, encourager, etc.)</small>	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Procedure</b>  <b>Teacher and student activity</b>	<b>Interaction</b>	<b>Time</b>
Facilitator	<b>Lead in/Preparation</b>  <small>(+SDL Learning Strategy highlighted)</small>	To introduce students to the topic "Going green".	<b>Students will watch two videos in which they can learn some specific tips to go green. The teacher will invite pupils to observe them carefully and identify useful expressions and verbs for talking about environment issues. (See Annex 1)</b>	S-S	10 Minute s
Model	<b>Presentation Modeling</b>  <small>(+SDL Learning Strategy highlighted)</small>	To elicit useful expressions  To become aware of verbs and expressions to state specific actions about the environment protection	<b>Step 1: After watching the videos,</b> students will share expressions and verbs used to express actions to protect our environment. At this stage learners need to complete a mind map in which they can write verbs and useful vocabulary. (See Annex 2) Here, students will be allowed to work in groups of 4 in order to establish common patterns such as pronunciation. Additionally, students will receive teacher's feedback and support who will be monitoring the groups' work.  <b>Step 2: Students are given verbs and additional words which will provide students with appropriate background about the topic. Students will share them in the same teams.</b>  <b>Step 3: Students will be asked to use these expressions in their teams to express ideas about environmental issues in the same groups of students by taking turns.</b>	S-S	10 Minute s   10 Minute s   10 Minute s
Encourager	<b>Practice</b>  <small>(+SDL Learning Strategy highlighted)</small>	To activate schemata	<b>Step 1:</b> Students will be provided with models of different expressions to make suggestions. (See Annex 3) At this stage, students will see a conference about environmental issues. (See Annex 4) Here, students rehearse in their groups making	SS	<b>10</b> Minute s

		<p>To provide and receive peers'</p> <p>To use and associate words with real life contexts.</p> <p>To interact orally with peers.</p>	<p>suggestions using the vocabulary previously identified.</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b> Students will perform their presentation for the conference in front of other group as a means to receive feedback.</p> <p><b>Step 3: Students will be able to discuss peers' feedback and comments in order to include additional words or expressions which are used to make suggestions.</b></p> <p><b>Step 4:</b> After reflecting on peers' suggestions and including new words or functions, students will perform the speaking activity in front of their peers. Students are to imagine that they are suggesting people how to go green. It is supposed that they are at a very important conference in which they suggest specific actions to achieve that goal. They will explain and make suggestions about how to go green.</p>	SS	10 Minutes
Guide Monitor	<p><b>Learner self-evaluation</b></p> <p>(+SDL Learning Strategy highlighted)</p>	To have students reflect on their own learning process.	Students will reflect on their presentation at the conference. Students will think about their perceptions and feelings about their performance. At this stage, students will be heard by the teacher who is going to take notes about their experiences and points of view about their own learning processes which will be shared later.	S-S	10 Minutes
Facilitator Guide	<p><b>Problem Identification/ solution</b></p> <p>(+SDL Learning Strategy highlighted)</p>	To identify the problems related with oral production and providing	Students and professor will work together again; they will identify problems and weaknesses. The professor and more skilled students will share the successful strategies used by them in order to help those	T-S S-T S-S	10 Minutes

	highlighted)	solutions for improving fluency.	classmates who are still showing difficulties.		
Encourager Guide	<b>Wrap up</b> (+SDL Learning Strategy highlighted)	To reuse verb patterns and vocabulary as a long time learning tools and strategies	<b>Step 1:</b> students are asked to make suggestions to their classmates in the break about immediate actions to be implemented in the school. They are asked to record one intervention.	S-S	20 Minute s
Encourager Guide	<b>Expansion/ Independent Study</b> (+SDL Learning Strategy highlighted)	To promote further practice in order to guarantee a real learning.	Students will make suggestions to their family members about how to go green. At this stage, students are asked to record some of their interventions in order to promote their autonomous work.		20 minute s

### Teacher's Evaluation of his/her lesson plan

If changes or adjustments are to be made on specific sections of the class, describe here the situation and how to improvement. You may write some quick notes after the class about what worked well and what needs improvement.

### REFERENCE

- Rubin, J. Lesson Planner (2012)
- ICELT Lesson Plan Template
- Weekly Planner 2012-02 Department of Languages and Cultures. Universidad de La Sabana



## **ANNEX 1**

### **Videos**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qS8-XInj\\_qg&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qS8-XInj_qg&feature=related)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kS6JN67DWtc&feature=related>

## **ANNEX 2**

### **Mind Map Template**

(It is attached, please download it)

## **ANNEX 3**

### **Going Green Useful Words**

Recycle, unplug, green power, use less water, paper, save trees, drive less, walk, save petrol, sun drying, plant trees, shutdown pc, go green, save the Earth, spread your message to others.

## **ANNEX 4**

### **Conference**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6yVTSReTQ4>