UNIVERSIDAD DE QUINTANA ROO

División de Ciencias Políticas y Humanidades

COMMUNICATION AMONG TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN AN EFL CLASSROOM
Centro de Estudios de Bachillerato Tecnológico
"Eva Sámano de López Mateos"

TRABAJO MONOGRÁFICO
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profesional en docencia
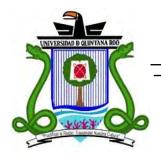
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A K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

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I want to dedicate this Project to the most important people of my life:

First **my beloved parents Ramon & Adda**, for their unconditional love they have always given to me. This job is a little gift I owe you, thanks for your big support and for trusting me. I want you to feel proud of me!

To my Husband Rafael, who I love with all my heart, that in good and bad moments in our lives he has always been there helping me and motivating me to continue dreaming and believing in love. Thank you so much my love!

Of course to my two adorable sons **Gibrán R. & Christian R.,** the cause of my daily smile, for enriching my soul and making me feel the best mom in the world for both of them. You are the reason of my life. Thanks for being my sons!

To my sisters **Marisol & Wendy** who have always been with me every time I needed them. This is a way to show you that every thing is possible if we want to do it.

Finally, to my three beautiful nieces; **María Valeria, María José & María Fernanda,** for letting me be part of their magic world.

I LOVE YOU SO MUCH!

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The present work is based on my experience thanks to the opportunity given in the Centro de Estudios de Bachillerato Tecnológico "Eva Sámano de López Mateos". When I was teaching English as a Foreign Language in that institution, I could visualize that communication among teachers and students in English, which influences within the scope of education, is not as usual and natural as using their mother tongue.

Through observation and the vivid experiences I acquired in a wonderful and unforgettable period of time as an EFL teacher of students from 15 to 18 years old, I realized that communication is often poor between teachers and students during the EFL teaching-learning process in the classroom. As expected, this factor does not help students to improve their knowledge and understanding of the subject.

The necessity of good interaction between EFL teachers and students during this extraordinary process of communication is not just to use what a book presents. There are also other characteristics that influence the process of EFL learning and have some lasting repercussions in the classroom.

A good EFL teacher is the one that formulates good and creative lesson plans for their students to make the class more interesting and more interactive. As EFL teachers, we have to take into account that all students

do not learn in the same way. For this reason, we need to use several teaching methods.

Some important factors for creating a good environment of communication and understanding in the classroom, and which must be taken into account by EFL teachers are:

- Natural communication.

- The use of verbal and non verbal language.

- A frequent communication in EFL teaching.

- The use of good pronunciation and explanation.

- Demonstrating patience with student performance.

- An interpersonal relationship.

- The presentation of classes using the EFL teaching process.

- Consideration of the affecting factors in the EFL learning process.

- Creating confidence between the students and teachers.

- Student and teachers relationship inside and outside the EFL classroom.

When I was a student, these factors really helped me for establishing a good relationship with my teachers and improved my interest and knowledge in the subject. This is something I do with my students.

I observed that there was limited communication among teachers and students in the EFL teaching process in the Centro de Estudios de

Bachillerato Tecnológico "Eva Sámano de Lopez Mateos"; which delays students' learning and development of language skills.

The application of some factors of communication in the EFL teaching-learning process is fundamental, if not, teachers will lose important elements in doing their best in the classroom.

Another main problem an EFL teacher faces in the teaching- learning process in this school is the nonattendance of students and the lack of interest in the class. This is partly because English classes are simple and not motivational, and in order to learn a language many aspects are involved including personal, economical, cultural, and social factors.

An EFL teacher must be aware of these aspects and how they are being affected and then learn how to deal with them. This is when communication between teachers and students has to flourish.

Sometimes students have no interest in the EFL learning process. During my first day as an EFL teacher in the Eva Sámano de Lopez Mateos School, in 2003- 2004 school programme, my topic was about "celebrations". I had structured my lesson plan to include a role-play and therefore encourage an active class. After practicing the vocabulary, reading the conversations and listening to the exercises in the book, I asked my students to form groups of four. When I explained the activity to them (they had to pretend they were at a party celebrating a wedding), they completely refused to do it. This kind of

situation sometimes makes the EFL teaching–learning process very difficult, but we, as teachers, must be prepared for unexpected situations.

This paper will hopefully provide benefits to the institution itself; especially in the subject of EFL. If teachers use the factors mentioned before, a good environment in the EFL classroom will be enhanced. As a result, students will be more likely to show more interest in the subject, and the academic level will be raised.

This paper will be a stepping stone beneficial to all EFL students of the Centro de Estudios de Bachillerato Tecnológico "Eva Sámano de López Mateos" to improve their knowledge, have better pronunciation, be more active and motivated while participating in class, and therefore achieve better grades. This paper will also be beneficial for EFL teachers of this institution to help them have a better relationship with their students and create a better learning environment in the classroom.

It is essential that not only the EFL teaching-learning process and the teacher's methodology be improved, but also the effect of learning in the classroom in the "Centro de Estudios de Bachillerato Tecnólogico "Eva Sámano de López Mateos".

This paper is structured in four chapters:

In the first chapter, I will present the ***contextual framework,*** which includes: General information about the school, its objectives, functions, English teaching methodology, material and programs.

In chapter II, I will include the ***Theoretical Framework*** to support the communicative problems that students face in the classroom and the importance of taking into account the influence that communication has in the EFL learning process, the link between teacher and student roles and their interpersonal relationships to improve students' understanding.

In chapter III, I will include ***My Memory,*** a paper of my own experience as an EFL teacher at the "Centro de Estudios de Bachillerato Tecnológico "Eva Sámano de López Mateos", which aims at presenting the ingredients that are necessary for an effective EFL teaching- learning process. Students' participation and motivation inside the EFL classroom will be described as well as other activities involved in teaching (e.g. tutoring and evaluating students).

In the fourth chapter, I will present the ***Conclusions and suggestions*** to help the reader understand the benefits of a good communication among teachers and students during the EFL teaching- learning process.

The main purposes of this paper are to:

- Describe communication among teachers and students observed in the EFL classroom.

- Enhance a harmonious environment in the EFL classroom.

- Increase students' development of skills in the EFL classroom.

- Improve communication among students- students and teacher-students.

C H A P T E R   1

C O N T E X T U A L   F R A M E W O R K

1.1 *Centro de Estudios de Bachillerato Tecnológico "Eva Sámano de López Mateos"*

From 1962 to 1997, this school was known as Centro de Capacitación Técnica para el Trabajo y de Nivel Medio Superior "Eva Sámano de López Mateos" and was founded on 17 May, 1962. Originally, it offered four technical academic programs for students who wanted to study high school or a technical career. The technical programs the school offered at first were Public Accounting, Hairstyle, Clothes Design and Bilingual Secretarial Studies.

This school was the first one in Chetumal, Q. Roo with the highest level of education, students could be enrolled not necessarily after secondary school and students' age to be admitted was unlimited.

However, in 1997 the Secretary of Education changed the name of the school to Centro de Estudios de Bachillerato Técnicnológico "Eva Sámano de López Mateos" and the school stopped offering the old programs and five new technical programs were implemented: Alternative Tourism, Recreation, Computers, Sports, and Marketing.

The school currently has two buildings; the first one is the Eva Sámano Center, located on Othón P. Blanco and 16 de Septiembre Streets, with eight classrooms and offers the careers of Tourism, Computers, and Marketing in both the morning and the afternoon programs.

The second school, which started in 2000 is located on 30 de noviembre Street in the same city and has 16 classrooms. It offers the following programs of study: Recreation and Sports also both in the morning and the afternoon programs.

Every year, each school receives more than 400 students, most of them enrolled in Tourism, Computers and Marketing, perhaps because these careers are important in the development of economy, something really important in life.

At the beginning of the first semesters of all careers, both institutions have 2 group sections, A and B, due to the big number of students enrolled in the school, there are sometimes around 50 students per group, about 800 students enrolled every year, but as time goes by in third semester, students from both groups A and B come together to form one group because many students drop out.

At the beginning of the new educational system, teachers faced some very difficult students, for instance, those who belong to families who split up and students with disruptive behavior. Most of these students lived in city neighborhoods where gangs are common. They frequently tried to run away

from their problems with parents or surroundings; and they belonged to working class families.

Sometimes teachers could find students who belong to a higher class family and they were enrolled in this school because they were excluded from other institutions and their parents decided to enroll them here as a punishment, or just to make them feel ashamed in front of society. This kind of situations is difficult for these students because they have low self-esteem and they are not interested in participating or attending classes.

Every teacher thought they did their best in front of the group, and the results are seen at the end of every semester, when students presented their final exam, and the classroom became a mess.

All teachers in this school have had the opportunity to teach students who really needed some advice for life or to increase their self-esteem. Teachers were obligated to make these students part of the group as the others. These students most of the time had problems with depression, drug abuse, prostitution, unwanted pregnancy, or other kinds of problems.

A year after implementing the new educational system the school started to establish specific rules for students such as: to be enrolled immediately after secondary school, to wear the uniform in an appropriate way, to wear short hair, to avoid use of makeup, no smoking. The age range for students in the first year must be from 15 to17.

Every semester, all teachers without exception in the school are asked to attend conferences, a series of workshops, or some important courses that would help them in their teaching development and face different kinds of problems.

1.2 Aims

One of the aims of the school is to form more competitive individuals who have a high level of knowledge and are capable of participating in the development of the region.

Another one is to be considered a leader in the education of individuals and therefore contribute to the development of the region.

1.3 English Courses in Centro de Estudios de Bachillerato Tecnológico "Eva Sámano de López Mateos"

The EFL subject is studied from the 1st to 6th semester in all programs of study. English is related to Social Sciences, History of Mexico, and Contemporary History, Reading and Writing workshop and Literature.

EFL is a subject following a sequence (English I, II, III, IV, V and VI) in the programs of the school due to the necessity and importance of language proficiency.

In all English courses, teachers must follow and complete the program, which is given by the school authorities. This program includes all

the topics but few materials and activities that will be used in the EFL classroom throughout the semester. It is important to mention that after analyzing the different programs for each semester of the different careers, communication is included in the aim since a communicative approach is followed.

English classes are taught in both schools eight hours per week, in both the morning and the afternoon programs.

At the time of this work experience, there were six teachers in charge of the EFL teaching-learning process for both educational centers. All of these teachers had had the experience in teaching English for many years and five of them had their Professional Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language.

1.4 Methodology

Most of the teachers in the institution normally use the traditional method of teaching which consists of going into the classroom, presenting the topic in the book, and giving a brief explanation about it on the blackboard.

The importance of having students participate and communicate in the classroom is not considered, nor the relationship among teachers and students. Students are usually passive and listen, but do not speak in the

classroom, which is contrary to the communicative approach that is written on the syllabus.

It is obvious that this traditionalist methodology which is being used must be changed and good materials must be used in the classroom, including technology tools and activities that are chosen based on the students' needs in order to develop their four skills.

There is not a specific number of students in each classroom since it varies according to the program of study; but there is usually an average number of students in each classroom that ranges from 20-30 students maximum after first semester, in sixth semester we can find even 10 students in a classroom.

The basic material used in English classes contains grammar rules, exercises, vocabulary and conversations. Teachers have no extra material to use except for the teacher's and student's books. Additionally, they do not have access to recorded materials such as compact discs or cassettes, so teachers must create their own material for students to find and consult it in the school's library.

Although students could not understand the language at all, most of the time I tried to teach in English, with the exception of an explanation that was really necessary to be totally clear for students (for example conjugation in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd conditional) or when a visitor who could not speak to

students in English came to the classroom (for example, the principal or head teacher).

C H A P T E R 2

T H E O R E T I C A L F R A M E W O R K

2.1 Communication

Lozano (1996) establishes that "Communication is the most important process in which a human being establishes a functional relationship with himself and with his surrounding or surroundings.

He says that communication integrates structures and functions based on influences, stimulus and conditions in its environment, therefore, enhancing a permanent exchange of information and behavior.

Lozano and Guillermo (1996) agree when stating that since our brain is constantly growing, our language and communication are doing so too. People use symbolic codes to manage, create and transmit all kinds of messages.

The process of communication sums up into one type considered the most perfect that actually exists: verbal language.

2.2 Verbal and non-verbal language in EFL classroom.

Chandler (1994) cited the general model of communication known after them, the Shannon-Weaver Model, that involved breaking down an information system into sub-systems so as to evaluate the efficiency of

various communication channels and codes. They propose that all communication must include six elements: the source, the encoder, the channel, the message, the decoder, and the receiver.

This model is often referred to as an "information model" of communication. However, one disadvantage of this model is that communication is perceived as a one-way process. This is remedied by the addition of the feedback loop. Noise indicates those factors that disturb or otherwise influence messages as they are being transmitted.

Montaner (1996) establishes that throughout the evolution of human beings, communication has been considered as a necessity that is currently well known as "Verbal Language". He also states that this language is most likely useful for human beings to express their ideas and to transmit any kind of information.

He also considers that communication exists if we have three important elements: the speaker, the listener and the message. The speaker is the person who has the necessity to transmit a message or some information. The listener is the person who can or not give utility to the received message.

Craig (2001) cited in his theory the Berlo's model which represents a communication process that occurs as a source drafts messages based on one's communication skills, attitudes, knowledge, and social and cultural system. These messages are transmitted along channels, which can include

sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. A receiver interprets messages based on the individual's communication skills, attitudes, knowledge, and social and cultural system.

During the process of exchanging information, there is a variety of possibilities of verbal and nonverbal combinations that offer signs and the capacity of being accommodated to any communicative necessity. This has placed oral language as a necessity in human relationships, since it creates an opportunity for people to establish social relationships.

According to Guillermo (1996), a human being is the only living thing with the capability to represent, express and communicate ideas by means of linguistic signs, being in this way, the model of all communicative systems.

Although verbal and nonverbal languages are used to communicate, it is important to mention that communication does not only imply transmitting information. Sometimes, when we talk, we do not transmit anything in concrete, we just express the opposite of what we really want to say or explain what the listener already knows.

In fact, the quality of the oral language depends on the speaker. People talk about different kinds of necessities, expressing their feelings, ideas, effects, tendencies, etc. There is always a reason to talk whether it is in an informative way or not.

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Emory (1997) says that in order to achieve a better comprehension, it is necessary for people of any language to know the elements of their linguistic system and the useful rules that their language has in relation to the meaning of every communicative situation.

In other words, spoken language has an effect on communication itself and aims at clarifying all doubts presented during the process of exchanging communication.

The capacity for speech is one thing that distinguishes humans from other species. Having said that, "nobody would argue that humans are born with language, a natural language in which the words are uttered through the mouth".

Littlejohn and Foss (2008), stated that the basis of communication is the interaction between people. Verbal communication is one way for people to communicate face-to-face. Some of the key components of verbal communication are sound, words, speaking, and language.

The nonverbal communication is usually understood as the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless messages. Nonverbal communication can be communicated through gestures, body language, and sign expressions and also using the written system; using this type of nonverbal communication we express what we really want to, for example:

Body language: Body language is considered the most quiet and powerful language of all. Our bodies send out messages constantly and we often do not recognize that we are communicating a lot more than we realize. A person's body posture, movements and positions more often tell us exactly what they mean, but may not always agree with what we are trying to say.

Sign language: Sign language is a type of language which, instead of acoustically conveyed sound patterns, uses visually transmitted sign patterns (manual communication and lip patterns) to convey meaning - simultaneously combining hand shapes, orientation and movement of the hands, arms and facial expression to express fluidly a speaker's thoughts. Wherever communities of deaf people exist, sign languages develop. In fact, their complex spatial grammars are markedly different from the grammars of spoken languages.

Written language: The written language is the representation of a language by means of a written system.

2.3 The role of EFL teachers in the classroom

One of the rights people have as Mexican citizens is to receive education which satisfies their basic necessities of learning and enriching their knowledge and experience.

The ability of students to retain certain messages in their minds while ignoring others is called selective retention. This is influenced by various psychological and physiological factors such as choice, values, culture, emotions, etc.

This is the tendency of students to interpret communication messages in terms of one's existing attitudes. This depends on factors influenced by the social relationships.

Werner, (1988) establishes that opinions of students are influenced by what they hear from teachers. An individual who is a member of a group (in this case the teacher) manifests certain characteristics in his thinking and behavior that contribute to the formation of students' opinion. The opinion of the teacher is based on rational thinking due to education and experience. They weigh the pros and cons of the information students receive and then give their judgment on it.

According to Lozano (1996), an EFL teacher faces several big problems in the classroom, but the two most frequent ones are:

a)   *Controlling students*. – In order to provide a respectful learning environment the teacher must teach students in a good but disciplined way. Rules must be established to control student's behavior.

b)   *Giving Instructions*. - A teacher is a person who coordinates a group of students from an academic point of view to achieve the learning aims.

Diaz (2003) cited that the teachers' role is to transmit important knowledge that will later help the student become more socially involved in the school and surroundings.

According to Torres (2007), in order to be a good teacher, it is necessary to take into account the following characteristics:

a) *A systematic interaction within a group of students*. - The interaction among teachers and students must take place in a systematic way since communication is linked to plans and programs with the aim of achieving a harmonious environment in the classroom.

b) *Interaction around the same goal of knowledge*. - This interaction is based on the common purpose from students and the teacher, if they do not do it, the result can be a big disinterest for the class.

c) *Interaction looking for a determinate view*. – During the teaching process, an interaction looking for a determinate view is always given, which can be of collective or individual interest.

d) *To be really interested in teaching*. - A good teacher must feel interested in and enjoy his work. As a result, students will naturally receive great benefits and should not be isolated; teachers should always look forward to increasing their knowledge and be up-to-date in order to solve problems or questions that may arise in the classroom.

e)   *<u>To know how to stimulate students to develop their own ideas</u>. –* The function of the teacher is to stimulate and teach students to formulate their own ideas. *A good teacher has the ability to talk to students about their mistakes without offending them or making them feel inferior***.**

According to Dzib (2000), teachers and students should have a good relationship and mutual respect towards each other in order to create a good environment during the class. It is also necessary for students to be allowed to express their ideas and teachers should take them into account so students feel they are being paid attention to.

A good EFL teacher is not selfish in sharing his knowledge because his main objective is to teach. Besides this, teachers should recognize and help all students trough verbal stimulus in order to achieve the students' goals**.**

2.4 The EFL teaching process

An EFL teacher must summarize common beliefs and repeat known facts in order to promote fluency and a sound control of the wide resources in the second or foreign language. Students' needs should be met in the classroom and they should be encouraged to learn about what interests them, as well as to cover essentials from the curriculum guidelines.

Lightbown & Spada (1993), state that learners should engage in meaningful pursuits, in fewer different tasks, but larger and more satisfying

projects. Teachers can provide feedback to students in many ways. Assessment is based primarily upon what students are doing from day to day in their target language. Comprehensive portfolio assessment might include data based not only on the products of the learners' efforts, but on the learning process that was followed as well.

According to Brown (2000), learning is interesting and fun if teachers take into account the following and important points:

- Eye contact: One shows respect for conversational partners by looking at them from time to time.

- Smiling: The timing of smiling also carries a message. Rules for when you smile vary greatly according to students' and teachers' cultural background.

- Padding: It is quite normal give students a pad on their back under emotional circumstances. But again it varies according to cultural background.

- Posture: It is a strong indicator of respect.

- Physical contact: The rules governing how and when to touch students vary greatly and can be considered a kind of stimulus.

- Gestures: People all over the world use gestures to communicate, the number permitted and the interpretation vary widely.

- <u>Distance between speakers</u>: The number of inches or feet between speakers is an important social message whose meaning varies from society to society.

- <u>Medium of expression</u>: There are clear cultural rules for whether a message should be typed, written or printed.

- <u>Loudness</u>: Teachers set different standards for level of voice loudness, which may vary according to the gender of the students and in different situations.

- <u>Silence</u>: silence is the correct response to certain questions or requests. It also means respect when adult people are talking to others.

- <u>Turn taking</u>: rules for taking turns in conversations vary from culture to culture as well.

All living entities communicate via movements, sounds, reactions, physical changes, gestures, languages, breath, etc. Communication is primarily used as a means of survival.

Garcia (1987), says that in the classroom, students feel the necessity of communicating with other classmates, and are aware that the status of the teacher has two different aspects:

1. - <u>Communication among students and professors</u>: This first aspect takes place during the teaching- learning process in which students are corrected and addressed according to their behavior and knowledge.

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2.- Students as social beings: students have to maintain a constant communication with professors in order to express their likes and dislikes, and therefore creating a better and more concrete socialization.

For students to be more productive and evaluative, it is necessary that teachers evaluate and stimulate the participation of all students through dynamic and more participative classes; in this way students will feel comfortable and the teaching-learning process will be easier and more attractive for both the student and the teacher.

2.5 Interpersonal relationships

Miller, (2005), says this kind of relationship among teachers and students has a transcendent influence on the process of the educational settings. In this kind of relation, we can observe the similarities and differences of a scholar community, but for every interaction, the diversity of questions and circumstances must be considered.

2.5.1 Teacher-student relationship

This relation is among the person who teaches and another who learns inside a circle of study. Everyone acts in function of the other and the information is reciprocal.

2.5.2 Student-student Relationship

In the classroom, it is important to take this process into account because a problem among students may change the information that a teacher gives. A good relationship in the classroom creates a perfect environment for learning.

2.6 The EFL learning process

Brown (2000), considers learning as acquiring knowledge of a topic or a skill through study, experience or instruction. There is a relatively permanent change in a behavioral tendency and this is the result of reinforced practice of the language.

Furthermore, Espejo, (2008), states that most people who learn a language are afraid to speak it because they could make mistakes and other people could laugh at them.

This means that the fact to learn a new language may be difficult for some people, especially for those who start this process at an older age. Due to this, it is necessary to remember that learning a language effectively is a long process that includes making errors along the way.

2.7 EFL learning affecting factors

Goffman, (1959), states that students' background, especially their home environment; socio-economic status; their early schooling experiences as well as their general exposure to the English language, affect their motivation in learning the language and the overall usage of oral communication and behavior.

Dzib (2000) cited that there is a positive relation between the degree of learning motivation and the English academic achievement. Generally speaking, the more motivated students are in the EFL learning process, the better they will progress academically.

Other factors are the emphasis given to oral skills in the course content, materials used for activities, lecturers' approach in the classroom and personal factors stemming from students' inadequacies in using the language inside and outside the classroom.

Teachers face a big variety of problems throughout the EFL teaching process such as:

a)   *Isolation*. - Isolation emerges from students who do not have any participation in class; they do not share ideas nor contribute to the learning process. This means that they stay away from any situation present in their environment. When teachers face isolated students, they should apply techniques and strategies to attract their attention and make them more participative.

b)   *Requirements*. – The requirements a teacher must have will depend on the feedback they give their students because when there is an exchange of ideas and opinions, teachers are forced to expand their knowledge in order to solve problems in the correct way.

c)   *Autonomy*. – Autonomy is a characteristic that is not presented in a high level because very few students are able to perform actions by them; In general, students are just expected to listen to what a teacher transmits to them.

Other affecting factors I can mention are:

- Non Academic Self-Confidence**:** Normally, there is a lack of confidence in those students who feel they are not well prepared, nor can do their best, or to achieve good grades.

- Value of course / task**:** Sometimes teachers have to teach a task that is not very important for students to learn, nevertheless, they have to do it in order to follow the academic curricula.

- Level of Intellectual Development / Maturity**:** As teachers, we cannot teach the same English level or topic to all students, because the knowledge of the language students have is not the same in all semesters.

- Effectiveness of relationship with instructor**:** Sometimes students do not feel confidence with their teacher, so they are not willing to establish a relationship with teachers in order to achieve better grades or find answers to their questions.

- <u>Thinking / Behavior Preference</u>**:** Sometimes teachers face problems regarding student's behavior. This kind of problem makes the teaching-learning process very difficult, especially if the teacher does not know how to control the situation.

- <u>Internal / External Motivation</u>**:** The motivation students have for success depends on their internal confidence or their surroundings.

- <u>Learning Style</u>**:** Teachers must be aware that students do not learn the same way as other students; therefore, teachers must use different strategies to teach. It does not matter if he has to use musical, visual or technological methods.

Cab (2003) says that the influence affective factors have on how well a foreign language is acquired goes extent on language achievement. Communication integrates structures and functions according to influences, stimulus and conditions that are obtained from its environment, allowing in this way a permanent exchange of information and behaviors.

As we can see, the lack of an appropriate communication during the EFL teaching-learning process brings up several different problems for students.

I think that all schools should continue promoting the practice of communication skills, so students can interact with teachers or classmates feeling self-confident to communicate.

CHAPTER III

MEMORY REPORT

My experience as an EFL teacher started in the year of 2003 when teaching the subjects English II and English IV in the high school Eva Sámano de Lopez Mateos. In each class, I had 35 students. In both classes the most students enrolled were women. I have been teaching in this school around 7 years and my teaching methodology has improved year after year.

One of the first problems I faced was the absence of students in class. As in most high schools students in this school were not well prepared or willing to be in a completely English spoken class. There was a general lack of interest and motivation towards English subjects. Additionally, students had very low grades.

This memory report will cover the next topics: Teachers and students, giving English classes, description of the activities done during classes, academic improvement of students, description and analysis of the EFL teaching-learning process problems and my achievement as an EFL teacher.

3.1 Teachers and students

All in all there were 6 teachers who taught English classes. All of them are Mexicans and have good skills in English but the majority of them did not

dedicate enough time to creating materials or using methodologies or techniques because they had a full-time job. That was why I started to implement different kinds of materials in my classes.

As English teachers tend to do, they shared a lot of ideas and expressed their teaching experiences. Although there was never a real communication problem, I consider I needed more practice in speaking English and for that reason, I always felt apart from the group, but I was always willing to do my best.

Most people who learn a language are afraid to speak it because they could make mistakes and other people could laugh at them. This feeling happened to me (it happened to me when I was a student). When I met the other English teachers and they tried to start a conversation with me, I did not want to speak it at first because I was very nervous.

I had always said that nerves makes you better in what you do (an artist must feel nervous before a presentation). I think this feeling in general, must disappear little by little, but when it really disappears I might stop being good at teaching.

When I first started teaching, it was my worse teaching experience. I had 35 students in my class and most of them never allowed me to discipline them. They always refused to do everything they were assigned. I really felt disappointed to work with a group that had a complete lack of interest, motivation and participation.

The biggest problem with students was their attitude and their lack of interest in the language. Many students never liked the subject. Some of them attended the class because they had to; others attended the class because English is a requirement in their program, and the rest of students simply did not attend the class.

At the end of the semester I finished teaching almost 20 students, from which most of them could not continue at the same rhythm as those who attended the class, which is probably why they decided to leave the course or not study at all.

Despite all these problems, it was very pleasant to find out that those students who continued attending classes throughout all the semester did their best in the exams at the end of the year. I could perceive they could now use their four skills, not at a 100 percent, but they did it well and they achieved good grades.

3.1.1 Giving classes

Before the class period began, I was provided with the syllabus of my English subject, as well as the English course books. I was never asked to plan my lessons for my class (because I was supposed to follow the syllabus); however, I know that for a good EFL teaching-learning process to take place, it is necessary to plan your lessons in terms of time, covering the

contents and making each class easier and more effective. One way of doing this, was including fun activities.

In order to plan a good and effective lesson, I took into consideration several aspects such as: the topic, the number of students per group, their English level, the program they were studying, and the skills they were required to develop.

Therefore, the main objective should have been specified and the students' level of competence needed to be considered. It was something which one would expect to change according to the technical career. However, I really did not teach according to this. I decided what kind of exercises needed to be used.

At the beginning, I found my students never felt confident in participating in class, they were always afraid of being laughed at by their classmates due to the lack of knowledge about the language.

I believe that an English teacher should try to avoid using their mother tongue with students, so I did not use it in class because I thought it was the best for students' learning process. However, during my teaching experience I realized that this made my students feel more frustrated. I continued doing so in order to help my students to develop their listening skill.

As we can see, communication integrates structures and functions based on influences, stimulus and conditions in its environment, therefore, enhancing a permanent exchange of information and behavior.

It was necessary to gain my students' confidence by starting a friendly but respectful relationship with them, being very flexible, etc. I tried to help students feel comfortable in their environment (classroom) and not to be afraid to tell me their ideas and opinions no matter what they were. I wanted them to be sure that I would never get angry. If they had doubts, I did not mind repeating the lesson several times. I always tried to be their friend and their teacher.

Every time I went to class I had nice attitude in front of the group. Something that I consider very important is the teacher's attitude when entering a class. It really worked.

Learning is considered as acquiring knowledge of a topic or a skill through study, experience or instruction. There is a relatively permanent change in a behavioral tendency and this is the result of reinforced practice of the language.

Most of my classes were more focused on listening and speaking since a communicative approach was being used. Students listened to me and repeated what I had said and used that to communicate with each other inside the group. It is important for students to be taught in an easy and

understandable way and here the body language takes an important place, too.

3.1.2. Description of the activities done during classes

My work as an EFL teacher in Eva Sámano de Lopez Mateos center includes teaching English classes, preparing exams, and tutoring my students after class when they needed it.

One of the main points I considered was my students' learning style. I tried to prepare classes with fun activities considering most students' needs. Sometimes I succeeded, other times I did not.

I had never had problems developing the class, but sometimes I really felt frustration because of my students' apathy and behavior. The exams were prepared according to the topics seen in classes.

As an English teacher, I tried to constantly give them feedback after grading their homework, tests or other activities, because if not, I knew they would never know the problems they had in the language. This helped them to improve their level of English and guide them through the learning process.

Another point I took into consideration was to work with my students by establishing goals, for example, getting extra points for the final grades or taking off points for taking the quizzes late. Students worked in pairs or

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groups of three or four people, in order to complete the tasks or activities I left them. I did this because the isolated students felt more confidence while working in groups than individually.

One of the most useful activities for my students was to work with songs. Every 15 days we worked with music and lyrics. Something that surprised me was that my students always wanted to learn a song from a singer I had not ever heard of before. That was quite embarrassing. I found this helped students to enrich their vocabulary and speaking skill, and why not, have a nice time, too.

For an EFL class to be successful, it is necessary to use good material for teaching each topic or for developing every skill. If teachers employ a variety of material and teaching methodologies, such as: a good lesson plan including pictures, cartoons, projector, technology, or role plays and if teachers use eye contact, smiling, posture, gestures, medium of expression, loudness or silence, turn taking are, patient and establish respectful relationships, students will have fun and began to feel interested in the subject.

In classes, I used communicative exercises that sometimes made my students laugh the whole class (that is a nice time to remember) such as games as Simon says, with songs where they had to imitate their favorite artist, and short oral presentations following the conversation and vocabulary presented in the book, of course Spanish was not permitted.

3.1.3. Students' achievement

After a long time, the variety of activities, tasks and material that I applied in the classroom, along with some material posted on the walls, helped students become more encouraged and feel more confident in their learning process, which obviously led to maintaining students' interest in the subject.

In the first semesters, students are still scared about their new school, new classmates, new teachers, but once in second semester little by little, students started to use English when communicating with the group, in English classes of course. They felt confidence structuring complete sentences or in saying "I'm hungry" or "Hi, everybody". They were sure if they made mistakes, it was not a major problem and they could be corrected. I am not saying they become experts using the language, but they did it well.

I really enjoyed seeing their surprised faces every time I checked them weekly with a little quiz because students finally got good grades. And that made me feel like an "extraordinary" English teacher

3.2 Description and analysis of 10 EFL teaching-learning process problems

I will mention the 10 most common problems I faced as an EFL teacher, in the Eva Sámano de Lopez Mateos center and the analysis and solutions I applied.

1. - Getting students to use English communicatively, because they did not know how to do it.

2. - The number of students per group - about 20-35 - which made it practically impossible to have proper conversation classes.

3. - The barrier to speaking English for students was the fear of making mistakes. Many times when I said "Hi Karen, how are you?" to students outside of class, they looked at the floor without responding.

4. - Students were unwilling to speak English even in class, not to mention after class. It was because of the lack of teaching communicational activities in their previous semesters.

5. – Some teachers are not very interested in teaching communicative skills and they teach English with the traditionalist method that consists of applying what books present. In other words, to explain the topics on the blackboard, to do some exercises in the book, and that's all.

6. - Students did not have enough confidence to ask the teacher if they had not understood something. As a consequence, low grades were obtained.

7. - Many EFL teachers are not interested in teaching English in a target language, so they tend to teach the English class in their mother tongue, and that gives the students few chances to be exposed to listening in English.

8. - Most of the materials to teach English were not sufficient and were not suitable for students.

9. - The methodology of teaching learners is each teacher's responsibility. This does not seem to be effective in classes of 20-35 pupils who show no interest in the class. This is the biggest obstacle for teachers in this school; students do not allow teachers to teach them.

10. - There is a big lack of participation and interest of students for the subject. Not all of them attended classes and when they did, they were always refusing to do activities.

     One of the most important things for me as an EFL teacher, talking from the communicative point of view is that I have always said "***How** you teach students is more important than **What** you teach them*". In other words, the way you teach, the techniques you use and the confidence you feel in teaching your students will be have more impact on their knowledge than the topic you are teaching.

     EFL teachers faced a lot of obstacles during their teaching process and the majority of them did not look for any solution, according to my

experience as an English student and then as a teacher, the most effective method to teach is to maintain good communication with students.

Cab (2003) argued that communication is the simplest way to express and understand thoughts, feelings, needs, likes and dislikes and so on. If somebody (teachers and students in this case) does not practice it, then the teaching -learning process will never improve and many doubts will not be solved.

This is an affective factor for those institutions applying the EFL subject, because English is a different language from Spanish. The grammar and rules are hard for students to learn and teachers must be prepared for facing different problems in and out the classroom and be capable of teaching students successfully.

According to other colleagues, high grades in the subject means that the teacher is better than the others and that represents a big problem among the teachers who teach English.

I have learned that eye contact, smiling, posture, gestures, distance between speakers, medium of expression, loudness or silence, turn taking, musical classes, respect, patient and respectful relationships, are also some communicative factors that a good teacher uses and takes into account in order to improve students' skills and their participation, and also to promote interest in the subject and grades.

It is very important to learn use those factors in an EFL classroom so students feel motivated and the teacher's interest in their learning condition.

One way of ensuring that materials were the appropriate ones for students was creating them myself according to my students' needs. Taking into consideration students' different learning styles, likes, attitudes, among others.

Like other languages, English is a difficult language to learn, so I often explained to my students that unless mistakes are made, they will not be able to identify their strengths and weakness in communication. It is necessary for them to practice what they have learned in class everyday.

In order to deal with all the problems I faced as an EFL teacher, I implemented some fun activities to reduce students' absences and the dropping out from the courses. I really had a hard time trying to predict which activities to include because I wanted to maintain my students' interest in class. However, most of the material really worked and my students had a nice time learning English.

3.3 My achievement as an EFL teacher

In all my experience, I found that I was able to survive one of the biggest and affecting problems in the EFL classroom. At the end of the semester, I thought, I had gained most of my students' confidence and

interest for the subject and doing this helped me notice that I was capable of applying the knowledge I got during my learning process.

At the beginning, it was really difficult for me to get close to my students, because respectful rules to follow were established, but then a friendship between us flourished and a nice environment was created. I really learned a lot from my students.

I feel great to know that I have developed my own teaching style; I achieve all the goals I had and it was wonderful to see my students' results. Actually, we helped each other gain more confidence.

All this nice experience made me fall in love with my job, I want to keep preparing myself and to do my best every day in front of a group, no matter if I have to take good or bad decisions for teaching English, but I will always do it thinking about the benefits I can provide in the EFL teaching-learning process.

3.4 Evaluation Criteria.

It is difficult for me to say if I am a bad, a good or an excellent teacher. I have thought about how I can self-assess myself several times, but if I take into consideration the relationship I keep with my students and the results I get every semester in the teaching process, then I can definitely say that teaching is what I like to do.

In my opinion, my teaching development was very good because year after year I could improve my teaching strategies of the language, gaining my students confidence something that is really hard to do.

I cannot say that in any time of my experience I did not become discourage, of course I did in the first semesters, and there were very difficult times to me. There were embarrassing moments that I now appreciate, because they taught me that everything in life is not always easy to get.

In my teaching experience, I have learned how to deal with uninterested students, to solve problems and listen carefully to my students' opinions about my teaching which is really important to me.

The main thing I can share from my teaching experience is that I feel really satisfied with the job I have done. This fact makes me feel motivated to keep preparing myself.

CONCLUSIONS

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In conclusion, the role of a teacher in the EFL classroom is a great responsibility. I consider that in order to perform well, teachers must be well prepared before starting working as such. Preparation is quite important to succeed. In other cases, if the person is not prepared, there are some things to consider such as being an energetic teacher, making fun activities and always considering that students get bored quite easily.

The teacher's task is to make sure that the quality of the teaching-learning process is the most appropiate for every group of students.

Throughout the present paper, I had the opportunity to detect the factors that affect the process of communication and the factors that teachers always face in an EFL classroom, such factors are the ones responsable for the lack of interest given to the process of communication, besides the unawareness teachers and students show for starting this vital process.

I think that the way teachers talk in front of a group is very important. During my experience as an EFL teacher, I could realize that students expected a lot from the teacher, including the way to deal with them, how to give the information and help them to comprehend any topic. These are

extremely important factors to gain students' confidence for starting the process of communication.

Teachers and students must be aware of the importance that communication has in the teaching- learning process, because this process is considered a special tool for establishing a respectful relationship for both, teachers and students, and for creating a harmonious environment inside and outside the classroom.

Based on the different theories mentioned at the beginning of this memory, I can conclude that communication among teachers and students in an EFL classroom must be considered the base of all teaching- learning *activities.*

Communication demands for both, teachers and students, a high study of interpersonal relationships in order to develop them with a high sense of quality in matter of communication.

At the moment the EFL teachers and students value the importance of the process of communication. The English classes in this institute will be more interesting and satisfying.

SUGGESTIONS

Communication among teachers and students in an EFL classroom in Centro de Bachillerato Tecnológico "Eva Sámano de López Mateos" is a basic need to create a pleasant environment in the educational process, and its practice must be addressed in a constant and permanent way among both teachers and students.

For having a permanent communication, I suggest all teachers to spend time having a dialog with their students, to have time for listening to their likes and dislikes presented inside the classroom, thus, work in a great environment. And this advice will lead them to achieve their goals.

For students, I suggest them to have a friendly, but always respectful relationship with their teachers. This will help learning take place in a more participative and confidence class. If students have any question about a topic, they should feel confident to approach the teacher and ask him/ her.

The teaching process is in our hands, and we must be well prepared and continue teaching our students in the best way we can, not just preparing them for their classes, but for their lives. As a result, they will be more prepared and they will have a better future.

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ANNEXES

PROGRAMA:	INGLÉS I
CARGA HORARIA:	4 Hrs. Semanales (64 hrs.)
CRÉDITOS:	8 (Ocho)
SEMESTRE:	PRIMERO
ÁREA:	TRONCO COMÚN

Objetivo General: Introducir al alumno en el conocimiento del idioma inglés a través del desarrollo de habilidades específicas como son: la escritura, la lectura y la conversación, para poder establecer lazos de comunicación efectivos.

RELACIÓN CON OTRAS ASIGNATURAS:

La asignatura d e INGLÉS I, es el inicio de una secuencia de enseñanza y aprendizaje que culmina en el sexto semestre, siendo esta una asignatura del tronco común que se encuentra en algunas especialidades que se imparten en nuestra institución.
Su valor curricular parte de la importancia que tiene el idioma como base de una comunicación globalizada, además de fortalecer los aspectos técnicos de cada especialidad con las habilidades a desarrollar.
Esta asignatura se encuentra en el primer semestre, y se relaciona con las asignaturas básicas además de las de formación profesional de cada especialidad.

Contents

PROGRAMA: INGLÉS II

CARGA HORARIA: 4 Hrs semanales (64 hrs)

CRÉDITOS: 8 (ocho)

SEMESTRE: II semestre

ÁREA: TRONCO COMÚN

OBJETIVO GENERAL: El alumno desarrollará sus habilidades en comunicación en diferentes situaciones como reportes, narraciones, descripciones y explicaciones, también el alumno incrementará el conocimiento del lenguaje tanto escrito como oral a nivel elemental.

RELACIÓN CON OTRAS ASIGNATURAS:

La asignatura de Inglés II corresponde al segundo semestre y constituye un apoyo para Inglés III, IV, V y VI se relaciona con las asignaturas de Introducción a las Ciencias Sociales, Historia de México, Historia Contemporánea, Taller de Lectura y Redacción así como Literatura.

Contents

"EVA SÁMANO DE LÓPEZ MATEOS"

DIRECCIÓN ACADÉMICA
Departamento de Desarrollo Académico

PROGRAMA: ENGLISH III

CARGA HORARIA: 4 Horas semanales (64 hrs.)

CRÉDITOS: 8 (Ocho)

SEMESTRE: TERCERO

ÁREA: RONCO COMÚN

OBJETIVO GENERAL: Trabajar con el alumno en el desarrollo de las habilidades y conocimientos que le permitan fortalecer el aspecto auditivo y de lectoescritura, en la comprensión de textos cortos relacionados a su especialidad.

RELACIÓN CON OTRAS ASIGNATURAS:

La asignatura de inglés III se imparte en el tercer semestre y pertenece al área de tronco común como antecedentes las asignaturas de inglés I, II, y constituye un apoyo para el inglés IV, V, VI.

La finalidad de fortalecer las habilidades y conocimientos adquiridos en los programas previos son los pasos primordiales a seguir en este y las subsecuentes asignaturas para que los alumnos cuenten con lo necesario para establecer una comunicación efectiva.

Contents

PROGRAMA: ENGLISH IV

CARGA HORARIA: 4 Horas semanales (64 hrs.)

CRÉDITOS: 8 (Ocho)

SEMESTRE: CUARTO

ÁREA: TRONCO COMUN

OBJETIVO GENERAL: Fomentar en el alumno las habilidades de comunicación oral y escrita, donde se aplicarán conocimientos previos, enriqueciéndolas con nuevos vocabulario y expresiones que utiliza en su especialidad.

RELACIÓN CON OTRAS ASIGNATURAS:

La asignatura de inglés IV se imparte en el cuarto semestre y pertenece al área de tronco común como antecedentes las asignaturas de inglés I, II, III y constituye un apoyo para el inglés V y VI.

Contents

PROGRAMA:	INGLÉS V
CARGA HORARIA:	4 hrs semanales (64 hrs)
CRÉDITOS:	8 (ocho)
SEMESTRE:	QUINTO
ÁREA:	TRONCO COMÚN

OBJETIVO GENERAL: Al finalizar el curso, el alumno sabrá comunicarse en diferentes situaciones tanto en forma oral, como escrita, dominando las cuatro habilidades del idioma inglés: listening, writing, reading and speaking.

RELACIÓN CON OTRAS ASIGNATURAS:

La asignatura del Inglés V se imparte en el quinto semestre y pertenece al área de Tronco Común, este curso es el antecedente a las asignaturas de Ingles I, II, III y IV, y como consecuente Inglés VI. Por otra lado esta relacionada con asignaturas correspondientes a otras áreas de conocimiento como son Introducción a las Ciencias Sociales, Historia de México, Historia Contemporánea, Taller de Lectura y Redacción, así como también Literatura.

Contents

PROGRAMA: INGLÉS VI

CARGA HORARIA: 4 hrs semanales (64 hrs)

CRÉDITOS: 8 (ocho)

SEMESTRE: SEXTO

ÁREA: TRONCO COMÚN

OBJETIVO GENERAL:

RELACIÓN CON OTRAS ASIGNATURAS:

La asignatura de Inglés VI se imparte en el Sexto Semestre y pertenece al área de Tronco Común tiene como antecedentes las asignaturas de Inglés I, II, III, IV y V. Se relaciona con las asignaturas de Introducción a las Ciencias Sociales, Historia de México, Historia Contemporánea, Taller de Lectura y Redacción, así como, Literatura.

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