COLLABORATIVE LEARNING TEAMS: A STRATEGY TO FOSTER SELF-

DIRECTED LANGUAGE LEARNING IN A1 COLOMBIAN STUDENTS

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Declaration

We hereby declare that our research report entitled:

Collaborative Learning Teams: A Strategy to Foster Self-Directed Language Learning in

A1 Colombian Students

- is the result of work done in collaboration as declared and specified in the text;

- is neither substantially the same as nor contains substantial portions of any similar work submitted or that is being concurrently submitted for any degree or diploma or other qualification at the Universidad de La Sabana or any other university or similar institution except as declared and specified in the text;

- complies with the word limits and other requirements stipulated by the Research Subcommittee of the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures;

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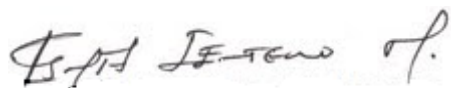Date:   15 November 2013
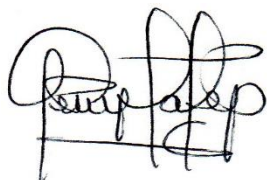
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*"Thus far has the Lord helped us." —1 Samuel 7:12*

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**Abstract**

The main concern of this research study is to implement teaching strategies to foster self-directed learning in Colombia. Therefore, this report focuses on the implementation of the Collaborative Learning Teams (CLT) strategy as an appealing and motivating strategy that would help English teachers trigger a self-direction sense as well as increase motivation in A1 English language students.

The authors of this research project are four State school English teachers interested in promoting good teaching practices; therefore, this proposal is a manifestation of how to empower learners with appropriate learning tools and strategies to aid them to become better English learners. This project is developed under the Action Research approach which allowed teacher-researchers to reflect on their current practices and situations in order to plan and act accordingly.

Regarding the findings and conclusions, teacher-researchers found evidence of students' change of attitudes when they were engaged in *teamwork*. Learners and teacher-researchers concluded that collaborative work is an opportunity to build up a safe learning environment in which students can collaborate, interact and communicate effectively.

*Key words and expressions*: Collaborative Learning Teams (CLT); Self-directed Learning (SDL); motivation; collaborative work; teamwork.

**Resumen**

La principal preocupación de esta investigación tiene que ver con la implementación de estrategias de enseñanza para el fomento del aprendizaje auto-dirigido en Colombia. Por lo tanto, este reporte se centra en la implementación de "Equipos de Aprendizaje Colaborativo" (EAC) como una estrategia llamativa y motivadora que ayudaría a los docentes de inglés a fomentar un sentido de autodirección en los estudiantes de inglés con nivel A1 al igual que a incrementar su motivación.

Los autores de esta investigación son cuatro docentes oficiales interesados en promover buenas prácticas pedagógicas, por tal razón, esta propuesta es una manifestación de como empoderar a los estudiantes con las herramientas apropiadas de aprendizaje con el fin de ayudarles a convertirse en mejores aprendices. Esta investigación fue desarrollada siguiendo los principios de la investigación acción puesto que ésta les permitió a los investigadores reflexionar sobre sus actúales prácticas pedagógicas, planear y actuar adecuadamente.

Con respecto a los hallazgos y conclusiones, los investigadores encontraron evidencia del cambio que tuvieron los estudiantes después de haberse involucrado en el trabajo en equipo. Los estudiantes y los investigadores concluyeron que el trabajo colaborativo es una oportunidad de construcción de un ambiente de aprendizaje seguro en el cual los estudiantes pueden colaborar, interactuar y comunicarse efectivamente.

*Palabras y expresiones claves*: Equipos de Aprendizaje Colaborativo (EAC); Aprendizaje Auto-dirigido (AAD); motivación; trabajo colaborativo; trabajo en equipo.

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## List of Abbreviations

| Abbreviations | Meaning |
| --- | --- |
| CL | Collaborative Learning |
| CLT | Collaborative Learning Teams |
| SD | Self-Direction |
| SDL | Self- Directed Learning |
| C. L.T.G | Collaborative Learning Team Goals |
| P.Ts.Cly | Performing Task Collaboratively |
| C.L.T.R | Collaborative Learning Team Roles |
| Ef. Part | Effective Participation |
| Lship | Leadership |
| Pr/Gr.s | Peer/Group Support |
| Gr.D. | Group Discussion |
| Py. At | Paying Attention |
| Sf. E | Self-Evaluation |
| A.F.H | Asking For Help |
| Ind. L.G | Individual Learning Goals |
| Ln. Indp | Learners' Independence |
| Id. Rs. | Identification of Resources |
| L. Ns | Learning Needs |
| Aw. L | Awareness on their Learning |
| Lang. L | Language Learning |
| Sf. Cd | Self- Confidence |
| Part. Atd | Participatory Attitude |

# Introduction

*"Learning about the classroom is an essential aspect of finding out how to teach" (Halliday, 1994, p. 162)*

Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN) with the implementation of the National Bilingualism Project which main objective is: "to have citizens who are capable of communicating in English," (author's translation. MEN 2006, p. 8, cited in de Mejía, 2011), pretends to generate positive changes in educators and students' attitudes towards foreign language teaching and learning to face the new global demands. Therefore, the researchers of this project, as state school teachers, are concerned about looking for new methods and techniques in order to face these new challenges. So, the teaching practice should provide public school students with the appropriate strategies to aid them to become self-directed and lifelong learners.

This research study is meant to demonstrate that the objective of the National Bilingualism Project of improving the communicative competence in English as a foreign language in public schools can be reached by exploring the strategy of *Collaborative Learning Teams,* (henceforth: CLT). The rationale for the explicit teaching of this strategy might be supported with the idea that "teachers should facilitate the understanding of the new learning and teaching mode" (Acero, 2012). This study is focused on the implementation of CLT as an appealing, motivating and successful learning strategy that would help local English teachers trigger a self-direction sense on their language students as well as the increase of their motivation in order to improve their language learning process.

Exploring and implementing the CLT strategy under the conditions of four Colombian public schools, in which English language teaching has been based on the principles of the traditional methods, gave the teacher-researchers the opportunity to put into practice a new and appropriate teaching and learning mode for large classes. That is, setting up a learning

environment where learners enjoy learning and teachers become facilitators who foster interaction among pupils to use the target language in a natural way. Therefore, the implementation of this model will value students' contributions as active participants in this research and as a result of these pedagogical interventions students will become successful learners (Rubin, 2003). As researchers provided learners with the strategy of CLT it was expected that students developed the necessary skills to change their attitude towards learning.

This study addresses the following question:

*Does the Collaborative Learning Teams strategy foster Self-directed learning and increase motivation in A1 students in four public schools in Colombia?*

The objectives to achieve in this research are:

- To identify the required teaching procedures in order to promote Collaborative Learning Teams (CLT) to foster self-direction in language learning.

- To validate the idea that Collaborative Learning Teams enhances Self- directed language learning and raises levels of motivation in language learning.

- To compare the impact on the different populations in which the innovation is implemented.

Researchers and readers of this study would find Collaborative Learning Teams (CLT) as a relevant instructional strategy that links *Collaborative Learning* and students' *self-direction* in language learning to help learners plan individual and collaborative learning goals, identify learning strategies and self-evaluate their own achievement. This learning process will actually contribute to improve the teaching practice as it is a teacher's opportunity to reconsider and reflect about the use of a new strategy that can support the practice in the foreign language classrooms.

**Theoretical Framework**

The literature review will examine the three main constructs considered for this study, as well as the research studies carried out related to each one of them. The constructs considered are *Collaborative Learning, Self-Directed learning* and *Motivation.*

**Collaborative learning: a successful strategy**

Collaborative learning (CL) has become an extremely valuable strategy for educators as it is focused on the learner's learning process (Laal & Laal, 2011), it also allows students to develop critical thinking skills (Gokhale, 1995) cited in Laal et al., (2011) by means of social-group interaction giving them the opportunity to approach, co-construct and transform knowledge (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1991) cited in Laal et al., (2011). Laal and Ghodsi (2011) define CL as an instructional approach which entails a small group of learners at different levels of capability working together to reach a common goal. For this study purpose, the difference of groups and <u>teams</u> is well defined by taking into consideration some definitions. Forsyth (2006) cited in Smith (2008) states: "a group is defined as two or more individuals who are connected to one another by social relationships" (p. 2-3). Groups are seen as individuals who are gathered together by common fate in experience, similarity in behavior or personality and proximity (Forsyth, 2006) cited in Smith (2008). When these groups move towards something to be approached as a whole they might be evolving into <u>teams</u>. Johnson and Johnson (2003) cited in Smith (2008) give a definition of groups becoming <u>teams</u> after certain group skills are developed, "to ensure that groups are effective, members must be extremely competent in using small group skills. Humans are not born with these skills; they must be developed" (p. 579-581). Johnson et al., (1994) cited in Csernica, Hanyak, Hyde, Shooter, Toole and Vigeant (2002) also state some key elements for successful *teamwork*: "positive interdependence": in

which one of  team members must rely on and support one another to reach the common goal; "individual accountability": every member is responsible for the complete process and their assigned part; " promotive interaction": team members must provide feedback and guidance; "appropriate use of teamwork skills": students must work efficiently with their team members.

Accordingly, in this study a team is defined as "people working together in a committed way to achieve a common goal or mission. The work is interdependent and team members share responsibilities and hold themselves accountable for attaining the result" (n.d. MIT Information Services and Technology). Besides, Luca and Tarricone (2001) cited in Luca et al., (2002) state that "team members must be flexible enough to adapt to cooperative working environments where goals are achieved through collaboration and social interdependence rather than individualized, competitive goals"(p.641). The focus of this statement deals with the fact that students, by working in teams, should be engaged in the process of setting up their individual learning goals, monitoring their progress, identifying the resources that may help them, setting a learning plan and evaluating to what extent their goal is achieved (Knowles, 1975) cited in Acero (2012). Furthermore, when working with their teammates learners have the opportunity of taking advantage of the benefits provided by CL such as the development of a "social support system for learners, the increase of self-esteem by means of a centered-learner instruction; the lowering of anxiety through collaboration, the promotion of critical thinking skills and students' active involvement in the learning process" (Johnson, 1989 & Panitz, 1999) cited in Laal et al.,(2011, p. 487).

This new scenario where the learners are active participants of their own learning process means that learners will be able to build skills and knowledge by themselves and adapt them to contextual factors as roles and use. Accordingly, the strategy of working in CLT could help

students develop the essential skills not only to boost their language potential but also their personal development. Soller, Lesgold, Linton and Goodman (1999, p.1) cited in Burton (2010) argued that "effective collaboration with peers has proven itself to be a successful and uniquely powerful learning method". Delucchi (2006) states that students appear to work in a better way, despite having different language skills and personalities, when they are in <u>teams</u> as they can share their ideas and thoughts without pressure or anxiety.

Bjorklund, Campbell & Colbeck (2000) define Collaborative Learning (CL) as a learning technique in which learners are required to work jointly in pairs or groups to solve learning tasks and it is validated in their work findings. They conducted a study with college students aimed at investigating students' visions of how collaborative work contributes to the development of their career abilities. The analysis of their data revealed that students made progress on communication, conflict management and problem-solving skills. Researchers also inferred that students got profit from working collaboratively, for example attaining team's goals, giving mutual feedback and peer support.

Rubin (2002, p. 17) defines CL as a "purposeful relationship in which all parties strategically chose to cooperate in order to accomplish a shared outcome". This can be aligned with the findings reported by Beatty and Nunan (2004) who carried out a study in which they investigated CL at computer- mediated instruction. The participants were exposed to a certain number of comprehension questions about a novel from Mary Shelley. The researchers found evidence those students who worked within a CL environment created more chances to advance through the materials, reduced misinterpretations and "social friction". They also pointed out that learners who did not work collaboratively failed at creating opportunities for meaning-negotiation and scaffolding their learning.

Prieto (2007) carried out a study about "Improving Eleventh Graders' Oral Production in English class through Cooperative Learning Strategies" in which she reported that her students seem to be more comfortable when they asked their partners to explain the meaning of concepts or words. She also noticed they discovered that having a good relationship among themselves as well as the whole class' participation were relevant aspects when they wanted to finish their task successfully. In sum, she found an improvement in her students' speaking skill as a result of the implementation of the cooperative strategies.

**Self-directed Learning**

Self-directed learning (SDL) is based on the premises of adult education and learning; this term is taking a pivotal role in current education as scholars have found that people who take control and responsibility of their learning make it meaningful to become successful learners (Abd-El-Fattah, 2010). Knowles (1975, p. 18) describes SDL as a process: in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in (1) diagnosing their learning needs, (2) formulating learning goals, (3) identifying human and material resources for learning, (4) choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and (5) evaluating learning outcomes". He also points out that a mature person is one who has matured "from dependency toward autonomy to the point that at least he makes his own decisions and faces their consequences" (Knowles, 1959, p. 9) cited in Brockett and Donaghy (2011). This five step model is followed by the authors of this research as a way to raise self-direction awareness in language learners.

Long (1994) cited in VanEckelen, Boshuizen and Vermont (2005) describes SDL as the mental procedures that are consciously regulated and oriented by the individual in order to obtain "knowledge and understanding" and to build up an ability. In other words, SDL is the process

in which a person takes control of his own learning process, that is, the person is able to decide by himself what to learn, when and how to do it. Garrison (1997) cited in Song and Hill (2007) suggests a three-dimensional model of SDL in which he states that SDL is achieved when the three dimensions: self-management, self-monitoring, and motivation, interact among themselves. Self-management has to do with how learners manage the learning resources and the achievement of their learning goals. Self-monitoring refers to the monitoring of learners' collection of learning strategies. Motivation is related to the students' engagement level in reaching a goal. That is to say that the learner is capable of developing his own learning strategies, self-assessment and evaluation criteria as well as the persistence in attaining his objectives.

Bell, Pape and Yetkin (2003) reported some evidence that support the above statements; they carried out an investigation in which they implemented a series of instructional strategies that met the "socio-cultural principles" in order to develop seventh grade students' mathematical thinking and self-regulation. After analyzing their collected data, they found evidence that students developed a sense of learning awareness and became responsible for their learning process.

Zimmerman (2002, p. 66) proposes some characteristics that self-directed learners should have. The most relevant for this study are: "establishment of goals for oneself, using of appropriate strategies to accomplish with the goals, monitoring one's performance, redesigning one's learning atmosphere to fit the goals and self-evaluation of one's methods". Dekker, Elshout-morh, and Wood (2006) found evidence that support Zimmerman's (2002) statement. They investigated the way two eight years old children regulated their Collaborative Learning (CL) while solving mathematical problems. Their findings reveal that both kids were able to

monitor their work, since they not only selected the strategies to apply to solve the tasks but also adjusted them when these did not work. The researchers also concluded that these children took responsibility for their learning, which in turn made them self-directed learners. Regarding CL, the researchers found evidence that CL provided opportunities for both children to gain learning. Dekker et al's findings support the idea that CL could promote SDL and that there is a strong two-way relationship among these two constructs.

**Motivation: a key element in learning**

Motivation is one of the concepts more related to language learning (Gardner, 2005); for this reason, there is a need for looking for suitable strategies to increase motivation in English language learners and setting up a CL environment might contribute to the achievement of this goal. For this particular study the definition to have into account is the one provided by Dörnyei (2001, p.8); he defines motivation as "the choice of a particular action, the persistence with it, the effort expended on it. In other words, motivation is responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, how hard they are going to pursue it". Gardner (2005) states that motivated people should have a firm wish of achieving their learning goals; an enjoyable feeling when doing the required activities in their road to accomplish the goals, awareness of their achievements and a sense of self-confidence in their attainments.

Evidence of the relationship between CL and motivation is found in Wang (2012). He conducted an experimental study with 67 female college students at a university in China; the purposes of the investigation were to explore the impact of cooperative learning on students' achievement motivation and to compare the impact of the cooperative learning approach and the traditional teacher-centered method on students' achievement motivation.  Based on the analysis

of the results of the pre and posttests, the researcher states that there were significant differences between the control and the experimental groups consequently the cooperative learning approach could develop students' achievement motivation. In the researcher's words "cooperative learning encourages positive peer pressure and learning becomes a valued activity. When success is based on the group's efforts rather than individual work, students attribute success to hard work rather than luck, so they are motivated to give their best" (p. 5).

Watters and Ginns (2000) investigated 154 elementary pre-service teachers enrolled in a science course. The researchers' purpose was to have the participants experience situations aimed at developing positive attitudes to science teaching so they adopted CL as one of the strategies for student-teachers to gain confidence and enhance motivation. Their paper explored the student- teacher's beliefs and perceptions of the strategies during the implementation. The findings indicated that the CL strategy had a positive effect on motivation since student teachers in the focus groups sessions expressed that the tasks based on CL were fun and enjoyable and they really led them towards motivation to be successful in their future teaching practice. Furthermore, student-teachers claimed that through CL tasks they had the opportunity to assign responsibilities, share ideas, agree on problem-solving situations, evaluate what and how they were learning; these abilities increased their confidence and empowered them when confronting an elementary class.

**Research Design**

This section covers the type of research that was carried out, the context where the study took place; the participants of the study; the researcher's role and the explanation of the data collection instruments and procedures.

**Type of study**

This research is developed under the Action Research (AR) approach because it allows the teacher-researchers to identify their teaching context's problems, reflect critically on their own teaching practice, and bring about change (Bailey &Nunan, 2009, p. 229) by carrying out "a detailed observation of their classrooms' situations, the development of a plan of action to improve what is actually happening in their classrooms, the implementation of the plan and the reflection on the outcomes" (Kemmis, McTaggart, &Retallic, 2004, p. 1). In order to take advantages of both qualitative and quantitative research traditions, this study makes use of a mixed-method design since this paradigm enables the teacher-researchers to collect and analyze persuasively and rigorously the data (Crewell & Plano, 2011). In accordance with the parameters of the mixed-method design, the teacher-researchers gathered qualitative and quantitative data through two elicitation instruments: questionnaires and an interview and two introspective instruments: teacher-researchers' journals and students' learning diaries (See Appendices A, B, C and D).

**Context**

This research study was carried out in four state schools in Colombia, Institución Educativa San Vicente de Paúl (school 1) located in Sincelejo- Sucre; Institución Educativa Departamental Instituto de Promoción Social (school 2) located in Villeta-Cundinamarca; Institución Educativa Colegio el Castillo (school 3) located in Barrancabermeja-

Santander; and Institución Educativa Departamental Urbana Cáqueza (school 4) located in

Cáqueza-Cundinamarca. These educational institutions face some common difficulties such as:

lack of appropriate technical resources to work with in classes, small classrooms, large size of

classes (35 to 42 per classroom), insufficient time to teach English (two or three hours per week).

Besides, participants' low level of English,  schools' low scores in the Saber 11[1]; students' lack

of commitment  with their learning process and their lack of self-confidence and  motivation to

participate in the language tasks proposed by the educators.

**Participants**

Initially, teacher-researchers pretended to work with their complete classes which

consisted of more than 30 students each. However, due to the completion of tasks, participation

in the pedagogical intervention and the data gathering process just 35 students were considered

for the analysis of data and from now on the teacher-researchers refer to these 35 participants as

the sample. 40% of the participants were males and 60% of them were females with mixed-

abilities since they learned at different pace, had different learning styles and preferences

(Bremner, 2008).   The target sample's   age ranged between 11 and 19 years old. They belonged

to a low economical background; most of them were interested in learning English as a foreign

language as they considered it as an opportunity to get a good job in the future. Unfortunately,

they had not been exposed to the instruction of learning strategies such as **Collaborative**

**Learning Teams** (CLT) to acquire a foreign language and they had failed in their attempt to

master the language which had frustrated and demotivated them.  17.1% of the subjects under

study attended two hours per week and 82.8% of them attended three hours per week and all of

them were in the secondary school level.  In order to confirm the participants' language level, the

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[1] **Saber 11**: National standardized exam taken at the end of the secondary school level.

teacher-researchers administered a questionnaire at the beginning of the study. This questionnaire was designed taking into account the standards formulated by the MEN[2] and it was divided in four sections; each one of them contained thirteen standards related to the language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. According to the MEN's vision, students are classified in a different language level in each one of the secondary grades: students from sixth to seventh grades must be in A2.2; students from eighth to ninth grades must be in B.1.1 and students in the last two grades of the high school (tenth and eleventh) must be in B.1.2; unfortunately, after administering the questionnaire the teacher-researchers confirmed that regardless the school level students were, they kept the same language level as shown in table 1.

| School | Number of the participants per schools | % | Male | % | Female | % | Age range | Students' school level | Number of hours attended per week | English language level |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1 | 6 | 17.1 | 2 | 5.7 | 4 | 11.4 | 16-19 | 11 grade | 2 | A1 |
| 2 | 10 | 28.5 | 5 | 14.2 | 5 | 14.2 | 11-16 | 8 grade | 3 | A1 |
| 3 | 10 | 28.5 | 7 | 20 | 3 | 8.5 | 14-15 | 9 grade | 3 | A1 |
| 4 | 9 | 25.7 | 1 | 2.8 | 8 | 22.8 | 15-19 | 10 grade | 3 | A1 |

Table 1.Sample discrimination and percentages per school

**Researchers' role**

The teacher-researchers who carried out this study kept a reflective attitude towards their teaching practice during the research process since they were "aimed at discovering, developing, or monitoring changes to practice" Wallace (2000) cited in Donato (2003, p. 1). As one of the

[2]Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2006). Series: Guía N° 22. Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: inglés.

action research principles is to get deep understanding on one's own teaching practice (Dick, 2003) by careful observation of one's context, as researchers of this project, teachers were constant observers of their classrooms' realities; planners, developers and monitors of the strategic actions: implementation of the CLT strategy, to be carried out in order to overcome their classrooms' difficulties.

The teacher-researchers acted as trainers as well, because students were trained under the CLT strategy to foster SDL skills and increase their motivation towards language learning. In this specific moment of the research study, teacher-researchers became guides and facilitators of students' learning process in order to help them boost their language potential, develop their critical thinking skills and instruct them in those features over which they should have control such as amount of effort, motivation, *teamwork* and self-direction. Besides, acting as guides and learning facilitators allowed teacher-researchers to help students take responsibility of their own learning, do more discovering, more design work, more modeling, to get student learning from and with each other and do more with feedback(Weimer, 2002) by creating more opportunities for collaboration and interaction with their peers. That is, teacher- researchers were meant to motivate students to develop SDL strategies since self-directed learners are not nurtured in isolation but in learning environments in which they exchange and share meaningful information.

**Data collection instruments and procedures**

The data collection procedures, the core of any research process, in which the researchers get engaged with the data gathered, where in this Action Research study the teacher-researchers considered that in order to answer the research question, it was pertinent to collect both kinds of data: qualitative and quantitative; therefore, the following instruments were

selected as the most suitable: initial and final questionnaires; students' learning diaries, teachers' journals, and a semi-structure interview  (Appendices A,B, C and D).

Taking into account the ethical principles of data collection stated by Dörnyei (2003, p.91-92) as cited in Bailey and Nunan (2009), participants as well as the principals of the schools were given a consent letter (See Appendix E) in which they were informed about the purpose of the research, the allocated time of the implementation of the strategy and the confidentiality in the use of the information collected from the students.

**Questionnaires**

Brown (2001, p. 6) as cited in Nunan and Bailey (2009) defines questionnaires as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react, either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers". For this research study, a Likert scale questionnaire with 36 closed-ended items, in both languages: English and Spanish, (See Appendix A) was the instrument designed to collect data about students' perceptions  about  working in teams,  CL, SDL,  and motivation, as well as participants' use of strategies related to the study constructs. This questionnaire was administered to the sample before and after the implementation of the strategy in order to contrast and analyze quantitatively the data gathered during these two specific periods of time.

**Students' learning diaries**

Bailey (1990, p. 215) cited in Nunan (1992) defines diaries as "a first person account of a language learning or teaching experience, documented through regular and candid entries". In this research study, the purpose of this instrument was to gain insights about students' use of collaborative learning, problem-solving and self-directed learning strategies, selection of resources, as well as their reflections, perceptions, feelings and thoughts about the Collaborative

Learning Teams (CLT) strategy on the promotion of Self-directed Learning (SDL). The students were given a diary model to follow; this model consisted of eight open-ended questions (See Appendix B); the participants were asked to write their diary entries either in their mother tongue or in English at the end of each implementation; the process of writing every single entry took approximately between 10 to 15 minutes.

**Teachers' journals**

The purpose of this instrument was to get insights about classrooms' events, students' perceptions, feelings, reflections, and thoughts about the implementation of the CLT strategy in order to confirm or refute what students expressed in their learning diaries. The journal format (See Appendix C) was designed with the support of the research counselor and contained three sections: observations, notes to self and interpretation. Teacher-researchers registered their classroom observations through this instrument at the end of each implementation.

**Interview**

The teacher-researchers conducted a semi-structured interview because it allowed them to get more valuable information (Dowsett, 1986) cited in Bailey and Nunan (2009). The purpose of this instrument was to collect data about students' experiences regarding the adoption of the CLT strategy and its effects in their learning process (See Appendix D).This interview consisted of a combination of 16 open and closed ended items and it was applied to the sample at the end of the research process; it was conducted in Spanish and took 45 minutes approximately to be administered. Three of the teacher-researchers applied individual interviews, except for the teacher-researcher from school one who administered a focus group interview due to time constraints.

## Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation

The main concern of this research project has to do with the implementation of an appropriate teaching and learning approach for large classes: the strategy of **Collaborative Learning Teams** (CLT) needed to be an appealing and motivating strategy that would help A1 English language students become more self-directed as well as more motivated; therefore, designing the intervention based on this strategy and putting it into practice were the steps that would permit answering the research question.

The intervention was planned for three months, from August to November 2012, with lessons which lasted from 120 to 165 minutes weekly. However, some unscheduled school activities at the end of the academic year impeded the normal course of the implementation, so this was continued until the first months of the next academic year (See Appendix F). Each lesson was observed and monitored based on the proposed changes while being implemented; those observations were reported in the teachers' diaries and then information was interpreted.

Regarding the lesson planning (See Table 2), teacher-researchers implemented from five to eight lesson plans (See Appendix G) following the format provided by the counselor. However, as each intervention took 2 hours or more the amount of time devoted to the research was sufficient to get the collection of data as expected. As suggested by Ferrance (2000, p. 12) "while the technique was implemented the teacher-researchers continued to document and collect data on performance".

| Schools | Number of Interventions per schools |
|---------|-------------------------------------|
| School 1 | 8 |
| School 2 | 8 |
| School 3 | 6 |
| School 4 | 5 |

Table 2.Summary of Interventions per School

The instructional process consisted of a sequence of four stages as follows:

In the first stage of the interventions, teacher-researchers applied a questionnaire to diagnose students' perceptions about working in <u>teams</u>.  This questionnaire gave the teacher-researchers evidence of how much the participants knew about Collaborative Learning (CL) and Self-Directed Learning (SDL), since it addressed particular items as autonomy, Self-Direction (SD) and motivation to learn.  Besides, as students needed to know new trends in language learning and teaching, it was advisable to provide solid background on CL, SDL, and motivation, so a workshop, including several dynamic aspects to work in class, was planned to motivate and sensitize students. In schools one, three and four the movie "Coach Carter" (a school basketball team faces some problems in the state championship.  Coach Carter helps them work collaboratively to become successful learners and players).  In school two, the video "Mirad Los Gansos (It shows geese migrations maintaining the speed by flying in the same direction, as a team to achieve their goal). Both, the movie and the video, were used to introduce the concept of *teamwork* and were the starting point to raise awareness on the Collaborative Learning Teams (CLT) strategy. In school three, students were given a video activity worksheet "Coach Carter" (Appendix G), in the other schools some oral activities were used to focus learners' attention on the content of the movie and the video.

The second stage took place after watching the movie and the video when students were asked to get into <u>teams</u> of four and discuss the benefits of working collaboratively and how this strategy could help them become self-directed learners.  As part of the process of facilitating the fundamental concept of SDL, the use of SDL model based on Knowles' five step model was included. Therefore, students were instructed on how to diagnose learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify human and material resources for learning, choose and implement

appropriate learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes (Knowles, 1975) cited in Smith (2002).  Teacher-researchers made students aware of the need to construct their own knowledge before working in <u>teams</u> so that they could actually contribute.

A third stage took place when the teacher-researchers introduced and modeled the use of CL strategies. They helped students to be organized in <u>teams</u> and encouraged them to agree on social rules and <u>team</u> commitments. For the <u>team</u> distribution, teacher- researchers had into account Jacobs and Ward's (1999) claim regarding the collaborative skills required to work successfully as a <u>team</u>:  "maintenance and idea skills. Maintenance skills refer to those required for team's operation; idea skills are those focusing on content learning".   Based on this statement, specific roles were selected: the ones related to <u>team</u> maintenance: a questioner; a timekeeper and a noise monitor; and the ones related to idea skills: a summarizer and a reporter. Each one of the <u>team</u> mates was aware of the importance of being responsible for the particular role that he had already been assigned.

Students were involved in *teamwork* activities; it was during the implementation of those activities when teacher-researchers brought about multiple practice opportunities to help students move towards autonomous use of the strategies through gradual withdrawal of the scaffolding, as well as self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategies used in the language classroom "to help students become independent and self-regulated learners through their increasing command over a variety of strategies for learning in school" (Chamot & Robbins, 2005, p. 11). So the assimilation of the Knowles' steps model was noticed when they used strategies such as planning, locating resources, solving tasks, controlling time, assessing needs and achievements while working under the collaborative mode.  Teacher-researchers made a record of the patterns

of socialization observed such as "positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual and group accountability and setting up common learning goals".

The last stage focused on the process of sharing and discussing the use of the strategy implemented. Students used their learning diaries to record issues related to collaboration, SD and motivation. Learners were engaged in describing the steps or actions taken for the purpose of learning English which gave insights of the meta-cognitive strategies as self-monitoring and self-evaluating that they were able to use. Rubin (2005) cited in Johnson (2005) defined Meta-cognitive strategies as the ones which "refer to the control or regulatory process by which learners plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning" (p. 53). Although students were not aware of using those strategies, teacher-researchers enabled learners to use them. Since the beginning of the implementation students were involved in the journal writing process; they were reminded that there were no right or wrong answers but personal reflections about the real concerns of their learning process.

The four stages illustrated in the descriptions of this chapter were an attempt to clarify the dynamics of the pedagogical implementation of the strategy of Collaborative Learning Teams (CLT); they do not constitute a step by step sequence but a combination of all the stages as a whole in the different moments of the intervention (See figure 1).
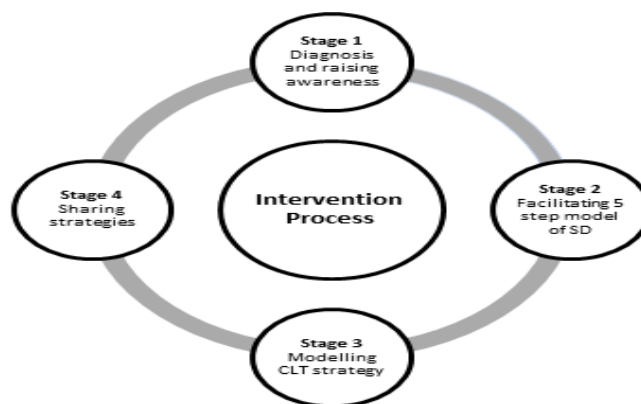


Figure 1.  Diagram of the intervention process.

**Results and Data Analysis**

In this section the teacher-researchers will draw evidence from both qualitative and quantitative data that were collected through two questionnaires: initial and final; students' learning diaries; teachers' journals and an interview.  Using quantitative data analysis techniques was very helpful in this qualitative study (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999) since the research question from this study: Does the Collaborative Learning Teams strategy foster Self-directed Learning and increase motivation in A1 students in four public schools in Colombia? can be answered by using both analytical approaches.

**Data analysis methods and procedures**

Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and considered for this study. The first strand of the analysis was based on a quantitative approach. The analysis of the quantitative data collected through the initial and final questionnaires was targeted at measuring, in terms of percentages and frequency, learners' shifts of attitudes, perspectives and perceptions, as well as their use of strategies after the pedagogical intervention. This quantitative data was organized in three general frequency tables (See Appendix I), these tables show the number of students who answered yes or no to each question and only the items which revealed major changes between the pre and post questionnaires were taken into account for the analysis.

The second strand of the analysis was based on a qualitative method. In this part of the analysis, the teacher- researchers considered the Grounded Theory as the most suitable approach to identify patterns; re-occurring themes and categories in the data collected though the interview and students' learning diaries. Data collected through the teachers' journals were used to reaffirm or refute data provided by the learners. In order to triangulate data, the teacher-researchers

analyzed separately the four sets of data and looked for relationships among them to confirm what was stated in each one of the instruments.

Corbin and Strauss (1990) as cited in Egan (2002) state that Grounded Theory refers to "a theory that is inductively derived, discovered and developed" from the data collected (p.277). Therefore, teacher-researchers read and re-read several times the data collected from the 35 sample respondents in order to become familiar with the corpus data.  After the initial process, the three processes of coding proposed by Corbin and Strauss (2007): open coding, the axial coding, and the selected coding were followed to identify re-occurring themes, patterns or categories and the possible relationship between them.   On the open coding phase a list of 14 indicators (See Table 3) were presented considering the constructs that guide the research to conceive them as "conceptual elements of theory" (Glaser & Strauss in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 168).

| **Indicators** |
| --- |
| Learning needs |
| Individual learning goals |
| Collaborative learning teams learning goals |
| Identification of resources |
| Performing task collaboratively |
| Monitoring |
| Evaluating learning outcomes |
| Collaborative learning strategies |
| Collaborative learning team roles |
| Motivation |
| Language used |
| Teacher's  roles |
| Scaffolding |
| Language learning |

Table 3.Indicators from the open coding phase.

In the second phase of the analysis, the axial coding was used to find links between the indicators found in the open coding phase. From this constant "engagement with data" (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 168) some codes (firstly called indicators) were reaffirmed and reorganized and some others disappeared. At this point of the analysis and after the breaking and constant comparison of the data the three main categories emerged. Then, the selecting coding technique was applied to integrate the categories to imply theory building that is "transform data into findings" (Patton, 2002, p.432). Table 4 shows the core categories and the reorganization of codes and sub-codes.

| CATEGORIES | CODES | Abreviations | SUB-CODES | Abreviations |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Collaborative Learning | 1. Collaborative learning team goals | C. L.T.G | | |
| | 2. Collaborative learning team roles | C.L.T.R | | |
| | 3. Performing task collaboratively | P.Ts.Cly | | |
| | 4. Collaborative learning strategies | C.L.S | Effective participation | Ef. Part |
| | | | Leadership | Lship |
| | | | Peer/group support | Pr/Gr.s |
| | | | Paying attention | Py. At |
| | | | Group discussion | Gr.D. |
| Self-direction | 1. Learning needs | L. Ns | | |
| | 2. Individual learning goals | Ind. L.G | | |
| | 3. Identification of resources | Id. Rs. | | |
| | 4. Awareness on learning | Aw. L | | |
| | 5. Language learning | Lang. L | | |
| | 6. Learner's independence | Ln. Indp | | |
| | 7. Self- evaluation | Sf. E | | |
| | 8. Asking for help | A.F.H | | |
| Motivation | 1.Participatory Attitude | Part. Atd | | |
| | 2.Self-confidence | Sf. Cd | | |

Table 4. Final Core Category.

**Category 1: Collaborative learning**

Data analysis revealed major differences in many of the aspects with regard to students' perceptions and attitudes about working in Collaborative Learning Teams (CLT). Table 5 shows one of these differences.

| Item | Time | Yes | | No | |
|------|------|-----|---|-----|---|
| **1.  I exchange information with my team.** | | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| | Pre | 15 | 42.8 | 20 | 57.1 |
| | Post | 34 | 97.1 | 1 | 2.8 |

Table 5. CL Questionnaire item 1

While in the initial questionnaire just a few number of students perceived that they were exchanging ideas with their <u>teams </u>(Table 5), the final questionnaire reveals a significant change, a high percentage of them changed their perception about their performance when working together as a <u>team</u>, this change in behavior and attitude suggests that students took advantage of the implemented strategy as an opportunity to create a safe learning environment for them, this can be corroborated with the information gathered from the students' diaries and interview:

> *"Esta actividad me ayudó a comunicarme mucho más con ellos, aprendí a escuchar  opiniones, que  me corrigieran, y dar mis opiniones" Student 1. Diary entry nº 3*

> *"Intercambié ideas con mi grupo de trabajo y pudimos crear un buen texto"  Student 3.Diary entry nº 6*

> *"La experiencia fue muy genial porque aprende uno como a respetar lo que dice el compañero y saber que aportes tiene él para el grupo" Student 4.Interview, question nº 5*

The excerpts evidence examples of the interpersonal skills proposed by Gillies (2007, p. 5): actively listening; stating ideas freely; accepting responsibility for one's behaviors; and providing constructive criticism. These interpersonal skills are essential for developing effective

communication skills and positive repercussions on relationship among the <u>team</u> members; the acquisition of these two elements not only makes possible effective collaboration among peers but also promotes learning and a deep understanding of the class material.

| Item | Time | Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3. I learn from my classmates when we work as a team.** | | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| | Pre | 12 | 34.2 | 23 | 65.7 |
| | Post | 33 | 97.2 | 2 | 5.7 |

Table 6.Collaborative Learning Questionnaire item 3

Item number three attempted to extract information from the subjects with regard to their beliefs in terms of learning supported by their <u>team</u> (Table 6), from the results of the final questionnaire it can be inferred that after the intervention the majority of the learners realized that working through CLT is a meaningful opportunity to interact and learn from each other; evidence found in the qualitative data, students' diaries and interview, supports this statement:

*"Compartimos ciertos conocimientos, y así ella aprende de mí y yo aprendí de ella, además nos ayudamos mutuamente en lo referente al vocabulario" Student 3. Diary entry nº 2*

*"Juntos interactuamos, aprendimos, nos ayudamos e imaginamos el mundo del inglés" Student 2. Diary entry nº 6*

*"Bueno yo he aprendido mucho de mi equipo, de mis compañeros de equipo, ellos han sido de gran ayuda para yo mejorar, porque yo considero que soy un estudiante bueno en inglés, pero yo solo no hubiese llegado al nivel que estoy ahora o que yo considero que estoy, ahora pienso que mis compañeros han sido de gran ayuda" Student 5. Interview, question nº 5*

The data from the excerpts above reveal a share of knowledge among <u>team</u> members; they also show how students support each other to achieve a common goal. This evidence suggests that peer support, interaction among team members, and the exchange of ideas, experiences and knowledge allow them to co-construct and transform their own knowledge. Data contained in teachers' diaries also confirm this assumption:

*"Students were involved in the task; they did everything to convince me to choose their ad and to go to the place they chose; it was fun to see them working together to do the task. Working in teams has helped them a lot. They have worked really hard in this task, I noticed that they used many language expressions in a very good way; they have improved their language level and feel more confident using English" Teachers' diary, entry nº 6*

The previous samples can prove Vygotsky's ideas (1978) cited in Hurd (2005) that humans do not learn in isolation, but through interactions with others. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development is the gap between what learners can achieve on their own and what they can achieve in collaboration with others. This is to say that the experience of the respondents after the intervention shows that working in <u>teams</u> strengthens students' efforts to overcome the barriers of language.

| Item | Time | Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **9. I am more comfortable working with my classmates.** | | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| | Pre | 12 | 34.2 | 23 | 65.7 |
| | Post | 32 | 91.4 | 3 | 8.5 |

Table 7. Collaborative Learning Questionnaire item 9

Item number nine was designed to find out students' feelings regarding working in <u>teams</u>, looking in detail the broad differences between the frequency of the yes option in the initial and final results (Table 7), it is evident that participants recognized that when working collaboratively with their teammates they can express themselves without pressure in an atmosphere free of anxiety, strengthening their social and affective strategies (Oxford, 1990, p. 37 & 135) cited in Bull & Ma (2001). The following excerpts support this statement:

*"Me sentí relajada y cómoda con mis compañeros"     Student 2. Diary entry nº 6*

*"Mis sentimientos durante toda la tarea fueron excelentes, puesto que mi grupo fue el equipo que más participó, el que mejor hizo las cosas y además fue el que mejor hizo el trabajo en equipo, puesto que cada quien manejó su rol excelente". Student 3.Diary entry nº 5*

The reflective data extracted from the passages suggested that when students work in a CLT they feel comfortable and secure with their peers, this CL environment  enables them to work by themselves assuming their team roles, negotiating meaning,  giving feedback to each other,  facilitating their peers' learning, and taking control and responsibility for their own learning to make it meaningful  (Abd-El-Fattah, 2010),  this kind of sense of independence from their teachers helps them develop self- directed  skills,  self-esteem and increase their motivation to learn. Data in teachers' diaries also reported evidence of this postulation:

*"It seems that my students have become more confident, L. F  is a good example, M, A, Y, I and LL are really engaged in their learning process, they are more motivated; most of the students have improved some of their skills (speaking and writing) and I think they have learnt. D has become aware of their learning process now she knows what she has to do to accomplish her goals. I can say that most of them have developed self-directed learning skills" Teachers' diary, entry nº 6.*

Hurd (2005) confirms that "collaboration with others through sharing the insights of reflection can enhance knowledge and lead to deeper understanding"; she also cites Little (1996, p.  211), in line with Vygotskian thinking, who claims that "the development of a capacity for reflection and analysis [. . . ] depends on the internalization of a capacity to participate fully and critically in social interactions". This is to verify that self-direction interplays with CL work as stated in this study.



Figure 2. Category CL: *Number of Students per Instruments and Codes.*
NOTE: Refer to Table 4, p. 23. Final Core Category to know the meaning of the abbreviations

After analyzing the bar graph in regards to codes and sub-codes, the teacher-researchers discovered that the major positive results correspond to performing tasks collaboratively; a high percentage of the students (88.57%) shows evidence of it in both diaries and interview; peer/group support was found in second place, 84.24% of students ranked CL as a relevant strategy when working as a <u>team</u>, based on these results the researchers can infer that collaboration and support among <u>team</u> members appear to be effective to create a safe and appropriate environment for students to overcome their learning barriers, as both of them lead to <u>team</u> interaction and promote the development of interpersonal skills (Gillies, 2007). <u>Team</u> interaction gives students the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills, take responsibility for their own learning and to generate a positive interdependence in which all the <u>team</u> members have to support each other to succeed as previously stated.

The high frequency of CLT roles, where 70% of students rated, in the collected data suggests that students were able to fulfill with the essential elements of a Collaborative Learning Team (CLT). This result also validates the idea that playing their individual roles as well as setting up their <u>team's</u> CL goals (65.71% of students reported) and effective participation (55.71%) allowed participants to assume their responsibilities, to contribute to accomplish their common goals, and to develop a sense of independence from the teacher.

Contrary to what was expected, the results show little evidence of group discussion and leadership. Although some evidence of leadership was found in teachers' diary, it seems that students do not perceive it as an essential feature to create a collaborative working environment in which they can become successful learners. This belief might be grounded on the idea that in a CLT everyone has their own responsibilities, everyone is in charge of his own and others'

learning and that every member of the <u>team</u> has to support each other in order to reach their common goal.

**Category 2: Self-direction**

In the field of self-direction the well-known author Malcolm Knowles (1975, p. 18) describes self-directed learning as a process:"...in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes".

Self-direction plays an important role in this research study since as previously stated, during the implementation of the CLT strategy students were engaged in Knowles' five step model as part of the instruction. These concepts can be proven by the data provided explicitly by the participants of the research as described in the bar graph below (figure 2).
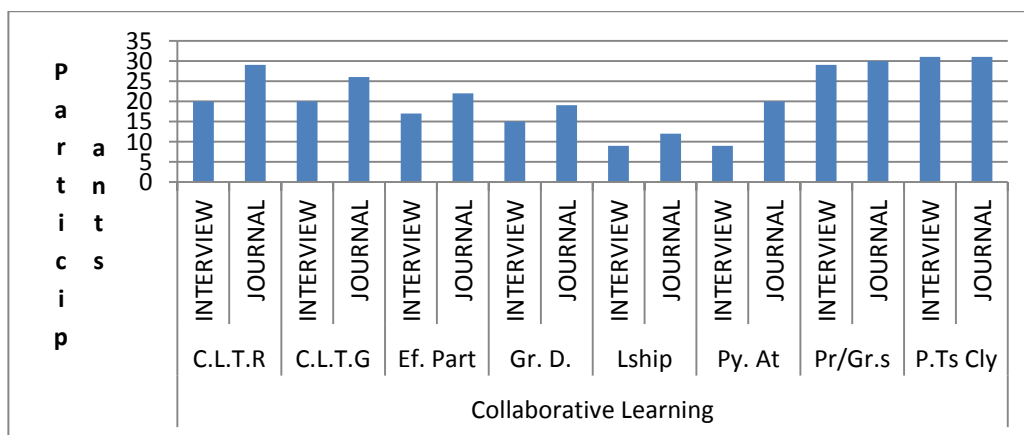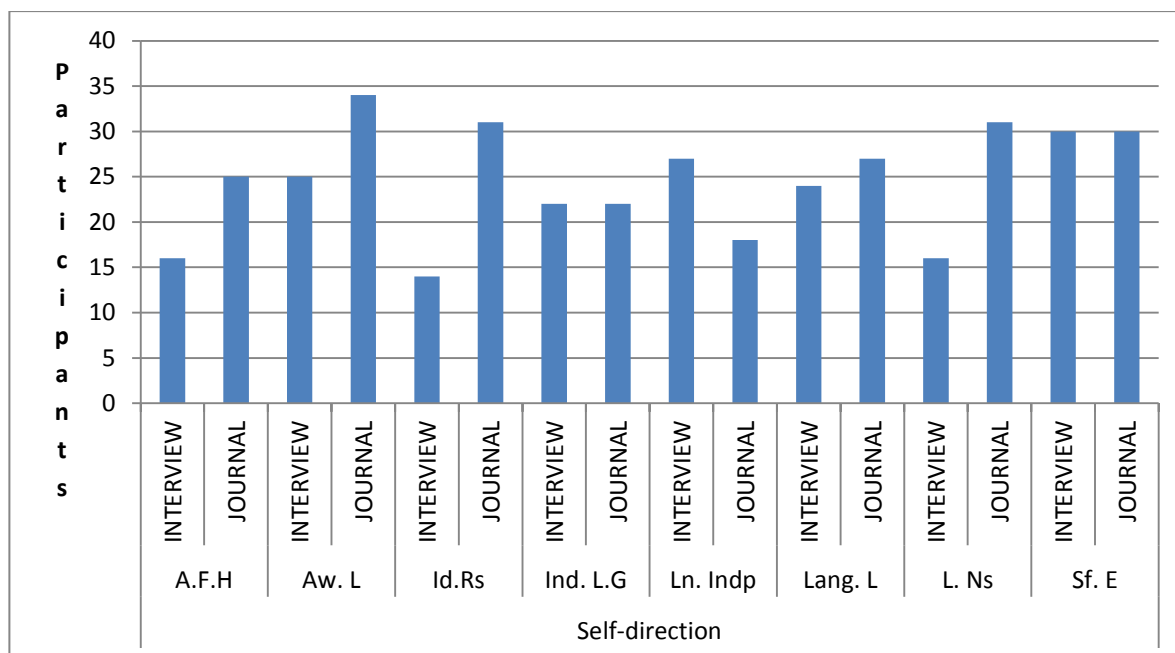


Figure 3.Category SD: *Number of students per Instruments and Codes.*
NOTE: Refer to Table 4, p. 23. Final Core Category to know the meaning of the abbreviations

From those results, Knowles' steps, with the exception of choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, were very significant to validate the question of this study that deals with the implementation of CLT to enhance self- direction, and positive attitude towards language learning. It is important to mention that although the implementation of the five step model of instruction was not a linear process; teacher-researchers implemented it as an opportunity to explore the individual reflections towards each one of the steps and their use when it was explicitly described by the learners.

As all the transcripts were kept in mind some other codes were considered as complementary reasons for a good deal of initiative in the participants' own learning. Among them, it can be mentioned: self-evaluation, 86% of students rated, awareness on learning 84% of students ranked and learner's independence (64%) along with asking for help (58%) as strategies to support what learners can achieve on their own and what they can achieve in collaboration with others. Here instruction played an important role in order to help students, individually and as a team, achieve the new mode of learning; the teachers' diaries corroborate it as follows:

> *"Today students were introduced how to formulate learning goals. The beginning of my class is crucial due to time constraints and discipline matters. I guided Ss to formulate their learning goals based on the ones which are contained in the syllabus of the text we follow. I pointed out that the goals I expected them to formulate should be linked to the topic that we were exploring (Fairy tales)". Teachers' diary, entry nº 2*

The sample data rated that almost 63% of the participants were able to express ideas which implicitly give insights of becoming self-directed learners. This is a positive assumption regarding the implementation of the five step model of instruction as mentioned before. Regarding the definition of proactive learners Knowles (1975, p. 14) cited in Smith (2002) states: "They enter into learning more purposefully and with greater motivation" and the results in table 10 reveal students could express their individual choices; in this way students were able to make

their own decisions with the help of their classmates and teacher for the purpose of focusing on the learning goals.

| Item | Time | Yes | | No | |
|------|------|-----|---|-----|---|
| **1. I make decisions for myself.** | | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| | Pre | 10 | 28.5 | 25 | 71.4 |
| | Post | 30 | 87.5 | 5 | 14.28 |

Table 8. Self-Direction Questionnaire item 1

One of the student's contributions in this aspect is:

*"...me gustó escoger los temas que quería aprender y recordar lo que hacíamos cuando éramos pequeños". Student 26.Diary entry nº 2*

The student not only mentions his responsibility towards the individual learning goal but also he is personalizing his learning experience which contributes to enhancing motivation.

Regarding the identification of resources (64% students rated), it is relevant to mention the learning diary as an  instrument to reflect individually about performing task collaboratively; these two codes  (identification of resources and performing task collaboratively) interplay with each other to aim at becoming self-directed by maximizing student collaboration,  hence having a positive impact in language learning.

Among the reflections of 'good learners' towards the use of the learning diary the followings are found:

*"Me gusta porque puedo aprender más inglés, empezando en español y luego en inglés. Me gustaría compartir para saber qué piensan mis compañeros al respecto de learning diary". Student 26. Diary entry nº 1.*

Accordingly, in the teacher's diary it is mentioned that:

*"I'm still really concerned to what extend my students are internalizing the methodology but as some of them stated today in his learning diary 'the topic was easy'. It means that when students have a path to follow (learning goal) they are willing to pursue it. This kid might be a good learner based on Joan Robin's theory". Teachers' diary, entry nº2*

From the previous excerpts, diary writing as a process offers the best chances to become a good self-directed learner since, as stated by Rubin (2003, p.10), *"Diaries can help the learner begin to monitor his/her own progress and give the teacher some idea of the ways learners address their problem".* In the same way, learners' results about being capable of developing their own learning strategies such as self-assessment and evaluation criteria can be noticed in the items 13 and 14 of the SD questionnaire as follows:

|  | | **Freq** | **%** | **Freq** | **%** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **13. Checking my progress and correcting my mistakes.** | Pre | 12 | 34.2 | 23 | 65.7 |
| | Post | 33 | 94.2 | 2 | 5.7 |
| **14. Being Able to judge and assess my work** | Pre | 13 | 37.1 | 22 | 62.8 |
| | Post | 31 | 88.5 | 4 | 11.4 |

Table 9. Self-Direction Questionnaire items 13 and 14

It can be inferred that after using the teaching strategy of modeling the use of metacognitive strategies learners could develop a sense of learning awareness and they also became responsible for their learning process in order to reach their learning goals as shown in the post-questionnaire results.

With regard to independence learning (64% of students rated), some of the explicit contributions given by the participants in the interview are:

*"Sí, porque yo casi no le pregunto nada a la miss, yo ya más o menos sé inglés. He visto mucho cambio...hasta ahora pues hablo un poquito más inglés". Student 1. Interview, question nº 6*

*"Yo mismo me pongo a practicar inglés y todo, para aprender por mi misma cuenta también". Student 1.Interview, question nº 11*

*"Yo hice muy bien la tarea porque a pesar de que trabajé en equipo con mi compañero, sé qué puedo hacer las cosas por mí mismo porque ahora soy más responsable con mis deberes en inglés".*
*Student 1.Diary entry nº 5*

*"...Yo ya me siento más independiente" Student 5. Interview question nº 12*

It can be inferred that trends of becoming independent is discovered by reflecting on the actions and responsibilities individuals have as being part of CLT.

### Category 3: Motivation

Table 11 shows the data extracted from subjects with regard to their perceptions and feelings towards English performance.

| Item | Time | Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. **I am a good English student.** | Pre | 12 | 34.2 | 23 | 65.7 |
| | Post | 26 | 74.2 | 9 | 25.7 |

Table 10. Motivation Questionnaire item 1

Comparing the initial questionnaire results to the final ones, the increase in the number of students who considered themselves as good English learners is evident. It can be inferred that CLT influenced the way they see themselves as confident learners towards their individual achievements. Richard-Amato (2003) cited in Ebata (n. d) claims "successful language learners appear to have higher self-esteem than those who are unsuccessful". Data found in students' learning diaries can corroborate these statements:

*"El trabajo colaborativo hace que confiemos en lo que hacemos y nos motiva a trabajar y aprender mucho." Student 9.Diary entry nº 3*

*"Antes no hacía las cosas con ganas porque sentía que no quedaban bien pero ahora con el apoyo de los compañeros en los equipos de trabajo uno se siente más seguro y aprende más cosas".*
*Student 8.Interview, question nº 2*

*"Yo siempre he sido buena para inglés pero desde que estoy trabajando en equipo sé que soy mejor."  Student 3.Diary entry nº 4*

*"Mi autoestima ha subido, me siento muy segura y confiada" Student 1. Diary entry nº 7*

| Item | Time | Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **9.  I encourage myself to do a work** | | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| | Pre | 11 | 31.4 | 24 | 68.5 |
| | Post | 34 | 97.1 | 1 | 2.8 |

Table 11. Motivation Questionnaire item 9

After intervention, a high percentage of students reported that they encouraged themselves in the class activities (Table 13). According to this, it is evident that there was an increase in students' positive feelings after the intervention. This can be corroborated with data from students' learning diaries. The following excerpts evidence that CL tasks involved students in dynamic interactions and helped to promote a safe and supportive environment.

*"Tranquilidad y alegría por la manera como estamos trabajando porque me siento motivado a participar".      Student 8.Diary entry nº 6*

*"Me sentí tranquila porque me entendí bien con mi compañera y porque todo el tiempo  trabajamos, además  aprendimos muchas cosas en esta actividad".  Student 9.  Diary entry nº 7*

Furthermore, data evidenced that feelings as fun, enjoyment and enthusiasm emerged while participating in the CL tasks.  Students see the English class as an amusing space to share and learn. The following excerpts confirm this assumption.

*"Yo me divertí mientras aprendía".   Student 14.Diaryentry nº 8*

*"Me gustó participar en la actividad, ahora las clases son más chéveres que antes". Student 12.
Diary entry nº 5*

*"Disfruté mucho haciendo las actividades en equipo". Student 14. Interview, question nº 2*

After analyzing the bar graph, it is noticeable that 70% of students consider self-confidence as a relevant condition to participate in class and to increase their motivation (See figure 3).
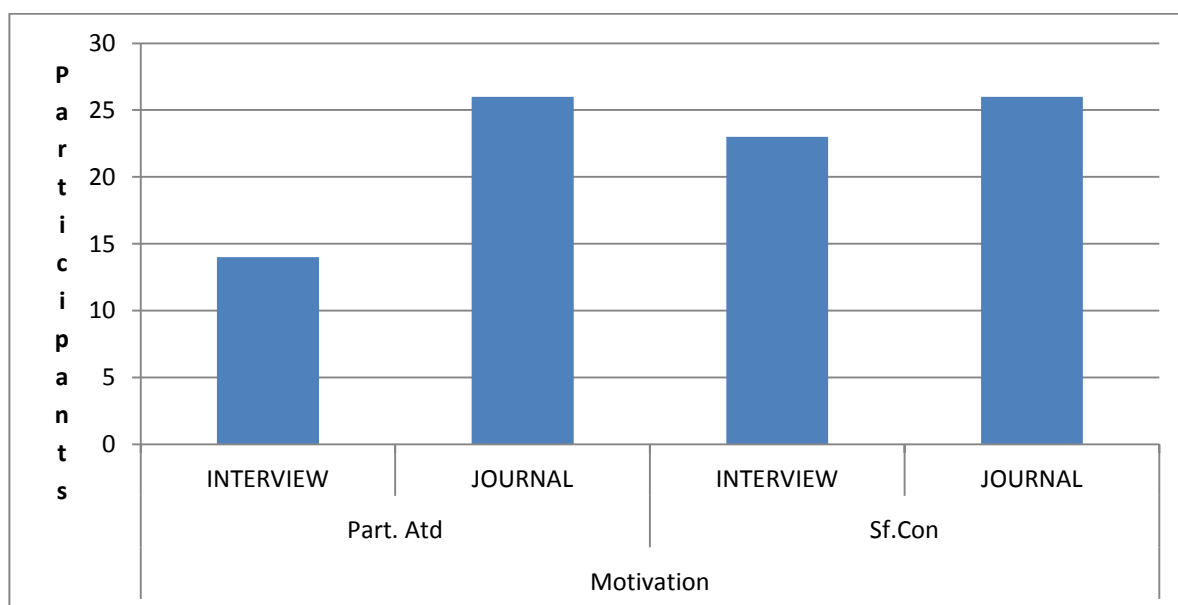


Figure 4.Category Motivation: *Number of Students per Instruments and Codes.*
NOTE: Refer to Table 4, p. 23. Final Core Category to know the meaning of the abbreviations

These results revealed positive effects after the implementation of CLT as a strategy to increase motivation for learning English and for the construction of knowledge. Students' comments support these findings.

*"Antes no hacía las cosas con ganas porque sentía que no quedaban bien pero ahora con el apoyo de los compañeros en los equipos de trabajo uno se siente más seguro y aprende más cosas". Students 8.Interview, question nº 2*

*"Yo siempre he sido buena para inglés pero desde que estoy trabajando en equipo sé que soy mejor". Student 3.Diary entry nº 4*

Gardner (2001) cited in Dörnyei and Schimidt (2001) claims that "the higher level of confidence students have about their own skills, the more frequent contact with the target language and higher achievement can be expected" (p.7). According to this, self-confidence is one of the most determinant conditions that contributes to increasing and enhancing motivation. From the results it can be inferred that CLT seems to exert a direct influence on self-confidence as a motivational factor which in turn benefits students' language learning.

After analyzing data it was also found that there was a shift on students' attitudes regarding their participatory attitude, the results showed 57.14 % of the participants acknowledged that CLT was the detonator to foster participation and enhance tasks enjoyment. This change of attitude was evident since students became active participants and discovered that they were motivated in situations that promoted commitment and affected their performance positively. As students actively engaged in showing off and discussing their tasks, they felt empowered and enjoyed the opportunity to make their own decisions. Teachers' and students' diaries confirm this assumption.

*By observing students participating many times during the implementation, it was found that enthusiasm and willingness to join with their classmates in the class affected in a positive way the students' motivation to learn. Teachers' diary entry nº 6*

*"Aprendí mucho en cada actividad y ahora me siento con más confianza para participar".*
*Student 7. Diary entry nº 5*

The excerpts above also corroborate Turner and Patrick's (2004) claim "participation is both a productive work habit, likely to contribute to learning, as well as evidence of student motivation to learn" (p.1760). That is to say that as students get used to the implementation of CLT strategy their motivation increased and hence there were improvements in their language learning.

## Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications, Limitations and Further Research

*"I no longer hear the expressions they used to say "teacher, speak in Spanish, we don't know English, and we are Colombians, no gringos!" Montes, S; diary, entry 5*

### Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of Collaborative Learning Teams in fostering self-directed learning and increasing motivation in A1 students. The analysis of the initial and final questionnaires results (Appendix A) and the category bar graphs (Figures 2, 3&4) show that there was a significant change on students' attitudes towards the three categories. The study also reveals that participants who were involved in Collaborative work took advantage of the implemented strategy, Collaborative Learning Teams, as an opportunity to build up a safe learning environment for them in which they were able to collaborate, interact and communicate effectively among them by developing interpersonal skills (Gillies, 2007).

Collaborative Learning Teams also fostered positive interdependence among students since they were able to develop individual responsibility for their learning when they were performing a collaborative learning task by respecting their teammates' opinions and supporting each other to ensure that all the team members shared knowledge and contributed to reach success. That is, working in CLT not only strengthens students' effort to overcome their learning language barriers but also helps them co-construct and transform their knowledge leading them to a deeper understanding (Hurd, 2005).

Furthermore, teacher-researchers observed that CLT triggered team interaction which in turn created opportunities to develop self-directed skills: diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources and evaluating learning outcomes. After carrying out the implementation of the CLT strategy the authors of this study found that students were able to take control and responsibility of their own learning as well as a sense of

independence from teachers.  This assumption supports the idea that collaborative learning promotes self- directed learning and that there is a strong two-way relationship among these two constructs.

Regarding motivation, it was observed that Collaborative Learning Teams (CLT) allowed students to feel secure and comfortable to perform tasks collaboratively; the strategy also prompted learners to participate more willingly and confidently in situations that promoted commitment. The teacher-researchers realized the students discovered that they were motivated when working in their <u>teams</u> which affected their performance positively. These findings support the hypothesis that the students in the CLT increased motivation and had a positive attitude towards learning. That is, CLT permitted students to perceive success as something easier to achieve.

As a general conclusion it can be stated that the subjects from this study showed positive changes in their language learning performance and level of motivation after the pedagogical interventions, and as a result of the implementation of the CLT strategy the participants became self-directed learners.

**Pedagogical Implications**

The findings provide evidence suggesting that Collaborative Learning Teams (CLT) can be effectively implemented in the classroom to promote self-direction and increase motivation. Implementing the strategy of CLT contributes significantly to developing self-directed learning skills since *teamwork* involves students in discussions focused on formulating common goals and assuming roles in tune with the process of becoming good language learners. Therefore the students take the initiative in learning by reflecting on what they think are able to do, they can

identify their own mistakes and they begin to find ways to correct those mistakes. Collaborative Learning Teams (CLT) also increases the motivation to learn which is reflected in participatory attitudes such as interest to practice, positive effects in self-confidence and a well disposition in class. Teacher-researchers also suggest that learners who lack self-direction skills are capable of developing them given appropriate conditions and preparation. It means that teachers should use CLT as a strategy to offer opportunities to exercise control over learning since it exerts an important influence on fostering self-direction skills among learners and its effects in language learning. Besides, the findings of this study not only can be useful for language teachers when designing a syllabus but also for curriculum developers who are interested in implementing student-centered models for English language teaching.

**Limitations**

The relevant limitations that were faced when carrying out this research project were related to time constraints, the number of participants, and questionnaire design.

The first limitation teacher-researchers found in this study has to do with the number of the pedagogical interventions. Due to some unscheduled school events at the end of the academic year the implementation process was interrupted in two of the four schools, and had to be continued during the first month of the next academic year (2013); therefore, the number of the pedagogical interventions were reduced and only five to six interventions were carried out in those schools. These factors impeded a much more profound investigation in aspects such as the linear implementation of Knowles' five step model of instruction to create more opportunities for helping participants become better language learners.

The second limitation is related to the number of participants. Due to the completion of tasks, participation in the pedagogical intervention and the data gathering process, only 35 students

were considered for data analysis; therefore the participants could not be seen as a representative sample of the entire population to make generalizations towards the validation of the question under study.

The third limitation was the questionnaire, it was designed by the teacher- researchers themselves to find out about participants' perceptions about working in teams, Collaborative Learning (CL), Self-Directed Learning (SDL), and motivation, as well as their use of strategies related to the study constructs; consequently, some trace of subjectivity might be evident due to the fact that participants might misinterpret some questions since they may not understand some of them properly.

**Further research**

In the current study, the evidence shows positive effects of the Collaborative Learning Team strategy on Self-Directed Learning; however, there is a need for continuing to examine the implementation during a longer term in order to collect more evidence of the effectiveness of the implemented strategy on the promotion of self-directed learning.

Although Knowles' five step model of instruction exerted a positive impact on developing skills to become self-directed in a CL atmosphere, further research is recommended when using this model as a linear process. In this regard, teacher- researchers discovered that learners tended to select from alternatives given, the steps of the model which best suit their learning process rather than following the logical steps proposed by Knowles' model (Smith, 2002).

Finally, in discussing the effects of the Collaborative Learning Teams Strategy on language learning, teacher-researchers surmise that students improved their language level, so future research is suggested to confirm this assumption.

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# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A (1 of 2)

**RESEARCH PROJECT: GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL LEARNING**
**INITIAL/FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

| COLLABORATIVE SELF-MANAGED TEAM/COLLABORATIVE LEARNING | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 1. I exchange information with my team group. <br> Intercambio información con mi equipo de trabajo | | |
| 2. I learn English by working with my team work <br> Aprendo Inglés trabajando con mi equipo de trabajo | | |
| 3. I learn from my classmates when we work as a team <br> Aprendo de mis compañeros cuando trabajo en equipo | | |
| 4. I am able to do my class assignments the best when I work in team <br> Soy capaz de hacer mejor las tareas en clase cuando trabajo en equipo | | |
| 5. When I work in team, I feel confident because my classmates work as much as me. <br> Cuando trabajo en equipo siento confianza porque mis compañeros trabajan tanto como yo. | | |
| 6. When I work in team, I am able to organize the way to work. <br> Cuando trabajo en equipo, soy capaz de organizar la manera de trabajar | | |
| 7. I am more productive when I work in team. <br> Soy más productivo cuando trabajo en equipo | | |
| 8. When I work in a group, I know which my responsibility is. <br> Cuando trabajo en equipo, sé cuál es mi responsabilidad | | |
| 9. I am more comfortable working with my classmates. <br> Me siento más cómodo trabajando con mis compañeros | | |
| 10. I express my ideas without a problem when I work in team. <br> Expreso mis ideas sin problema cuando trabajo en equipo | | |
| 11. When I work with some classmates, we decide on what to learn and how to do it. <br> Cuando trabajo con mis compañeros, nosotros decidimos qué y cómo aprender. | | |

| AUTONOMY, SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 1. I make decisions for myself. <br> Tomo decisiones por mí mismo | | |
| 2. I learn something new on my own. <br> Aprendo algo nuevo por mi cuenta | | |
| 3. When I do a task, I do it as well as I can. <br> Cuando hago una tarea, lo hago tan bien como puedo | | |
| 4. I set goals to achieve for myself. <br> Me pongo metas para lograrlas por mí mismo | | |
| 5. I feel confidence about what I do. <br> Siento confianza sobre lo que hago | | |
| 6. Before doing a work, I plan it well, step by step. <br> Antes de hacer un trabajo yo lo planeo muy bien, paso por paso | | |
| 7. I am ready to participate in new activities. <br> Estoy listo para participar en nuevas actividades | | |
| 8. I have a clear goal when I do my tasks. <br> Tengo clara la meta cuando hago mis tareas | | |

**APPENDIX A (2 of 2)**

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 9. I have a clear goal when I do my tasks.<br> Tengo clara la meta cuando hago mis tareas | | |
| 10. I work hard in my tasks.<br> Trabajo duro en mis tareas. | | |
| 11. I keep even know the work is hard.<br> Persevero incluso sabiendo que el trabajo es duro. | | |
| 12. When I finish a task, I am able to judge how I have done it.<br> Cuando termino una tarea soy capaz de juzgar lo que he hecho | | |
| 13. When I do a task, I often use available resources.<br> Cuando hago una tarea, frecuentemente uso los recursos disponibles | | |
| 14. I check my progress correcting my mistakes.<br> Chequeo mi progreso corrigiendo mis propios errores | | |
| 15. I am able to judge and assess my work<br> Soy capaz de juzgar y evaluar mi trabajo | | |
| **MOTIVATION AND SELF-CONFIDENCE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING** | **Yes** | **No** |
| 1. I want to learn English<br> Quiero aprender Inglés | | |
| 2. I am a good English student.<br> Soy buen estudiante en Inglés | | |
| 3. I use English out of the school.<br> Uso Inglés fuera del colegio | | |
| 4. I think English is easy.<br> Pienso que Inglés es fácil | | |
| 5. I like trying to speak English.<br> Me gusta tratar de hablar Inglés | | |
| 6. I think English is useful.<br> Pienso que Inglés es útil | | |
| 7. I expect to do English well this period.<br> Espero que me vaya bien en Inglés en este periodo | | |
| 8. I think learning English is fun.<br> Pienso que aprender Inglés es divertido | | |
| 9. I encourage myself to do a work.<br> Me animo a mí mismo al hacer un trabajo | | |
| 10. I have positive thoughts of me.<br> Tengo pensamientos positivos de mi | | |
| 11. I am motivated to help my classmates learn.<br> Estoy motivado a ayudar a mis compañeros para que aprendan | | |

# APPENDIX B (1 of 1)

## SAMPLE STUDENTS' LEARNING DIARY FORMAT

**GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL LEARNING CIRCLESTUDENTS' LEARNING DIARIES**

**TEMPLATE** Prepared by Acero Claudia

**MY PERSONAL INFORMATION**

| NAME | |
|---|---|
| CODE NUMBER | |
| LEVEL | |
| SCHOOL | |
| HEAD TEACHER | |

### I. WHERE AM I NOW?

| MY STRENGHTS | | MY GOALS |
|---|---|---|
| SPEAKING | | |
| LISTENING | | |
| READING | | |
| WRITING | | |
| GRAMMAR | | |
| VOCABULARY | | |

| MY WEAKNESSES | | MY GOALS |
|---|---|---|
| SPEAKING | | |
| LISTENING | | |
| READING | | |
| WRITING | | |
| GRAMMAR | | |
| VOCABULARY | | |

### ENTRY N° _____

1. **What did you learn from the task?**

2. **What resources did you use?**

3. **What problems did you have when doing the task?**

4. **What did you do to solve the problems?**

5. **What did you do before, during and after the task?**

6. **What were your feelings before, during and after the task?**

7. **Having worked with your teammates/pair helped you do the task?**

8. **Would you do something different for future tasks?**

**TEACHER'S JOURNAL FORMAT**

# GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL LEARNING CIRCLE

# FIELD NOTES TEMPLATE

Prepared by Acero Claudia

| Name of co-researcher: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **University Code Number:** | | | |
| **Institution:** | | | |

| Date of Class:    DAY    MONTH    YEAR | | | | **Time of Class:** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Week No. _____** | | | | **Length of class:** |
| **Class/grade:** | | | | **Room:** |
| **Number of students:** | | | | **Average age of Students:** |

| Lesson Number | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **Research Circle Leader:** |
| **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | |

| OBSERVATIONS | NOTES TO SELF | INTERPRETATION |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

**APPENDIX D (1 of 2)**
**INTERVIEW**


**GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL LEARNING CIRCLE**

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**Prepared by Research Team**

| Interviewer: | Date | Time: | Location: | Setting: | Interviewee: |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Shorthand symbols:**

**The interview will take place: 30 minutes**

| TOPIC 1.   COLLABORATIVE LEARNING |
|---|
| 1.   **¿Consideras que el docente tuvo en cuenta tus habilidades comunicativas para la conformación de los equipos de trabajo?** |
| 2.   **¿Consideras que la estrategia aplicada (aprendizaje colaborativo) te ha ayudado a tener más control sobre lo que estás aprendiendo?** |
| 3.   **¿Consideras que has realizado tareas colaborativas?   Si la respuesta es sí, enuncia ejemplos de ellas  y explica tu respuesta** |
| 4.   **Consideras que estás en capacidad de formular tus propios objetivos de aprendizaje?** |
| 5.   **¿Has aprendido en y de tu equipo de trabajo colaborativo? Te gustó la experiencia, si, no?   ¿Por qué?** |

| TOPIC 2. MOTIVATION |
|---|
| 6.   **¿Consideras qué estás más motivado?** |
| 7.   **¿Consideras que el docente se acerca a tu equipo de trabajo y les brinda su apoyo?** |
| 8. **¿Cómo te motiva el docente?:** <br> a.   **Compartiendo su conocimiento con los diferentes equipos de trabajo.** <br> b.   **Actuando como un mediador.** <br> c.   **Actuando como un organizador.** |

**APPENDIX D (2 of 2)**

| TOPIC 3. SELF - DIRECTED LEARNING |
|---|
| 9. ¿Consideras que el docente te está facilitando tu aprendizaje del idioma inglés? En caso de que la respuesta sea positiva, por favor enuncia lo que está haciendo el docente para facilitar tu aprendizaje. |
| 10. Define con tus propias palabras ¿Qué es aprendizaje auto-dirigido? |
| 11. ¿Consideras que has aprendido a  auto-dirigir el aprendizaje del idioma inglés? |
| 12. ¿Consideras que la estrategia implementada (aprendizaje colaborativo) te ha ayudado a depender menos de tu profesor? |
| 13. ¿Consideras que has aprendido a auto-evaluar tu trabajo? ¿Qué tan seguido lo haces? |
| 14. De las estrategias utilizadas en la clase ¿Cuál te ayudó más ser un estudiante auto-dirigido?<br><br>a. Trabajo en equipo (colaborativo) y diario de campo<br>b. Formulación individual de objetivos<br>d. Escribir  tu diario de campo (journal). |

| TOPIC 4. LANGUAGE LEARNING |
|---|
| 15. ¿Cuando estás trabajando con tu equipo se explican entre sí temas relacionados con el idioma inglés (gramática, vocabulario, pronunciación, etc.? |
| 16. ¿Consideras que has mejorado tus habilidades comunicativas del idioma inglés? |

**APPENDIX E (1 of 2)**

**LETTER OF CONSENT**

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

**CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN**

Ciudad, Fecha de 2012
Señores:
Estudiantes  -Grado
Nombre Institución Educativa
Ciudad
Apreciados estudiantes:

Actualmente estoy realizando una investigación titulada  Aplicación de estrategias colaborativas para el fomento del aprendizaje auto-dirigido  Este estudio busca corroborar si la aplicación de dichas estrategias promueve el aprendizaje auto-dirigido.  Cabe anotar que dicha investigación hace parte de mi trabajo de grado de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés para el Aprendizaje Auto-dirigido –Programa Virtual- de la Universidad de La Sabana.

Por lo anterior, comedidamente solicito su consentimiento y colaboración como participantes de mi propuesta de investigación, que se llevará a cabo durante los meses comprendidos entre junio y noviembre de 2012.  Esto implica la planeación e implementación de actividades,  y recolección de datos durante algunas  semanas en las cuales ustedes responderán dos cuestionarios, completaran unos ejercicios de reflexión en relación con las estrategias utilizadas en las actividades, llevaran diarios después de las clases, y presentarán dos exámenes, 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

_____                         Padre de familia

## APPENDIX E (2 of 2)

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

**CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN**

Ciudad, Fecha de 2012

Señor:
Nombre
Rector:
Nombre Institución Educativa
Ciudad

Apreciado rector:

Actualmente estoy realizando una investigación titulada  Aplicación de estrategias colaborativas para el fomento del aprendizaje auto-dirigido  Este estudio busca corroborar si la aplicación de dichas estrategias promueve el aprendizaje auto-dirigido.  Cabe anotar que dicha investigación hace parte de mi trabajo de grado de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés para el Aprendizaje Auto-dirigido –Programa Virtual- de la Universidad de La Sabana.

Por lo anterior, comedidamente solicito su consentimiento y autorización para llevar a cabo mi propuesta de investigación, durante los meses comprendidos entre junio y noviembre de 2012. Esto implica la planeación e implementación de actividades,  y recolección de datos durante algunas  semanas en las cuales los estudiantes de 11-3 responderán dos cuestionarios, completaran unos ejercicios de reflexión en relación con las estrategias utilizadas en las actividades, llevaran diarios después de las clases,  y presentarán dos exámenes, 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.  Su autorización  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 F (1 of 2)
# RESEARCH PROJECT TIMELINE

| Tasks | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May. | Jun. | Jul. | Aug. | | | | Sep. | | | | Oct. | | | | Nov. | | | | Dec. | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | | | | |
| Formulating the research question | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Defining a methodology in the research circle | | █ | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Drafting the individual proposal | | | | █ | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Revising the proposal in the Research Circle | | | | | | █ | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Planning the implementation | | | | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Writing and sending the Letter of Consent to the school principal | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Writing and sending the Letter of Consent to the students | | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Diagnostic test implementation | | | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Analysis of data from the diagnostic test | | | | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Motivating and sensitizing students to participate in the project | | | | | | | | | | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | | | | | |
| Teacher's presentation and modeling of collaborative and self-directed learning | | | | | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**APPENDIX F (2 of 2)**

| Tasks | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May. | Jun. | Jul. | Aug. | | | | Sep. | | | | Oct. | | | | Nov. | | | | Dec. | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | | | | |
| Choosing the Collaborative and self-directed teams | | | | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Planning interventions | | | | | | | | | | █ | █ | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Selecting and developing a collaborative self-directed task | | | | | | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Students producing their own videos | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | █ | █ | █ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Researcher's observation | | | | | | | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | | | | | | | | |
| Assessing the task | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | █ | █ | | | | | | | | | |
| Reflecting on results | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | █ | █ | | | | | | | | |
| Data analysis | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | |
| Reporting results | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | █ | | | | |
| Article writing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | █ | | █ | █ | |

# APPENDIX G (1 of 5)

## LESSON PLAN SAMPLE 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

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Name of co-researcher: Sixta María Montes Contreras**<br>**University Code Number:    201111217** | | | | | |
| **Institution:  San Vicente de Paúl** | | | | | |
| **Date of Class:**      DAY    MONTH    YEAR<br>                              **20         09         2012** | | | **Time of Class:      2:50 P.M        Length of class:  110 minutes** | | |
| **Week No.     6** | | | **Time Frame:** 2 hours | | |
| **Class/grade    11** | | | **Room:** | | |
| **Number of students: 32** | | | **Average age of Students: 15-19** | | |
| **Number of years of English study: 6** | | | **Level of students: A1** | | |
| **Lesson Number** | | | **Research Circle Leader: Claudia Acero Rios** | | |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 6X | 7 | 8 |

**Set Lesson Goals**
-    Talk about and discuss about going on vacations.
-    Describe vacation activities.

| **Language Goal** | **Assessment Criteria** |
|---|---|
| -    To give opinions about what places are good to go for a vacation and describe the activities that can be done in each destination.<br>-    To recognize, list and classify vocabulary related to weather, vacation, activities to do on vacation, places, etc. | -    Students will give personal opinions about which places to go on vacation or free time. |
| **Learning to Learn Goal**<br>-    Learning to learn how to organize ideas to express their opinions. | **Assessment Criteria**<br>-    Learners will express their opinions and ideas appropriately. |

**Identify a topic for the lesson**
-    Getting away

**Materials and Resources**

| Material 1 Name:<br> Activity 1 sheet.<br>. | Rationale:<br><br>This activity is presented as a warm- up activity which will help the teacher to activate students' schemata. | Annex 1<br><br>Photocopies |
|---|---|---|
| Material 2 Name:<br><br>Photocopies containing some travel ads | Rationale:<br>These photocopies provide students with some travel ads that can help them to accomplish the task. | Annex 2<br><br>Photocopies<br>Audio tracks |
| Material 3 Name: | Rationale: | Annex 3 |

**Assumed knowledge**
Write a description of the language/skills/competences that students already know/have that will serve as a basis for new language/skills input.
-    Students may have some ideas about the past tense of the verb to be and other verbs
-    Students may know some key vocabulary related to vacation, free time activities and places to visit on vacation.

# APPENDIX G (2 of 5)

**Anticipated problems and planned solutions**
Describe briefly what problems may your students face in the lesson and the proposed solutions to overcome them
- Students will feel confused with the kind of language used in advertisements.
- Students will be afraid of making mistakes and will feel stressed.
- Students will use their English dictionaries to tackle the problems related to vocabulary.
- Students will have the opportunity to work in teams, share ideas and help each other in order to overcome the possible stressing moments.

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

| Form | N/A |
|---|---|
| **Meaning** | |
| **Use** | N/A |
| **Skill(s) and sub skill(s)** | Listening, speaking, reading |
| **(For CLIL) Content Communication Cognition Culture** | No language goal set for this part of the lesson |

**Sequence the lesson to accomplish your goals**

| Teacher's role | Stage | Aim | Procedure Teacher and student activity | Interaction | Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Facilitator<br><br><br><br>Encourager | **Lead in/Preparation** | - To present the lesson and learning language goals.<br><br>- To motivate students to set up their own learning and language goals. | - Teacher will present the language and learning goals for the lesson.<br><br>- Students are divided in groups of 4 and are asked about what learning strategies they need to reach the proposed goals, they also are encouraged to establish their own goals for this lesson.<br>- Students will present their goals to the rest of the class and will discuss on their goal selection. | **T-Ss**<br><br><br>**Ss-Ss**<br><br><br><br>**Ss- Ss** | 5 minutes<br><br><br>15 minutes<br><br><br><br>5 minutes |
| Activator Encourager | **Presentation** | - To active students' schemata | - Students will get into groups of four, and in the group they will answer some questions regarding advertisements and travel agencies and vacation activities (see appendix 1, activity 1 sheet). One student will be the summarizer, another one will be reporter, another one will be a questioner and the other one will be the time keeper and the noise-monitor.<br>- Students will be asked to present their conclusions to the rest of the class and one student will be announced as a secretary to write the conclusions and ideas of the whole class. | **Ss-Ss** | 10 minutes<br><br><br><br><br><br>10 minutes |
| Model | **Thinking aloud Taking notes Discussing** | - To foster group discussion and collaborative work. | - Students will be asked to get in teams of four and then they will receive a photocopy in which they will find four vacation ads.<br>- Students will self-assign a role for each participant of the group (a summarizer/secretary, a checker, a reporter, a noise-monitor, and a time-keeper.<br>- The teacher will present a situation to students in which they will imagine that they are travel agents. First, they have to get into agreement about what place they would select from the ones presented on the ads on the photocopy, then they have to discuss and organize their ideas to try to convince a client (the teacher) that the place they chose is the best for her to go on vacation.<br><br>- Students will present their statements to the rest of the class. And the teacher will select one of the places. | **T- Ss**<br><br><br>**Ss-T**<br><br><br><br>**Ss-Ss**<br><br><br><br><br>**Ss- Ss** | 5 minutes<br><br><br>5 minutes<br><br><br><br>30 Minutes<br><br><br><br>10 Minutes |

# APPENDIX G (3 of 5)

| Guide Summarizer | **Wrap up Summarizing** | - To recycle vocabulary | - Students will be asked to close their notebooks and write a list of vocabulary learnt during the lessons. | **Ss-T** | 5 minutes |
| | | | - Teacher summarizes and closes session | **T** | 5 minutes |
| Scaffolder | **Expansion/ Independent Study Reflecting** | | Students are asked to write their comments on what they learnt and how they learnt it during the class in their learning diaries. | **Ss** | 5 minutes |

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**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
- Saslow.J. & Ascher, A. 2006. Top Notch. Student book. Pearson Education. New York.

**Presentation activity**

Dear students, please get in groups of 4 students, choose and assign a role for each one of you (summarizer, reporter, questioner, time keeper, noise-monitor) then discuss and answer the following questions.

1.      What do you think a travel agency is?
2.      What do people who work in a travel agency do?
3.      What is an advertisement? What is its objective?
4.      What places are good for going on vacation?  Beaches? Mountains?
         Rivers?  Poles?  Islands?  Cruises?
5.      What activities can you do on those places?
6.      Which of the above places would you select to go on vacation and why?

After finishing this part of the activity, please report to the rest of the class your answers and conclusions. You will have 10 minutes to prepare the activity and only ten minutes are given to all groups to present their activities.

**Thinking aloud, taking notes, discussing activities.**

Collaborative task

Dear students it's time to continue working collaboratively, please choose one of the travel ads on this photocopy. Imagine that you are travel agents and you have to convince a client (your teacher) that the place/touristic package you chose is the best for her to go on vacation and what activities she can do there. Please discuss the pros and cons, the advantages and disadvantages of that place, the cost, duration, accommodation, food, etc, and prepare your statement to convince your client. You have 30 minutes to prepare this activity and 10 minutes are given to all groups to present the activity to the rest of the class.

**APPENDIX G (5 of 5)**

**APPENDIX H (1 of 2)**

**VIDEO ACTIVITY WORKSHEET**

**Annex 1 Lesson 1**
**Topic:** Learning how to work in Collaborative learning teams
**VIDEO ACTIVITY**
**Film: Coach Carter**

Session 1: Before watching the film
Why do we have rules?
List 5 school rules? Describe them

Session 2: While watching the Scene 1: 'I'm you new basketball coach'
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9T_H1XQOuIE&feature=related)
What were the rules that Coach Carter mentioned?
What do you think of those rules?

Session 3: After watching the film:
You will work in teams for a 2 months period.
Do we need rules to work in teams?
Can you mention any rules for team work?
Look at the following information about The Elements for Teamwork. Read them carefully and select the rules you think we will need to have a good interaction in each team. There are 5 categories; you will be assigned **one** of them.

**Elements of Cooperative Learning**



**1. Positive Interdependence**
(sink or swim together)

- Each group member's efforts are required and indispensable for group success
- Each group member has a unique contribution and task responsibilities

**2. Face-to-Face Interaction**
(promote each other's success)

- Orally explaining how to solve problems
- Teaching one's knowledge to other
- Checking for understanding
- Discussing concepts being learned
- Connecting present with past learning

### 3. Individual
### &
### Group Accountability
( no hitchhiking! no social loafing)

- Keeping the size of the group small. The smaller the size of the group, the greater the individual accountability may be.
- Randomly participating orally to present group's work to the teacher (in the presence of the group) or to the entire class.
- Having active participation from each member of the group.
- Assigning one student in each group the role of checker. The checker asks other group members to explain the reasoning and rationale underlying group answers.
- Having students teach what they learned to someone else.



### 4. Interpersonal & Small-Group Skills

- Social skills must be taught:
    o Leadership
    o Decision-making
    o Trust-building
    o Communication
    o Conflict-management skills
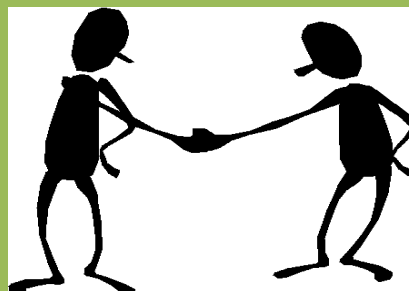


### 5. Group Processing

- Group members discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships
- Describe what member actions are helpful and not helpful
- Make decisions about what behaviors to continue or change

# APPENDIX I (1 of 3)

# FREQUENCY TABLE

| COLLABORATIVE LEARNING | QUESTIONNAIRE | YES | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| 1. I exchange information with my team. | Pre | 15 | 42.8 | 20 | 57.1 |
| | Post | 34 | 97.1 | 1 | 2.8 |
| 2. I learn English by working with my team. | Pre | 12 | 34.2 | 23 | 65.7 |
| | Post | 31 | 88.5 | 4 | 11.4 |
| 3. I learn from my classmates when we work as a team. | Pre | 12 | 34.2 | 23 | 65.7 |
| | Post | 33 | 97.2 | 2 | 5.7 |
| 4. I am able to do my class assignments the best when I work in team. | Pre | 17 | 48.5 | 18 | 51.4 |
| | Post | 27 | 77.1 | 8 | 22.8 |
| 5. When I work in team, I feel confident because my classmates work as much as me. | Pre | 16 | 45.7 | 19 | 54.2 |
| | Post | 29 | 82.8 | 6 | 17.1 |
| 6. When I work in team, I am able to organize the way to work. | Pre | 16 | 45.7 | 19 | 54.2 |
| | Post | 27 | 77.1 | 8 | 22.8 |
| 7. I am more productive when I work in team. | Pre | 12 | 34.2 | 23 | 65.7 |
| | Post | 28 | 80 | 7 | 20 |
| 8. When I work in a group, I know which my responsibility is. | Pre | 13 | 37.1 | 22 | 62.8 |
| | Post | 32 | 91.4 | 3 | 8.5 |
| 9. I am more comfortable working with my classmates. | Pre | 12 | 34.2 | 23 | 65.7 |
| | Post | 32 | 91.4 | 3 | 8.5 |
| 10. I express my ideas without a problem when I work in team. | Pre | 16 | 45.7 | 19 | 54.2 |
| | Post | 33 | 97.2 | 2 | 5.7 |
| 11. When I work with some classmates, we decide on what to learn and how to do it. | Pre | 14 | 40 | 21 | 60 |
| | Post | 29 | 82.8 | 6 | 17.1 |

**Freq= Frequency**　　　　　　　**%= Percentage**

# APPENDIX I (2 of 3)

# FREQUENCY TABLE

| SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING | QUESTIONNAIRE | YES | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| 1. I make decisions for myself. | Pre | 10 | 28.5 | 25 | 71.4 |
| | Post | 30 | 85.7 | 5 | 14.28 |
| 2. I learn something new on my own. | Pre | 13 | 37.1 | 22 | 62.8 |
| | Post | 33 | 94.2 | 2 | 5.7 |
| 3. When I do a task, I do it as well as I can. | Pre | 15 | 42.8 | 20 | 57.1 |
| | Post | 33 | 94.2 | 2 | 5.7 |
| 4. I set goals to achieve for myself. | Pre | 13 | 37.1 | 22 | 62.8 |
| | Post | 33 | 94.2 | 2 | 5.7 |
| 5. I feel confidence about what I do. | Pre | 19 | 54.2 | 16 | 45.7 |
| | Post | 32 | 91.4 | 3 | 8.5 |
| 6. Before doing a work, I plan it well, step by step. | Pre | 13 | 37.1 | 22 | 62.8 |
| | Post | 34 | 97.1 | 1 | 2.8 |
| 7. I am ready to participate in new activities. | Pre | 16 | 45.7 | 19 | 54.2 |
| | Post | 33 | 94.2 | 2 | 5.7 |
| 8. I have a clear goal when I do my tasks. | Pre | 10 | 28.5 | 25 | 71.4 |
| | Post | 31 | 88.5 | 4 | 11.4 |
| 9. I work hard in my tasks. | Pre | 15 | 42.8 | 20 | 57.1 |
| | Post | 34 | 97.1 | 1 | 2.8 |
| 10. I keep even know the work is hard. | Pre | 20 | 57.1 | 15 | 42.8 |
| | Post | 31 | 88.5 | 4 | 11.4 |
| 11. When I finish a task, I am able to judge how I have done it. | Pre | 8 | 22.8 | 27 | 77.1 |
| | Post | 33 | 94.2 | 2 | 5.7 |
| 12. When I do a task, I often use available resources. | Pre | 12 | 34.2 | 23 | 65.7 |
| | Post | 34 | 97.1 | 1 | 2.8 |
| 13. Checking my progress correcting my mistakes. | Pre | 12 | 34.2 | 23 | 65.7 |
| | Post | 33 | 94.2 | 2 | 5.7 |
| 14. Being able to judge and assess my work. | Pre | 13 | 37.1 | 22 | 62.8 |
| | Post | 31 | 88.5 | 4 | 11.4 |

**Freq= Frequency          %= Percentage**

**APPENDIX I (3 of 3)**

**FREQUENCY TABLE**

| MOTIVATION | QUESTIONNAIRE | YES | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| 1. I want to learn English. | Pre | 11 | 31.4 | 24 | 68.5 |
| | Post | 35 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. I am a good English student. | Pre | 12 | 34.2 | 23 | 65.7 |
| | Post | 26 | 74.2 | 9 | 25.7 |
| 3. I use English out of the school. | Pre | 9 | 25.7 | 26 | 74.2 |
| | Post | 20 | 57.1 | 15 | 42.8 |
| 4. I think English is easy. | Pre | 11 | 31.4 | 24 | 68.5 |
| | Post | 30 | 85.7 | 5 | 14.2 |
| 5. I like trying to speak English. | Pre | 11 | 31.4 | 24 | 68.5 |
| | Post | 29 | 82.8 | 6 | 17.1 |
| 6. I think English is useful. | Pre | 14 | 40 | 21 | 60 |
| | Post | 35 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 7. I expect to do English well this academic term. | Pre | 15 | 42.8 | 20 | 57 |
| | Post | 32 | 91.4 | 3 | 8.5 |
| 8. I think learning English is fun. | Pre | 14 | 40 | 21 | 60 |
| | Post | 30 | 85.7 | 5 | 14.2 |
| 9. I encourage myself to do a work. | Pre | 11 | 31.4 | 24 | 68.5 |
| | Post | 34 | 97.1 | 1 | 2.8 |
| 10. I have positive thoughts of me. | Pre | 26 | 74.2 | 9 | 25.7 |
| | Post | 32 | 91.4 | 3 | 8.5 |
| 11. I am motivated to help my classmates learn. | Pre | 12 | 34.2 | 23 | 65.7 |
| | Post | 34 | 97.1 | 1 | 2.8 |

**Freq= Frequency**          **%= Percentage**