

Research Impacts: Expanding Perspectives



CC
CA Centro Cultural
Colombo Americano
Cali

EDITORS: Brayan Portilla M.A. • Mabel Johanna Londoño B.A. • JoEllen M. Simpson Ph.D.

Research Impacts: Expanding perspectives

BRAYAN PORTILLA M.A. • MABEL JOHANNA
LONDOÑO B.A. • JOELLEN M. SIMPSON PH.D.
(EDS.)

© Centro Cultural Colombo
Americano de Cali
First Edition • May 2024

General Director

JoEllen M. Simpson

Editors

Brayan Portilla Quintero M.A.
Mabel Johanna Londoño B.A.
JoEllen M. Simpson, Ph.D.

Design and Typsetting

Natalia Ayala Pacini
estudiocasual.co

Copyright ©2024 by
Centro Cultural Colombo Americano de Cali
All rights reserved

Printed in Cali, Colombia
2024

Research Impacts: Expanding Perspectives

EDITORS:

Brayan Portilla Quintero M.A.

Mabel Johanna Londoño B.A.

JoEllen M. Simpson Ph.D.



Centro Cultural
Colombo Americano
Cali

Table of Contents

Preface

Mabel Johanna Londoño • Brayan Portilla

↗ 06

PART ONE

Meso-Curricular Systematization Projects to Improve Staff Development

I

Elevating Teaching Practices Through Peer Observation

By Diana Mercedes Cabezas • Luz Carime Bustamante

↗ 12

II

Learning Centers for English Teachers' Professional Development

By Diana Isabel Mora • Juan David Montoya

↗ 24

III

The Impact of the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano - Cali Pre-Service Teacher Program

By Claudia Andrea Díaz • Farid Camilo Sandoval

↗ 40

IV

Unleashing Teachers' Potential with Digital Competencies Courses

By Nelson Jaramillo • Carlos Reyes • William Sastoque

↗ 63

V

Enhancing English Learning through Self-Regulated Learning

By Wendy Carolina Lenis Gomez

↗ 78

PART TWO

Classroom-Based Systematization Projects to Improve Student Learning

VI

ChatGPT as a Peer Correction Tool for Language Learners

By Juan Sebastian Restrepo • Nicole Andrea Reyes

↗ 99

VII

The Impact of Grouping Techniques in Teacher and Student-Talking Time

By Julian Cardona • Christian Londoño Quintero

↗ 113

VIII

Fluency First: Empowering Learners' Independent Communication in English by Using the WordReference App

By Luis Felipe López Gil

↗ 128

IX

The Systematization of the Collaborative Tech Tool “Web-Based Processor Google docs” to Facilitate Students' Oral Intervention Opportunities in the Virtual Classroom at CCCA

By Libia Angélica Taborda Ossa

↗ 141

Preface

BY

Mabel Johanna Londoño • Brayan Portilla

In the pursuit of academic excellence and professional growth, the binational center Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali (CCCA) proudly presents *Research Impacts: Expanding Perspectives*, the culmination of collective efforts aimed at enriching the academic processes through educational research. These efforts were made by a very valuable group of academic advisors, academic product developers, support teachers, and the educational psychologist at our institution.

This volume presents a convergence of two distinct yet interrelated paths of analysis: classroom-based studies and meso-curricular analyses that were the result of a course in which a model of educational research called *systematization* was implemented. Systematization is an “ordered and documented writing of the knowledge accumulated through our [academic/teaching] experience” (Vasco, 2008, p. 22) in which scattered perceptions and experiences of different educational practices undergo reflective processes, enabling educational agents to collectively construct a narrative that contributes to understanding what we do and what other opportunities for

reflecting upon and improving processes there are. This narrative is then interpreted by these stakeholders to generate new perspectives of knowledge (micro-theory that can be confronted with existing theory), allowing for the renewal and transformation of their practices (Eduteka, 2019, para. 2).

Another crucial aspect of systematization is its role in knowledge management and learning. Through systematization, insights and lessons learned from past experiences can be captured, documented, and shared, ensuring that valuable knowledge is not lost over time. By organizing information systematically, patterns, trends, and connections can be identified, leading to a deeper understanding of complex phenomena. Systematization, as presented in this compilation, promotes a structured yet lighter classroom research and educational research approach to analyze what happens in teaching, learning and administering language education, facilitating the synthesis of existing knowledge and the identification of gaps or areas for further investigation.



The proposal for systematization-type research at the CCCA starts from an academic interest in developing academic dialogs and contributions to our bilingual education in Cali and the region, and grows from the connections we have developed with the School of Education at Icesi University in Cali. The best way to start considering a systematization project was with our own Academic Area members, especially our teachers, as they constantly struggle with implementing different educational theories in the classroom, and comparing what they usually do in their classes with those theories can be a beneficial practice. A first systematization course, which started in the first semester of 2023, was taken by our support teachers, and then we proposed a second course addressed to the academic advisors and the product development team during the second semester of 2023. Both systematization courses ended in spring 2024. They turned out to be the perfect professional development excuse to write about what we do, how we do it, and how we want to go beyond and expand our views as an academic community. It is there, in the expansion of our academic interests, that this publication comes to life and gains its value.

By systematizing teaching and educational practices, the academic community involved in this process ventures to heighten the understanding of pedagogical dynamics and enhance the professional development of educators and language institutions. Through rigorous examination and reflection, this edition of *Research Impacts* aspires to chart a course toward more effective and impacting teaching and educational practices as we seek to empower educators with a structured process for inquiry and intervention, thereby fostering a culture of reflective practice and continuous improvement.

At the organizational level of the text, each report systematized in this book commences

with an introduction. The introduction discusses reflective teaching, the significance of systematizing experiences, and the purpose of the report. This is followed by a depiction of specific teaching strategies at the micro-curricular level and educational practices at the meso-curricular level. These are presented as steps or “moments” of intervention, offering a tangible solution to educational concerns and challenges and presenting the identification of problems. Subsequently, the objective of the systematization and its guiding perspectives provide the reader with the lenses through which both the problem and the effects of the intervention are observed. Each of the axis of the systematization will offer the reader with an analysis area that leads the discussion. Moving forward, a review of the intervention and how those actions can be interpreted in light of the guiding perspectives/axes takes the reader on a journey of observation, detailed reconstruction, and reflection on how educational phenomena occur in the classroom and beyond. The conclusion of each report encompasses the writers’ reflective perspective on the results obtained, the benefits of the interventions, the experiences in their roles, and their role as researchers.

In the exploration of the contents of this volume, readers will encounter a diverse collection of topics and methodologies, each contributing to our collective understanding of English language education in a binational center, our contexts, and our processes, but also language education and teacher professional development. From practical classroom strategies involving the use of technology to broader curriculum considerations and processes of professional development, the scope of perspectives presents the multifaceted nature of our field and the richness of the academic community at our binational center.

This volume starts with an article by the academic advisors Diana Mercedes Cabezas

and Luz Carime Bustamante who present their systematization project *Elevating Teaching Practices Through Peer Observation* which focuses on standardizing peer observation processes for the supervisory and pedagogical support that the academic advisors at the CCCA offer. They focused their attention on reviewing the standardization process of peer observation as a professional development strategy in alignment with the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach observation guidelines. The primary goal of the peer-observation proposal analyzed in this report was to improve the quality, objectivity, and effectiveness of peer observations as a strategy for professional development among the English teachers at the institution. As a result of this systematization, the perceptions of the process and the opportunities for teachers' own reflection process through peer observation convey a powerful message about the importance of setting up clear guidelines, structured procedures, and supportive environments for our English teachers.

In the second article, Diana Isabel Mora and Juan David Montoya, who also serve as academic advisors, introduce their research project titled *Learning Centers for English Teachers' Professional Development*. This project delves into the intricate process of establishing Learning Centers as a pedagogical approach aimed at enriching the teachers' professional development through a flexible, self-paced strategy for language educators. The project not only examines the insights and responses of the academic staff regarding the establishment of these learning centers but also underscores the potential of this strategy as a catalyst for fostering teacher autonomy and facilitating ongoing professional growth within our academic discipline.

Following the line of professional development, Claudia Andrea Diaz and Farid Camilo Sandoval, also academic advisors,

present their systematization report titled, *The Impact of Pre-service Teacher Program in Centro Cultural Colombo Americano-Cali*, which examines the Pre-Service Teacher Program, a pioneering program aiming to equip aspiring educators from local universities with theoretical knowledge and practical skills for effective teaching. Their report discusses how the program impacts the academic area and the perceptions of professional development opportunities of different university students in the last stage of their studies in foreign languages. Detailed reports on participants' views and statistics of the program run since 2022 are shared as a means to indicate its success, its evolution, and its influence on strengthening the workforce at the CCCA.

Nelson Jaramillo, Carlos Reyes, and William Sastoque, product developers, share a systematization report named *Unleashing Teacher's Potential with Digital Competencies Courses* which discusses the impact of two digital courses proposed as professional development opportunities for our teachers during 2023. Their primary intervention goal was to enhance teachers' digital literacy and competencies by equipping them with tools to appropriately perform in the language classroom while benefiting their learners within rapidly changing technological environments. The implementation of the two courses was observed through the lenses of the impact on teachers' pedagogical views and classroom practices. This report sets an outstanding example of curriculum creation for language education.

Closing this first part of the meso-curricular projects, Wendy Carolina Lenis, the learning counselor at the CCCA, unveils her project *Enhancing English Learning through Self-Regulated Learning*, focusing on the importance of daily practice in learning a foreign language, emphasizing the relevance of identifying students' emotional discomfort experienced in

the English classroom, particularly in speaking, and the significance of self-regulated learning in managing emotions and achieving language proficiency. The conclusion after the findings emphasizes the need for promoting self-regulated learning to lower dropout rates, particularly in the initial cycle (A1 level) of the Adult Program. As a learning counselor, Wendy emphasizes her reflection on the transformative and key role of language teachers in caring for students' emotional well-being.

For the second part of this volume, readers will find a set of systematization projects discussing different teaching strategies as implemented by classroom teachers, specifically incorporating digital resources that are used to improve language learners' performance. In this line of research, Juan Sebastian Restrepo and Nicole Reyes present their project *ChatGPT as a Peer Correction Tool for Language Learners* in which they evaluate the findings of lowering Teacher Talking Time (TTT) and increasing Student Talking Time (STT) through the use of student peer-correction with the help of ChatGPT in an A2 English class. Among the remarkable findings, the didactic technique involving this AI tool better suits writing activities in a classroom setting, providing a controlled and structured environment, generating constructive feedback, and fostering critical thinking and self-editing skills.

In the same vein as in the previous report, Christian Londoño and Julián Cardona invite the readers to explore Teacher Talking Time and Student Talking Time through a more crafty didactic technique: grouping students using paper-based materials, poker cards, and a digital picker. The exploration provides a closer look at how grouping techniques using these strategies facilitate a more active and independent role from learners with the teacher stepping out of the spotlight, highlighting the interaction patterns that usually occur in a face-to-face classroom. An interesting

academic interpretation of the results indicates that teachers continue to be key at decision-making, strategy implementation, and more importantly, at offering students enough input and mediation between materials and student-student interaction to perform in the language successfully.

Luis Felipe Lopez's contribution to the volume aims to further empower students in the classroom through his project, *Fluency First: Empowering Learners' Independent Communication in English by Using the WordReference App*. The project reflects on the integration of this vocabulary app to tackle the issue of English learners' over-reliance on the question, "How do you say ___ in English?" One notable outcome of this intervention was the exposure of learners to didactic strategies and resources that enable them to navigate language challenges at the vocabulary and developmental levels. The discussion encompasses reflections on the roles of teachers and technology, while also inspiring opportunities for adapting teaching strategies in different courses to aid students in achieving the desired language performance.

In the final systematization report, *The Systematization of the Collaborative Tech Tool "Web-Based Processor Google docs" to Facilitate Students' Oral Intervention Opportunities in the Virtual Classroom at CCCA*, Angélica Taborda discusses three perspectives related to collaboration through online resources: the teacher's, the students', and the tech tool. Her study focuses on the implementation of Google Docs to enhance students' oral skill development in a virtual teaching environment. The tools discussed demonstrate that students can actively participate, develop critical thinking skills, and cultivate a sense of group work in a virtual environment. Placing the learner at the core of the teaching process increases their chances of performing better in speaking. Angélica's experience as a teacher

and researcher converges in reflections on the impact of technology, inspiring the implementation of other collaborative online tools and the exploitation of digital resources in the language classroom.

Research Impacts: Expanding Perspectives stands as evidence of our shared commitment to academic rigor, professional development, and innovation within the domain of English language teaching, particularly at a binational center. As we celebrate 70 years of dedicated scholarship and contributions to our teachers and our students, may this volume serve as an incentive for ongoing dialogue and growth, inspiring educators and institutions alike to continue pushing the boundaries of knowledge and successful transformative educational practices.

➤ References

- EduTEKA. (n.d.). *Algunas razones para sistematizar experiencias educativas*. Universidad ICESI. <https://eduteka.icesi.edu.co/articulos/SistematizacionExperiencias1>
- Vasco, C. (2008). Sistematizar o no, he ahí el problema. *Revista Internacional Magisterio*, 33, 20-23.

PART
one

Meso-Curricular
Systematization
Projects to Improve
Staff Development





Elevating Teaching Practices through Peer Observation

BY

Diana Mercedes Cabezas • Luz Carime Bustamante



➤ Introduction

This project centers on the need to standardize the process of conducting peer observations among teachers. Currently, each academic advisor at Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali (CCCA) has a different procedure for the peer observation process, leading to subjectivity and diverse perceptions among teachers. To enhance the quality of peer observations and align them with the criteria used on the CLT observation form, a standardized process is being implemented. This standardization aims to improve the quality, objectivity, and effectiveness of the peer observations by focusing on observable behaviors and specific performance indicators.

This document will outline the objectives and steps of this standardization practice, aiming to determine its impact and provide opportunities for self-reflection and improvement for English teachers at the CCCA, aligned with the current approach to professional development at the institution. Finally, CCCA seeks to promote a more consolidated approach to professional development and teaching practices.

PHASE

1

Identification of the Educational Practice

➤ The Socio-Academic Context

The Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali (CCCA) is a binational center located in the city of Cali and has 166 teachers who follow Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a pedagogical guide. The CCCA has an integrative professional development model, which includes a supervisory component that accompanies the professional development process in teachers. These teachers have the support of an academic advisor who helps them improve their teaching practices and implement CLT in their classes, which aims at providing teachers with opportunities for reflection, evaluation, and establishment of action plans for improving their language teaching. This accompaniment is carried out through class observations, post-observation chats, and peer observations, which have a significant impact on the measurements that are done in June and November each year at the institution. These measurements seek to evaluate the strength of the academic practice; therefore, they determine the accomplishment of the implementation of CLT as a pedagogical goal.

➤ The Educational Practice Problem

The Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali has worked on the professional develop-

ment of all the teachers to ensure appropriate implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching methodology (CLT) by each teacher in their respective classes. One of the strategies suggested by academic advisors to help teachers achieve their teaching practice goals and fulfill their observation plan for the academic year was to have teachers do peer observation; this task is given to new teachers and the ones with some aspects to improve in their practices aligned with the CLT. Academic advisors were able to assign 149 peer observations during 2023. Each academic advisor had a different procedure for the peer observation follow-up, which could lead to subjective perceptions among the teachers. For instance, some advisors provided teachers with some guiding questions to answer based on the observation, some others asked the teachers to observe and take notes, and others had teachers observe, then during the post-observation meeting, they discussed their findings and impressions.

During the measurements done in the first semester of 2023, it was identified that each academic advisor had a different procedure while assigning the peer observations done by teachers. Therefore, it was decided to standardize this process to enhance its quality, monitor and measure its effectiveness, and ensure that all observations were conducted using the same criteria and procedures. With standardized criteria, peer observations are more likely to be based on observable behaviors and specific performance indicators rather than subjective opinions. Standardizing the process of peer observation ensures that the feedback academic advisors provide to teachers is constructive and aligned with the academic and CLT goals.

➤ The Identification of the Educational Practice

In this section, we will describe the 5 steps carried out to standardize the peer observation process at Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali.

The objective of the peer observation process implementation is to determine the impact of its standardization in the procedures to assign the peer observations and do the follow-up on those observations done by teachers.

Step 1

To find out how the academic advisors understood the peer observation process, we interviewed the seven academic advisors to know how the whole process was perceived, from the moment of assigning until the process of doing the follow-up on the peer observation (see appendix 1. Peer-Observation Process Exploration). After consulting the academic advisors, it was concluded that each one had a different procedure on how to carry out the process and how to document it, which could lead to misunderstandings and subjectiveness at the moment of providing feedback to the teachers.

Step 2

After having collected the information about the process each academic advisor conducted, we analyzed the similarities and differences to integrate all the procedures in only one. After the analysis, it was decided to integrate them and have only one procedure, providing a Google form to collect the peer observation information and having one-on-one meetings with 129 teachers who were requested to do peer observation in the Adults and Kids and Teens programs. To create the CLT Peer Observation Form (See Appendix 2. CLT Peer Observation Form), we listed all

the criteria based on the CLT rubric of the observation form, emphasizing the behaviors teachers should consider during class, along with a short explanation for each criterion. In each criterion section, observing teachers were asked to answer some reflexive questions based on the criteria that were suggested to focus on by the academic advisors, which were according to the teacher's needs.

Step 3

When the Google form was ready, we explained to the academic advisors how to handle the new procedure to conduct the peer observations. The new procedure was tested in November 2023 with a group of 10 teachers from the adult program. The academic advisors met the teachers in order to explain how the peer observation was going to be carried out and how the follow-up process was going to be. The teachers were informed about how the Google form should be filled out and the way their reflections based on the peer observations were going to be produced. The teachers were given three different options to choose from (a video, a written text, or a meeting with their advisor).

The procedure is described as follows:

- Have a one-on-one meeting with the teacher.
- Explain the form and how to fill it out according to the specific needs.
- Set the date and time to carry out the peer observation form.
- Provide the different options to reflect based on the peer observation.
- Establish a deadline to deliver the reflection.

Step 4

When the peer observation was finished, the teachers filled out the form to help them reflect based on the criteria the academic advisors recommended. Following that, the teachers submitted their reflections or had meetings with their academic advisors within the established time frame.

Step 5

After a successful pilot, to implement the peer observation form with teachers, the advisors shared the form with the observing teachers in a meeting to explain the form and the questions, and a follow-up meeting was programmed to share the teachers' perceptions of the form and also the gains from the peer observation. In January 2024, the process of informing about the new peer observation procedure was initiated with new teachers and teachers with specific needs, and they started peer observing in February 2024.

PHASE

2

Establishing the Objective and Axes of the Systematization Practice

This project aims to assess the effects of implementing standardized procedures for assigning peer observations among teachers. By establishing clear guidelines and protocols

for conducting peer observations, this project seeks to evaluate how such measures influence teaching practices, professional development, and overall teacher effectiveness. Through comprehensive analysis and feedback from participants, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the benefits and challenges associated with standardized peer observation procedures in educational settings.

➤ Systematization of the Educational Practice Question

How does a standardized process of assigning peer observations and the follow-ups done by teachers impact teachers' classroom practices at CCCA?

➤ The Objective of the Systematization

Determine the impact of implementation and standardization of the procedures to assign peer observations done by teachers.

➤ The Axes of Reconstruction of the Educational Practice

Axis 1

Academic advisors' perceptions on the peer observation process.

Axis 2

Opportunities for self-reflection and improvement towards CCCA teachers' teaching practices.

PHASE

3

Reconstruction of the Educational Practice

In stage 3, the educational practice was reconstructed taking into account the different steps followed to standardize the peer observation process in the light of the axes.

➤ Axis 1: Academic Advisors' Perceptions on the Peer Observation Process

The peer observation process helps teachers improve their teaching practices based on the pedagogical goals of the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali. The academic advisors are in charge of the logistics and explain to observing teachers how the peer observation is going to be carried out, and finally, the observing teacher comes up with a reflection based on the observation.

In step 1, academic advisors' peer observation procedures, it turned out that all of them had a different approach to the peer observation process. One of the advisors mentioned that she created a set of questions that the teacher needed to answer after observing his/her peer; another one mentioned that she just asked the teacher to observe the class, and then in a follow-up meeting, they discussed it. They all agreed on two aspects of the process: the reason for having a teacher do the peer observation and the reflection needed after the observation. Due to all the differences in the process, it was evident that this process needed to be standardized to minimize the

gaps when collecting information about the improvement of the teachers' practices. In step 2, analysis of the information collected, it was determined that it was necessary to create a form where academic advisors and teachers could find data required at the moment of teacher evaluation. The CLT Peer Observation Form had the items of the Teacher Annual Evaluation Rubric academic advisors have been using to observe classes (see Appendix 3. Teacher Annual Evaluation Rubric). Each item has a short explanation, and these items are divided into 5 categories. The standardized procedure started with a meeting with each teacher who needed to reinforce some aspects of his/her teaching practice, and the academic advisor explained how to use the CLT Peer Observation Form created. The peer observation was set, and the teacher answered the questions in the form according to the category selected and based on the class the teacher observed.

➤ Axis 2: Opportunities for Self-Reflection and Improvement Towards CCCA Teachers' Teaching Practices

In step 3, socialization of the CLT Peer Observation Form (See Appendix 2. CLT Peer Observation Form), once the form was created and ready to use, a meeting was held with the academic advisors in November 2023. During this meeting, the CLT Peer Observation Form and its categories were explained in detail, including how the information would be collected, how to proceed with the final reflection, and how to conduct the new procedure for peer observations. The following are the different categories on the CLT Peer Observation Form. Inside each category, the different criteria and some reflective questions for the observing teachers to answer are found. It

is very important to clarify that the teachers were focusing and observing just a category of the CLT Peer Observation Form, which was agreed upon based on the class observation performance done by the academic advisors and the established action plans for each teacher. In the CLT Peer Observation Form, the teachers were asked to select who their academic advisor was so that information could be further classified and analyzed in a spreadsheet by each academic advisor.

To go through the final reflection, 3 options were proposed, a video, a written text, or a meeting with the academic advisor. This was to offer a variety of options, so teachers could choose the one they felt more comfortable with.

This new peer observation procedure was tested in December 2023 with a group of 10 teachers from the Adult Program, those were some teachers who were still missing in completing the required peer observations of the year. New and experienced teachers were included so that it was possible to have different points of view.

The academic advisors developing this new procedure met the teachers individually to explain how the peer observation process was going to be carried out using the CLT Peer Observation Form and how the follow-up process would be, along with the final reflection they were to make.

In step 4, CLT Peer Observation follow-up, after the teachers conducted the peer observation, they filled out the CLT Peer Observation Form to help them reflect based on the section and criteria the academic advisors recommended. They submitted that information, and the academic advisors were able to check and collect the information as evidence of the accomplished activity. Next, the teachers chose the way they wanted to have their final reflections following the established time frame; they were supposed to inform in advance in case they wanted to have a meeting with their

academic advisors so they could set up a date and time.

In step 5, CLT Peer Observation implementation, the process to inform was initiated in January 2024. This was conducted with new teachers and teachers with specific needs according to their performance from the previous year. To implement the new peer observation procedure with the teachers, the advisors shared the CLT Peer Observation Form with the observing teachers in a meeting to explain how to fill it out, the different categories and criteria, the reflective questions, and the way they could have their final reflections. After this, a follow-up meeting was programmed to share the teachers' perceptions of the CLT Peer Observation Form and also the gains from the peer observation. This Peer Observation process started in February 2024.

PHASE

4

Interpretation of the Educational Practice

Now that we have discussed the reconstruction of the educational practice in the previous stage, it is time to address why the situation occurred as it did. In this section, we will take into account the perspectives we have as academic advisors and researchers who aim to establish a standardized process for the teaching and learning process.

➤ Axis 1: Academic Advisors' Perceptions on the Peer Observation Process

In order to comprehend this axis thoroughly, it is essential to acknowledge the two steps involved in its reconstruction; step 1 academic advisors' peer observation procedures, and step 2 the analysis of the information collected. By establishing these two steps, as academic advisors, we could gain a more profound perspective and understanding of the peer observation process that has been implemented over the years at the CCCA.

For several years, the peer observation process has become an integral part of the pedagogical practice at CCCA since it has been used as a tool to enhance and improve the teachers' teaching practices, which is a great opportunity for new teachers to know and adapt to the Communicative Language Teaching methodological approach we have at the institution, for those teachers who have an established action plan, and even for teachers who are always looking for new ideas and strategies to implement in their classrooms, also, expert teachers can improve their teaching practices by observing and commenting on the less experienced teachers which in turn helps them reflect on their teaching practices and how they have developed over time. We have found new teachers gain a lot of support, ideas, and strategies from peer observations since they have the opportunity to observe more experienced teachers. At CCCA there is a variety of skills and talents among teachers, and some of them are very good at implementing digital tools, creativity, critical thinking, assessment, and evaluation, among others. Hence, peer observation for sure guarantees that not only these new teachers but also the experienced ones acquire new skills and talents which are implemented in their future classes. Academic advisors have observed

firsthand the positive impact of this practice on the professional development of our teaching staff. Peer observation of teaching is seen as a supportive developmental process for improving the quality of teaching, and the benefits for observers include learning about a new strategy and enhancing their confidence to try this strategy in their own teaching (Hendry & Oliver, 2012). This peer observation process has been managed by the academic advisors, who are responsible for informing the observing teachers that they will be doing a peer observation, contacting the teachers that will be observed by a peer and setting up a date and time, explaining to the observing teachers what is expected of them during the observation, and finally meeting the observing teachers for the peer observation follow-up.

During the meetings held for the measurements done in the first semester of 2023 with the academic advisors' team, an important issue arose. We discovered that each member had a unique approach to conducting the peer observations. Nevertheless, it is necessary to take into consideration that the implementation of structured peer observations is necessary to ensure consistent and positive outcomes. After this finding, it was decided to have a more realistic and complete perception of the way academic advisors were carrying out the peer observation process; hence, we collected data about the instructions they were giving to the teachers to follow during the class observation and how they were developing the follow-up process. The data collection showed that some different practices included asking the teacher to observe certain things from the class, taking notes, answering guiding questions, or having a meeting to discuss what had been observed in class. However, there was not a clear and concrete process to follow, which made it difficult to determine whether the peer observation had been meaningful and successful or not. As a result, the purpose

of the peer observation process may not have been as effective as intended. Wainwright, et al. (2003) indicate that unstructured peer classroom observations, i.e., those that are not based on a set of core criteria, can result in inconsistency and do not always address teaching practices that are valued by a program. With peer observations being unstructured, it appeared that some teachers lacked clear guidance on how to effectively conduct peer observations, causing them to feel uncertain and unproductive during the process. Unfortunately, this resulted in a limited number of positive outcomes from the observations, as teachers were not able to fully benefit from the experience.

As academic advisors, we believe that the peer observation process is a valuable addition to the yearly observation plan that CCCA teachers are required to follow. After observing their classes, we engage in post-observation chats with the teachers to provide feedback and develop action plans based on the areas that need improvement. The peer observation process plays an important role in supporting these action plans, as it opens the possibility to reflection and provides teachers with the opportunity to observe and learn from different teaching ideas and strategies that can help them overcome any difficulties they may be facing. As Nguyen (2021) indicates, peer observation has been identified as a valuable tool for enhancing subject-matter knowledge and pedagogic content among educators. This approach has the potential to enable teachers to develop a deeper understanding of the disciplinary content of the courses they teach. It is essential that the peer observation process is successful, as it allows teachers to fully harness their observation-invested time and enhance their teaching practices, which will lead to strengthening the teaching and learning process at the institution as well as improving the students' experience. In the

peer observation follow-up meetings, we have observed that teachers are exhibiting a heightened awareness of their pedagogical practices. Through these observations, they are reflecting on the activities they conduct in the classroom, the strategies they employ, and how they execute them. This reflection results in the consideration of how they can enhance their teaching skills and be better teachers.

➤ Axis 2: Opportunities for Self-reflection and Improvement Towards CCCA Teachers' Teaching Practices

Peer observation typically occurs among teachers whose individual action plans require them to improve their teaching practices. According to Hendry and Oliver (2012), peer observation involves two teachers collaborating to observe each other's teaching in order to enhance teaching quality. Despite its potential benefits, the process of peer observation has presented challenges among teachers who are asked to participate. We have noticed some negativism toward peer observation. Some teachers consider it an unnecessary process, and some others complain about not having enough time to do it. Some have even refused to do peer observations. These challenges are followed by a lack of commitment, mostly due to a sensation of not having a clear purpose when observing, as stated by Lomas and Nicholls (2005). They highlighted that peer observation can sometimes be intrusive and may hinder academic freedom. To address these challenges, standardizing the process of peer observation is essential. This standardization would enable academic advisors and in-service teachers to establish a clear course of action for self-reflection and improvement in teaching practices.

Therefore, we considered creating a Google form that could help both academic advisors and in-service teachers follow a clear path toward professional development, as mentioned in step 3 in the reconstruction phase. This form needed to have a relation to what the institution expects from teachers so that peer observation makes sense. Teachers followed the CLT Peer Observation Form items that helped them reflect on their own teaching practices as mentioned by Richards and Farrell (2005), who say that through peer observation, teachers can enhance their professional growth because it helps teachers close the gap between their current teaching conditions and the academic expectations set on them. In this step, we explained how the new procedure was going to be, that a one-on-one meeting was needed to establish the proper way to address the peer observation and how to fill out the CLT Peer Observation form which is according to the teacher's action plan, and to set a final meeting to share the reflection based on the peer observation conducted. To effectively engage in peer observation, it is important to remember certain key steps outlined in the reconstruction phase, as Bell (2010) suggested. These steps include planning, conducting the observation, and reflecting upon it. By carefully following each step, teachers can gain a deeper understanding of the purpose behind peer observation. This understanding can help reduce negativism and create more opportunities for individual reflection and development. In step 4, CLT Peer Observation follow-up, teachers and academic advisors set a date to talk about the gains obtained from the peer observation, part of the reflection is registered in the CLT peer observation form created for that purpose, and the second part of the reflection happened in a one-on-one meeting with the academic advisor fostering reflection to work on the individual teacher's action plan. As stated by Cosh (1999), peer observation should stimulate a reflective review

based on others' performances. During the implementation explained in step 5, academic advisors have established a well-organized method for collecting information resulting from peer observations. This has greatly benefited academic advisors in their efforts to support teachers, while also standardizing the process of assigning peer observations and conducting follow-up. It helps teachers' development, as mentioned by Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond (2005) when they said that peer observation could stimulate reflection to achieve individual purposes.

PHASE

5

Learnings and Experiences

In response to the need for a more standardized procedure for conducting peer observations among teachers, this systematization focuses on implementing a structured process at Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali. The aim of standardizing the peer observation process is to enhance its quality, objectivity, and effectiveness by aligning it with the criteria specified in the CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) observation form. This procedure emphasizes observable behaviors and specific performance indicators to ensure a consistent and meaningful measurement of teaching practices. Without a well-defined process, teachers may struggle to grasp the purpose and benefits of peer observations, leading to reduced motivation and limited impact on their development.

Additionally, we highlight the broader benefits of peer observations, including supporting different action plans for teachers and incorporating new ideas and skills into teaching methodologies. By systematically conducting peer observations, we can take advantage of the collective expertise within our academic community and ensure meaningful improvements in teaching quality and educational practices.

In regards to axis 1, we emphasize the significance of implementing structured and standardized peer observation procedures. We recognize that inconsistent procedures can result in ineffective outcomes and hinder professional growth. Without a clear framework for conducting these peer observations, teachers may feel uncertain about their purpose, ultimately leading to a lack of motivation to participate. As a result, it is essential to establish a clear path for peer observation to ensure its meaningful impact on teacher development. As academic advisors, we have gained valuable insights into the need for establishing clear guidelines and expectations to promote constructive and effective peer observations that not only foster teachers' professional development but also foster a culture of continuous improvement in teaching practice. We also have learned to recognize the impact of our role in facilitating peer observations and supporting teachers' professional development. We have transformed our mindset by understanding the necessity of a structured process that leads to reflection and improvement in teaching practice among the academic community.

In Axis 2, we identified the challenges that implementing peer observation had, such as negativism among teachers, not having a clear goal when observing a colleague, and misconceptions about peer observations. Besides those challenges, we also found that we needed to have a proper structural process that allowed teachers to understand

the importance of peer observation in their professional growth. Therefore, standardizing the process of assigning peer observation to teachers was one of the adaptations needed to be able to succeed in helping teachers improve their teaching practices through self-reflection during the follow-up meetings. For this new procedure to work, we needed to collect information from teachers and analyze that information in a way that allowed us to measure the effectiveness of the process by the academic advisors. This tool is a Google form (CLT Peer Observation Form) which helped teachers focus on the aspects they needed to improve as well as some reflective questions to boost their self-analysis in order to adapt new strategies into their teaching practices.

This new procedure has allowed teachers to enhance their professional development by bridging the gap between their current teaching practices and the academic expectations that the institution has set for them.

One of the key learnings from this analysis is the recognition of peer observation as a valuable tool for professional development and improving teaching practice. It emphasizes the need for academic advisors and teachers to have a shared understanding of the purpose and process of peer observation to ensure meaningful outcomes. It not only benefits teachers but also academic advisors, as the peer observation process supports the different action plans that they have established for teachers, resulting in remarkable improvement in the areas they need to improve. This saves time and labor since teachers obtain the knowledge from firsthand experience. Academic advisors just need to identify the teacher who has the skills we want the observing teacher to perceive, explain the CLT Peer Observation Form category and criteria, and meet the teacher for the follow-up. With these activities carried out the outcomes will be the ones expected.

Within the research, we found several authors who support the benefits and necessities of doing peer observation. Based on this, we reinforce the idea that peer observation is not only for new teachers or teachers who need to improve in any aspect but also for teachers who have more experience. We highlight the fact the new generations are bringing new ideas and skills that deserve to be implemented in the classrooms to foster the teaching-educational process, so why not take advantage of these fresh ideas and include them in the repertoire of teaching and learning strategies and methodologies? This systematization highlights the journey from recognizing challenges to implementing transformative practices in peer observation. It showcases the potential for continuous improvement and enhanced teaching quality when educators engage in structured and supportive peer observation processes.

This systematization underscores the crucial role of structured and standardized peer observation processes in educational institutions. It identifies key challenges, including inconsistent procedures, unclear purposes, and teacher resistance, which can impede the effectiveness of such initiatives. However, it also emphasizes the transformative potential of implementing clear guidelines, structured processes, and supportive environments for peer observation. Moreover, we believe that academic advisors and teachers have improved their practices by recognizing that systematic peer observation can be a positive and impactful experience. This not only promotes a culture of continuous improvement among teachers but also recognizes the transformative power of structured peer observations, which enhance self-reflection, professional growth, and a collaborative learning culture within our institution.

➤ References

- Cosh, J. (1999). Peer observation: A reflective model. *ELT Journal*, 53(1), 22–27. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/53.1.22>
- Hammersley-Fletcher, L., & Orsmond, P. (2005). Reflecting on reflective practices within peer observation. *Studies in Higher Education*, 30(2), 213–224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070500043358>
- Hendry, G., & Oliver, G. (2012). Seeing is believing: The benefits of peer observation. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 9(1), 1–9.
- Lomas, L., & Nicholls, G. (2005). Enhancing teaching quality through peer review of teaching. *Quality in Higher Education*, 11(2), 137–149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13538320500175118>
- Nguyen, Q. (2021). Revisiting peer classroom observations as a teacher professional development protocol: A critical theoretical review of global practices. *Vietnam Journal of Education (VJE)*, 5, 10–20. <https://doi.org/10.52296/vje.2021.71>
- Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers* [Preprint]. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511667237>
- Wainwright, C. L., Flick, L. B., & Morrell, P. D. (2003). Development of instruments for assessment of instructional practices in standards-based teaching. *Journal of Mathematics and Science: Collaborative Explorations*, 6(1), 21–46.

➤ Appendices

Click [HERE](#)



Learning Centers for English Teachers' Professional Development

BY

Diana Isabel Mora • Juan David Montoya



➤ Introduction

The Centro Cultural Colombo Americano-Cali has been working on structuring a professional development component which responds to the training and professional development needs of the different members of the Academic area and has an impact on the enrichment and strengthening of the educational practices of its teachers and therefore on the improvement of the quality of the English teaching service at the institution.

Since this professional development component, encompassing a series of in-services, workshops, and mandatory courses, is both dynamic and comprehensive, it requires a diversification of strategies in the development and delivery of these educational offerings. This systematization project on the Implementation of Learning centers as a pedagogical strategy to dynamize the professional development component at the CCCA serves as a model for other institutions looking to elevate their professional development programs beyond mere attendance, towards creating a more interactive, knowledge-rich, and practically applicable learning environment, Richardson (2003), since this pedagogical strategy is designed to foster teacher's autonomy, encourage professional learning, and ensure all educators have easy access to these resources Devany (2005).

The relevance of this systematization project stems from a critical need to understand and enhance the professional development dynamics within CCCA. Despite offering consistent opportunities for professional growth, the institution faces challenges with low attendance and engagement among its teaching staff, further complicated by the frequent rotation of teachers. This has implications for the effective implementation of CLT methodologies. By systematizing the perceptions of the academic team on the implementation of Learning Centers, we aim to gain insightful perspectives that will inform strategies to invigorate our professional development efforts. This project is a fundamental step towards achieving key institutional objectives: fostering continuous improvement of processes, ensuring technological solutions align with process needs, and creating transformative experiences for our teachers to attract and retain them. Ultimately, this systematization is expected to provide clarity on how Learning Centers can potentially improve teachers' attendance and engagement in the professional development component at CCCA, thereby contributing significantly to the institutional mission.

➤ The Socio-Academic Context

The Cultural Colombo Americano (CCCA) situated in Cali, Colombia, has a rich socio-cultural framework embodying educational values and operational dynamics that have characterized its commitment to English language teaching and cultural exchange since its establishment in 1954. This framework is deeply aligned with its Educational Institutional Project¹ for 2023 and a comprehensive Pedagogical Framework advocating for Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodologies. These methodologies emphasize student-centered learning, greatly aided by technological integration to enhance language instruction and professional development.

The teaching staff at CCCA represents a diverse spectrum, spanning ages from 20 to 60 and encompassing a range of experiences from newcomers to seasoned veterans with 20 years or more of service. This diversity includes local Colombian teachers and a few international instructors, creating a dynamic educational landscape that integrates varied teaching approaches and experiences.

Despite the institution's use of modern communication platforms such as email and WhatsApp to promote professional development opportunities, it faces challenges with low attendance in monthly in-services and bi-annual courses, with only a minority of teachers completing these programs. To incentivize participation, CCCA has introduced a points system linking professional development directly to salary increases, demonstrating the institution's commitment to ongoing learning.

In its pursuit of educational excellence, CCCA actively integrates technology into teaching and professional development efforts, supporting both synchronous and asynchronous learning environments. Feedback mechanisms, structured through forms, help

the institution gather insights into teachers' perceptions regarding the relevance and impact of these professional development sessions.

The Integrative Professional Development Model was meticulously designed to elevate teaching standards and, consequently, student achievement. This model rests on foundational components aimed at comprehensive educational enhancement. Specifically, it reinforces the teaching staff's expertise in applied linguistics and didactics, enriching classroom practices with the latest pedagogical insights. To achieve these ambitious goals, CCCA employs a wide range of strategies, including courses, workshops, in-services, webinars, teaching capsules, and instructional videos, tailored to meet educators' diverse needs, styles, and developmental stages.

However, maintaining consistent engagement and completion of professional development activities remains a challenge, prompting CCCA to seek innovative solutions. Learning centers emerge as a novel approach in this context, designed to enhance teacher engagement and participation. These centers function as dynamic learning environments within educational institutions, promoting active and engaging learning experiences. Tailored to specific subjects or skills, they provide teachers with resources and activities that accommodate diverse learning styles. By incorporating learning centers into its professional development strategy, CCCA aims to address low engagement issues, creating a more interactive, knowledge-rich, and practical learning environment (see Appendix 1: Integrative Professional Development Model 2021 - 2022).

1. In Spanish Proyecto Educativo Institucional (PEI)

PHASE

1

Identification of the Educational Practice

➤ Educational Practice Problem

The CCCA prides itself on its rich history of providing quality English language teaching, rooted in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodology. However, despite offering consistent professional development opportunities, the institution struggles with low attendance and participation rates among its teaching staff. This challenge is aggravated by the frequent rotation of the teaching body, leading to disruptions in the consistent implementation of CLT. The reduced engagement not only affects teaching quality but can also have long-term implications on institutional unity, culture, and the broader aspiration for lifelong learning. Addressing this problem is crucial, not just for maintaining educational standards but also for fostering a culture of continuous growth and adaptability in the face of staff changes.

The need to provide a structured environment for CCCA teachers to reflect on their teaching practices, identify areas for improvement, and develop action plans becomes evident. Also, it is important to promote lifelong learning among CCCA teachers encouraging them to adopt a growth mindset to improve their teaching practices at the Institution.

Learning centers are dynamic environments within educational institutions that foster active and engaging learning experiences. These centers are often tailored to specific subjects or skills, providing students with a

range of resources and activities that accommodate diverse learning styles (Malefyt, n.d.). They are distinguished by their emphasis on hands-on, experiential learning opportunities, frequently incorporating technology, interactive tasks, and collaborative workspaces (Education Week, 2016). Learning centers can vary in form, from designated areas in a classroom focusing on particular subjects to comprehensive facilities dedicated to pedagogical innovation and faculty development (Inside Higher Ed, 2018; Inside Higher Ed, n.d.). These centers are instrumental in enhancing student learning by offering varied learning modalities and creating an environment conducive to exploration and discovery (Peterson, 1975).

➤ Identification of the Educational Practice

This section details the development of Learning Centers at CCCA, divided into three main steps: Creation of a Learning Center on a Learning Center, Creation of the framework for the Learning Centers, Proposal Sharing, and Orientation for the Academic Team. Each step contributes to implementing Learning Centers for professional development in 2024.

Step 1

Creation of a Learning Center on a Learning Center

Objective:

- Allow the academic team to experience a real learning center.

Procedure:

- Define a format for the Learning Center of a Learning Center
- Create the Learning Center of a Learning Center (see Appendix 2: the Learning Center of a Learning Center.)

- Have a session with the Academic Staff to socialize in the Learning Center
- Collect the first reflections on the feasibility of using learning centers as a tool to dynamize the professional development component (see Appendix 3 Learning Center, Final Reflection Stage)
- Collect the second reflections on the feasibility of using learning centers as a tool to dynamize the professional development component (see Appendix 4: The Academic Team’s Attitude Survey.)

Step 2

Creation of the Framework for the Learning Centers

Objective:

- Establish the foundational framework for the Learning Centers.

Procedure:

- Define the physical layout and resources required for the Learning Centers.
- Determine the core principles and objectives for the Learning Centers in alignment with CCCA’s Pedagogical Creed.
- Identify the expected outcomes and benefits of the Learning Centers.
- Create a timeline for the implementation of Learning Centers (see Appendix 5: The Learning Center Framework.)

Step 3

Proposal Sharing and Orientation for Academic Team

Objective:

- Establish guidelines for creating Learning Centers and provide orientation to the academic team.

Procedure:

- Organize a meeting on October 30 to present the proposal for Learning Centers to the academic team, including Coordinators, support teachers, and Advisors (see Appendix 6: Learning Centers Slides - October 30th, 2023 Meeting)
- Discuss the rationale behind implementing Learning Centers as a strategy for professional development in 2024.
- Share with the academic team (Coordinators, support teachers, and Advisors), the proposal for learning centers to dynamize the professional development component in 2024.
- Define the structure and guidelines for the Learning Centers, including the duration of activities, topics to be covered, and available formats (e.g., workshops, online resources, peer observation).
- Specify the expected outcomes and learning objectives for each Learning Center.
- Establish the work teams and themes for the development of the learning centers.

PHASE

2

Establishing the Objective and Axes of the Systematization

In Phase 2, we focus on setting clear goals and exploring key areas for our project on Learning Centers. Our main goal is to understand what the academic team at Centro Cultural Colombo Americano thinks about introducing Learning Centers for professional development. We will look into two main areas: how the team sees Learning Centers and their reaction to our plans for these centers. This step is important because it helps us see the potential impact of Learning Centers on improving teaching and learning at our institution.

➤ Objective of the Systematization of the Educational Practice

Describe the perceptions among the academic team, regarding the implementation of Learning Centers as a pedagogical strategy to dynamize the professional development component at Centro Cultural Colombo Americano.

➤ Axes of Reconstruction of the Educational Practice

Axis 1: Understanding the Perceptions of Learning Centers among the Academic Team: Coordinators, Advisors, and Support Teachers

This axis encompasses the academic team's comprehension of Learning Centers, their implications in professional development, and their attitudes towards the concept.

Axis 2: Reactions to the Proposal and Framework

This axis combines the academic team's attitudes toward the proposal for Learning Centers, their understanding of the framework designed by Diana Mora, and their overall response to the initiative (see Appendix 4: the Academic Team's Attitude Survey.)

PHASE

3

Reconstruction of the Educational Practice

In terms of educational practice, the concept of learning centers highlights an innovative strategy that promises dynamic pathways for professional development and student enrichment. Concerning Learning Centers within the academic landscape, the first axis delves into the perceptions held by the

academic team - comprised of coordinators, advisors, and support teachers - toward these transformative spaces through a survey that explores the team's understanding of learning centers as an alternative to dynamizing the professional development component, its implications for professional development, and the academic team's discernment toward the concept. On this basis, the second axis is directed towards the reactions to the proposal and framework presented by Diana Isabel Mora. This axis covers the attitudes of the academic team towards the proposed initiative, their understanding of the framework outlined, and their overall response to it.

➤ **Axis 1: Understanding the Perceptions of Learning Centers among the Academic Team: Coordinators, Advisors, and Support Teachers**

In the pursuit of pedagogical transformation to the professional development component at the CCCA which allowed for the empowerment of the academic team through an innovative and dynamic approach that fostered a flexible, personalized, and engaging learning environment, on September 2023, with the support of the Assistant Academic Director, the idea of incorporating the methodology of learning centers arose.

Later on, on September 8th of the same year, a Learning Center on a Learning Centers was created and shared with the academic team (Coordinators, Academic Advisors, and Support Teachers) in a meeting, where they had the opportunity to experience a real learning center and its features to provide their perceptions of it.

As a result of that experience, the team agreed on the benefits of the learning center methodology as an ideal strategy and a dynamic approach for the professional develop-

ment component for 2024, even though there were some common concerns, and reflections that were expressed in the same meeting verbally in the "Reflective Teaching Questions set" (see Appendix 3 Learning Center, Final Reflection Stage) developed in groups and in a further Google form created to keep record of those first perceptions (see Appendix 4: the Academic Team's Attitude Survey.) The perceptions about the learning centers were:

- Learning Centers' strategy as a dynamic alternative for the professional development component for teachers looks like a user-friendly interface that facilitates seamless navigation and engagement for teachers. Additionally, it offers a self-paced learning model, allowing teachers to progress through the content at their own speed. This personalized approach empowers educators to tailor their learning experience according to their individual needs and preferences. This is evident in comments like:
 - "It's innovative, user-friendly, and helps people learn at their pace." (Teacher 1, Survey, October 30, 2023)
 - "It is an innovative idea to encourage reluctant teachers to take part in professional development courses." (Teacher 2, Survey, October 30, 2023)
 - "Learning center is a nice way of presenting information to the learners." (Teacher 3, Survey, October 30, 2023)
 - "It is a really nice idea that can encourage great reactions from teachers based on different topics that may be in their own interest." (Teacher 4, Survey, October 30, 2023)
 - "They're a great tool to engage more teachers in the professional development area" (Teacher 5, Survey, October 30, 2023)

- b** There might be a lack of time to build well-structured learning centers that fulfill the needs of the teachers and nurture their teaching practices, taking into account the various activities that had to be covered before the end of the year by the academic team. This is evident in comments like:

“It seems like a lot of work.” (Teacher 1, Survey, October 30, 2023)

“It is interesting, but for creators could be a matter of time.” (Teacher 2, Survey, October 30, 2023)

“It looked very interesting but it also meant more work.” (Teacher 3, Survey, October 30, 2023)

“Is the time enough for the design?” (Teacher 4, Survey, October 30, 2023)

“Overwhelmed” (Teacher 5, Survey, October 30, 2023)

- c** There was uncertainty regarding the confirmation that a teacher has taken the right learning center, how to evidence teachers’ learning about the topics in the learning centers, and finally how to certify that a teacher did or did not pass a learning center.

- d** There is not a very positive attitude of the teachers regarding the obligatory nature of the learning centers, as based on experience with the professional development courses offered to teachers. This is evident in comments like:

“It’s a great initiative, it will give the teachers some flexibility to work in their professional development. However, I’m concerned regarding those teachers who are not that committed to their processes and teaching practices, since even with the flexibility the learning center will provide, we’ll still have those teachers who won’t make it.” (Teacher 1, Survey, October 30, 2023)

“It is a great way to get teachers to work on their professional development. However, some teachers may still be reluctant to do it.” (Teacher 2, Survey, October 30, 2023)

- e** The implications for the academic team include constantly supervising and reminding teachers of the deadlines for the activities to be developed.

➤ Axis 2: Reactions to the Proposal and Framework

On October 30, 2023, the framework of the learning centers (Appendix 5: Learning Centers Framework) was socialized, and the formation of the work teams and subsequent assignment of the topics to be worked on in the Learning Centers and the schedule for the execution of the moments regarding the creation of the learning centers was carried out.

To get a clearer picture of the team’s understanding of the framework and their initial reactions to it, a form was created (Appendix 4: The Academic Team’s Attitude Survey) with 9 questions in total, 4 open questions, and 5 multiple choice questions.

Firstly, the level of expectation of the team regarding the implementation process of the learning centers as an alternative strategy for professional development was investigated, showing a positive attitude and a high level of enthusiasm.

Similarly, it was found that 11 team members considered that the implementation of learning centers would have a positive impact on teacher development, while 8 of them believed that it would not have a positive impact.

Regarding the relevance of the framework created as a basis and guide for the learning center creation process, 18 members of the team considered that the information contained in the document was pertinent and

that it fulfilled its function as a guide for the learning center implementation process.

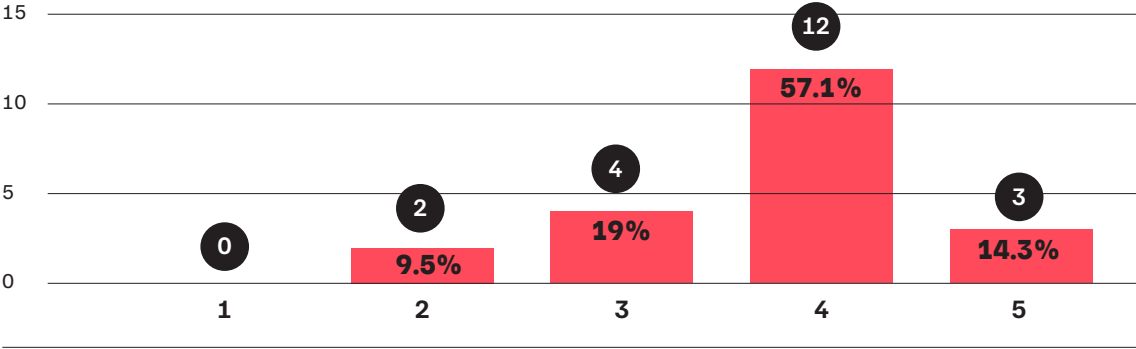
The team was also asked about their feelings regarding the opportunity of creating a Learning Center. Three of them were expectant, eight members of the team expressed feeling motivated by the opportunity to learn and contribute, and six of them expressed feeling normal since this is part of their job

duties. Two members of the team were unsure about where to start creating a Learning Center. Five members expressed concern, regarding the amount of work, taking into account the various activities that had to be covered before the end of the year and three team members were unconvinced since they would have to continue pushing the teachers to do their activities.

Graph • 1

On a scale of 1 to 5, how excited are you regarding the implementation of The Learning Center as a Professional Development Strategy at the CCA?

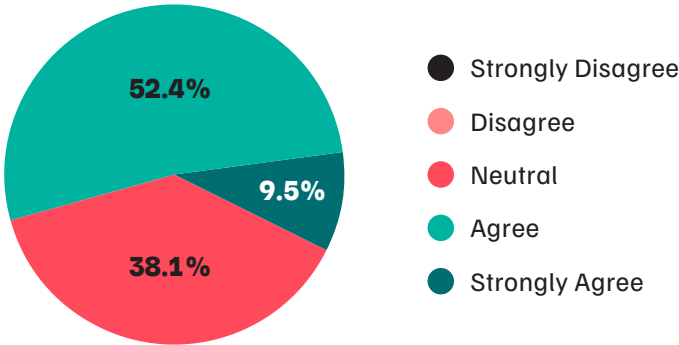
21 RESPONSES



Graph • 2

Do you think the Learning Centers will have a positive impact on teacher development?

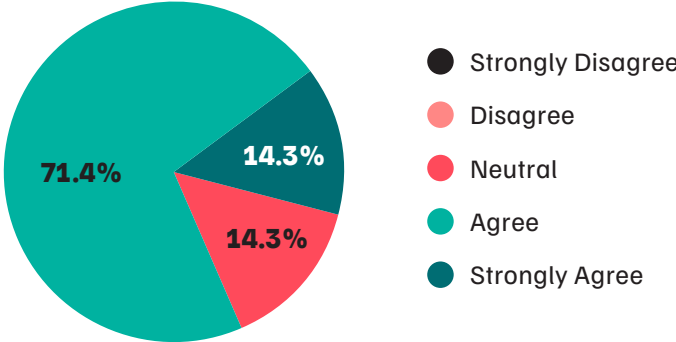
21 RESPONSES



Graph • 3

Is the information contained in the Learning Center Framework document relevant, clear and useful to guide me in the design process of a Learning Center?

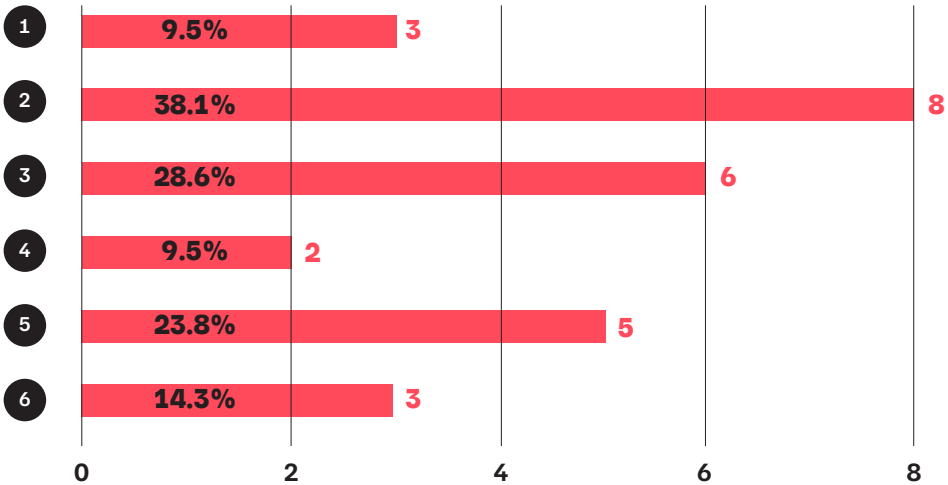
21 RESPONSES



Graph • 4

How do you feel about the opportunity of creating a Learning Center?

21 RESPONSES



- 1. **In expectation:** “Let’s see what this road brings us.”
- 2. **Motivated:** “This is an opportunity to learn and contribute.”
- 3. **Normal:** “It’s part of my job, I’ll do my best.”
- 4. **Unsure:** “I don’t know where to start, I’m a little worried.”
- 5. **Worried:** “We have a lot of work.”
- 4. **Not very convinced:** “We’ll still have to push the teachers.”

PHASE

4

Interpretation of the Educational Practice

In this section, we are going to present information about interpretation, which is an important stage in which the analysis of the perspectives of the Academic staff about the learning centers and the program developed will be discussed. In order to have this discussion, it is relevant to have the definition of perception. As Timperley explores, the integral role of teacher perceptions in the efficacy of professional development programs. She argues that for professional development to be transformative, it must resonate with teachers' perceived needs and their context-specific challenges. According to Timperley, an effective professional learning process encourages teachers to critically reflect on their practices and to propose powerful transformations in their methodology that will significantly impact both their learning process and that of their students. This reflective process is deeply influenced by teachers' beliefs about their capabilities and the potential for change within their classrooms (Timperley, 2008).

This argument can be applied to understanding how teachers perceive and interpret their experiences with Learning Centers, as it engages with new information and pedagogical strategies, integrating them into their existing schemas of professional development. We can evidence this with the concern some members of the academic team have over time constraints, the gathering of information, the development of material, and the learning center itself. This perspective offers a compre-

hensive framework for analyzing teachers' perceptions, emphasizing the role of social context and cognitive processes in shaping their understanding and attitudes toward the implementation of Learning Centers in professional development programs.

Understanding the academic team's perception of Learning Centers is pivotal in gaining insights into how the broader body of educators may perceive this form of professional development, so understanding the academic team's viewpoint can give us a clue about what teachers might think. Moreover, the attitude and perspective of the academic team towards learning centers serve as a predictive lens for measuring the efficacy of this professional development approach.

➤ Axis 1: Understanding the Perceptions of Learning Centers among the Academic Team: Coordinators, Advisors, and Support Teachers

Based on discussions and feedback obtained from the academic team during meetings and through the utilization of the "Reflective Teaching Questions set" in group settings and via a Google form, it became evident that the team acknowledged the imperative to renovate the approach to professional development. They viewed the Learning Center strategy as an opportunity to effect this transformation. The team highlighted the necessity to offer teachers a diverse selection of training topics tailored to individual pedagogical needs, with flexible scheduling options and practical, implementable tools. However, logistical concerns emerged regarding the operational aspects of establishing Learning Centers. Tasks such as sourcing pertinent theoretical resources, devising innovative and well-structured activities to stimulate

teacher reflection and growth, and ensuring consistent oversight presented challenges, particularly given time constraints. Although the Learning Center model offered flexibility in pacing, preset start and end dates necessitated ongoing monitoring, posing additional demands on the team's time. Furthermore, the team expressed uneasiness about encountering resistance from certain teachers who perceive professional development opportunities as obligatory and of limited utility, thus obstructing full engagement with the Learning Center initiative.

According to reflections and reactions gathered regarding the proposal for implementing learning centers as a dynamic strategy for teacher professional development, it aligns with Dweck's (2006) Growth Mindset research. Dweck distinguishes between a fixed mindset, where individuals believe abilities are static and unchangeable, and a growth mindset, which emphasizes that abilities can be developed through hard work, effective strategies, and input from others. Similarly, Kahneman's (2017) "Thinking, Fast and Slow" sheds light on the reactions of the academic team to learning centers. Kahneman's explanation of System 1 thinking—fast, automatic, and emotional—illustrates how quick, stereotyped judgments, akin to a fixed mindset, may arise. Conversely, his System 2 thinking—more deliberate and effortful—allows for the possibility of changing one's approach based on new information, aligning with fostering a growth mindset. The Academic team's worry about the workload, time constraints, and how overwhelming the process can be shows a fixed mindset as well as system 1 thinking. On the other hand, their comments on how innovative the proposal is and the excitement shown towards learning centers show a growth mindset along with system 2 thinking. These perspectives hold immense significance in education, shaping how both

teachers and students perceive challenges, effort, and failure. They cultivate a passion for learning and resilience in the face of challenges, viewing them as opportunities for growth rather than insurmountable obstacles.

Addressing their initial responses is crucial to better prepare the academic team for potential reactions from the broader body of teachers. This involves engaging in regular reflection sessions and feedback workshops, where the team can thoroughly analyze their reactions, embracing constructive criticism and practicing openness to alternative perspectives. Alongside these reflective practices, the development of a detailed operational plan that outlines the logistics of setting up and maintaining Learning Centers will streamline the implementation process, addressing logistical constraints and optimizing resource allocation. Implementing a phased introduction of Learning Centers allows for gradual integration into the teachers' professional development schedules, effectively managing time constraints without overwhelming faculty or staff.

Moreover, setting challenging goals aligned with personal development objectives and celebrating progress achieved through effort and persistence will strengthen the team's growth mindset and System 2 thinking. Addressing teacher resistance through targeted communication strategies, personalized learning pathways, and highlighting the benefits of Learning Centers will ensure that the academic team is not only prepared for potential pushback but is also equipped with strategies to foster engagement and participation.

Since the academic team is part of the same teacher community, their reactions can serve as a controlled sample, mirroring how teachers might react to learning centers. By adopting this proactive approach, the academic team can develop resilience, learning, and effective decision-making skills.

This preparation is vital for equipping them to navigate and address challenges within the larger teacher community, thereby ensuring the successful implementation and utilization of Learning Centers as a dynamic tool for professional development.

This section has interpreted how the academic team perceives Learning Centers for professional development. They recognize the need for a fresh approach and view Learning Centers as a solution. However, logistical challenges and concerns about teacher resistance arise. Drawing from the Growth Mindset theory, their reactions reflect a mix of fixed and growth mindsets. To address potential resistance, proactive measures like reflection sessions and detailed plans are crucial. Gradual integration and personalized communication strategies can enhance engagement. Leveraging the team's reactions and implementing proactive measures will ensure successful Learning Center implementation for professional development.

➤ Axis 2: Reactions to the Proposal and Framework

In considering this aspect, it's important to review how data was gathered. Following Diana Mora's presentation of the proposal and framework at a faculty meeting, the academic team participated in a survey comprising nine questions tailored to their perspectives. Having been introduced to the concept of Learning Centers beforehand, the team's comprehension of the framework and proposal was facilitated.

A notable portion of the team exhibited considerable emotional investment and enthusiasm, signaling a readiness to embrace Learning Centers as a novel initiative. While some members maintained a neutral stance regarding the potential positive impact of

Learning Centers on teacher development, this presents an opportunity for clarifying the framework and proposal further. The team emphasized the versatility that Learning Centers offer. The common remarks included appreciation for teachers' ability to manage their time and select desired professional development content, and they appreciate the dynamism inherent in the approach.

While certain comments reflected a positive perception, others expressed reluctance and placed the responsibility on teachers for ensuring a positive impact, citing their willingness to engage with the Learning Centers consciously and the alignment of the centers with their personal or professional goals. It was surprising to note that although the majority viewed it as an opportunity for learning and contribution, some perceived it merely as part of their job.

In interpreting this feedback, a recurring concern emerged, namely, time constraints. The team perceived this both as a challenge and as a valuable resource for the task at hand. Additionally, the survey shed light on the diverse skills and abilities that the team could bring to the creation process of Learning Centers, including creativity, soft skills, and organizational prowess, among others.

The reflection of fixed and growth mindsets, as well as System 1 and 2 thinking, observed in the previous analysis was evident here as well. The team's initial apprehensions and focus on challenges mirrored a fixed mindset and System 1 thinking, whereas their enthusiasm and openness to viewing Learning Centers as a means to engage teachers and revitalize professional development reflected a growth mindset and System 2 thinking.

These reactions can also be understood through Rogers, et al. (2014) Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which categorizes individuals into five groups based on their readiness to adopt new innovations. The Innovators, who

are eager to try new ideas, were evident in the academic team's enthusiastic and proactive response. The Early Adopters, who validate new ideas and provide early support, also showed positive interest in learning centers but had some reservations about how teachers might react. Additionally, there was an Early Majority willing to contribute their skills to the development of learning centers, indicating a growing acceptance. However, there were also elements of the Late Majority, characterized by skepticism, highlighting a need for further persuasion. Understanding Rogers' theory provides valuable insights into how to effectively engage with the academic team and eventually with the broader teacher community.

This duality in mindset and thinking processes along with the individual's readiness to adopt innovation could impact team engagement by potentially prioritizing tasks differently, thus allocating less time to developing Learning Centers. This, in turn, might result in subpar Learning Centers with decreased attention to detail, subsequently affecting teacher engagement and potentially exacerbating the very issue we aim to address.

In the previous axis, we discussed strategies for navigating operational, logistical, and time-related constraints. Considering that the academic team's responses can serve as a reflection of teachers' sentiments, addressing any reluctance or resistance toward Learning Centers, as mentioned previously, can better prepare the team for potential challenges within the broader teacher community. Kotter (2012) provides an 8-step process for leading change and implementing new initiatives, which holds significant relevance in this educational context.

The process begins with creating a sense of urgency regarding the need for change, forming a coalition of supportive leaders, and crafting a clear vision and strategy. Effective

communication of this vision fosters buy-in and empowers staff to take action while achieving short-term wins builds momentum. Kotter highlights the importance of consolidating gains to drive further change and anchoring new approaches in the organizational culture for lasting impact.

This systematic approach is pivotal in overcoming resistance, engaging stakeholders, and achieving successful and sustainable implementation of change initiatives. Given that several steps, such as establishing a sense of urgency, forming a supportive coalition, and developing a clear vision and strategy have already been initiated, implementing the remaining steps will facilitate broader acceptance of change across all staff members.

This section has interpreted the academic team's reactions to the Learning Centers proposal. Data was gathered through a survey after Diana Mora's presentation, revealing a range of enthusiasm levels from team members. Some were excited, while others were neutral or hesitant, citing time constraints as a common concern. The feedback reflects a mix of fixed and growth mindsets and System 1 and 2 thinking. Strategies from Kotter's change process are recommended to address challenges and enhance team engagement, including creating urgency, forming a supportive coalition, communicating a clear vision, achieving short-term wins, consolidating gains, and anchoring new approaches in the organizational culture.

PHASE

5

Learnings and Experiences

In the process of implementing Learning Centers within the CCCA professional development framework, this phase encapsulates insights, experiences, and potential for future exploration. Our roles as both researchers and advisors have given us a comprehensive perspective on this endeavor, revealing opportunities and challenges in educational innovation.

From Axis 1, we found that most of the academic team viewed learning centers positively. However, some members were skeptical due to concerns about time limitations and balancing multiple tasks simultaneously. This mirrored the findings in Axis 2, where the majority were supportive, but some still had doubts about managing time constraints and tasks, potentially impacting the quality of learning centers and teacher engagement. Additionally, some members questioned the effectiveness of making teachers responsible for their involvement. Addressing these concerns is crucial to better prepare for engaging with the broader body of teachers.

Our involvement in this research project fulfilled our commitment to academic inquiry but also highlighted the challenge of balancing ambitious research goals with limited time. Exploring Learning Centers at the CCCA has revealed numerous possibilities for enhancing our institution's professional development landscape. It has showcased the potential of Learning Centers as a foundational element in our professional development system, guiding

current efforts and inspiring future initiatives. However, this endeavor was not without challenges; managing multiple responsibilities brought both excitement and frustration, particularly in our desire to dive deeper into research within tight time constraints. This experience shows the importance of resource allocation and time management in research attempts, emphasizing the need for strategic planning and prioritization to maximize outcomes despite inherent limitations.

The project uncovered various perspectives on innovative professional development methodologies, ranging from enthusiasm to skepticism among team members. We observed a prevailing growth mindset among most, eager to embrace change, alongside a minority requiring further engagement and persuasion. This diversity in mindset underscores the complexities of professional development initiatives and emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and adaptability. The conceptualization of Learning Centers has strengthened our belief in their potential to address attendance and completion challenges in professional development programs. Their adaptability promises increased engagement tailored to individual professional journeys, enhancing the application of CLT principles and fostering student engagement and achievement.

Our interactions with colleagues and stakeholders have enriched our understanding of Learning Centers' potential impact on professional development and pedagogical practices. Moreover, the process has highlighted the interconnectedness of various aspects of educational innovation, from research and curriculum development to teacher training and institutional policy. By navigating these complexities, we have not only expanded our knowledge base but also cultivated a spirit of resilience and adaptability in the face of challenges.

Looking ahead, the insights gleaned from this research project will inform our continued efforts to enhance professional development at CCCA. By leveraging the strengths of Learning Centers and addressing the challenges identified, we aim to create a more robust and inclusive learning environment for educators and students alike. Moreover, we recognize the importance of ongoing reflection and refinement in shaping our professional development strategies, ensuring their relevance and effectiveness in a rapidly evolving educational landscape. We remain committed to fostering a culture of innovation and excellence within our institution.

Unfortunately, implementing Learning Centers was beyond our scope within this study's timeframe, paving the way for future research. This unrealized potential opens avenues for investigating their impact on teacher engagement, classroom dynamics, and student outcomes. This future exploration can also shine a light on administrative challenges, implementation strategies' adaptability, tool efficacy, and outreach strategies to engage educators in future endeavors. These insights will guide us in refining the Learning Centers approach to align with institutional goals and evolving educational standards.

In conclusion, this phase has been a catalyst for learning and growth, setting the stage for future explorations building on our initial venture into Learning Centers. It urges us to continue innovating, promoting inclusivity, and making an impact to enrich the CCCA's academic landscape.

➤ References

- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House.
- Kahneman, D. (2017). *Thinking, fast and slow*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Education Week. (2016, February). Four keys to effective classroom learning centers. <https://t.ly/kumUv>

Singer, S. R. (2002). Learning and teaching centers: Hubs of educational reform. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 119, 59. <https://doi.org/10.1002/he.71>

Kotter, J. P. (2014). *Accelerate: Building strategic agility for a faster-moving world*. Harvard Business Review Press.

Malefyt, T. (n.d.). *Learning centers in the secondary classroom*. Edutopia. <https://t.ly/5SILD>

Truschel, J., & Reedy, D. L. (2009). National survey: What is a learning center in the 21st century? *Learning Assistance Review*, 14(1), 9-22. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ839147>

Rogers, E. M., Singhal, A., & Quinlan, M. M. (2014). Diffusion of innovations. In D. W. Stacks & M. B. Salwen (Eds.), *An integrated approach to communication theory and research* (2nd ed., pp. 432-448). Routledge.

Timperley, H. (2008). *Teacher professional learning and development*. International Academy of Education, UNESCO. (Educational Practices Series-18). <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000179161>

➤ Appendices

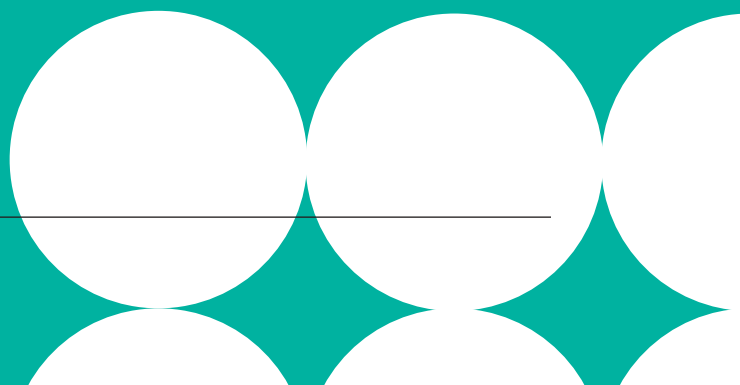
Click [HERE](#)



The Impact of the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano - Cali Pre-Service Teacher Program

BY

Claudia Andrea Díaz • Farid Camilo Sandoval



➤ Introduction

The Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali has consistently prioritized its educators' professional development, as evidenced by implementing the pedagogical practice process via the Pre-Service Teaching Program. This program has guided prospective teachers in grasping the essential phenomena, concepts, and knowledge crucial for effective pedagogical practices.

Structured into three key modules—Pedagogical Guidance, Didactic Orientation, and Reflective Teaching—the Pre-Service Teaching Program employs a communicative approach in each session, aligning seamlessly with Colombo's teaching methodology. Throughout this enriching process, participants partake in thirteen in-person sessions, each lasting four hours, in addition to two remote sessions (8 hours) and six autonomous work hours dedicated to investigative and reflective tasks. The latter contribute significantly to reinforcing the learnings acquired during the in-person sessions.

This program, implemented over three years, signifies a substantial investment by the institution in the comprehensive training of its future educators. The amalgamation of in-person sessions and autonomous work provides a solid theoretical foundation and cultivates reflection and the practical application of acquired knowledge. The aim is to address the demand for education professionals and equip them with essential tools for a confident and effective initiation into their teaching careers.

This pedagogical training context, framed with an institutional commitment, provides an ideal setting for the subsequent systematization of experiences. The meticulous documentation and analysis of experiences within the Pre-Service Teaching Program will facilitate a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to the program's success, pinpoint areas for continuous improvement, and ensure that specialists precisely tailor the training to meet the institution's and participants' needs.

➤ The Socio-Academic Context

The Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali, a binational center officially recognized by the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá, has been a key institution in fostering English language education and promoting American culture in Cali for over 70 years. As a non-profit foundation, it operates two main branches in Cali, with the larger Northern branch serving as the hub for various administrative and cultural activities, including the Abraham Lincoln Library, the art gallery, and the IdeaLab Maker Space. The organization's commitment extends to accommodating the population's growing needs in the city's south by opening a new branch in the Colegio Americano (Sede Melendez) and its traditional South branch. These expansions reflect its dedication to providing accessible language education and cultural experiences across different city regions.

The Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali has further exemplified its proactive approach to academic excellence and professional development with its strategic response to the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic brought. Recognizing the importance of adapting to local and global educational needs, the institution significantly restructured its academic area at the end of 2020. This initiative aimed to enhance its teaching staff's professional development and refine its academic management processes, ensuring the highest standards of educational service to the community. By developing an Integrative Professional Development Model, the CCCA has strongly emphasized teacher education, innovative pedagogy, and adequate supervision of classroom practice. This model aims to bolster student language learning outcomes, showcasing the CCCA's commitment to fostering research, digital literacy, interinstitutional cooperation, and quality teaching practices. Such efforts highlight the institution's capability and readiness

to develop and implement comprehensive programs that meet the evolving needs of its educators and students alike, thereby providing a robust foundation for introducing our current Pre-Service Teacher Program.

PHASE

1

Identification of the Educational Practice

➤ The Educational Practice Problem

The teaching field has significantly transformed due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The widespread impact includes a surge in teacher resignations and declining applicants for available positions. This shift in the workforce dynamic has added to the challenges faced by educational institutions worldwide. Moreover, the pandemic's disruptive influence on education is highlighted by global averages, indicating complete school closures for 20 weeks with an additional 21 weeks of partial closures. This extended period of disrupted learning has profoundly affected an estimated 63 million teachers globally, further emphasizing the far-reaching consequences of the pandemic on the education sector (UNESCO, 2020, 2022).

According to survey results, educators encountered heightened levels of stress and burnout during this timeframe. A significant number of 15,000 teachers surveyed across

11 countries, including the United States, Canada, Australia, Russia, and New Zealand, consistently expressed fatigue during 2020–2021. Over half of the surveyed teachers indicated a requirement for assistance to address their well-being (UNESCO et al., 2022).

Likewise, the situation in Latin America mirrored these challenges. In nations such as Peru, the organizational, resource, and salary circumstances for teachers have made their work more stressful, leading many to contemplate resigning (Yupari-Azabache, et al., 2021). In Colombia, a parallel struggle is underway. It has worsened over time, prompting numerous protests by organizations like FECODE (Colombian Federation of Education Workers) and ADEA (Association of Educators of the Atlantic) in response to earlier issues. FECODE advocates for the rights of all teachers due to inadequate conditions in areas such as health, education, economics, and social security. Additionally, many rural areas resumed in-person classes without the necessary health safeguards (Yupari-Azabache, et al., 2021).

Considering all this in the Colombian context, Cali was no exception. According to a study by the Observatory of Educational Realities (ORE) conducted in 12 municipalities of Valle del Cauca, 85% of the total teachers surveyed indicated they had no experience teaching virtually before confinement, and 77% had a medium-low mastery of ICT tools. Furthermore, 48% of teachers noted that students' learning processes deteriorated. Regarding the challenges students faced in virtual learning, the most notable included the lack of habits for virtual learning (65%), permanent support from parents (61%), availability of technological devices (61%), internet access (60%), having conditions at home to receive virtual classes (58%), and mastery of the technology used for classes (35%) (Universidad ICESI & ORE, 2020). In a similar

vein, teachers expressed that one of their most significant difficulties was responding to domestic and care work (35%), followed by the evaluation of learning (30%) and curricular structuring adapted to virtual education (26%) (Universidad ICESI & ORE, 2020).

The academic staff observed many teachers leaving their positions throughout the pandemic, with fewer applications for open spots. Consequently, the remaining teachers took courses to fill these vacancies, leading to an increased workload. This increased workload provided a valid reason for them to experience quicker burnout due to the heightened stress. Additionally, the pandemic directly impacted the academic sphere by necessitating the migration from physical classrooms to Google Classrooms, creating Provisional Lists (virtual attendance lists), and requiring teachers to devise activities for a virtual environment with which they were unfamiliar. When teachers gradually had to return to the branch, they faced further challenges, such as teaching while ensuring adherence to biosecurity rules.

Another challenge was creating activities based on CLT but with no physical interaction. Additionally, several cultural services had to be canceled, like projects aligned with the American Spaces agenda, special occasions, and IdeaLab services. Consequently, in post-pandemic times in 2021 at Centro Cultural Colombo Americano, the Head of Human Resources, the Academic Director, and the Assistant Academic Director proposed a potential solution to the situation mentioned above: a project to recruit new teachers and simultaneously promote the government's push for companies to provide jobs for first-time employees.

➤ The Identification of the Educational Practice

This section, “The Identification of the Educational Practice,” is divided into five parts. First, it outlines the practice’s objective, enabling readers to grasp the primary purpose of the Pre-Service Teacher Program. Then, it delves into the specific aims and actions undertaken at each stage, charting the journey from the initial idea’s inception to the post-implementation evaluation and adjustments. Moreover, it presents this systematization project’s objective and details the key aspects considered at each stage to re-examine the practice. This comprehensive and insightful analysis will provide the framework for the rest of this text.

1 The Name of the Educational Practice Intervention

The Impact of the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali Pre-Service Teacher Program.

2 The Objective of the Educational Practice

The general objective of The Pre-Service Teacher program is to increase the number of available teachers with the necessary skills to join the institution, favoring the inclusion of young people into the labor force as established in Decree 688 of 2021. Likewise, the objectives and description for each step will be presented:

Step 1

Project Proposal Development

Objective:

- To prepare the project proposal.

Procedure:

The Pre-Service Teacher program came up as an idea to respond to the pressing need for teachers in Centro Cultural Colombo

Americano. In 2021, in an Equipo Directivo meeting, the issue was presented by Martha Orobio, the Academic Director of the institution. As a possible solution, she commented in the meeting that going to the universities and recruiting pre-service teachers could provide a solution to the institutional needs. Mr. Bernardo Franco, the head of the financial department, approved the creation of a new program addressing the pre-service teacher population.

The workgroup, formed by Ana María Chate, the head of Human Resources; Martha Orobio, the Academic Director; and Brayan Portilla, the Assistant Academic Director, collaborated on a comprehensive proposal. In that project, they defined the conditions for the program with a description of the candidate profile (a 7th semester or higher university student, B1+ level of English, undergraduates of Foreign Languages, Bachelor degrees in Education or related fields), a budget for transportation benefits for participants to travel to the Colombo Americano for classes, and some potential partner universities that could be invited to participate in the program. The information was compiled into an Excel file as the foundational document. (see Appendix 1. Propuesta Plan Semillero de formación 2021 - 2024)

Step 2

Partnership and Network Formation

Objective:

- To create a network to promote the program

Procedure:

As part of the second stage of the project, Brayan Portilla, the Assistant Academic Director, created a syllabus proposal, which the Academic Director approved. Both decided on a person who would lead the program activities and who was the bridge between the participants, university practicum coordina-

tors, and Centro Cultural Colombo Americano. The academic advisor, Claudia Andrea Diaz Melo, was assigned this role. Also, the trainers for each session were selected and informed; a Google Classroom was designed to compile all the materials trainers were to use, plus all the legal information about the program for participants.

Then, the group of four engaged with university program directors and deans of education to present the project and establish agreements between the institutions. The first two universities to participate in the project were ICESI University and Santiago de Cali University (see Appendix 2. Presentation Pre-Service Teaching Program—ICESI & USC—May 2022 and Appendix 3. Infographic: Pre-Service Teaching Plegable Logo Colombo.pdf).

Step 3

Recruitment and Selection

Objective:

- To call for applicants and the selection process.

Procedure:

Each university invited students in the 7th and eighth semesters of foreign language degrees to participate in the program. Colombo Americano staff presented the program to potential pre-service teachers interested in completing their Centro Cultural Colombo Americano internships. As a result, three meetings were held on February 11th, 14th, and 15th, 2022. In the meetings, possible candidates were able to learn about Colombo's offer: The core of the Pre-Service Teacher program, recruitment conditions, the plan of benefits, the calendar of activities, and a Q&A time. They got a QR code to fill out a form to apply. After that week, 23 participants applied to the program, fourteen participants were not selected due to their level of English (B1 or below), and 8 participants were selected.

Secondly, the Head of Human Resources and the Academic Director checked the applications to select the candidates. The chosen participants took the OOPT test and a personal oral interview. Those selected in the third filter could start the program (see Appendix 4 Inscripción Programa Semillero Colombo).

Step 4

Educational Framework and Practice

Objective:

- To provide participants with a common theoretical framework and meaningful practice.

Procedure:

The implementation time came on Saturday, March 12th, 2022, when the opening session of the Pre-Service Teacher Program took place. Participants and the Academic staff were excited about that new beginning. Participants were expected to attend eleven in-situ sessions and two synchronous sessions from the opening day to June 11, 2022, when the closing ceremony occurred. During those thirteen weeks, participants delved into different professional development topics divided into three sections: Pedagogical, Didactic, and Reflective orientations. In six of the thirteen sessions, participants had to develop an Exit Ticket, understood as an independent activity, to reflect on their gains in the process and how to apply all the information in the sessions. They got feedback from their trainers after each Exit Ticket deadline.

Participants also had the opportunity to delve deeply into pedagogical subjects, providing a solid foundation for their professional development. Finally, they got a certificate of attendance. Also, they filled out a feedback survey. (see Appendix 5. Pre-Service Teacher Program Feedback.)

There were four cohorts from February 2022 until November 2023. The following chart contains the number of participants per cohort:

**Step 5
Program Evaluation and Adjustment**

Objective:

- Adjust the Pre-Service Teacher Program based on participant and Academic Staff feedback.

Procedure:

The Assistant Academic Director and the academic advisor in charge of the program

met to check feedback forms; the comments condensed in the document were the input for the improvement made to the program in terms of curriculum, trainers, session time, and practical exercises.

After each cohort, a process of reflection and adjustment has been conducted. In the same Google Forms document, participants could indicate their availability to work with the Colombo Americano teachers’ staff (see Appendix 5, Pre-Service Teacher Program Feedback).

Chart • 1

| Cohort | Year/Semester | Number of participants | Participants hired by the CCCA |
|--------|---------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1st | 2022-1 | 8 | 6 |
| 2nd | 2022-2 | 13 | 7 |
| 3rd | 2023-1 | 13 | 5 |
| 4th | 2023-2 | 17 | 4 |



PHASE

2

Establishing the Objective and Axes of the Systematization

➤ The Objective of the Systematization of the Educational Practice

To analyze the impact of the Pre-Service Teacher Program on the academic, administrative staff, and hired teachers.

➤ The Axes of Reconstruction of the Educational Practice

1. The impact of the Pre-Service Teacher Program on the academic administrative staff.
2. The impact of the Pre-Service Teacher Program on the hired teachers.

PHASE

3

Reconstruction of the Educational Practice

This section, “Reconstruction of the Teaching Practice,” is divided into two parts. First, it describes the events that show how the implementation of the Pre-Service Teacher Program impacted the academic administrative staff. Second, it presents the participants’ perspectives after the program’s conclusion.

➤ Axis 1: The Impact of the Pre-Service Teacher Program on the Academic Administrative Staff

To assess the effectiveness of the Pre-Service Teacher Program, Martha Orobio, the Academic Director, and Ana María Chate, the Head of Human Resources, responded to a series of questions where they expressed the program’s intentions. Ana María Chate mentioned that in 2021, there was a shortage of teachers due to a high turnover, and the growth of CCCA prompted the program’s creation. Afterward, Ana María Chate, Martha Orobio, and the Assistant Academic Director, Brayan Portilla, created an initial draft of the program in Excel outlining the various conditions and curriculum, considering the universities’ needs in terms of topics, practicum opportunities, and available financial resources to present a robust proposal. Later on, they began seeking potential collaborators. The first two universities they visited were Santiago de Cali and ICESI, which accepted the invitation.

Ana María Chate emphasized that the program's main objective is to provide CCCA with a pool of teachers to be employed in the institution. She underlined the importance of recruiting new teachers while aligning the initiative with the requirements outlined in the Colombian Technical Standards 5555 and 5580, which establish the criteria for teachers regarding content and experience needed to teach in a certified institution. Additionally, she highlighted that this program is aligned with the national government's promotion of jobs for young people.

In her academic role, Martha Orobio highlighted that while the Program was initially founded on administrative principles, its fundamental goal is to draw in university students by presenting teaching as a rewarding path for professional development. She emphasized that the Pre-Service Teacher Program enables students to explore teaching as a vocation, thus offering practical experience in developing their teaching skills. (see Appendix 6 - Transcripción preguntas y respuestas realizadas a Martha Orobio y Ana Chate.)

As illustrated in the chart in the previous phase, the program implementation yielded positive results for Centro Cultural Colombo Americano. The first cohort contributed six new teachers hired to work in the institution's Kids and Teens program, meeting the program's expectations of acquiring new educators.

Since the program's inception, three additional cohorts have been initiated: the second cohort from August 27th to November 19, 2022; the third cohort from March 11th to June 10th, 2023; and the fourth cohort from September 2nd to November 18th, 2023. Since February 2022, seventy-one candidates out of the four cohorts expressed interest in joining the program, with fifty-one selected to undergo the sixty-hour training and twenty-two ultimately hired to work in the Kids & Teens and Adults programs.

➤ Axis 2: The Impact of the Pre-Service Teacher Program on the Hired Teachers

At the end of the implementation of the Pre-Service Teacher Program, participants from each cohort provided feedback on various program components. Forty-five participants completed the feedback form between June 2022 and November 2023, consisting of closed questions rated on a scale from one to five. The questions covered topics such as the virtual complementary learning environment, the usefulness of materials and resources for pedagogical discussions, the significance of the course, its utility for teaching work, and how the trainers' contribution greatly enhances the professional development process. Notably, all responses received scored either a 5 or 4, with none falling below an average score of 3 or a low score of 2-1.

The following paragraphs offer more detailed information about participants' perceptions:

Forty-five participants completed the survey to answer the following questions: 1. The virtual complementary learning environment Google Classroom facilitated the development and achievement of the program objectives and goals; thirty-eight participants rated it as 5, and four rated it as 4 (Graph 1).

To question: 2. The materials, digital resources, and support learning systems in the course were helpful for the discussions and awareness about English Teaching as a Foreign language; forty-one participants ranked it as 5, and four evaluated it as 4 (Graph 2).

To the question: 3. The content, resources, and discussions in the course were significant for developing teaching the language—the total number of participants evaluated this question as five (Graph 3).

To question: 4. The trainers facilitated the achievement of the course objectives,

the participation, and interactions among the course members; forty-one participants ranked it 5, and four individuals evaluated it as 4 (Graph 4).

The survey also included an open-ended section for participants to share their opinions about the program. The majority of comments were overwhelmingly positive, with participants using words such as 'helpful,' 'enjoyable,' 'applicable to teaching,' 'passion,' 'commitment,' 'fulfilling expectations,' 'meaningful experience,' 'useful tools,' 'improved pedagogy,' and 'teaching English competence.' These comments were overwhelmingly positive, but we also asked participants in a more informal setting to give us feedback. In this case, they told us things like "The program should retain a theoretical component such as delving into approach, method, and methodology, since these topics are not extensively covered in our academic curriculum and are useful for reflecting on our pedagogical practice." "The program should give more prominence to micro-teaching sessions as they differentiate this program from any ordinary teacher preparation course." Also, "I would like more reflective activities such as debates and discussions on traditional teaching methods and the new needs of students from more contemporary educational contexts." Unlike the comments on the survey, these informal comments helped improve the Program after each cohort and made it more robust in practice, class observations, and didactics.

As a result of implementing the Pre-Service Teacher Program, twenty-two participants were hired to be teachers starting in the Kids and Teens Program. The participants from the first and second cohorts in 2023 could also teach in the Adult program. They were interviewed again after they started working for Centro Cultural Colombo Americano. The survey included a combination of closed and open questions. In the first section, teachers were to answer if they agreed or disagreed

with five statements about "their understanding of teaching," "skills to manage a class," "effective teaching practice," "a supportive learning environment offer," and "open-minded teaching practices." On the other hand, the second section provided teachers with room to express their opinions about the "relevance of the program in their teaching experience," "if after the program they changed their teaching approaches," "if they got a better understanding of their student's needs," and "if they feel more confident in teaching after participating in the program." Twenty of the twenty-two teachers hired answered the survey.

The first section showed that ex-participants generally considered the Pre-Service Teacher Program "relevant" for effective teaching. It changed their teaching perspective and equipped them with the foundations needed for teaching a class. Consequently, twenty of them expressed feeling more confident when teaching a class (Graph 5).

The information about participants' perceptions was found to be more detailed. In answer to the question, "I have a deeper understanding of how to teach a language," sixteen participants strongly agreed, and six participants agreed (Graph 6).

Regarding the question, "I am better able to manage my classroom effectively," twelve participants strongly agreed, and ten participants agreed (Graph 7).

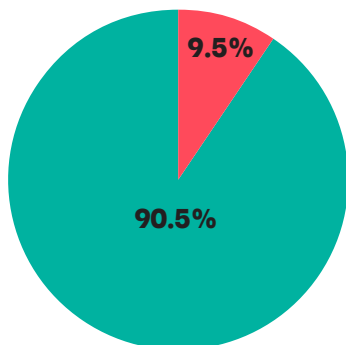
Sixteen participants strongly agreed, five participants agreed, and one participant had a neutral opinion of the statement "I am more reflective of my teaching practice." (Graph 8)

Regarding the statement, "I am creating a more positive and supportive learning environment," sixteen participants strongly agreed, and six participants agreed (Graph 9).

For the statement "I am more open to trying new things in my teaching," seventeen participants strongly agreed, and five participants agreed (Graph 10).

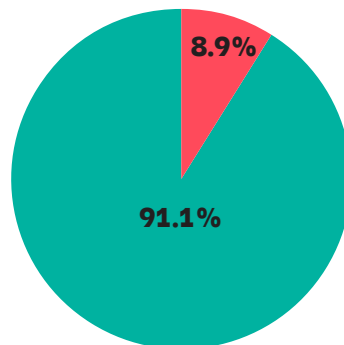
Graph • 1

Participants' Scores for Google Classroom Effectiveness



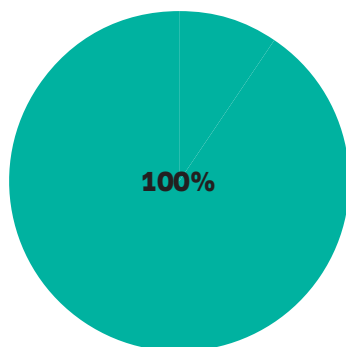
Graph • 2

Participants' Scores for the Usefulness of Course Materials in English Teaching



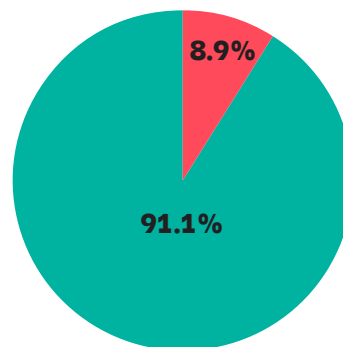
Graph • 3

Participants' Scores for the Significance of Content and Discussions



Graph • 4

Participants' Scores for Trainers' Facilitation of Course Objectives

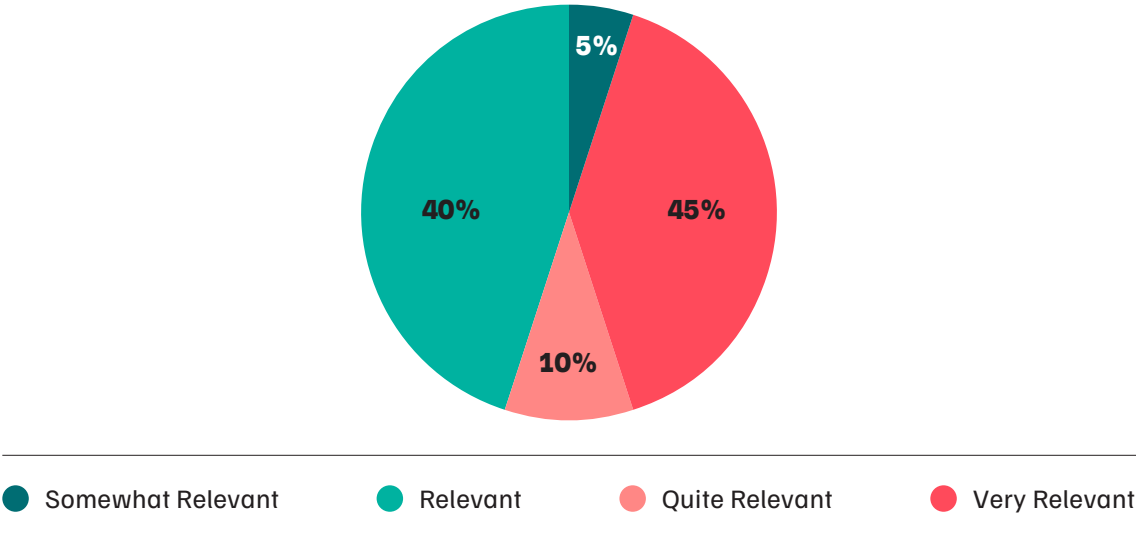


● Participants who rated 4

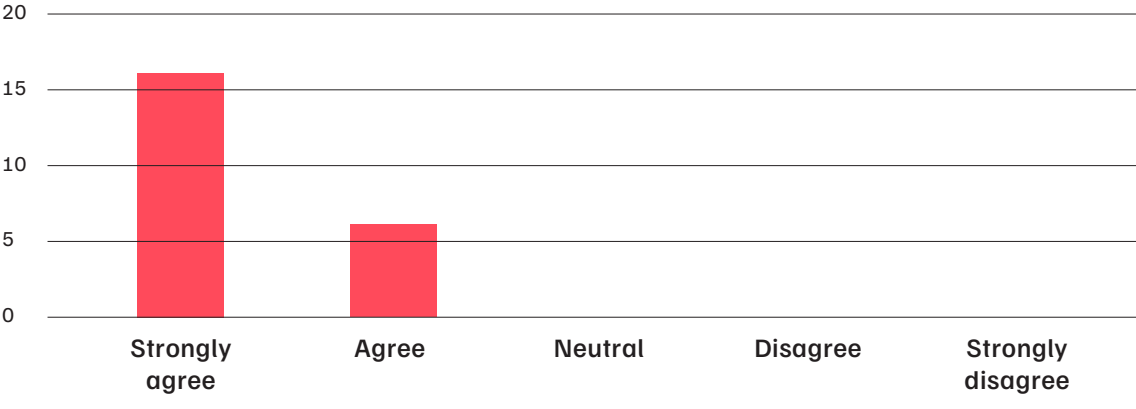
● Participants who rated 5

Graph • 5

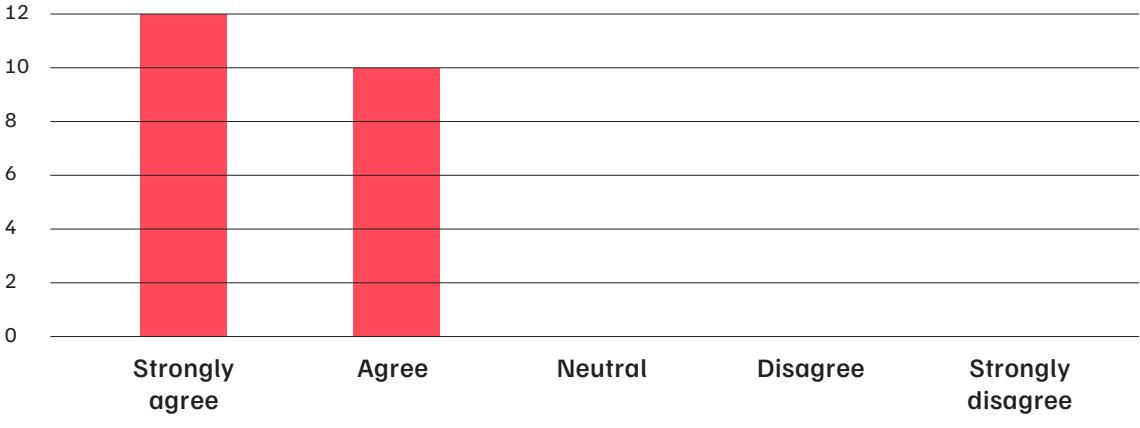
Pre-Service Teacher Program's Relevance to Current Teaching Practice



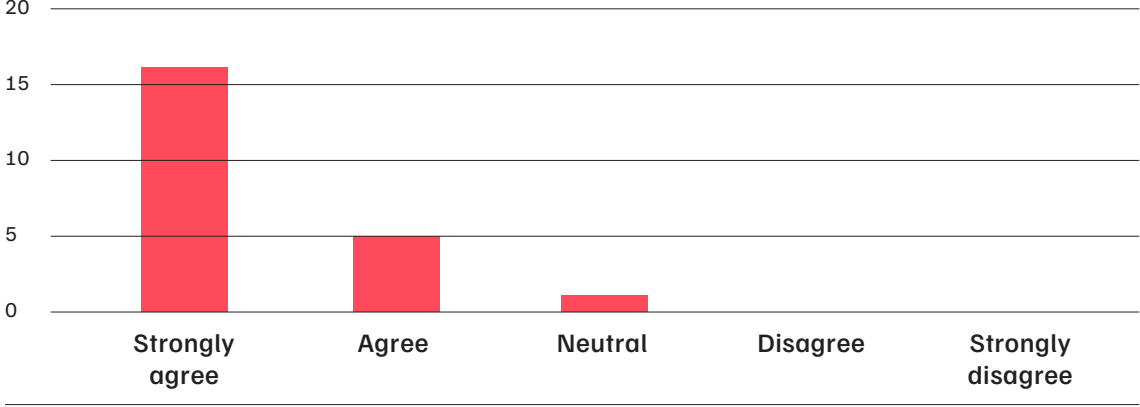
Graph • 6



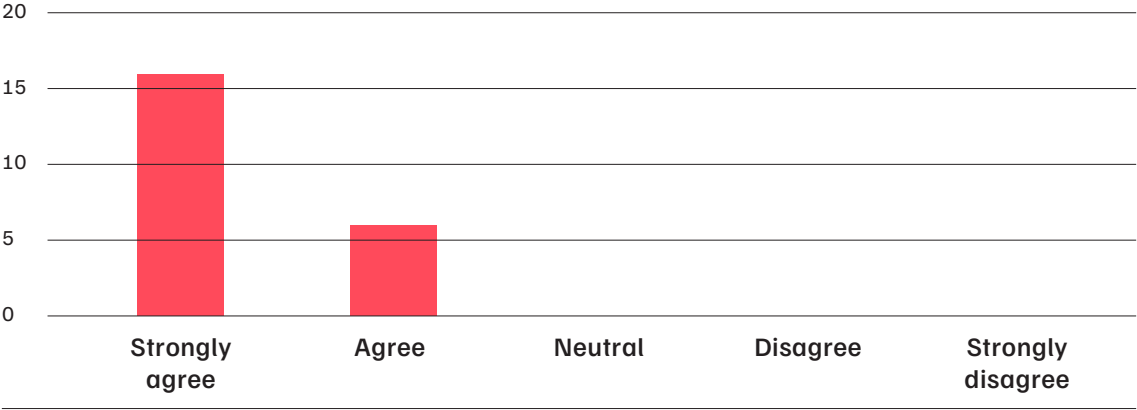
Graph • 7



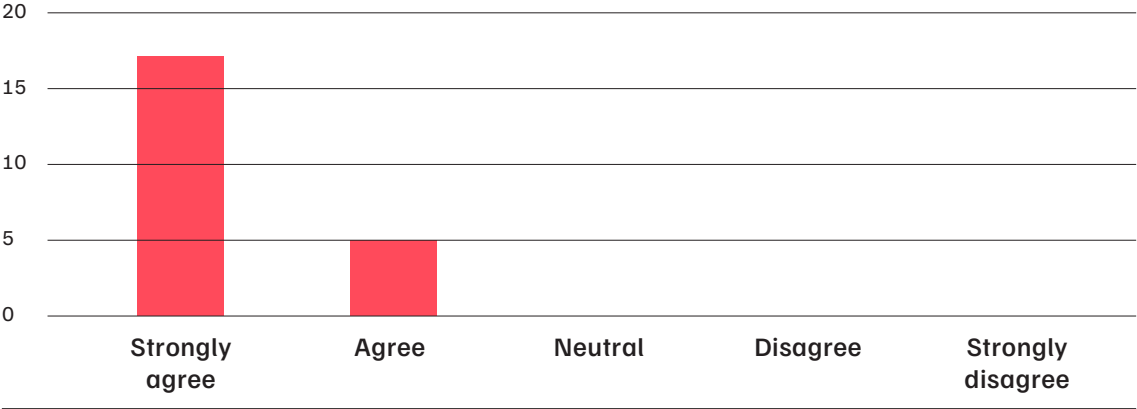
Graph • 8



Graph • 9



Graph • 10



In the second part of the survey, teachers were asked three more open questions in which they expressed the following opinions on how equipped they felt to teach a class:

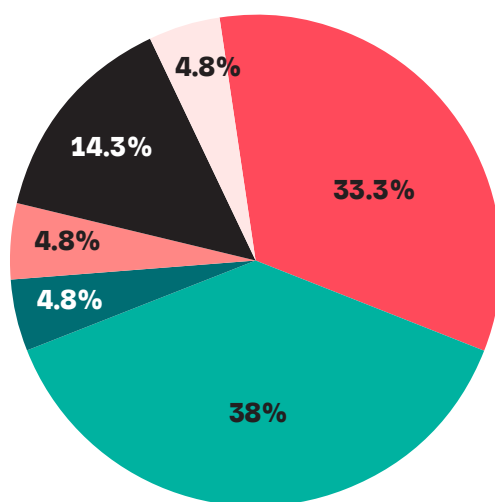
To the question: “Has the program changed your approach to teaching in any way? If so, how?” The opinions were consistently positive. The comments were grouped into six categories, taking into consideration the most common ones:

- How to structure the class
- Communicative and interactional class
- Innovative teaching practices and tools
- To develop teaching skills
- A more reflective teaching perspective
- Not really

The following graphic shows the results.

Graph • 11

Program Impact on Teaching Approach



- Not really
- A more reflective teaching perspective
- How to structure the class
- To develop teaching skills
- Innovative teaching practices and tools
- Communicative and interactional classes



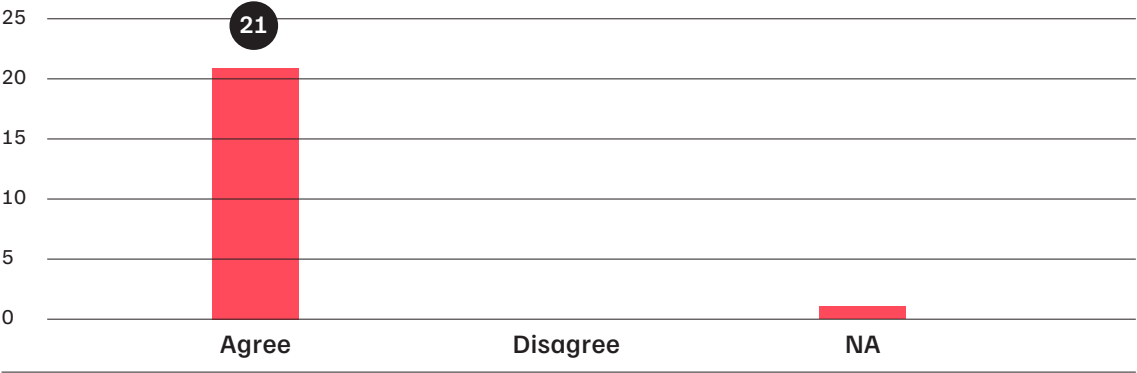
Below, we will present the data collected from the open-ended question that responds to two questions: “Has the course helped you to understand the needs of your students better?” and “Do you feel more confident in your teaching abilities as a result of the course?”. To record the data in this document, we classified the affirmative responses with “Agree” and the negative ones with “Disagree.” (Graph 12 and 13).

Implementing the Pre-Service Teacher Program at the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano underscores the significance of equipping future educators with a comprehensive theoretical and practical foundation.

Through innovative methodologies and institutional commitment, the program has proven crucial in training qualified teachers and addressing current educational needs. The positive outcomes, reflected in the high satisfaction of participants and the successful integration of new teachers into the institution, highlight the value of this collaborative and reflective approach to teaching. This joint effort between the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano and participating universities has enriched the educational experience of teachers in training and significantly contributed to the professional development and enrichment of the academic community at large.

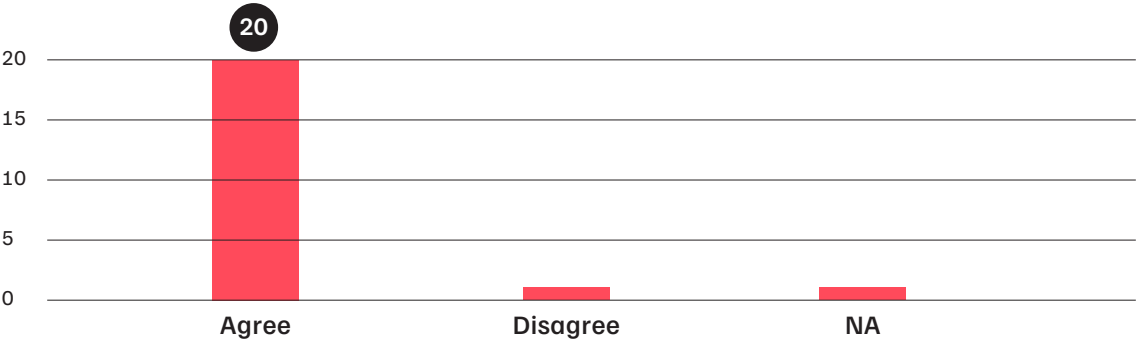
Graph • 12

Has the course helped you to better understand the needs of your students?



Graph • 13

Do you feel more confident in your teaching abilities as a result of the course?



PHASE

4

Interpretation of the Educational Practice

In the previous phase, information was presented based on the feedback collected from ex-participants in the Pre-Service Teacher program; in this phase, an analysis of the program implementation will be shown.

➤ Axis 1: The Impact of the Pre-Service Teacher Program on the Academic Administrative Staff

According to the information found, the administrative staff had the idea of implementing a robust program to facilitate the acquisition of new teachers while training them in teaching practices to be executed in CCCA classes. The objective of Decree 688 is to implement a strategy for young workers to develop activities to strengthen their life projects, social-emotional skills, innovation, and leadership in collaboration with Colombian institutions. It seeks to contribute to closing gaps for young people to access information and knowledge, preparing them to take on challenges and participate in new economic opportunities (Decreto 688, 2021). The chart shown in the first stage measured the program's impact in the four cohorts: ninety-four pre-service teachers applied to the program, fifty-three were selected and participated, and they had access to the pedagogical, didactic, and reflective foundations offered by CCCA. As a result, twenty-two of them work as teach-

ers in the institution. This fact has positively impacted the institution by increasing the number of teachers and reducing the need for advertisements to find new teachers outside the institution. Also, nineteen of them were covered by Decree 688, which impacted the financial benefit received by the individuals in their first job.

As researchers, it is satisfactory to see how Centro Cultural Colombo Americano participates in this government initiative by training and employing young university students who can grow professionally in the institution. That is the case of one of the participants, whose professional experience and growth in the institution allowed him to be selected as an academic advisor in December 2023. The role of the academic advisor is understood in Colombo Americano as a teacher who can guide other teachers in applying Communicative Language Teaching in the classroom by improving their teaching skills.

The program's implementation indicates Colombo's growth and how new projects could be developed to impact the working environment meaningfully. As workers in Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali, we see the consolidation of the Pre-Service Teacher Program as a laboratory that proves how a step-by-step project implementation can help solve administrative issues. According to the data, the growth of pre-service teachers' pedagogical knowledge and didactic skills is also evident. As Decree 688 proposes, there is a positive perception of innovation, leadership, and preparation to face classroom dynamics accurately and diligently. Also, Colombo Americano has taken into account participants' needs and recommendations given in the feedback form to adjust the curriculum of the program to the particular needs and expectations of the university students, providing them with meaningful training in core language teaching topics that impact the

way they would apply that knowledge in the classroom whenever they would be hired by a school, institute, among others.

On the other hand, the number of universities participating in the program also increased within two years of implementation. This fact gives the researchers a sense of trust in the program. Initially, two universities participated in the program's agreement. By March 2024, six universities will be participating in the program recruitment sessions; that is another fact that supports the potential of the described project.

In her article "Professional Development Through Teachers' Associations," Baecher (2023) mentioned some information related to organizations such as Colombo Americano, which intends to impact new teachers positively. She writes, "Teachers Associations are formal organizations that bring teachers from different subjects and levels of education into a professional community" (Baecher 2023, para. 9). In the case of Colombo Americano and its Pre-Service Teacher Program, it provides support to university students in their professional development. At the same time, they have access to networking opportunities. These kinds of agreements, such as the one between the CCCA and the participant universities, are described in Baecher:

To provide a valuable platform for teachers to develop their skills, stay current with trends in teaching and learning, and connect with other educational professionals. [...] teachers can advance their careers, improve the quality of their teaching, and contribute to the overall development, growth, and improvement of education (Baecher 2023, para.14).

A third area of analysis, as expressed in the impact of the feedback survey, was applied to the participants when they finished the pro-

gram, which affected the curriculum adjustments during the program's four semesters. These adjustments have taken into account the needs of the participants in terms of a higher number of class observations, the removal of some topics that were not considered core in the field of language teaching, and the inclusion of other topics like new technologies, new trends, and lesson planning, which are less present in the pedagogical orientation field and more present in the didactics field.

➤ Axis 2: The Impact of the Pre-Service Teacher Program on the Hired Teachers

In this study, the perceptions of twenty-two hired participants towards the Pre-Service Teacher program are analyzed concerning the strengths and needs expressed in the feedback form after they began to work as teachers at Colombo Americano. Participants shared their opinions on various aspects of teaching, including collaborative learning, classroom strategies, practical content, and class observations.

The opinions of CCCA participants align with those found in a study by Gadella Kamstra (2024). Gadella Kamstra focused on training conducted in two universities in Spain and its evaluation from the perspectives of pre-service and in-service teachers. The results showed similarities with the categories found in CCCA participants' feedback, particularly in recognition of being part of a community of teachers in training and the importance of pedagogical practice. Gadella Kamstra's study highlights the significance and value of being part of a community of pre-service teachers within a teacher training program. The data indicated that both in-service and pre-service teachers consider this aspect extremely valuable because it allows participants to encounter

diverse opinions, effectively preparing them for their future professional lives in education.

Another researcher, Farrell (2012) emphasizes the crucial role of the Pre-Service Teacher Program in professional development. Farrell introduced the concept of “novice-service teacher development,” advocating for a collaborative effort to ensure a seamless transition into the teaching profession. CCCA participants noted the program’s constant support in the feedback they provided. They acknowledged strengths such as the usefulness of the virtual complementary learning environment, materials, and resources for collaborative pedagogical discussions in each session. They also emphasized the significance of the course for their teaching work and how the trainers’ contributions greatly enhanced their professional development process.

Another significant aspect that CCCA Pre-Service Program participants noticed is the pedagogical practice, which is crucial for facing the challenges of a real classroom environment. Gadella Kamstra’s study also notes the importance of pedagogical practice as a practical experience that allows participants to assess their affinity for the teaching profession and refine their skills in handling real classroom situations. Farrell (2012) emphasizes the value of interdisciplinary communities and pedagogical practice in enriching pre-service teacher education, advocating for a curriculum that integrates theory with classroom realities to develop reflective and effective educators. This reflection points to a broader discussion on the effectiveness of teacher training programs and the importance of ensuring they are responsive to the evolving needs of educators and students in a rapidly changing educational landscape, a topic that could be considered for future research.

Gadella Kamstra’s study highlights the importance of integrating a supplementary

course dedicated to exploring the challenges and realities of the first years of teaching through reflective practice. Such a course could help prepare pre-service teachers for the complexities of classroom teaching and encourage the development of essential reflective practice skills. Johnson, mentioned by Gadella Kamstra (2024), suggests that preparation programs should focus on three key areas: content knowledge required by L2 teachers, pedagogical approaches, and the institutional mechanisms through which these elements are delivered and learned.

Consequently, the CCCA program has proposed and improved a curriculum that bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching skills. With a total of 60 hours of training, participants highlight the importance of discussions in all sessions. The didactic orientation has evolved to include more hours of training in topics such as the role of the teacher and the student, differentiated instruction, lesson planning, and new trends in language teaching. This strong hands-on component significantly impacts classroom decision-making and teaching practices.

The 22 hired teachers in CCCA highlighted feeling more confident in their teaching abilities due to the course and a better understanding of their students’ needs. The program has evolved by including more hours of class observation, which Noguera (2018) considers a powerful tool for identifying teacher behavior and refining teaching strategies as well as for sharing teaching techniques, documenting and learning in-class dynamics. Additionally, the CCCA program focuses more practically on aspects such as class preparation, activity selection based on student needs and context, classroom management strategies, and assessments. Participants prepare a Micro-Teaching session collaboratively with the guidance and feedback of program trainers.

The feedback survey enabled an understanding of participants' expectations and needs. Comparing survey results with the knowledge acquired at the program's conclusion, it is evident that educators must receive training focused on professional development and preparation for teaching a class considering specific teaching methods during their university formation process.

Moreover, Farrell (2012) calls for stronger partnerships between education programs and schools or institutions like Colombo Americano, advocating for a collaborative approach to pre-service teacher development. This collaboration could involve designing and implementing orientation programs that provide mentoring and support for non-experienced teachers, recognizing the importance of multiple sources of support in fostering a positive teaching experience and enhancing teacher efficacy beliefs during the formative years of teaching, as demonstrated by the CCCA Pre-Service Teacher Program.

PHASE

5

Learnings and Experiences

The systematization of the Pre-Service Teacher Program at CCCA highlights a significant undertaking to enhance future educators' professional development. This process was embarked upon with the dual goal of refining the program's methodology and content to

ensure it remains responsive to the evolving needs of the educational landscape and the participants it serves. The project aimed to document the program's effectiveness and establish a model that could be iteratively improved upon based on systematic analysis and feedback.

Reflecting on Axis #1, the impact of the Pre-Service Teacher Program on the academic administrative staff reveals a transformative effect. The program has facilitated a deeper engagement between the institution and its educators, fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptability. This engagement has been crucial in navigating the challenges of external factors, such as the global pandemic. It has underscored the importance of resilience and flexibility in adversity.

Considering Axis #2, the program's influence on hired teachers underscores a profound shift in pedagogical approaches. The feedback from participants indicates a significant enhancement in their teaching efficacy, confidence, and ability to adapt to diverse learning environments. This shift benefits the individual educators and enriches their students' learning experiences, contributing to a more dynamic and engaging educational process.

The systematization project has been an enlightening journey from the academic advisor's perspective. It gave us a valuable opportunity for reflection and critical analysis in our pursuit of excellence in teacher training. Additionally, we experienced the power and gratification of exploring new ways of analyzing educational situations and transforming them into growth opportunities. By systematizing our Pre-Service Teacher program, we learned how to effectively engage in the research process and develop proposals to enrich our teaching practices.

Conversely, the collaborative effort between the program's university coordinators

and participants has captured the program's multifaceted impacts, offering broad and deeply nuanced insights. This process has reaffirmed the necessity of maintaining an open dialogue between all stakeholders to ensure the program's ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

Moreover, the experience has emphasized the importance of flexibility and innovation in program design. By staying attuned to the latest educational trends and participants' feedback, the program demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement. This adaptability is essential in preparing educators to be proficient in their subject matter and capable of navigating the complexities of modern educational environments.

From the coordinator and leader's perspective, leading the Pre-Service Teacher Program has been a testament to the power of visionary leadership and collaboration. The ability to conceptualize and implement a program that addresses the pressing needs of pre-service teachers while contributing to the professional landscape of education in Valle del Cauca is a remarkable achievement. It reflects a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities within teacher education and a commitment to pioneering solutions that have a lasting impact.

Throughout this systematization project, essential knowledge was acquired on standardizing a project as significant as the seedbed and adapting it to the systematization format. Initially, this process was perceived as a considerable challenge, as it was the first attempt to undertake a project in this format, generating uncertainty about the comprehensive understanding of the project and its successful execution. Additionally, the initial phases of the project presented specific challenges as its structure began to be outlined by Claudia Díaz, who took on the perspective of coordinator and leader of the program. Subse-

quently, Farid Sandoval, a former participant of the first cohort and currently an academic advisor, joined the team, facilitating the presentation of the project from a joint perspective and enriching it with insights from both the coordination and as a former participant. This collaboration proved extremely valuable, allowing for the appreciation of various facets of the program and sharing perceptions that might not have been considered individually.

It is crucial to highlight that, for both the project's creator and former participant, conducting this research has allowed us to observe the program's evolution over the past two years. This evolution has facilitated continuous refinement and adaptation of the contents to meet the needs of the professionals in training, demonstrating that the Pre-Service Teacher program is versatile and capable of evolving, can keep up to date with the latest educational trends, and has proven sustainable over time.

On the other hand, executing this systematization project has allowed us to recognize that we are one of the few, if not the only ones, who have ventured into this field of professional development at the national level, working closely with higher education institutions at the regional level. Thanks to the thorough research conducted for this project, we have identified that a similar program is being implemented in Spain. However, information has yet to be found to indicate the existence of a comparable program in another Latin American country. Despite this, we are convinced that we are the leading institution for this project in the Valle del Cauca, marking a milestone in teacher professional development.

It is essential to highlight the crucial role that various articles and projects played in forming and developing our project, the Pre-Service Teacher Program. The meticulous research phase was a cornerstone in this process, allowing us to identify and select

authors whose works resonated with our objectives and enriched our understanding and approach to teacher education. A prominent example of this was the analysis of the case of the University of Seville (Gadella Kamstra, 2024.) This study proved invaluable by comparing how an educational incubator can be fostered by leveraging the socio-educational and cultural context of a European country like Spain. Moreover, it provided us with a deep insight into the aspirations and challenges of the program in an environment that, being first-world, faces its own educational peculiarities and regional needs.

Likewise, authoritative sources such as UNESCO publications were instrumental in helping us understand the impact of disruptive global events, like a pandemic, on the educational field. This perspective allowed us to adopt a more holistic view, appreciating not only the adversities and challenges that arose but also identifying opportunities for innovation and adaptation within the framework of the Pre-Service Teacher Program. The ability to reflect on these circumstances and apply key learnings to our program proved vital for its success and relevance.

In conclusion, the systematization of the Pre-Service Teacher Program reveals an innovative and responsive multifaceted approach to teacher education. The insights gained from this project highlight the program's vital role in shaping the future of education and underscore the importance of continuous learning and adaptation in achieving excellence in teaching. Additionally, the author's work (Yupari-Azabache, 2021) was particularly enlightening. Her focus on the psychosocial dimension of educational program development provided valuable insights into addressing and mitigating the consequences of modern diseases affecting the teaching community. The consideration of psychosocial factors and the search for innovative solutions to contem-

porary problems emerged as fundamental elements for creating a resilient and adaptive teacher training program that prepares educators to face current challenges and anticipate and respond proactively to future needs. This comprehensive and reflective approach toward constructing the Pre-Service Teacher Program underscores the importance of a solid, diverse, and applied research base, which becomes the foundation upon which a promising and sustainable educational future can be built.

➤ References

- Baecher, L. (2023, May 19). *Professional development through teachers' associations*. TESOL International Association. <https://www.tesol.org/blog/posts/professional-development-through-teachers-associations/>
- Decreto 688 de 2021. (2021). <https://www.funcionpublica.gov.co/eva/gestornormativo/norma.php?i=164886>
- Farrell, T. S. (2012). Novice-service language teacher development: Bridging the gap between preservice and in-service education and development. *TESOL Quarterly*, 46(3), 435-449.
- Gadella Kamstra, L. S. (2024). *Bridging the gap between pre-service teacher education and in-service teachers' experiences in Spain*. British Council. <https://doi.org/10.57884/ZZGN-0K41>
- Noguera, J. (2018). The role of classroom observation in pre-service English teachers' understanding of the teaching profession. *Porta Linguarum*, 30, 193-216.

Universidad ICESI & ORE. (2020). Desafíos de la educación en tiempos de pandemia. https://www.icesi.edu.co/observatorio-educacion/images/investigaciones/Encuesta_Educacion_durante_Pandemia_2020.pdf

UNESCO (2020). *COVID-19: A global crisis for teaching and learning*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373233.locale=en>

UNESCO. (2022). *From learning recovery to education transformation: Insights and reflections from the fourth survey on national education responses to COVID-19 school closures*. <https://covid19.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2022/09/from-learning-recovery.pdf>

Yupari-Azabache, I. L., Rabanal-León, H. C., Guzmán-Cárdenas, M. Z., & Rodríguez-Azabache, J. A. (2022). Estudio comparativo del estrés laboral y características del docente en tiempos de pandemia: Perú-Colombia. In N. Callaos, J. Horne, E. F. Ruiz-Ledesma, B. Sánchez, & A. Tremante (Eds.), *Memorias de la décima segunda conferencia Iberoamericana de complejidad, informática y cibernética: CICIC 2022* (pp. 79-84). International Institute of Informatics and Cybernetics. <https://doi.org/10.54808/CICIC2022.01.79>

➤ Appendices

Click [HERE](#)

IV

Unleashing Teachers' Potential with Digital Competencies Courses

BY

Nelson Jaramillo • Carlos Reyes • William Sastoque



➤ Introduction

Pandemic and post-pandemic times left educators with a series of realizations. At the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano (CCCA) one of those understandings was the growing importance of digital tools in the processes of teaching and learning. This issue brought the academic office staff and the product development team together on the critical analysis of the connection between English teachers' level of digital competence and their current and future relevance in a digitalized world. In response to this understanding, it became clear that the provision of comprehensive resources and practical activities for teachers was not only crucial but, indeed, central to the successful application of digital competencies in our educational context. Hence, the creation of two digital competencies courses seemed to provide an adequate path to approach such a need.

The objective of this study is to investigate the connection between English teachers' level of digital competence, the type of activities connected to technology used in class, and their impact in the learning process. The goal is to understand the importance of digital tools in the teaching and learning processes and to assess how English teachers' digital competence influences their effectiveness in the evolving digital educational landscape of digital competence and their current and future relevance in a digitalized world.

We will be using a systematization modality as systematizing educational practices is equally vital in our role as product developers. By systematically structuring our educational materials and resources, we can create coherent and standardized products that are user-friendly for both teachers and students. This consistency not only enhances the usability of our materials but also ensures a seamless learning experience across various platforms and settings. Furthermore, a systematic approach helps in the efficient organization of content development, aligning it with curriculum standards and educational objectives. This not only guarantees the relevance of our products but also simplifies the process of updating and adapting materials to stay current with changing educational landscapes.

PHASE

1

Identification of the Educational Practice

➤ The Socio-Academic Context

The Centro Cultural Colombo Americano - Cali is a non-profit foundation and Binational Center officially recognized by the United States Embassy in Bogotá, it has provided English language teaching and promoted culture since 1954. Currently, the institution has two branches in Cali, Colombia. There are around 160 teachers who work at different programs teaching English to adults, teens, and young learners. The CCCA has an area of Product Development that is in charge of the development and creation of different educational products for internal and external clients.

Keeping in mind that one of the Product Development Area objectives is to keep up with state-of-the-art trends and technologies, it was coherent that the development of a course in this area. With a target audience of 160 English teachers in 2023, the course was embedded in the institution's commitment to providing responsive and relevant professional development opportunities. The sociocultural composition of this context was characterized by the fusion of technological innovation and pedagogical evolution, which is a demand of the times, to empower educators in their quest to excel in a digitally interconnected world.

Recognizing the evolving educational landscape, the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano has emphasized the increasing importance of digital tools in teaching and learning. This recognition required collaboration between

the academic office staff and the product development team to critically analyze the correlation between English teachers' digital competences and their relevance in a digitalized world. This study aimed to collect insights into the impact of digital competencies on teacher effectiveness. Addressing the need for comprehensive resources and practical activities supporting teachers in applying digital competencies, the study recommended the creation of digital competencies courses, ensuring alignment with the academic area's pedagogical component for 2023. As part of the broader educational objectives, CCCA's pedagogical component focuses on strengthening CLT pedagogical views and the institution's impacts on language teaching, as well as cultivating digital competencies and soft skills among the academic community, reflecting a commitment to a holistic and adaptable educational environment in the digital era.

➤ The Educational Practice Problem

In response to the imperative need for English teachers to strengthen their digital competencies, a comprehensive course was designed. The overall course objective was to facilitate educators' grasp of the essential concepts of digital technology and digital competence, fostering the development of foundational skills that empowered them to integrate digital tools and trends into their teaching practices. By doing so, the course aspired to elevate the digital competence of English teachers at CCCA, ultimately improving their capacity to adapt and excel in the evolving landscape of education.

Furthermore, developing a specialized training program for our teachers focused on integrating digital resources into their classes was a pivotal step in enhancing the quality and effectiveness of language instruction. This

course encompassed a comprehensive exploration of innovative digital tools and platforms tailored to meet the diverse needs of English language learners. Emphasizing practical applications, the training was designed to enable teachers to navigate various interactive language learning apps, online language learning platforms, and digital resources for language assessment. Through hands-on workshops and collaborative exercises, educators were expected to gain proficiency in leveraging multimedia resources, virtual communication tools, and language learning software to foster an engaging and immersive learning environment for their students. Additionally, the program prioritized the development of strategies to address potential challenges in implementing digital resources, ensuring that teachers would feel confident and adept in navigating the ever-evolving landscape of digital education.

➤ The Identification of the Educational Practice

Two courses were developed. The first one (see Appendix 1) addressed teachers who were feeling less comfortable with the use of technology tools in the classroom. There was a second course (see Appendix 2) aimed at teachers who had gained some expertise in the use of digital resources in the classroom.

The objectives of the first course were to understand the basics of digital hardware and software and be able to apply them into their teaching practice as well as to integrate the use of digital tools with teaching activities, and strategies for designing and delivering digital content in online and in-person environments. Finally they were to be trained on evaluating ways to improve digital competencies in the five areas listed by the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (Dig-CompEdu).

As far as the second course was concerned, they were expected to be able to understand the main activities digitally proficient teachers should integrate into their teaching practices. In addition to this, they were expected to develop awareness of their strengths and weaknesses by building a Personal Digital Learning Path as well as evaluating ways to work on the construction of a digitally competent Colombo teacher community. Finally, they would be asked to apply strategies related to digital competencies by collaborating on the construction of a Digital Learning Hub.

This educational endeavor was organized through a seven-step process. It started with Step 1, which entailed the charting of an outline for the course, putting together available resources and pedagogical expertise to formulate a basic structure. Step 2 aimed at taking that skeletal framework a step further by designing the course itself, aligning it closely with the needs and expectations of the teachers at the CCCA (see appendices 1 and 2). Clear guidelines were established, ensuring the sequence and coherence of each course.

Subsequently, step 3 involved the creation of the actual course materials, blending diverse teaching modalities and digital resources to construct a dynamic and engaging learning experience. In a series of team meetings, we created the course materials. These meetings happened regularly, giving us a chance to talk openly, share ideas, and work together creatively. The teamwork played a big role in mixing different teaching styles and bringing in various digital resources smoothly. We faced challenges and worked together to solve problems. Through trying different resources and getting feedback, we improved the course materials, making sure they were not only informative but also interesting and easy to understand. This helped create an environment where our English teachers could develop their digital skills effectively.

In step 4, the course plan was disseminated to the broader academic community within the institution, fostering the opportunity for collaboration. This was done with the help of different strategies created and designed by the product development team. We chose a character (Master Wu) who is an Oriental sensei who was here to teach the advantages of digital competencies. We introduced him to the community (see Appendix 3). We also came up with some advertising campaigns (videos and images see Appendix 4) for the participants to be more motivated to get involved and participate massively throughout the course. The implementation of the digital competencies courses evolved in step 5, where the theoretical groundwork was put into practice. We developed the course in a range of three months starting in April and finishing in July 2023. We designed three asynchronous sessions with material (videos, images, articles, escape rooms, gamified activities) that was given to the participating teachers on a biweekly basis. Participants had to go over the sessions and they were to hand in an assignment per session that was checked by the team and then given feedback. At the end, there was a synchronous session that we developed in different schedules so participants could choose the best time. In this session,

participants had to put into practice what they had learned during the first sessions by working collaboratively on solving some challenges to complete a bootcamp and putting together a Google Site. Step 6 was dedicated to an evaluation of the courses' implementation and its impact on the participating educators. During this step it's important to show how the performance of the participants (teachers) was affected before and after they took the course. First of all, this is the rubric that was kept in mind for the teachers' observation from the academic office:

Appendix 5 presents information to compare the performance of the teachers who took the course. This shows their evaluation before and after the course was taken.

Finally, step 7 aimed at the continuation of activities to sustain and enrich the digital competencies cultivated among the English teachers. In this point it is important to highlight that a collaborative site was created for participants to keep feeding during their time at the Colombo with new resources and ideas to share with their peers. This way, they would give continuation to what was learned in the courses (see Appendix 6). This systematic proposal assured a comprehensive and progressive enhancement of digital mastery within the CCCA academic community.

E. Digital Competencies Fostering the Implementation of CLT

13 Activities and virtual learning environments designed for the class are appropriate for the students' characteristics, digital abilities and level.

14 Digital tools used in session support students' learning process and foster the development of communicative skills

As a conclusion for this stage, we could say that the sequence of the seven-step process, from conceptualization to implementation and evaluation, provided a comprehensive and customized approach to addressing some of the different needs of teachers at varying digital proficiency levels. By encouraging collaboration, integrating several teaching modalities, and providing continuous support and resources, these courses aimed to equip educators with basic digital skills and also to plant the seeds of what could be the beginning of a culture of ongoing learning and innovation. We expect that the impact of these initiatives expands outside the classroom walls, setting up the foundation for a digitally proficient and empowered teaching community prepared to deal with an increasingly digital world.

PHASE

2

Establishing the Objective and Axes of the Systematization

➤ The Objective of the Systematization of the Educational Practice

The underlying objective behind systematizing the educational practice through the creation of the courses is to provide a structured and comprehensive description of the impact of the two courses on digital

competencies. This approach sought to bridge the gap between traditional pedagogy and the demands of the digital era, giving the chance to educators to become proficient in supporting digital tools to integrate them into their classroom activities.

All in all, the ultimate goal is to foster a digitally competent teaching community capable of delivering engaging learning experiences that prepare students to be successful learners in a world in which technology is a main player in the process of learning a language.

➤ The Axes of Reconstruction of the Educational Practice

Axis 1: From the Institution + Digital Perspective: Impact of the Pedagogical Practices in the CCCA

This axis centers on the synergy between the institution and digital technologies, emphasizing the significant influence of teaching activities. It also aims to assess how CCCA's educational strategies leverage digital tools, shaping the learning experience and fostering innovation.

The development of the academic course for enhancing digital competencies among English teachers at the CCCA has resulted in significant impacts within the institution's pedagogical panorama. One notable effect is the revitalization of teaching practices, where educators have integrated digital technologies into their teaching and administrative practices. Through the course's emphasis on using digital tools effectively, instructors have been empowered to explore innovative approaches to curriculum delivery, assessment, and student engagement. This shift not only reflects a modernization of teaching strategies but also signifies a change in how teaching and education are understood and delivered within the institution.

Additionally, the course's influence extends beyond individual classrooms to the broader institutional framework, fostering a culture of digital literacy and innovation. By equipping educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the digital landscape, the institution will keep on positioning itself at the forefront of educational advancement. This synergy between pedagogical practices and digital technologies has created a cross effect, involving teachers in collaborative initiatives, multilevel activities, and intra-area collaborations. Consequently, the institution has witnessed a transformative shift in its educational strategies, marked by a renewed commitment to student-centered and active learning, technological integration, and continuous improvement. In essence, the impact of the course transcends the mere acquisition of digital competencies; it activates a holistic reimagining of education, grounded in adaptability, creativity, and excellence. The former impacts beyond question the very core of the values of the CCCA.

Axis 2: Teachers + Methodology Perspective: Strengthening of Digital Competencies for Teachers at the CCCA

In Axis 2, the focus is on empowering teachers at CCCA by enhancing their digital competencies. This involves training and development courses to provide teachers with the necessary skills to implement digital tools and methodologies in their teaching practices. The aim is to cultivate teachers who are proficient in using technology to enrich the learning process.

These two axes collectively constitute a comprehensive approach to advancing educational practices at CCCA by optimizing the institution's relationship with digital technology, providing teachers with the necessary skills, and ultimately enhancing the educational experience for the students.

PHASE

3

Reconstruction of the Educational Practice

In this section, reconstruction of the educational practice at the CCCA was structured around two key axes, each addressing different perspectives on the enhancement of digital competencies among teachers. Axis 1 focused on the institutional and digital viewpoint, exploring the impact of pedagogical practices within CCCA through an analysis conducted by the product development team. This analysis, following seven steps, examined how educational trends, technological advancements, and emerging teaching methodologies influence course content planning and resource utilization. Meanwhile, Axis 2 focused on the perspective of teachers and methodology, emphasizing the strengthening of digital competencies through steps undertaken by the product development team. The description of such steps will be described in detail in this section.

➤ Axis 1: From the Institution + Digital Perspective: Impact of the Pedagogical Practices in the CCCA

The analysis of this axis was made based on the seven steps followed by the product development team members in light of the digital perspective and its impact on the pedagogical practices at the CCCA. The integration of digital perspectives into the pedagogical practices at the CCCA has marked the begin-

ning of a transformation in the educational process.

By aligning course content development with the latest trends and tools in technology, the institution has positioned itself in the lead of digital education. The systematic approach adopted ensured that course content was not only academic but also tailored to meet the demands of the digital era. Through this development of the professional development course, teachers identified the essential knowledge about digital competencies they need in the digital age while simultaneously incorporating practical insights to optimize resource utilization and course effectiveness.

Following this, the development team researched and then designed a placement test to assess the current level of digital competence among the teachers who would be participating in the professional development course. This diagnostic tool served as a foundational step to tailor the course content to the specific needs and proficiency levels of the participants. A total of 76 teachers were placed in the first course (teachers who had

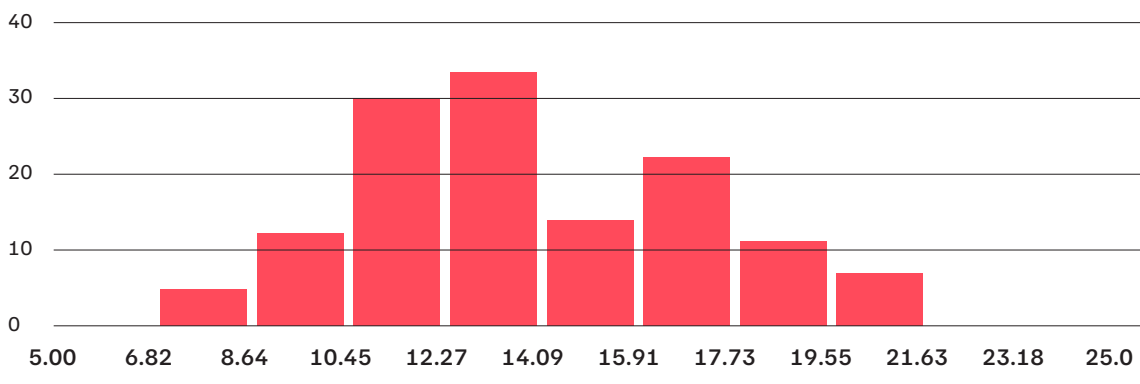
a score of 13 or less) and 57 in the second course (teachers who had a score higher than 14) (Graph 1).

After the placement test, the professional development team created the two digital courses and uploaded the material into the respective Google Classroom spaces, ensuring accessibility for the teachers. This collaborative approach, facilitated by the division of tasks and effective use of institutional resources, resulted in the creation of engaging and informative digital competencies courses. By customizing the professional development experience, the CCCA ensured that teachers received targeted support to enhance their digital competencies.

In order to share the plan for the digital competencies professional development course with the academic community at the CCCA, an orientation session was conducted during the in-service period in January, February, and March 2023. These sessions served as a platform to communicate crucial information about digital competencies, providing the academic community with a clear understanding

Graph • 1

Classification of 133 teachers into the two professional development courses



of the training to be implemented. The orientation covered key aspects of the upcoming professional development course, including its objectives, structure, and expected outcomes. By engaging with the academic community during these in-service sessions, participants were equipped with the necessary insights and knowledge to prepare for and actively participate in the digital competencies training. This approach ensured that the academic community at the CCCA was well-informed and ready to embrace the upcoming professional development opportunities of digital competencies.

During the time teachers were enrolled and participated in the professional development course, there was a significant shift in pedagogical practices within the CCCA. The integration of Google classroom platform indicated an efficient way of course content and provided accessibility for teachers, as Google classroom is the current Learning Management system (LMS). It was easy for teachers to work and handle the material provided in the course. Additionally, the use of asynchronous classes allowed teachers to access course materials and instructions at their own pace. This flexibility provided individual learning preferences and schedules, potentially leading to better engagement and understanding. While asynchronous classes offered flexibility, the synchronous class at the end of the course ensured that teachers had the opportunity for real-time interaction and clarification of doubts. This blend of asynchronous and synchronous learning experiences helped teachers with different learning styles and needs.

Continuous feedback was provided to teachers upon completion of each lesson, using different and various channels such as email, chatbot, phone calls, and WhatsApp which made it possible to contact all teachers, a strategy that led to the improvement of communication. Moreover, the product

development team sent reminders to teachers who had stopped participating in the course in order to increase retention rates. By using emails and digital announcements, the institution aimed to motivate teachers to persist and complete the course, maximizing the impact of the professional development initiative.

Furthermore, in-service activities were organized, providing trainers with a summary of the course learnings and an assessment of their current status as digital learners. The Learning Hub¹, housed on Google Site, was introduced and teachers were encouraged to actively engage and contribute their ideas through collaborative efforts. Those activities were shared with the community of the CCCA and were made available to be used as references, activities in class and material for future training.

Overall, this pedagogical practice shifted towards more inclusive, flexible, and technology-driven practice within the CCCA, aimed at enhancing teacher engagement, learning outcomes, and communication channels.

➤ Axis 2: Teachers + Methodology Perspective: Strengthening of Digital Competencies for Teachers at the CCCA

The analysis of this axis was made based on the seven steps followed by the product development team members in light of the methodology perspective and its impact on the strengthening of digital competencies for teachers at the CCCA.

The creation of the academic course, as explained in step 5, aimed at enhancing digital competencies among English teachers,

1. <https://sites.google.com/t.colomboamericano.edu.co/reallifeexpression/home>

catalyzed a series of positive impacts within the institution, particularly in the realm of teacher development and digital literacy. By the implementation of step 6, we noticed a notable outcome, the significant improvement in teachers' understanding and proficiency with various digital tools. Through targeted training sessions, hands-on workshops, and collaborative learning opportunities, educators gained valuable insights into the practical applications of digital technologies within the context of language instruction. This newfound expertise did not only clarify concepts about complex digital tools, but it also empowered teachers to harness their potential to enrich the learning experiences of their students.

Moreover, the course played a noticeable role in integrating digital activities into teachers' everyday classroom routines. By providing practical strategies, customizable lesson plan ideas, and real-world examples, educators were able to transcend traditional teaching paradigms and embrace a more dynamic and interactive approach to teaching. From multimedia presentations and gamified activities to collaborative projects, teachers leveraged digital tools to foster student engagement, critical thinking, and creativity (See images 2-4). This integration of digital activities not only enhances the efficacy of instruction but also cultivates a technological learning environment that mirrors the digital realities of the 21st century.²

Furthermore, as described in step 7, the course inspired teachers to design innovative activities and assignments centered around digital tools, thereby promoting a culture of creativity, experimentation, and continuous improvement. By encouraging teachers to explore new pedagogical approaches, adapt to emerging technologies, and collaborate with

2. Video tutorial "How to create a chat bot"
Video activity "The best of Canva"
Concept review

peers, the course has fostered a spirit of innovation that permeates every aspect of the institution's educational landscape. From gamified learning experiences and multimedia projects to interactive simulations and virtual reality experiences, teachers have embraced digital tools as catalysts for transformative learning experiences that transcend the confines of traditional classrooms. In essence, the course has not only strengthened teachers' digital competencies but has also ignited a passion for innovation and excellence in education that will continue to shape the institution's educational practices for years to come.

PHASE

4

Interpretation of the Educational Practice

Following the exposition of the reconstructed teaching practice in the preceding phase, it becomes imperative to engage with the rationale behind the occurrences as described. This segment will reflect upon our role as product developers and trainers committed to facilitating the improvement of digital competencies among teachers at CCCA.

➤ **Axis 1: From the Institution + Digital Perspective: Impact of the Pedagogical Practices in the CCCA**

In order to interpret the first axis as it was presented in the reconstruction, it is import-

ant to recall the main steps taken towards the design and implementation of the digital competencies courses: the charting of an outline for the course, the designing of the course, the creation of the material and activities, the communication of the course plan, the follow-up of activities and the continuous feedback delivery, among others.

In the construction of the whole experience, we faced several challenges and experienced first-hand some academic discoveries. One such challenge was the customizing of the professional development experience. As articulated by academic experts such as Guskey (2009) and Krauskopf, et al. (2017), effective professional development acknowledges the diverse needs of educators and emphasizes the importance of tailoring learning experiences to individual contexts.

Guskey (2009) properly notes that one-size-fits-all approaches to professional development are inadequate in meeting the varied needs of teachers. This assertion underscores the necessity of personalized learning experiences that consider teachers' unique backgrounds, skill levels, and instructional contexts. This relates to the observed challenges in customizing professional development experiences for teachers. The diversity among educators in terms of technological proficiency, pedagogical preferences, and classroom dynamics was in need of a refined approach to designing and delivering professional learning opportunities.

Moreover, Krauskopf, et al. (2017) emphasize that customized professional development empowers teachers to engage meaningfully in learning experiences that directly impact their instructional practices and student outcomes. This finding aligns with the observed need to tailor the courses to address specific areas of growth identified by educators. By catering to some of those individual needs and contextual factors within the CCCA community, customized professional development initiatives have

the potential to foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement among teachers. Our team kept this in mind in the preparation of the digital competencies courses. We found out that it was imperative to divide the participants in level of digital proficiency as well as level of digital literacy.

Even though we feel a strong connection with the authors' assertions dealing with the advantages of professional development, we do need to highlight the challenges associated with the whole implementation of a professional development course. We discovered that customization stands in need for different elements such as planning, resource identification and ongoing support to ensure its effectiveness. Over and above that, finding a balance between individual goals and collective goals within the institution presented a complex challenge. Thus, while the principles espoused by Guskey (2009) and Krauskopf, et al. (2017) are to be kept in mind, their practical application demands an approach that considers the broader organizational context and resource limitations. We believe that such an approach is far from being perfect and needs to be flexible enough to allow changes on the way as circumstances might hinder teachers to take full advantage of the resources provided. This realization is a crucial first step in the planning of any type of professional development or training course.

The second challenge we faced was related to the integration of digital perspectives into the pedagogical practices and according to Krumsvik (2011, pp. 44–45) “the teacher’s [...] proficiency in using ICT in a professional context with good pedagogic-didactic judgment and his or her awareness of its implications for learning strategies and the digital Bildung³ of pupils and students.” This has an important

3. Bildung: German word which means “education” “formation”

impact on students as they enhance their learning opportunities, develop their digital literacy, foster critical thinking and problem solving skills in the 21st century.

We can see that the development team played a crucial role in facilitating the digital competence of teachers as outlined in Krumsvik's perspective. This means providing support for integrating ICT tools and platforms into teaching methodologies, as well as offering training and resources to enhance teachers' proficiency. We also understand that Krumsvik's emphasis on pedagogic-didactic judgment suggests that just the use of ICT is not enough; it must be integrated into teaching practices generously. This also goes in the line of Kivunja (2013), who emphasizes the integration of the digital perspective into pedagogical practices, which means incorporating digital viewpoints, tools, and methodologies into the teaching method rather than treating technology as a separate entity. This becomes an integral part of how teaching and learning are conducted. The development team can interpret this as a need to support teachers in understanding how to integrate ICT effectively into their pedagogical approaches, ensuring alignment with learning objectives and student needs. Moreover, the development team also understands the need for ongoing professional development opportunities through continuous workshops, seminars, and courses that could be designed to deepen teachers' understanding of how ICT can impact learning strategies and contribute to the digital development (Bildung) of students.

Finally, it is paramount to understand that only one course is not enough; there has to be constant training from the institution for its teachers, and also from the teachers to a personal level in order to be able to impact the teaching and learning process as well as engage students in lifelong learning.

➤ **Axis 2: Teachers + Methodology Perspective: Strengthening of Digital Competencies for Teachers at the CCCA**

Below we will make an interpretation of the second axis which refers to the methodology perspective, taking into account the strengthening of digital competencies at the CCCA.

The initiative we used in the steps taken to improve digital skills among teachers was essential in the modern educational landscape. Our team used a systematic approach that involves specific training, practical workshops and collaborative learning opportunities, and this shows a strategy that in addition to being well planned, was also done after doing an exhaustive reflection exercise. The emphasis on practical applications of digital technologies in the context of language teaching is also interesting. Furthermore, the integration of digital activities into everyday classroom routines and the encouragement of innovative pedagogical approaches show a modern mindset towards education. In general, the practice of strengthening digital competencies carried out seems to have effectively empowered teachers. This is aligned with Mishra and Koehler (2006) when they mention that knowing a technology automatically leads to good teaching with technology. And, consequently, there was surely an enrichment in the students' learning experiences.

This dynamic used to strengthen digital competencies through different steps has important implications for the institution. It indicates a commitment to motivating a culture of continuous learning and innovation. The idea in the middle of this innovation is linked to what was mentioned by Kasimia and Ulum (2023) when mention is made to emphasize the need for educators to adapt and embrace technology and strike a balance

between traditional and digital methods to provide students with effective, engaging, and future-ready learning experiences. By investing in teachers' digital skills, the institution is positioning itself as an educational place that prioritizes the success of both educators and students. Furthermore, integrating digital activities into teaching practices can improve the institution's reputation and attractiveness to future students and any interested customer.

For the institution's community, which includes students, parents and others, the methodology we followed brings several benefits. Students can expect more engaging and interactive learning experiences that better prepare them for the digital world. Parents and guardians can feel confident that their children are being taught based on a modern education that takes into account current technological trends. Additionally, the community can see the institution as a leader in educational innovation, enhancing its position in the region and support to the community.

Finally, in strengthening digital competencies in our institution, we faced the challenge of equipping our teachers, but in the midst of these challenges, the joint work as a team was reflected through the effective sequencing of the steps that we carried out, leading us to achieve the objectives proposed. It is our hope that the motivation and commitment of our teachers as well as our students will bring our project to a successful conclusion, and we will continue in this process of growth in the digital world.

PHASE

5

Learnings and Experiences

This section is about the learning and experiences our team enjoyed during the process of systematization of this educational practice which had an objective to investigate the connection between English teachers' level of digital competence, the type of activities connected to technology used in class, and their expected impact in the learning process.

One of the most significant learnings from Axis 1 is that we were able to understand the diverse needs and skill levels among our teachers regarding digital tools and methodologies as well as confirm the importance of tailoring professional development to individual teacher's contexts, emphasizing personalized support as different experts have mentioned. Through this exploration, our team has gained a deep understanding of the complexities involved in providing tailored training that requires careful planning, resources and ongoing support. Additionally, the team also realized that keeping a balance between individual and collective goals within the organization presents a complex challenge that demands flexibility and adaptability in our approach.

Furthermore, we realized that the integration of digital perspectives into pedagogical practices has emerged as an important aspect in the professional development of teachers, as noted by some scholars in the field. The team learned that there is a call for constant support and training to ensure teachers can remain updated with evolving pedagogical

practices and technological advancements that can prepare the teachers, students and the institution for the demands of the 21st century.

Regarding axis 2, we should keep in mind that even though we aim to strengthen teachers' digital literacy, it takes time for them to put that into practice in class because not all of them are used to implementing these resources in class. What's more important is the information that we transmitted during the courses, and we just have to hope that this pays off in the near future. We can't expect them to put everything into practice at once, especially when we know that their time is limited, and preparing technology material takes extra time outside of the classroom. That's why we think it is important for us as trainers to bring resources that are handy, practical and not time-consuming. We think this is the way they will be able to collaborate, be autonomous and transform their traditional classes into digital ones.

The experience learned through the systematization of educational practice has been an enriching journey. As product developers and researchers, we learned the importance between theory and practice within the educational context. As product developers, we have gained a deeper understanding of the diverse needs and skill levels among educators regarding digital tools and methodologies. This understanding has highlighted the importance of personalized professional development, with the need of careful planning, resource allocation, and ongoing support.

Moreover, our role as researchers has taught us the complexities of integrating digital perspectives into pedagogical practices. We have discovered that educators not only need to possess technical abilities but also to integrate digital tools into their teaching methodologies.

Overall, our experience as product developers and researchers in the systematization of educational practices has been transformative, providing us with invaluable insights into the complexities of educational ecosystems. It has reinforced our commitment to developing innovative solutions that empower educators and students in order to enhance the quality of education in the 21st century.

All in all, the analysis we carried out during each of the phases of the systematization process brought different gains to our team in different dimensions. First of all, the understanding of the context we developed during the first phase gave us a broader understanding of the different aspects that needed to be kept in mind when planning and developing professional development materials. After that, the setting up of the problem motivated us to clarify the departing point and the reasons behind the design and development carried out by the team. Then, the possibility of looking at the development of the courses from different axes allowed us to identify the impact of our work from different angles and gave us a cross-sectional view of what product development is at our institution. Last but not least, the fact we could connect different topics and challenges we experienced during the design of the courses with theories behind such concepts helped us to compare and analyze our findings in light of experts and allowed us to make our own informed opinions.

To finish we can say that the systematization of this academic practice has specifically reshaped our view of the challenges the design and development that future professional development material may have. This is because we do have a better understanding of the multiple factors needed to be observed before, while and after the constructions of any academic experience that involves a community of teachers like the one we have at CCCA.

➤ References

- Guskey, T. R. (2009). Closing the knowledge gap on effective professional development. *Educational Horizons*, 87(4), 224-233.
- Kasimia, Y., & Ulum, Ö. G. (2023). Unveiling the dynamic fusion: Exploring how future ELT teachers embrace digitalization in EFL settings. *AELTE 2023 Digital Era in Foreign Language Education*, 152.
- Kivunja, C. (2013). Embedding digital pedagogy in pre-service higher education to better prepare teachers for the digital generation. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 2(4), 131-142.
- Krauskopf, K., Foulger, T. S., & Williams, M. K. (2017). Prompting teachers' reflection of their professional knowledge: A proof-of-concept study of the graphic assessment of TPACK Instrument. *Teacher Development*, 22(2), 153-174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2017.1367717>
- Krumsvik, R. J. (2011). Digital competence in Norwegian teacher education and schools. *Högre Utbildning*, 1(1), 39-51.
- Mishra, P., & Koehler, M. J. (2006). Technological pedagogical content knowledge: A framework for teacher knowledge. *Teachers College Record*, 108(6), 1017-1054.

➤ Appendices

Click [HERE](#)

V

Enhancing English Learning Through Self-Regulated Learning

BY

Wendy Carolina Lenis Gomez



➤ Introduction

Speaking a foreign language is a skill, and as in every skill you need to practice it every day to learn it. Several learning theories such as Ausubel's Meaningful Learning Theory and Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory point out the importance of action toward the construction of knowledge, highlighting that it is in the application of the information that the knowledge is consolidated. It could be said that for English as a Foreign Language learners, the application part lies on the speaking skill, which is usually the most triggering of emotional discomfort, due to high levels of affective filter combined with low proficiency in the language and lack of study skills or ineffective study strategies. Therefore, the promotion of self-regulated learning comes out as a key for students to learn the language and be able to communicate through English, because it allows them to be aware of their emotional experience in their learning process and manage it by recognizing their strengths and weaknesses and planning how to overcome the obstacles in order to achieve their learning goals primarily because they believe they can do it. That way, they can keep their motivation up and adopt strategies to cope with new and demanding tasks, which leads students to finish the English Program they might be in and not drop out of it.

At the Colombo Americano Cali, it has been found that the highest levels of dropout occur in the Fundamental Cycle (A1) of the Adult Program, and when interviewing students in this cycle it is found that they struggle with the self-regulation of their learning process. So, to address this situation, the Learning Counseling Program developed a *Meso Curricular Intervention* with the objective of promoting self-regulated learning skills in the students of the first level of the Fundamental Cycle in the adult program with the intensity of 4 days per week at the North, South and Virtual sites.

It is crucial to conduct a systematization process because it would make the meso curricular intervention measurable, therefore allowing us to figure out some prevention strategies from different areas involving new actors to intervene. This way we could support all students' English learning process from the very beginning, leading to preventing them from struggling with it.

PHASE

1

Identification of the Meso-Curricular Intervention

In this phase, the context of the meso-curricular intervention, the problem identified, and the meso-curricular intervention itself are described.

➤ The Socio-Academic Context

This intervention occurred at the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano in Cali (CCCA), officially recognized by the U.S. Embassy as a Binational Center, which is a non-profit foundation, dedicated since 1954 to English language teaching and cultural exchange. Currently, the organization has two sites in the city of Cali (one in the North and one in the South) and there is also a virtual office that manages the virtual programs. CCCA offers face-to-face and virtual programs for adults (starting age 15 years old) with an intensity of 4 days per week, 2 days per week, and once a week on Saturdays, and face-to-face programs for Kids and Teens once a week on Fridays at the South office, and on Saturdays at the North office.

Being an educational institution of languages, the CCCA is ruled by Technical Standard 5580 and Technical Standard 5555 and must adopt the dispositions of Law 1620 regarding the management of coexistence situations among the educational community, and the dispositions in the Decree 1421 of 2017 about inclusive education. Following the provisions

of Decree 1421 of 2017, in 2022 the CCCA implemented the Learning Counseling Program, which aims to support those students with diverse learning abilities by providing pedagogical and didactic strategies and tools that enhance their strengths and contribute significantly to the learning of English and its process at CCCA. It is in the frame of this Program that we have detected that in most cases the failure of students are in the Fundamental Cycle of the Adult Program with an intensity of 2 hours, 4 days per week. This failure is related to two aspects: the lack of knowledge of effective strategies for learning English and emotional interference in speaking performance related to low self-efficacy beliefs or inadequate emotional management.

➤ Systematization Problem

Fundamental Cycle students (A1) had the highest proportion of dropouts during the first semester of 2022, with 39.30% of the total 3,112 dropouts out of 9,073 registered students during this period, and the level of this cycle with the most dropouts was Fundamental 1 with 391 students dropping out (31,97%) , and it also was the one with the most dropouts after studying one level with 38,79% (173 students dropping out after 1 level, based on the dropout report from Jan - Dec 2022). When interviewing students in this cycle, before dropping out of it, it was noticed that most students struggled with low self-efficacy beliefs in their performance and in their ability to learn English; this was observable in some of the students' behaviors and expressions such as: *"I don't have what it takes to speak English"*, *"I am not good at speaking English"*, *"My pronunciation is too bad"*, *"I just can't speak English"*. It was also found that they did not know how to study English as a foreign language; this was observed in students' descriptions of how they studied:

“I do a list of unknown words”, “I write down everything that the teacher says in class”, “I just go to class.” These two aspects made it difficult for the students to sustain their motivation and persevere throughout the whole program beyond the first level or the first cycle.

➤ The Educational Practice: A Meso-Curricular Intervention

To address the problem of desertion of the Fundamental Cycle, the Learning Counseling Program designed a meso-curricular intervention that is composed of Moment 1) a workshop to help students manage their emotional experience toward learning English as a foreign language, and Moment 2) a follow-up of the impact of this workshop. The description of the meso-curricular intervention is as follows:

Moment 1) Description of the Workshop

Name: “*Emotional Management in the English Learning Process*”

Objective:

- To understand how the emotional experience interferes with learning English as a foreign language and to recognize self-regulated learning as a tool to manage one’s emotional experience.

Participants:

310 students ages 15 years old to 64 years old, taking the level Fundamental 1 in the adult program with an intensity of 2 hours, 4 days per week, from the three Sites: North, South, and Virtual.

Procedure:

Moment 1 took place during the academic period of January 2023, during class time after the 7th session of level Fundamental 1 in the face-to-face and virtual Adult Program. Its

length was about 30 minutes on average, and it was conducted in Spanish. Students had to fill out a reflective questionnaire in Spanish (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). The objective of this session was for students to understand the importance of being aware of their self-efficacy beliefs and how they trigger an emotional reaction that can interfere with their performance and to be able to recognize the implementation of effective study strategies as an action to manage that emotional reaction.

Moment 2) Description of the Follow-Up

Moment 2 took place during the academic period of May 2023, with a sample of 35 students who were in the workshop conducted in the academic period of January 2023. The objective of this moment was to identify if the students made a change in their self-efficacy beliefs (emotional management) and their study strategies, by answering a questionnaire in Spanish about these topics that was sent via email (see Appendix 3 Follow-up questionnaire). It is important to highlight that in this questionnaire the workshop from moment 1 was referred to as “the talk” for students to recognize it better.

PHASE

2

Establishing the Objective and Axes of the Systematization

In this phase, the systematization objective and the axes of the systematization that led to this research are described.

➤ Systematization Objective

Analyze the impact of the meso-curricular psychoeducational intervention related to self-regulated learning implemented in Fundamental Cycle (A1) Groups of the Colombo Americano Cali.

➤ Axes of the Systematization

Axis 1

Students' self-efficacy beliefs vs. the emotion identified as the most frequent in the English learning environment.

Axis 2

Study strategies used by the students for learning English as a foreign language.

PHASE

3

Reconstruction of the Meso-Curricular Intervention

In this phase, the findings of the meso-curricular intervention in the light of the axes per each moment are described, which are taken from two questionnaires: Reflective Questionnaire from Moment 1, and Follow-up Questionnaire from Moment 2.

➤ Axis 1: Self-efficacy Beliefs Vs. the Emotion Identified as the Most Frequent in the English Learning Environment

Moment 1 • Workshop

Regarding the axis of students' self-efficacy beliefs vs. the emotion identified as the most frequent in the English learning environment, it has been found that in response to the question 2) *How capable do you think you are for learning to communicate in English?*¹ 150 (47.77%) of the students self-rate their capabilities in 8, 9 and 10, 127 (41.01%) self-rate themselves in 4, 5, 6 and 7, and 37 (11.67%) self-rate themselves in 1, 2 and 3 (See Graph 1).

In response to the question 3) *How do you feel about your ability to learn to communicate in English?*² 59.31% (188 students) marked

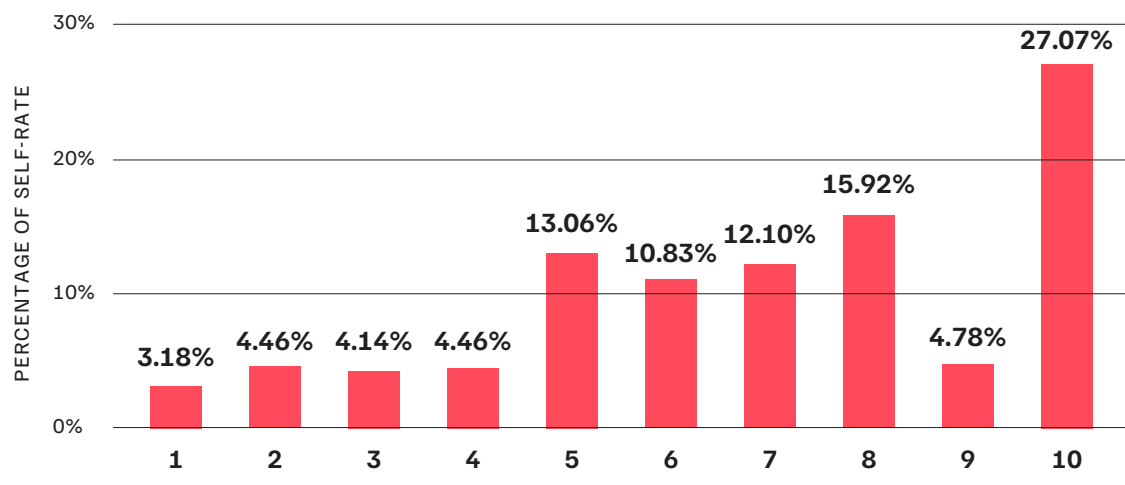
1. Translation by the author: 2) ¿Qué tan capaz crees que eres para aprender a comunicarte en inglés?

2. Translation by the author: 3) ¿Cómo te sientes respecto a tu capacidad para aprender a comunicarte en inglés?

Graph • 1

Capabilities Self-Rate in Moment 1

2) How capable do you think you are for learning to communicate in English?



a) happy; 29.02% (90 students) marked b) afraid; 9.46% (29 students) marked e) frustrated; 1.27% (4 students) marked f) disappointed; 0.64% (2 students) marked d) sad; and 0.32% (1 student) marked c) angry³ (See Graph 2)

Among the 150 students who self-rated their capabilities in 8, 9 and 10 the emotional state identified as the most frequent was happy with 71.33% (107 students), followed by afraid with 22% (33 students), and in third place frustrated with 4,67% (7). This is in contrast to the 37 students who self-rated themselves as 1, 2 or 3. For these students, the most frequent emotional state was afraid with 43.24% (16 students), followed by happy with 32.43% (12 students), and in third place frustrated with 24.32% (9 students). In the

3. These emotions were listed as multiple options with only one response to question 3. See Appendix 2.

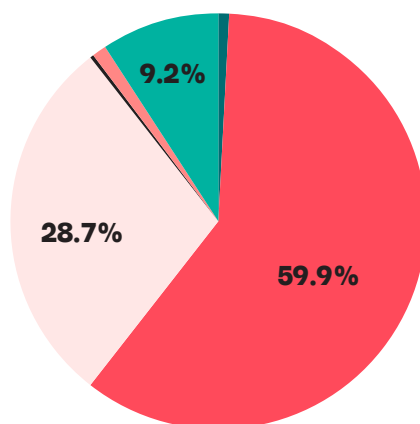
group of 127 students that self-rated themselves as 4, 5, 6 and 7, 51.75% (73 students) marked happy as the most frequent emotion, 32.87% (46 students) marked afraid, 12.59% (17 students) marked frustrated, and 12.59% (3 students) marked disappointed.

It is interesting to note that only 6 (5.6%) of the students who marked happy and rated their capabilities for learning English in 8, 9, and 10 referred having to overcome self-consciousness to be able to learn English in response to the open question 5) *What do you think you need to do to learn to communicate in English and achieve your goals?*⁴, while 91.9% (23 students) of the students who rated their capabilities for learning English in 1, 2, and 3, and marked afraid and frustrated

4. Translation by the author: 5) ¿Qué crees que necesitas hacer para aprender a comunicarte en inglés y alcanzar tus metas?

Graph • 2

Response to Question 3) How do you feel about your ability to learn to communicate in English? In Reflective Questionnaire from Moment 1.



● Happy ● Afraid ● Angry ● Disappointed ● Frustrated ● Sad

as the emotion about their capabilities said they need to gain self-confidence to achieve learning English.

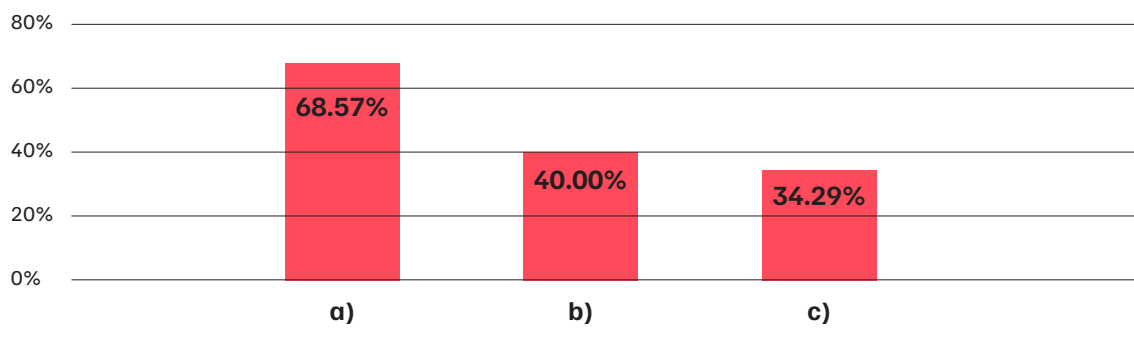
Moment 2 • Follow-up

The answers in the follow-up questionnaire in moment 2 related to the axis *self-efficacy beliefs vs. the emotion identified as the most frequent in the English learning environment* reveal that twenty four (68.57%) of the student sample of 35 answered that the meso-curricular intervention helped them to reflect on their motivation toward learning English as a foreign language; 14 (40%) of them said the meso-curricular intervention helped them in the reflection of their self-efficacy beliefs, and 34.29% (12) of them said the meso-curricular intervention helped them to reflect on their emotion when they do not get the expected results (See Graph 3.).

Thirty-four (97.14%) marked they identify with the following statements *a) I have a clear goal that I want to achieve by learning to speak English* and *b) I believe I am capable of learning to speak English*, and 22 (62.86%) identified with the statement *c) I am able to manage my emotions assertively in my English learning process* (See Graph 4).

Graph • 3

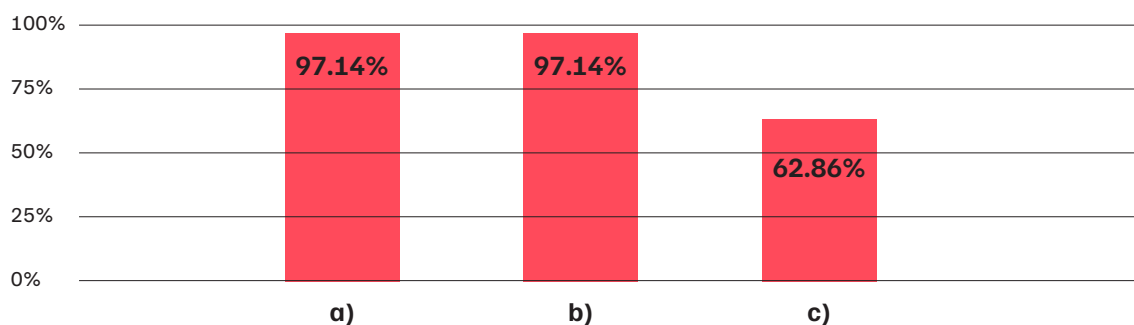
Answers to question 1) Mark the aspects in which you consider that the talk helped you to reflect:



- a)** The reason why I am studying English (what motivates me to learn to speak English)
b) My beliefs about my abilities to learn to speak English (my level of self-demand and how I treat myself) **c)** My emotion when I don't get the expected results.

Graph • 4

Answers to question 3) With which of the following statements do you identify?



- a)** I have a clear goal that I want to achieve by learning to speak English **b)** I believe I am capable of learning to speak English **c)** I am able to manage my emotions assertively in my English learning process.

➤ Axis 2) Study strategies Used by the Students for Learning English as a Foreign Language

Moment 1 • Workshop

With respect to the axis of study strategies used by the students for learning English as a Foreign Language, it has been found that in answer to the question 4) *Which of the following study strategies are you applying to learn to communicate in English?*⁵ 38.85% (122) of students chose the option a) *Study phrases (not just individual vocabulary words) to understand how to use words depending on the context and how to connect words with prepositions like “to,” “at,” “by,” etc.*; 35.03% (110) chose option b) *Practice expressing and writing your ideas in English by hand (not just reading and repeating what was seen in class) to solidify the retention of what you’ve learned and to search for unknown words to expand your vocabulary.*; 38.54% (121) chose option c) *Study daily for at least 30 minutes to achieve more effective results and review previously learned material.*; 28.34% (89) chose option d) *Self-assess your English learning process by identifying areas of strength and areas where you need to exert more effort or perhaps make some changes in how you study or practice English.*; 59.55% (187) chose option e) *Integrate English into your daily life through an English hobby such as watching movies, listening to music, or setting your phone to English.*; 11.46% (36) chose option f) *Reflect on your emotions surrounding your learning process, identifying what makes you feel a certain way.*; 8.92% (28) chose option g) *Record yourself speaking to practice*

5. Translation by the author: 4) ¿Cuáles de las siguientes estrategias de estudio estás aplicando para aprender a comunicarte en inglés?

your pronunciation.; 4.46% (14) chose option h) *None of the above*⁶ (See Graph 5.).

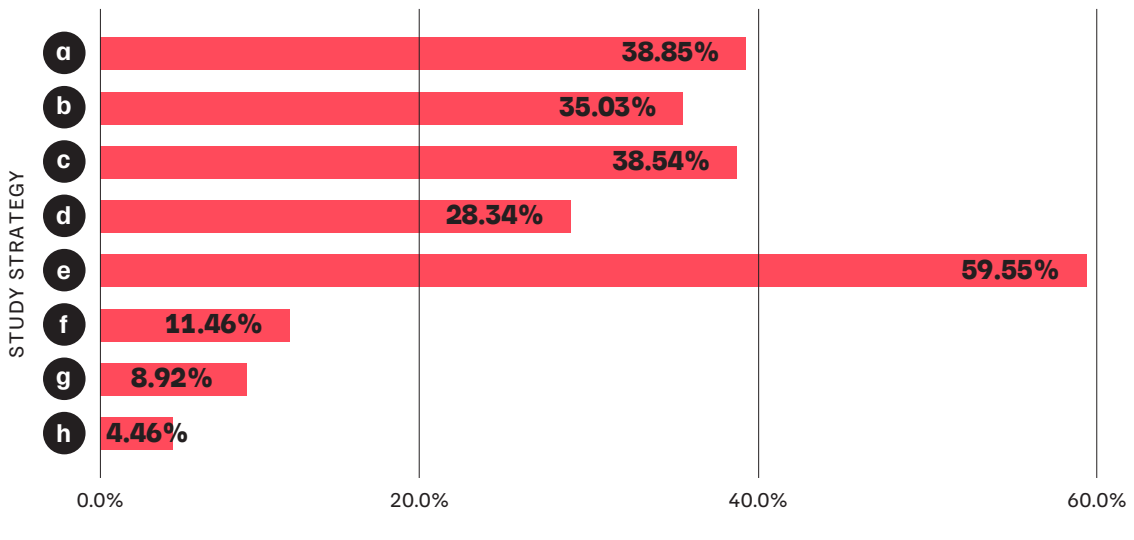
Analyzing the results of the reflective questionnaire it was found that in answered to question 4) *Which of the following study strategies are you applying to learn to communicate in English?* 113 students (35.99%) marked 1 o study strategy for learning English as a foreign language, 70 (22,29%) marked 2 study strategies, 59 (18,79%) marked 3 study strategies; 39 (12,42%) marked 4 study strategies; 9 (2,87%) marked 5 study strategies; 6 students (1,91%) marked 6 study strategies; and 4 students (5,73%) marked 7 study strategies (See Graph 6.).

There were also some students that only marked 1 study strategy, these are: e) integrate English into your daily life through an English hobby such as watching movies in English, listening to music in English, or changing your phone’s language to English with 43.36% (49 students); a) study phrases (not just individual words from the vocabulary) to understand how to use the words depending on the context and how to connect the words with prepositions like “to,” “at,” “by,” etc. with 15.93% (18 students); c) study daily for at least about 30 minutes to have a more effective result and review things previously learned with 15.04% (17 students); b) practice expressing and writing down your ideas in English by hand (not just reading and repeating what you’ve seen in class) to reinforce the memorization of what you’ve learned and to search for unfamiliar words to expand your vocabulary with 10.62% (12 students); d) self-assess your English learning process by identifying areas of strength and areas where you need to exert more effort or perhaps make some changes in how you study or practice English with 12.39% (14 students);); reflect

6. These study strategies were listed as multiple options with only one response to question 4. See Appendix 2.

Graph • 5

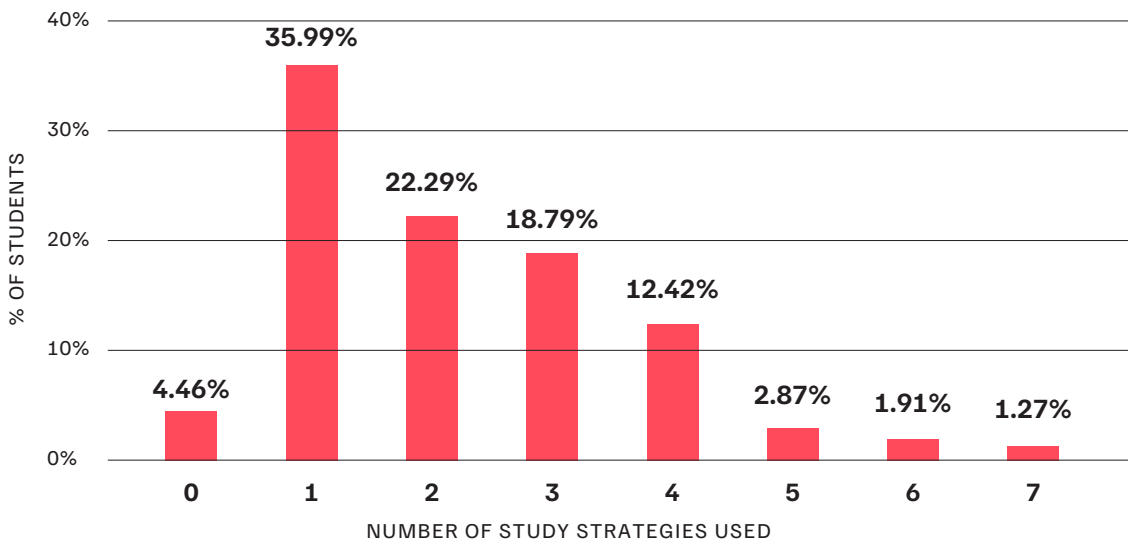
Answers to question 4) With of the following study strategies are you applying to learn to communicate in English?



a) Study phrases (not just individual vocabulary words) to understand how to use... **b)** Practice expressing and writing your ideas in English by hand (not just erading) **c)** Study daily for at least 30 minutes to achieve more effective results and revie... **d)** Self-assess your English learning process by identifying areas of streng... **e)** Integrate English into your daily life through an English hobby such wa... **f)** Reflect on your emotions surrounding your learning process, identifying what... **g)** Record yourself speaking to practice your pronunciation **h)** None of the above.

Graph • 6

Percentage of number of study strategies used.



on your emotions surrounding your learning process, identifying what makes you feel that way with 1.77% (2 students); and g) record yourself speaking to practice your pronunciation with 0.88% (1 student (See Graph 7.).

Moment 2 • Follow-up

In the follow-up questionnaire from moment the participants answer to question 1) *Mark the aspects in which you consider that the talk helped you to reflect on*⁷, 37.14% (13) marked option d) *The self-assessment I make of my English learning process*, and 48.57% (17) marked option e) *The effectiveness of the study strategies I use to learn to speak English*⁸ (See Graph 8.).

To determine which of the study strategies presented in the workshop (“talk” for students) from moment 1 were implemented, in the follow-up questionnaire was asked the question number 2) *Which of the following study strategies to learn to speak English did you implement after the talk?*⁹ and here are the results of marking per strategy: 42.86% (15) marked a) *Study phrases (not just individual words from the vocabulary) to understand how to use the words depending on the context and how to connect the words with prepositions like “to,” “at,” “by”... etc.*; 42.86% (15) students marked b) *Practice saying and writing your ideas in English by hand (not just reading and repeating what you’ve seen in class) to strengthen the recall of what you’ve learned and look up unfamiliar words to expand your vocabulary*; 54.29% (19 students) marked c) *Study daily for at least 30 minutes for a more effective outcome and review previously learned material*;

7. Translation by the author: 1) Marca los aspectos en los que consideres que la charla te ayudó a reflexionar

8. These affirmations were listed as options for multiple responses to question 1) of the follow-up questionnaire.

9. Translation by the author: 2) ¿Cuáles de las siguientes estrategias de estudio para aprender a hablar inglés implementaste después de la charla?

51.43% (18 students) marked d) *Self-assess your English learning process by identifying your strengths and areas where you need to put in more effort or perhaps make some changes in how you study or practice English*; 68.57% (24 students) marked e) *Integrate English into your daily life through an English hobby such as watching movies in English, listening to English music, or setting your phone to English.*; 20.00% (7 students) marked f) *Reflect on your emotions surrounding your learning process by identifying what makes you feel that way*; 14.29% (5 students) marked g) *Record yourself speaking to practice your pronunciation.*; 5.71% (2 students) marked option h) *I already had implemented some study strategies*; 11.43% (4 students) marked option i) *I implemented other study strategies*; and 0.00% (0 students) marked j) *I didn’t implemented any study strategy*¹⁰ (See Graph 9.)

Regarding the number of study strategies that participants marked in question 2) from follow-up questionnaire, it was found that 20.00% (7 students) marked one study strategy; 14.28% (5 students) marked 2 study strategies; 28.57% (10 students) marked 3 study strategies; 11.42% (4 students) marked 4 study strategies, and 25.75% (9 students) marked 5 study strategies (See Graph 10.)

In the responses to question 3) *With which of the following statements do you identify?*¹¹ related to the axis of study strategies, it was found that 29 students (82.86%) marked option d) *I self-assess my learning process to be aware of my strengths and weaknesses*; 32 students (91.43%) marked option e) *I use study strategies that help me reinforce my English learning*¹² (See Graph 11.).

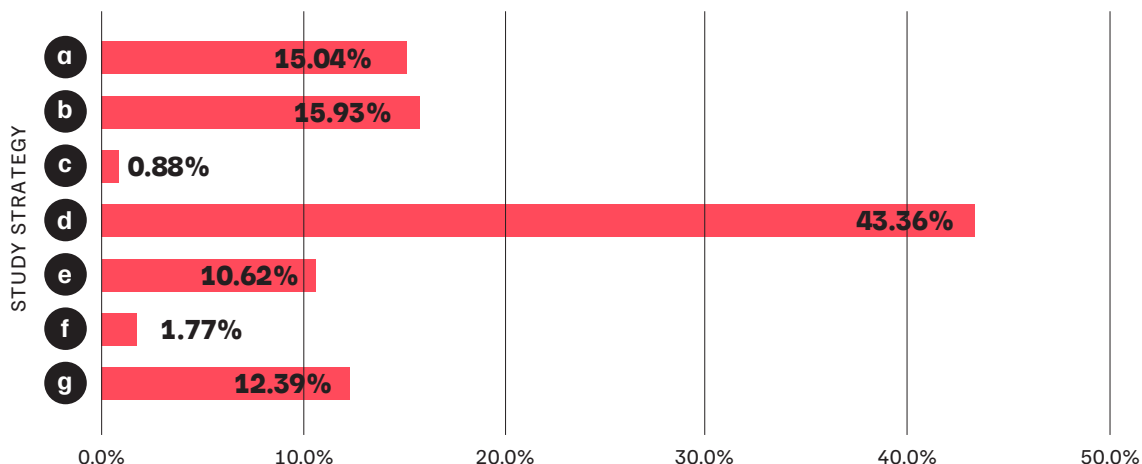
10. These study strategies were listed as multiple options with only one response to question 2). See Appendix 3.

11. Translation by the author: 3) ¿Con cuál de las siguientes afirmaciones te identificas?

12. These statements were listed as options with multiple answers to question 3).

Graph • 7

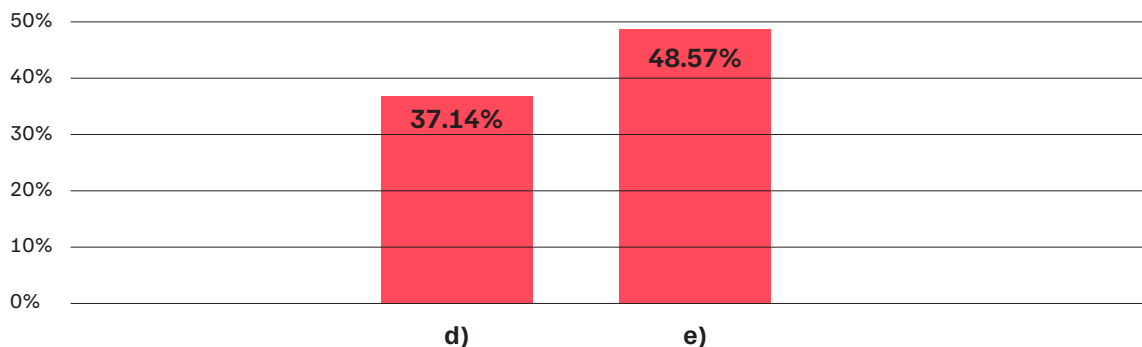
Percentage of study strategies used as the only one strategy in moment 1.



a) Study daily for at least about 30 minutes **b)** Study phrases (not just individual...) **c)** Record yourself speaking to.... **d)** Integrate English into your daily life... **e)** Practice expressing and writing down... **f)** Reflect on your emotions... **g)** Self-assess your English learning...

Graph • 8

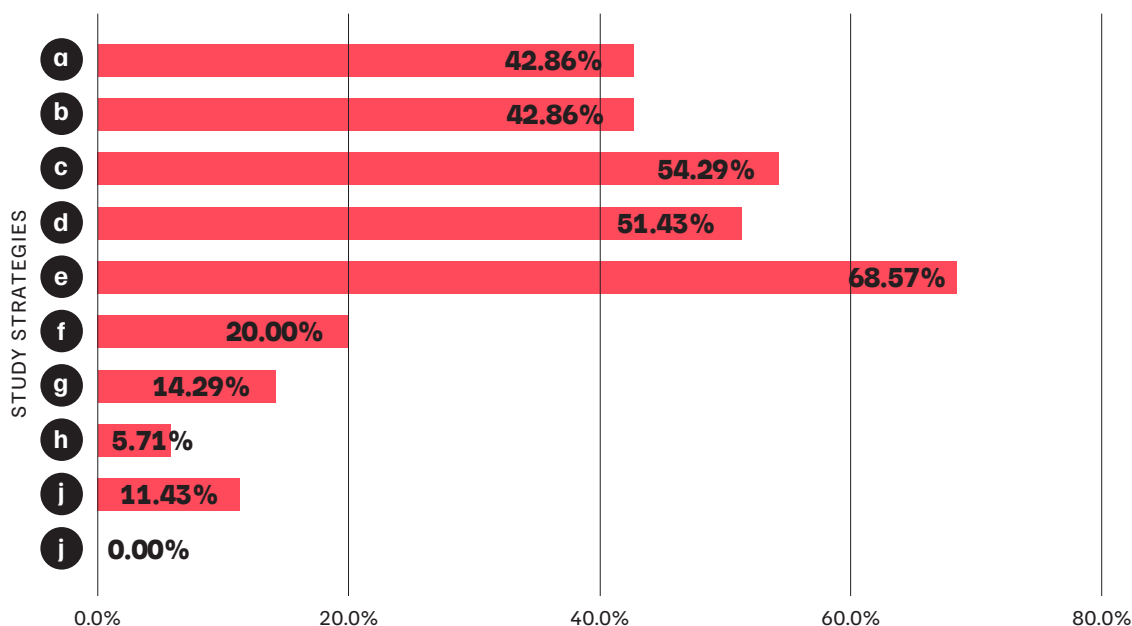
Answers to question 1) Mark the aspects in which you consider that the talk helped you to reflect:



d) The self-assessment I make of my English learning process
e) The effectiveness of the study strategies I use to learn to speak English

Graph • 9

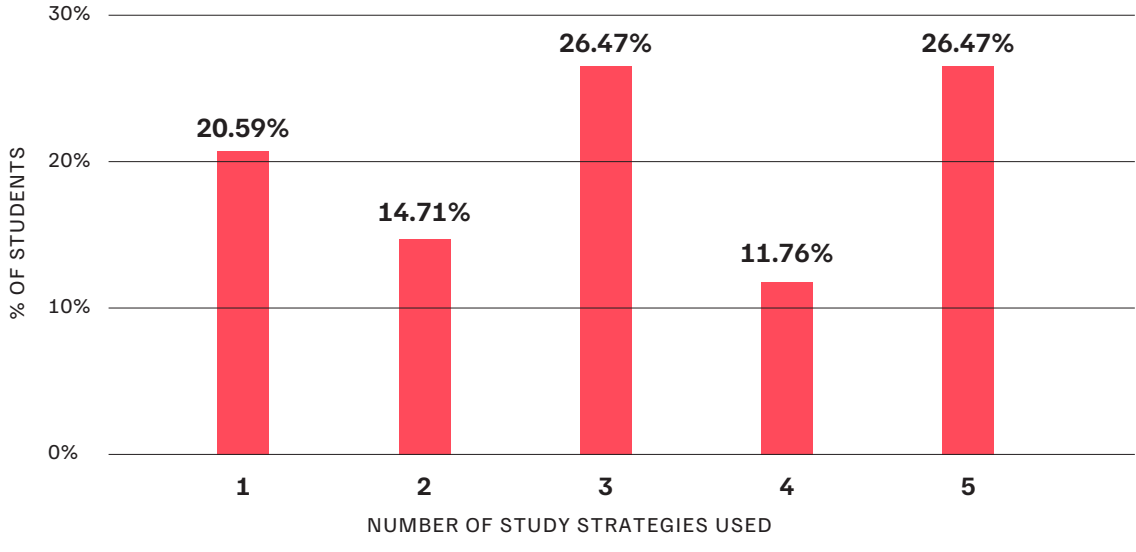
Answers to question 2) Which of the following study strategies for learning to speak English did you implement after the talk?



a) Study phrases (not just individual words from the... **b)** Practice saying and writing your ideas in English **c)** Study daily for at least 30 minutes for a more effective... **d)** Self-assess your English learning process by... **e)** Integrate English into your daily life through an... **f)** Reflect on your emotions surrounding your learning process... **g)** Record yourself speaking to practice your pronunciation **h)** I already had implemented some study strategies **i)** I implemented other study strategies **j)** I didn't implemented any study strategy.

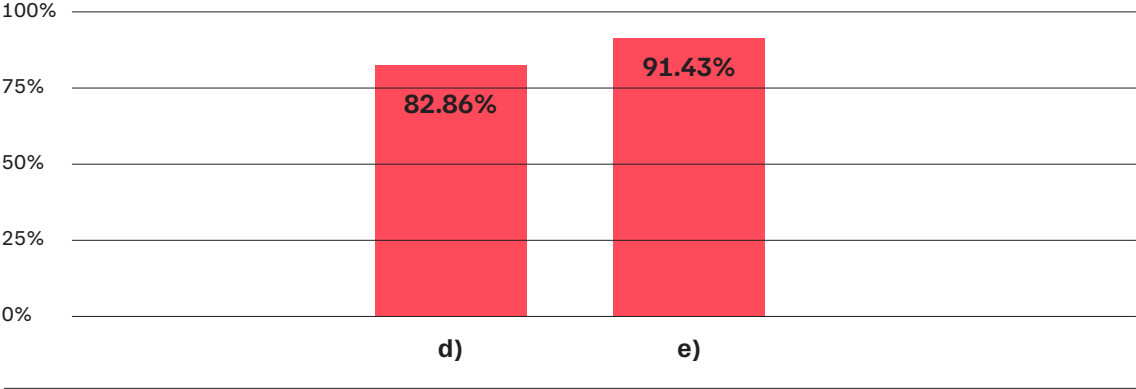
Graph • 10

Percentage of number of study strategies used after the Workshop.



Graph • 11

Answers to question 3) With which of the following statements do you identify?



- d)** I self-assess my learning process to be aware of my strengths and weaknesses
- e)** I use study strategies that help me reinforce my English learning.

PHASE

4

Interpretation of the Meso-Curricular Intervention

In this phase, the analysis of the information from the previous interventions is described considering the axes of the systematization per moment considering prominent authors in the area.

Self-regulated learning is defined by Zimmerman (2015) as a dynamic process through which learners actively take control of their learning experiences. It encompasses a range of cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational strategies that students employ to set goals, monitor their progress, and regulate their efforts to achieve those goals. In self-regulated learning, individuals engage in goal setting, planning, organizing, time management, metacognitive reflection, and the strategic use of resources to optimize their learning outcomes. This proactive approach to learning places learners at the center of their educational journey, allowing them to adapt and refine their strategies as they navigate the complexities of learning tasks and challenges. Ultimately, self-regulated learning empowers individuals to become more effective, independent, and self-directed learners.

In the context of learning English as a foreign language, the concept of self-regulated learning embodies a dynamic and proactive approach through which learners take the reins of their educational journey. Language learning is not devoid of emotions; students may encounter anxiety, fear, or stress. Dulay

and Burt's affective filter hypothesis (1977), as cited by Krashen (1982), suggests that these emotions can hinder language acquisition, acting as a barrier to comprehending and internalizing language input. Krashen argues that to maximize language acquisition, educators should create an environment that fosters low affective filters. This can be achieved by reducing anxiety, building learners' confidence, and making the learning experience enjoyable and motivating (Harmer, 2007).

This positive feedback loop reinforces their confidence and resilience, ultimately leading to more successful and empowered language learners who believe in their ability to overcome obstacles and achieve linguistic proficiency. This confidence in one's ability to succeed in a particular task is described by Bandura as self-efficacy belief, which can be enhanced by encouragement, feedback, and positive reinforcement from others (Kim, et al., 2015). Another source of self-efficacy are emotional reactions and physiological responses (like stress or anxiety) during a task because they can shape self-efficacy. If individuals manage their emotions effectively during challenging situations, their self-efficacy may increase.

Learners can actively manage their emotions to optimize their language learning experiences through strategies for reducing anxiety and enhancing motivation. By integrating emotional self-regulation into language learning, learners can develop more resilient and successful language acquisition skills. In order to do this, it is essential that students reflect on their emotional responses to different learning situations and adjust their strategies accordingly (Oxford & Gkonou, 2021).

Learners who can effectively regulate their emotions are better equipped to engage in the metacognitive processes implied in self-regulated learning. This means that by managing their emotional states and reducing anxiety or

stress, learners can create a more conducive environment for self-regulated learning, ultimately enhancing their ability to set, pursue, and achieve their academic and language learning goals.

The meso-curricular intervention presented in this study can play a pivotal role in nurturing students' self-efficacy beliefs and recognizing the personal tools to manage emotions during English communication, and understanding how what they think and feel about themselves influence their behavior towards learning English as a foreign language. Considering all of this could lead not only to empowering students to become more effective and independent language learners but also to provide them with the tools needed to navigate the intricacies and challenges of foreign language learning successfully.

➤ Axis 1: Self-efficacy Beliefs Vs. the Emotion Identified as the Most Frequent in the English Learning Environment

Moment 1 • Workshop

As seen in the responses to the Reflective Questionnaire, it was found that 47.32% of students self-rated their abilities to learn English with 8, 9 and 10, which leads us to assume that most students struggle with what they think about their abilities towards learning English as a Foreign Language, revealing a tendency to negative self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). 71,33% of this group marked option a) *happy* in response to question 3) *How do you feel about your ability to learn to communicate in English?*¹³ and the 1.9% that mentioned fac-

13. Translation by the author: 3) ¿Cómo te sientes respecto a tu capacidad para aprender a comunicarte en inglés?

ing challenges related to self-consciousness in their language learning journey in response to the open-ended question 5) *What do you think you need to do to learn to communicate in English and achieve your goals?*¹⁴, indicates that learners harboring positive self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to experience joy during the learning process. This finding, when viewed through the lenses of Bandura's self-efficacy and Zimmerman's self-regulated learning, provides an understanding of the intricate interplay between psychological factors and language learning outcomes, because students with elevated self-efficacy beliefs approach language learning with confidence, which fosters positive emotions and allows students to adapt and refine strategies to navigate learning challenges and to take control of their learning process. According to Krashen all this eases language acquisition because it contributes to lowering the affective filter (emotional discomfort) that interferes with learning. This reinforces the importance of fostering confidence and positive emotional experiences in language learners.

Moment 2 • Follow-up

The results of the follow-up questionnaire show that the meso-curricular intervention had a profound impact on increasing students' awareness of their self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). This is shown by 41.2% of students choosing option b) *I believe I am capable of learning to speak English* to question 1) *Mark the aspects in which you consider that the talk helped you to reflect on*¹⁵. Furthermore, 65.7% of participants selecting option c), *I am able to manage my emotions assertively in my English*

14. Translation by the author: 5) ¿Qué crees que necesitas hacer para aprender a comunicarte en inglés y alcanzar tus metas?

15. Translation by the author: 1) Marca los aspectos en los que consideres que la charla te ayudó a reflexionar

learning process, to question 3) *With which of the following statements do you identify?*¹⁶, points to the meso-curricular intervention's contribution to emotional self-regulation, a fundamental aspect of self-regulated learning highlighted by Zimmerman. Additionally, 82.86% of participants chose option d) *I self-assess my learning process to be aware of my strengths and weaknesses*, for the same question, indicating the meso-curricular intervention's impact on fostering metacognitive awareness. As mentioned earlier, according to Krashen, all the psychological impact of the meso-curricular intervention leads to a decrease in the affective filter, allowing students to develop self-regulated learning.

➤ Axis 2) Study strategies Used by the Students for Learning English as a Foreign Language

Moment 1 • Workshop

To enhance the learning of English, students' active engagement with the language beyond the conventional classroom environment is crucial for their learning progress. Therefore, it is vital to recognize the study methods employed by students. The results from Moment 1 say that students who took part in the workshop struggle to incorporate English into their everyday routines. This is clear as 58.99% of participants selected option e) *Integrating English in daily life through activities like watching movies, listening to music, or changing their cellphone language to English* in response to question 4. This statistic highlights a lack of initiative among learners to take charge of their learning experiences, a key concept in Zimmerman's theory of self-reg-

ulated learning. Additionally, only 8.83% of students opted for option g) *Recording oneself for pronunciation practice*, showing that very few students actively reflect on their English learning needs, which is another aspect of self-regulated learning.

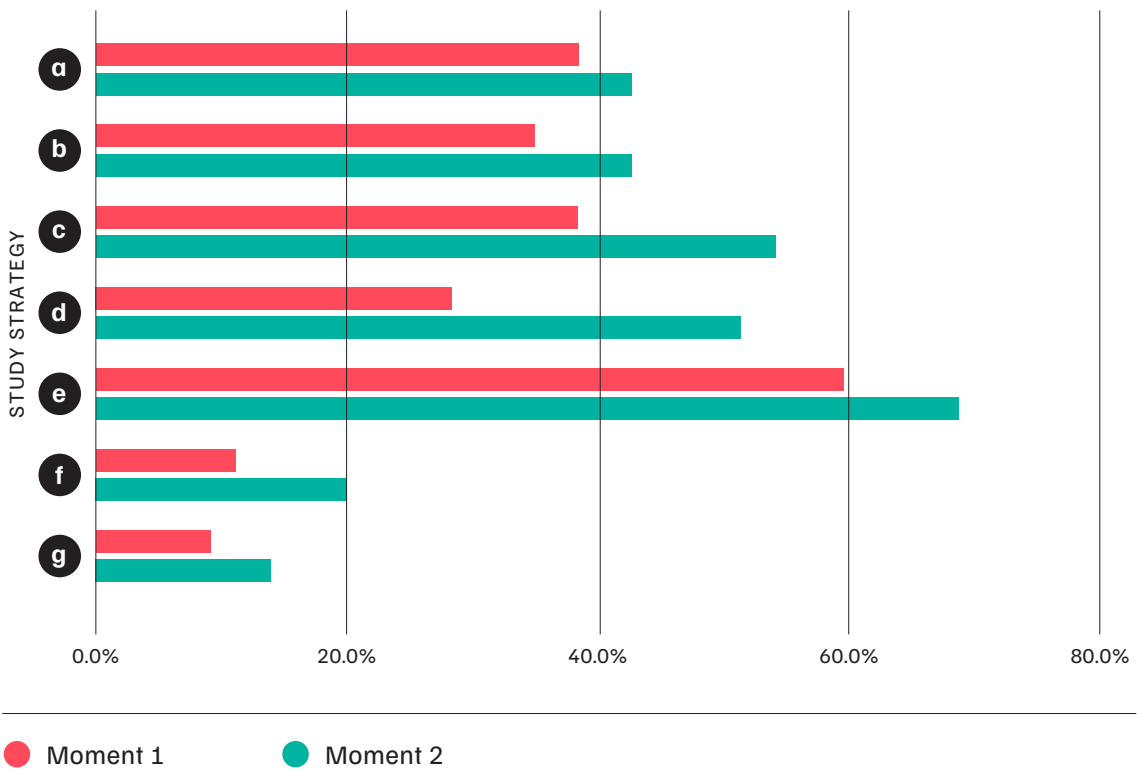
Moment 2 • Follow-up

The follow-up questionnaire outcomes showcase the influence of the meso-curricular on students' receptiveness to new study strategies and their capacity to enhance their learning approaches, underscoring their readiness to embrace and implement effective strategies—a hallmark characteristic of self-regulated learning that indicates that students who participated in the workshop from moment 1 started to take an active role in their learning process. This is evident in the increased use of study strategies between moment 1 and moment 2 (See Graph 12). Additionally, the data reveals that none of the students chose the option j) *I didn't implement any study strategy* in response to question 2. Furthermore, a significant percentage of students (91.43%) selected option e) *I use study strategies that help me reinforce my English learning* and 82.86% chose option d) *I self-assess my learning process to be aware of my strengths and weaknesses* in response to question 3. The responses to question 3) show that the meso-curricular intervention empowered students to navigate and enhance their language learning journey by facilitating a shift into a proactive and strategic mindset among them.

16. Translation by the author: 3) ¿Con cuál de las siguientes afirmaciones te identificas?

Graph • 12

Use of Study Strategies in Moment 1 Vs Moment 2



a) Study phrases (not just individual words... **b)** Practice saying and writing your ideas in English **c)** Study daily for at least 30 minutes for a more effective... **d)** Self-assess your English learning process by... **e)** Integrate English into your daily life through an... **f)** Reflect on your emotions surrounding your learning process... **g)** Record yourself speaking to practice your pronunciation

PHASE

5

Learning and Experiences

The objective of this systematization project was to analyze the impact of the meso-curricular psychoeducational intervention related to self-regulated learning implemented in Fundamental Cycle (A1) Groups of the Colombo Americano Cali. Throughout this experience I had two kinds of learning, one as an Educational Psychologist who visits the classrooms and talks with the students and one as a researcher. First, I am going to speak about what I have learned as an Educational Psychologist. Reality overcomes theory. I was able to see the frustration and anguish on the students' faces and how they became more relaxed while I was talking to them about how to manage the emotional experience in the English learning process. This enabled me to understand how much the students need to validate their emotional experience while being faced with the challenge of understanding a class in English and having to reply in English a language unknown to them at the beginning. Students were able to realize that the greatest obstacle for them was in their minds because of their high level of self-demands, and this could be lowered by the explanation of the outcomes expected of them. This also confirmed to me that the CCCA English teacher has the power to improve the whole learning experience for the students. Some teachers may not be aware of this power, and perhaps they also struggle with low self-efficacy beliefs to address the emotional realm of the students.

As a researcher I learned that students with low self-efficacy beliefs tend to experience more

negative emotions and that this leads them to prefer study strategies for practicing receptive skills more than productive skills because the receptive activities are less threatening and in consequence less triggering of negative emotions. Therefore, when the self-efficacy beliefs are enhanced, the emotional experience is more positive, and students are more likely to practice their productive skills because they feel more confident in them.

A great learning from systematizing this experience is that the meso-curricular intervention helped students to identify and to implement effective study strategies to learn English and to understand the process of learning English which leads to decreasing the self-demand on performance and therefore acknowledging their achievements and increasing their motivation to continue learning English.

This systematization project shows that English learning can be enhanced by fostering the development of self-regulated learning. It emphasizes the importance of developing a comprehensive strategy that encompasses all the crucial components, particularly focusing on the emotional aspect linked to self-efficacy beliefs and the knowledge of effective study strategies for learning English as a Foreign Language, as there is no greater motivation than experiencing positive emotions while learning. Creating a positive emotional experience is a powerful motivator for learning, and addressing the emotional factors of learning could potentially help reduce dropout rates. One effective approach to achieve this is by implementing the principles of Universal Design for Learning (CAST, 2018). This framework aims to ensure that all students can learn effectively and encourages teachers to design lessons that empower students to become expert learners who are purposeful, motivated, resourceful, knowledgeable, strategic and goal directed (CAST, 2018).

➤ References

- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman and Company.
- CAST (2018). *The UDL guidelines*. <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching*. Pearson Longman.
- Kim, D. H., Wang, C., Ahn, H. S., & Bong, M. (2015). English language learners' self-efficacy profiles and relationship with self-regulated learning strategies. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 38, 136-142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2015.01.016>
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press.
- Oxford, R. L., & Gkonou, C. (2021). Working with the complexity of language learners' emotions and emotion regulation strategies. In Sampson, R. J. & Pinner, R. S. (Eds.) *Complexity perspectives on researching language learner and teacher psychology* (pp. 52-67). Multilingual Matters.
- Zimmerman, B. J. (2015). Self-regulated learning: Theories, measures, and outcomes. In J. D. Wright (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of the social and behavioral sciences* (pp. 541-546). Elsevier. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.26060-1>

➤ Appendices

Click [HERE](#)

PART
two

Classroom-Based
Systematization
Projects to Improve
Student Learning



VI

ChatGPT as
a Peer Correction
Tool for Language
Learners

BY

Juan Sebastian Restrepo • Nicole Andrea Reyes



➤ Introduction

Having the chance to observe a coworker is such an enriching experience because not only does it provide the opportunity to see how other teachers work, but it also makes you reflect on your teaching practices. Observing a colleague is always a good source of new ideas for your own lessons. As teachers, we get to a point in which the classes and activities become repetitive and less original. Nevertheless, observing other teachers refreshes our creativity. That way, we can either take the observed teacher's activities as examples to our lesson's needs. On the other hand, it is interesting to see how different teachers like to emphasize different skills of the class based on their personalities.

Another important point is that observing how another person works gets you to reflect on how you are managing your classes. According to Ahmed, et al. (2018), "Several studies suggest that the Peer Observation (PO) may be used as a developmental tool rather than an evaluative activity. The observer can decide the goals of the PO in order to receive meaningful feedback" (p. 74). Although it is common to judge other teachers when observing their classes, it is also a good way to analyze the way you are handling your own lessons. In fact, some questions may emerge: Do we have the same challenges? What are we doing to overcome them? What is the teacher doing right that we are not? Additionally, being observed cannot be out of the picture since it provides another person's perspective on how your classes are being managed.

Overall, it can be said that doing peer-observation is a good practice that we as teachers should do more often. First, it makes us have a different perspective of teaching and it is a good way to reflect on our own teaching practices and look for ways to improve them.

➤ Why is it Important to Carry out a Systematization?

There is no question that it is relevant to carry out a systematization because it is necessary to organize and structure the findings of the observed challenges in a clear and logical way so that other people who are interested in the same issue can understand, retain, and even duplicate the information more easily. Thus, future additions to the research can be included without necessarily going through the same processes mentioned in this paper

PHASE

1

Identification of the Teaching Practice

This phase will present relevant information about where the systematization took place, the observed lessons, the identified challenge and the teaching practice that will be used to overcome the challenge. Additionally, this phase will show in a very detailed manner what happened in the observed classes and how a tech-tool was implemented.

This systematization was carried out at the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano in Cali (CCCA). The CCCA is a non-profit foundation and a Binational Center officially recognized by the Embassy of the United States in Bogota. It has provided English language education and promoted culture since 1954.

The original observation was specifically done in the north branch on April 10th, 2023.

A Pre-Independent 2 class was observed in order to identify some possible teaching challenges that teacher Nicole Andrea Reyes was facing in her lessons. It was noticed that her lesson lacked the use of technological resources; the only one used was the television. On the other hand, Teacher Talking Time (TTT) was present more than it should be due to the lack of some students' participation and contribution to the lesson.

➤ Identification of the Teaching Practice

Based on the observations mentioned above, it was important to identify which teaching practice would be used to overcome the challenges that teacher Nicole was facing. So, it was concluded that the most suitable teaching practice for these issues was peer correction. Peer correction was chosen because it provides students with the opportunity to analyze their peers' mistakes and correct them. As a result, students will be given more chances to participate and have speaking time in the lesson. It is important to point out that the teacher's help is still relevant when it comes to providing corrections to the students. The objective of this teaching strategy is to increase Student Speaking Time in class by fostering peer correction with the help of ChatGPT.

ChatGPT is a language model AI that uses complex learning algorithms to understand and generate human-like language. It can answer questions, generate text, and carry out different language tasks. One way ChatGPT could be used for peer-correction in an English class is by having students enter their written work into the AI, which would then generate feedback on grammar, punctuation, syntax, and vocabulary usage. This feedback could be used by students to help each other identify and correct errors they aren't sure about in their speaking, spelling or writing, so that they

can improve their English usage. Additionally, ChatGPT could be used to provide suggestions for sentence structures or word choices, helping students to expand their vocabulary and improve their level overall.

➤ Class 1 • Vocabulary

Peer correction would be implemented when brainstorming. The teacher would brainstorm vocabulary regarding the class topic and have students write it down on the board. If there were spelling mistakes, students would have to correct them by their understanding and in case they did not know what the corrections were, ChatGPT could be used to double-check on misspelled words. Students should type the following questions or similar ones in order to get the best results possible: *What's wrong with this word's spelling "word"? Is this word spelled correctly "word"? What's the correct spelling for this word "word"?* See *image 1*. ChatGPT sample.

Image • 1

ChatGPT sample



Is this word spelled correctly "exausted"?



No, the word "exausted" is not spelled correctly. The correct spelling is "exhausted."

➤ Class 2 • Writing

Peer correction would be used for checking written texts. The teacher would have students write a short paragraph related to the main topic of the class in Google Docs. Once they were done, students would have to check their peers' work, as much as they could. The feedback was to be provided orally. ChatGPT could be used to check grammar, cohesion, and spelling that students are not certain about. Students should type the following questions or similar ones in order to get the best results possible: *Can you check this text in terms of grammar, spelling, and punctuation "text"? What's wrong with this text regarding grammar, spelling and punctuation "text"?* Image 2. ChatGPT sample.

➤ Class 3 • Speaking

Peer correction would be applied for correcting oral production in roleplays. The teacher would have students roleplay a con-

versation about the topic addressed in the lesson. Students should take notes of mistakes they caught and then make corrections orally. The teacher could also write some mistakes on the board. ChatGPT could be used to correct sentences that students were not sure about. Students should input the following questions or similar ones in order to get the best results possible: *What's wrong with this sentence in terms of grammar, spelling and punctuation "sentence"?* Image 3. ChatGPT sample.

The systematization of teaching challenges and the identification of suitable teaching practices, such as peer correction, can help overcome these challenges. In this particular case, ChatGPT can be a helpful tool to foster peer correction and increase Student Speaking Time. By implementing peer correction in different class activities, students can boost their confidence, have more opportunities to participate, and improve their English usage.

Image • 2

ChatGPT sample



What's wrong with this text regarding grammar, spelling and punctuation "Hi everybody. we're in a Coffee Place in france. It's beautiful and cold. It's on Colombo Street and opposite the Coffe House Café. It's famous because is cheap. The food is good."?



Here's the corrected version of the text, addressing grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors:

"Hi everybody. We're in a coffee place in France. It's beautiful and cold. It's on Colombo Street, opposite the Coffee House Café. It's famous because it's cheap. The food is good."

Changes made:

- Capitalized "we're" to "We're" at the beginning of the sentence.
- Capitalized "coffee" in "coffee place" and "coffee" in "Coffee House Café."
- Added a comma after "Colombo Street" for proper punctuation.
- Replaced "is" with "it's" in "It's famous because is cheap" to maintain consistency.
- Added a period at the end of the sentence "The food is good" to complete the sentence and provide proper punctuation.

Image • 3

ChatGPT sample



What's wrong with this sentence in terms of grammar, spelling and punctuation "Tomorrow, I going to drank some soda"?



Here's the corrected version of the sentence, addressing grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors:

"Tomorrow, I am going to drink some soda."

Changes made:

- Replaced "going to drank" with "going to drink" to use the correct verb form.
- Changed "drank" to "drink" to use the appropriate present tense.
- Added "am" after "I" to form the proper verb phrase "am going" for future tense.
- Added a period at the end of the sentence to provide proper punctuation.

PHASE

2

Establishing the Objective and Axes of the Systematization

In this section, we will explore three key perspectives: the teacher's viewpoint on Teacher Talking Time (TTT) during correction sessions, the amount of Student Talking Time (STT) during peer correction activities, and the efficacy of using ChatGPT as a technological tool to mitigate TTT. Additionally, research into each axis helps us gain a comprehensive understanding of how these factors cross and influence language learning outcomes.

Systematization Objective

The objective of this systematization is to evaluate the findings of lowering Teacher Talking Time and increasing Student Talking Time through the use of student peer-correction with the help of ChatGPT in Nicole's Pre-Independent class.

➤ Axes of the Systematization

Axis 1

Teacher's perspective: The amount of TTT when making corrections:

Axis 2

Student's perspective: The amount of STT when making peer corrections.

Axis 3

Tech Tool's perspective: Effectiveness of ChatGPT to reduce TTT.

PHASE

3

Reconstruction of the Teaching Practice

The role of a teacher in the language learning process is varied, with one relevant aspect being the correction of students' language mistakes. Effective correction strategies applied by students can greatly impact their language learning. In this section, we dive into the dynamics of TTT during peer correction within the context of utilizing ChatGPT as a tool for language improvement. Thus, a narrative description of what happened, focusing on each axis, in each session is shown below.

➤ Axis 1 • Teacher's Perspective: The Amount of TTT When Making Corrections

Session 1 • Vocabulary

In this session, the teacher took an important amount of time during the first part of the class to explain how ChatGPT was going to be used as a peer-correction tool. As this went along, students took a while signing up and asking questions to the teacher on how to do it. Once everything was set up, she had students brainstorm vocabulary about recycling. She paired students up and they were provided with a marker to write the vocabulary on the board. They were expected to make spelling mistakes, nevertheless, when the activity was taking place it was noticed that there were no mistakes from the students. Therefore, the teacher misspelled two words on the board on

purpose in such a way that students could use the technological tool to make the necessary spelling corrections. At the end, one word was not corrected properly by ChatGPT due to the lack of context, so the teacher had to intervene and correct it.

Session 2 • Writing

Session 2 took place in the Multimedia Room. Students were assigned a writing activity based on the same topic, which was recycling, seen in the prior session. In addition, the teacher explained to the students in a very detailed manner the assignment which involved writing an email requesting a product they had purchased. For this activity, they used a shared Google Doc. Once they were done writing their emails, they had to check a classmate's work by using ChatGPT. To sum up, they had to copy the text and paste it in ChatGPT using the following questions in ChatGPT: *Can you check this text in terms of grammar, spelling, and punctuation "text"? What's wrong with this text regarding grammar, spelling and punctuation "text"? After the explanation of the activity was given, the teacher did not have to make any interventions or corrections whatsoever.*

Session 3 • Speaking

To begin with, the teacher took some time going over the instructions on how to create a roleplay conversation in their notebooks, following the vocabulary and topic seen in class. After that, the teacher went over the activity again and gave them time to memorize the script. Finally, she had students role-play the dialogues in front of the class. The other students had to take notes of the mistakes they noticed during the roleplay. Also, the teacher could take part in this activity by taking her own notes. Once the role-plays were done, the students listed the mistakes they caught on the board. Later, they used ChatGPT to correct them. However, since no context was given to

ChatGPT, it corrected some sentences in the wrong way. Once again, the teacher had to intervene and make corrections.

➤ Axis 2 • Students' Perspective: the Amount of STT When Making Peer Corrections

Session 1 • Vocabulary

During this session students were given the instruction to write a few words regarding recycling, when implementing this activity they shared ideas with each other for some time. As the observation started, students brainstormed vocabulary about recycling. Students were provided with a marker to write the vocabulary on the board. They were expected to make spelling mistakes; nevertheless, there were none. So, the teacher misspelled two words on the board on purpose so that students could use the technological tool. The two words were "foum" as in "foam" and "aluminum" as in "aluminium." Once students were done, they used ChatGPT to correct the spelling of the words. They asked the following questions: *What's wrong with this word's spelling "word"? Is this word spelled correctly "word"? What's the correct spelling for this word "word"? However, they came across one limitation. Since no context was provided before the questions, ChatGPT was not as accurate as expected. Although it corrected "aluminum" properly, it did not correct "foum" right, and instead it showed it as "forum." That was when the teacher's help was necessary, and she had to make the correction.*

Session 2 • Writing

During this session, students had to write an essay about recycling; the topic addressed in the prior session. Additionally, students were able to check each other's work and notice the

mistakes they had and how the tool provided a different path on their writing skills. And finally, when the assignment was done, the teacher was able to receive feedback from them and let them share what they had written as a wrap up activity. This feedback could include insights into the students' understanding of the topic, their writing abilities, and any areas where they may need additional support or instruction.

Session 3 • Speaking

During this session students were able to use ChatGPT as a way to provide assessment to their classmates in a role play activity to enhance their speaking skills using the vocabulary seen in class. First, they had to prepare their conversation in pairs and later be ready to present as a role play in front of the class. As each student came up to the class and presented, the teacher only had to call them to stand, and the student had to do most of the work by taking notes and listening. Soon after, the students were given the opportunity to write down on the board the list of words and phrases that needed fixing, and later they had to look them up in ChatGPT and provide the assessment to their classmates. At the end, they were provided with some suggestions on the way they did assessments and finally finished the activity.

➤ Axis 3 • Tech Tool Perspective: Effectiveness of ChatGPT to Reduce TTT

Session 1 • Vocabulary

In this session, ChatGPT was used to correct words related to recycling that students had brainstormed on the board. Although the tech tool was able to correct a word properly, it did not succeed in correcting other words due

to the lack of context that it was given. It turns out, context is king, and without the full picture of our classroom discussion, ChatGPT stumbled on a few occasions. It left us with a small issue, needing more teacher intervention than initially anticipated. This unexpected situation in our experiment served as an eye-opener, revealing the balance between the aid provided by AI and the essential guidance offered by our teacher.

Session 2 • Writing

Session 2 took place in the Multimedia Room so that the use of the tech tool was more convenient. In this case, ChatGPT was used as a means of correcting a text. Students were to copy their assigned classmate's work and paste in ChatGPT to correct it. The most remarkable aspect was that there was no need to call upon the teacher for assistance; ChatGPT autonomously handled the entire correction process.

Session 3 • Speaking

As a final session, ChatGPT was used by students to correct wrong sentences they caught from their classmates' roleplays. Once again, the tech tool did manage to make some corrections well, showcasing its potential as an educational aid. It adeptly pinpointed and rectified a multitude of sentence structure issues, delighting both students and the teacher alike with its capabilities. However, because of the lack of context, ChatGPT could not correct some sentences properly. In one specific case, the correction it made was right, but it did not suit the context of what students meant. This incident was like a wake-up call, showing us that even though ChatGPT can be super helpful, it showed the need to be careful on how we use it. It's kind of like having a really handy tool in your toolbox, but you've got to use it wisely, especially when you want everything to flow smoothly and make sense in your conversation or writing.

PHASE

4

Interpretation of the Teaching Practice

In this phase, the dynamics of TTT and STT during peer correction activities using ChatGPT were explored. Across three sessions, the role of the teacher, the engagement of students, and the effectiveness of ChatGPT as a tool for reducing TTT were addressed. Each session offered valuable insights into how ChatGPT influenced the balance of interaction in the classroom, shifting from teacher-centered to student-centered learning. Here is what could be interpreted from the findings.

➤ Axis 1 • Teacher’s Perspective: the Amount of TTT When Making Corrections

Session 1 • Vocabulary

When students used ChatGPT to brainstorm recycling-related vocabulary, it helped keep TTT in check. Instead of the teacher doing all the talking, ChatGPT stepped in to provide quick corrections and suggestions, allowing students to actively engage in the vocabulary brainstorming process. According to elearningindustry¹, “whether you’re struggling with a particular subject, or just need some advice on how to manage your time more effectively, ChatGPT can help” (2023, para. 2).

This dynamic shifted the focus from the teacher to the students, creating a more

1. Elearningindustry.com

student-centered learning environment. It’s a great way to ensure that the teacher did not unintentionally dominate the discussion when the goal is for students to express themselves and collaborate while building their recycling-related vocabulary. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that it is extremely necessary that the teacher guides students to provide enough context to ChatGPT before the questions are asked so that the tech tool can process the information more efficiently and thus, provide a better correction.

Session 2 • Writing

During a writing activity in which students were assigned a task, the role of ChatGPT became crucial in managing TTT. By providing instant corrections and guidance, ChatGPT enabled students to independently refine their writing skills. “Rather than weaken student effort, artificial intelligence can help prepare students for the real world by encouraging critical thinking—with a few caveats” (Abramson, 2023, p.1).

The goal was to let students take the lead, express their creativity, and learn through their own efforts. Therefore, ChatGPT acted as a valuable tool for keeping TTT in check and ensuring that the focus remained on students actively engaging with the writing task. In this case, ChatGPT showed good effectiveness and corrected everything exceeding the expectations. In fact, some students acknowledged its importance and pointed out that sometimes they left out some small details that they would not have noticed if it had not been for ChatGPT. The application of the tech tool was beyond successful as mentioned before, since there was no need for the teacher to intervene.

Session 3 • Speaking

When employing ChatGPT to facilitate a role-play conversation among students, the objective was to empower learners to

actively engage and drive the discussion. In this context, it was essential for the teacher to limit TTT and encourage students to take the lead in crafting the conversation. ChatGPT served as a valuable resource for providing guidance and corrections without overshadowing the students' participation. Striking the right balance ensured that students had the opportunity to develop their communication skills and utilize ChatGPT as a helpful tool rather than relying solely on the teacher's input, thus promoting a more student-centered and interactive learning experience. However, once again it was crucial to provide context to ChatGPT before inputting the question so that it could provide more accurate answers that suited the conversation's intentions. Integrating any new tool into the classroom should be done judiciously, and ChatGPT is no exception (Abramson, 2023).

➤ Axis 2 • Students' Perspective: the Amount of STT When Making Peer Corrections

Session 1 • Vocabulary

When students utilized ChatGPT for peer corrections while brainstorming vocabulary about recycling, it amplified STT substantially. With ChatGPT's assistance in providing real-time feedback and language support, students could engage in meaningful discussions, shared ideas, and collaboratively explored recycling-related terms. This approach did not only foster active participation, but it also encouraged students to express themselves confidently in English. By minimizing the need for teacher intervention and allowing students to guide the conversation, ChatGPT enhanced STT, creating a more student-driven and interactive learning environment, which was particularly beneficial for vocabulary devel-

opment in a topic like recycling. Additionally, as noted by Kasneci, et al. (2023), language models like ChatGPT can also provide teachers with adaptive and personalized means to assist students in their language learning journey, which can make language learning more engaging and effective for students. Nevertheless, it is relevant to mention that since the tech tool did not function as expected, the teacher's help was needed. Overall, it was observed that STT increased.

Session 2 • Writing

When students were assigned a writing activity and utilized ChatGPT for peer corrections, there was a notable increase in (STT). This approach encouraged students to actively engage with their peers' writing, providing comprehensive and high-quality feedback and suggestions, as emphasized in the statement, "students can learn from each other by peer-reviewing and assessing each other's solutions. This, of course, has the best effect when the given feedback is comprehensive and of high quality" (Kasneci, et al. 2023, p. 5). By relying on ChatGPT as a helpful tool for language support, students could independently discuss and improve their written work. This dynamic shift toward peer interaction not only enhanced STT but also promoted collaborative learning, as students learned from one another's perspectives and writing styles. It created a more student-centered and communicative classroom environment, allowing students to take ownership of their writing and language development

Session 3 • Speaking

Integrating ChatGPT into role-play activities in an English class significantly amplified STT during peer corrections. By utilizing ChatGPT as a language support tool, students could engage in extended dialogues, receive real-time feedback, and collaboratively refine

their language skills. This innovative tool empowered students to actively participate in the learning process, fostering a dynamic and interactive classroom environment. As they corrected each other's language errors with ChatGPT's assistance, they not only gained valuable speaking practice but also deepened their understanding of English grammar and vocabulary. But finding ways to incorporate AI tools in your course could actually help prepare students for the real world, where they'll need to apply concepts rather than simply recall facts (Abramson, 2023). Enhancing student talk time through ChatGPT integration in English role-play activities .

In essence, ChatGPT enhances STT, making role-play activities in English class both engaging and instructive. However, the teacher's intervention was crucial to clarify the context of the phrases and vocabulary corrected by the tech tool.

➤ Axis 3 • Tech Tool Perspective: Effectiveness of ChatGPT to Reduce TTT

Session 1 • Vocabulary

The use of ChatGPT in the context of students brainstorming vocabulary about recycling has proven effective in reducing TTT. Although, ChatGPT's ability to provide instant language support and corrections empowered students to take charge of their learning process and instead of relying heavily on the teacher for guidance, students could independently explore recycling-related vocabulary, share ideas, and engage in discussions. There was still the need to rely on the teacher's assistance at some point since the tech tool could not pick the context that the brainstorming vocabulary was taking place in. Nonetheless, this shift minimized the need

for the teacher to dominate the conversation, thereby creating a more student-centered and interactive learning environment. However, be clear about your expectations for the class and motivate students to be engaged with the material (Abramson, 2023).

ChatGPT acted as a valuable tool that encouraged students to actively participate and collaborate, ultimately enhancing their language skills while efficiently reducing TTT.

Session 2 • Writing

The effectiveness of ChatGPT in reducing TTT became highly evident when students were assigned a writing activity. ChatGPT's real-time language support and feedback capabilities empowered students to work independently on their writing tasks, as highlighted by the statement, "There is vast potential for AI language models to facilitate the editing process, and act as a vehicle to disseminate information from the non-English speaking world" (Tai, et al., 2023, p. 19) Instead of prolonged teacher explanations, students could use ChatGPT as a helpful resource to enhance their writing skills. As ChatGPT and other AI technologies advance, universities will develop official conduct codes about their use. Until then, it's up to you to implement and communicate expectations about how students can and can't use these tools in your class (Abramson, 2023).

This dynamic minimizes TTT and encourages self-directed learning. Students were not only engaged in the writing process but also gained valuable insights into their language development. ChatGPT's role in reducing TTT allowed the teacher to facilitate the learning process more efficiently, fostering a more student-centered and productive writing environment.

Session 3 • Speaking

The effectiveness of ChatGPT in reducing TTT was present when students were tasked with creating a roleplay conversation. ChatGPT served as a valuable tool that empowered students to take the lead in constructing and guiding their conversations. ChatGPT offers fast and easy access to information, (Abramson, 2023) with its real-time language support and suggestions, students could independently correct roleplay scenarios and engage in dynamic interactions with their peers. This reduction in TTT allowed the teacher to step back a bit from the conversation and adopt a more facilitative role, letting students actively participate and learn from one another. ChatGPT's contribution in this context fostered a student-centered and interactive learning environment, where TTT was minimized, and students were encouraged to harness their creativity and communication skills effectively.

PHASE

5

Learnings and Experiences

The objective of this systematization was to meticulously assess the outcomes achieved by reducing TTT while concurrently increasing STT through the strategic implementation of student peer-correction, created by ChatGPT, within the context of a CCCA teacher's A2 level class. In this innovative approach, we explored

the practical application of technology and pedagogy to explore how ChatGPT could facilitate peer correction, thereby empowering students to actively engage in the learning process and refine their English language skills. This endeavor seeks to shed light on the transformative potential of such a tech-oriented strategy in promoting language proficiency and fostering a dynamic and participatory classroom environment.

In conclusion, the systematic assessment aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of reducing TTT while simultaneously increasing STT through the strategic integration of student peer-correction with ChatGPT. Through this innovative approach to technology and pedagogy, our goal was to explore ChatGPT's capacity to enable peer correction, empowering students to actively participate in their learning journey and improve their English language skills.

From the teacher's perspective, the systematization of teaching challenges and the incorporation of effective teaching practices like peer correction are invaluable tools in enhancing the learning experience. The usage of ChatGPT as a facilitative tool can significantly contribute to fostering peer correction and increasing Student Speaking Time.

On the other hand, ChatGPT was found to be better suited for writing activities in a classroom setting. One advantage lies in its ability to provide students with a controlled and structured environment for honing their writing skills. With the written format, students have the opportunity to compose and foster a deeper understanding of grammar, syntax, and organization. Moreover, ChatGPT can assist in generating constructive feedback, identifying areas for improvement and offering suggestions for enhancing written work. This process encourages students to develop critical thinking and self-editing skills, which are essential for effective communication.

Additionally, the text-based interaction minimizes distractions that may appear in spoken conversations, allowing students to focus more on the task at hand. Overall, ChatGPT's proficiency in supporting writing activities makes it a valuable tool for language educators looking to enhance their students' literacy and composition skills in a classroom setting.

This educational strategy not only fosters active student engagement but also allows for the development of critical language skills through peer interaction and correction. Research on this shows that when students correct each other, it benefits both agents. They get more practice and learn from their peers. So, they would learn more about this topic to find interesting ways to create engaging and interactive classrooms that put students at the center of the action. It is all about learning from one another, and that is enriching!

As for the researcher's perspective, the use of AI in a classroom as a tool to engage English as a second language was interesting. Therefore, the matter of having to use it was the same as knowing how it could be used effectively. AI-powered language learning platforms can provide instant feedback on grammar, vocabulary usage, and writing skills. This immediate feedback helps students correct mistakes in real-time, leading to more efficient learning and improvement. This knowledge immediately gave the opportunity to research deeper into AI. The whole process of learning how to incorporate this new tool (ChatGPT) was appealing in terms of peer correction and focused on the one skill it was known to be more effective on, which was writing.

Finally, having AI in the classroom can enhance the efficiency, and accessibility of English language learning, ultimately helping students achieve their language proficiency goals more effectively.

References

- Ahmed, E., Nordin, Z. S., Shah, S. R., & Channa, M. A. (2018). Peer observation: A professional learning tool for English language teachers in an EFL institute. *World Journal of Education, 8*(2), 73-87. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wje.v8n2p73>
- Abramson, A. (2023, June 1). How to use ChatGPT as a learning tool. *Monitor on Psychology, 54*(3). <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2023/06/chatgpt-learning-tool>
- Tulsiani, R. (2023, January 19). *ChatGPT for students: How AI chatbots are revolutionizing education*. <https://elearningindustry.com/chatgpt-and-the-future-of-personalized-learning-in-higher-education>
- Kasneji, E., Seßler, K., Küchemann, S., Bannert, M., Dementieva, D., Fischer, F., ... & Kasneji, G. (2023). ChatGPT for good? On opportunities and challenges of large language models for education. *Learning and Individual Differences, 103*, 102274. <https://doi.org/10.35542/osf.io/5er8f>
- Tai, A. M. Y., Meyer, M., Varidel, M., Prodan, A., Vogel, M., Iorfino, F., & Krausz, R. M. (2023). Exploring the potential and limitations of ChatGPT for academic peer-reviewed writing: Addressing linguistic injustice and ethical concerns. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning, 17*(1), T16-T30.

VII

The Impact of Grouping Techniques in Teacher and Student-Talking Time

BY

Julian Cardona • Christian Londoño Quintero



➤ Introduction

Today, reflective practice represents an innovative training option that articulates theoretical and practical knowledge in depth and clarity for teachers looking forward to improving professional performance. Teachers play a vital role in this process of change. To lead this change and adapt to current needs, teachers need greater professional autonomy to innovate as needed in dynamic and reflective ways. Teachers are the main agents of change and must be self-reflective and critical professionals, practicing observation, inquiry into the teaching process and classroom management, a complex space configured as a real, permanent, and dynamic ecosystem. However, this image of the teacher is light years away from the traditional and entrenched teaching model of the teacher as a provider of knowledge. The problem identified is that teachers tend to overuse Teacher Talking Time (TTT) in class, giving less chances for students to produce and having less Student Talking Time (STT) decreasing the oral production expected in the institution during class time.

In professional work, the teacher is immersed in situations that must be analyzed and understood before designing and constructing interventions, and the teacher strives to be contextualized by moving away from standardization. The teacher designs are open-ended and move away from the mechanical application of general strategies by adapting them to real situations. Teachers become active participants in building expertise as they do not directly apply off-the-shelf strategies but tailor them to the specific needs of the moment. These professionals require a wide range of personal skills enabling them to research, analyze, reflect and create. teachers' work is distinctly inventive, dynamic, and changing, requiring innovation and commitment. Of course, the training of reflective teachers presents complex challenges, but we believe it remains the most appropriate option for a teaching profession often characterized by change, uncertainty, and complexity.

Technocratic and uncritical training methods may not allow teachers to deal with uncertain situations in their profession. Critical reflection training requires better preparation, and greater confidence in the innovative situations facing their work, and transforms teachers into transformational intellectuals (Giroux, 1990, p. 178) who link reflection to teaching practice to rise up and develop professionally in their teaching research skills. In this approach, the traditional boundaries that delimit and separate research from teaching disappear and educational research is linked to the real issues and problems of the classroom. Here is where the systematization of the teaching practice comes to the scene, being the systematic process that may eventually become the most important part of the teaching profession. This is due to the reflectiveness of the process itself, giving the opportunity to the teachers to reflect on current methodologies, coping with the identification of what they have and making it shine with trends, highlighting the key aspects of what is successful in class and using them to boost classes (Burhan-Horasanlı & Ortaçtepe, 2016) (Domingo, 2021).

PHASE

1

Identification of the Teaching Practice

At the beginning of collecting information to reach the objective of this study, observation was key to identify a current teaching practice situation that particularly affect students in their performance as learners of a second language in a classroom at Centro Cultural Colombo Americano. This will be presented in the following section.

➤ Teaching Context

The Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali (CCCA) is a nonprofit organization that works with informal education or “Educación para el trabajo”, guided by the Colombian Technical Standard 5580. As teachers we have the freedom to incorporate resources in the “instructivo de cómo dictar una clase”. The CCCA is also an institution that is a Binational Center which makes it a bridge between Colombian and American cultures; thus, one of the services is offering English as a Foreign Language classes as a manner of crossing the bridge of cultures.

For the current study, a Fundamental Plus 1B (A2 level) was chosen because it was noticed that few students were participating in class, only making short comments and not engaging in real conversational language use.

➤ Teaching Problem

Observation can become a meaningful tool for teachers to grow, although it may seem uncomfortable for teachers when observation is used as a tool for supervision. When teachers are aware of observation as a way to work and improve their own teaching practice, learning comes to teaching, and perhaps a more conscious process of teaching. Considering the observed problem of lack of real conversation in class, our proposal for the teacher to improve is to implement new grouping techniques to use small groups in stages in class. This will force more student-student interaction instead of student-teacher interaction. Using student-student interaction activities in the pre, while and post sections of class and seeing if the use of new grouping techniques can provide what is being needed to get students to participate more.

We strongly believe that the implementation of group work in the classroom should be more widely researched. Because by doing so, teachers as researchers might come across with relevant information about the influence of the implementation of this strategy on student’s performance when speaking in English as a foreign language.

➤ Strategy Objective

The objective of the strategy is increasing student interaction (peer correction, etc.) in the target language through grouping techniques to help the class be more student-centered.

Teaching Practice Description

The teacher practice description as it follows was implemented during three different sessions in a Fundamental Plus 1b (A2 level) on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali.

Session 1 • Poker cards grouping

During session 1 Poker cards were used for the grouping technique. Since students were intrigued about the cards, at the beginning the cards' symbols (♠♣♥♦) and their names were explained. Students were asked to take a card out of a deck and depending on the symbol (pikes, clubs, hearts or diamonds) they got into the groups. This grouping technique was aimed to make them work in small groups for the warm up activity in the class, in the grammar practice and the production process.

Session 2. Online Name picker

During session 2 an online group work organizer (*random curtain call group generator*¹) was used to pair students. This grouping technique was aimed at making them work in small groups for the warm-up activity in the class, in the grammar practice and in the production process.

Session 3 • Colored Sticky Note

During session 3 colored sticky notes were used. As students arrived at the classroom they were given a sticky note (Blue/Green). Each of the papers contained a number and a letter. This grouping technique was aimed to make them work in small groups for the warm up activity in the class, in the grammar practice and the production process.

1. <https://www.online-stopwatch.com/random-group-generators/random-curtain-call-group-generator/>

PHASE

2

Establishing the Objective and Axes of the Systematization

In this section, we will be presenting the objective of the systematization that was chosen for this research project as well as the axes identified as key paths to develop a process that can help us enlighten a way to spot further findings in this project.

Objective of the systematization

To describe the effectiveness of the implementation of grouping techniques in 3 stages of the class to increase Student Talking Time (STT).

➤ Axes

1. Implementation of the grouping techniques.
2. Teacher Talking Time (TTT)
3. Student Talking Time (STT)

PHASE

3

Reconstruction of the Teaching Practice

Based on the axis aforementioned, this phase will cover descriptions of the experiences lived throughout the 3 sessions implemented, keeping in mind the development of the classes, teachers' insights, students' responses in terms of talking time, and the performance of the implementation of the grouping techniques. The descriptions written in this phase were collected using field notes.

➤ Axis 1: Implementation of the Grouping Techniques

Session 1

During this session Poker cards were used to group students in the three stages of the class. Students were asked to make the groups depending on the symbol (♠ pikes, ♣ clubs, ♥ hearts and ♦ spades). At the beginning students asked questions about the vocabulary of the poker cards symbols but also their order. Students took a card out of the deck and got different cards and they paired up according to the symbol. In the first stage, students worked with the partner with the same card symbol to discuss careers and their jobs. For the second stage of the class (grammar practice), students were assigned to work with a student with a different card symbol to ask questions about their work experience. Finally, for the third stage (production) they switched partners again to carry out a job interview role-play.

Session 2

The grouping technique implemented in this session was an online name picker to generate groups. This web tool was used three times during the class according to each stage. Students worked together as assigned by the name picker; for the first stage students talked about traditional jobs and trendy jobs. In the second stage, students switched partners to work together solving some activities in the book. And finally, for the third stage, students worked with a different partner giving their opinions about different jobs.

Session 3

The grouping technique implemented in this third session was Colored Sticky notes. This strategy was implemented during the three main stages of the class. In the warm up students were asked to find a colored note that was pasted under their seats. Students were asked to pay attention to the colors (yellow, blue and green) to get into three groups, once in groups they read some questions, provide an answer and based on that guess the class topic was. Later on, during the grammar practice, students wrote a number from 1 to 3 on their pieces of colored paper and then group with the partners with the same number, in this stage students explored the modals used to talk about rules in sports and competitions. For the production stage, students wrote letters A, B or C on their papers and then they had to make a group with the partner holding the same letter, this time they had to work together and explain the rules for a sport or a competition.

➤ Axis 2: Teacher Talking Time

Session 1

In this session, the teacher was in charge of showing and explaining the use of the poker cards to be implemented. This time, the teacher asked students whether they had played poker before or even if they liked it. Later the teacher admitted he had never played poker before. The teacher had explained to students about the representation of the symbols and the order of the poker cards. After clarifying doubts instructions were given as long as he explained the rules of the activity for each of the stages. In order to check the comprehension of the instructions, the teacher asked random students to say what the instructions were in front of the class once again. The teacher was mainly monitoring the students' performance during the development of the activities in each stage.

Session 2

In this session, the teacher wrote the students' names on the website of the name picker generator before class time. During the warm up, the teacher intervention occurred once students did not remember how to say certain words about jobs and occupations, or when some students were struggling with some spelling.

Once they were given the grammar presentation, the teacher selected examples written on the board to model the grammar. Teacher's intervention was necessary in order to explain the patterns of the language. By the end of the class the teacher gave some feedback on students' role play.

Session 3

During the third session of implementation of the strategy, students were given a set of instructions to fulfill the task. This time the

instructions were shorter, listed, and written on slides where students could read them all along the task. Keywords were necessary in the writing on the task, the teacher took from 1 to 2 minutes on average to give instructions and later on, the teacher was mainly walking around to answer the questions that students would come up with, monitoring that students were following the instructions and using the target language to communicate with their classmates.

➤ Axis 3: Student Talking Time

Session 1

During this session students participated asking about the poker cards and some vocabulary related to them. Once they were grouped, they carried out the instructions given by the teacher for each of the stages. Even though they changed partners several times, they continue interacting and solving the activities. Students demonstrated more interaction among themselves in the development of the second and third stage since they had to discuss more actively about the work experience, even if they were not employed at the moment they used information from their relatives, and at the final stage they were able to present the role-play. Students look for support from the teacher when they had questions related to vocabulary and grammar structures.

Session 2

During the second session, students started to participate the moment they saw the web tool in action, they asked why their names appeared on the screen. For the warm up stage students provided a list of current jobs and their descriptions to their peers. After that students gave examples of the grammatical structures seen, however the student-student

interaction in this stage was less evident since it was necessary that the teacher intervened more to clarify doubts. In contrast, in the final stage, the student-student interaction was more evident when they exchanged opinions with their classmates.

Session 3

During the third session, students participated more due to familiar vocabulary they could use throughout the class. Students interacted more by answering the questions given in order to guess what the main topic was. Then, on the second stage students had to exchange their previous knowledge about the grammar topic and reach out for explanations to the teacher when needed. In the final stage students worked more independently in their groups while preparing their presentations about rules of the sports they chose, carrying out a consistent and active interaction.

PHASE

4

Interpretation of the Teaching Practice

The 3 axes exposed at this phase will be addressed by following three different sessions in which the authors mentioned support the analysis of each. Exploring studies that we consider as most relevant through our process, such as motivation, students' rapport with teacher and their classmates, and factors that could aid teachers in their teaching practice.

➤ Axis 1: Implementation of the grouping techniques

Session 1

During this first session, the engagement seemed evident because of the intrigue caused by the teacher when students saw the teacher bringing a deck of poker cards. Students seemed not to have experienced any situation related to vocabulary with poker cards. Once the activity was done engagement seemed to be activated, Sari (2019) also noted in her study that encouraging the grouping up of students could represent a relevant turning point in terms of engagement, seeing that group work activities are appropriate ways to change the traditional teacher talk taking over of the class to students who work together in English interact more, share ideas, prompt to give each other feedback and improve their communication.

Thus, having students engaged in class using grouping techniques to group them may highly benefit students' class environment and then become a more participative class, which is what language teachers tend to expect class by class; students using the information learned in class in a setting where they can actively become part of their language learning process.

Session 2

Using a tech tool in a link in this session, students seemed to have a high expectation of seeing their names on the screen, plus not knowing who they would work with generated interest. This session used this tool because tech tools are becoming more friendly than ever, for both old school teachers and avant-garde teachers. With this grouping strategy, students' interaction increased during session 2, in which students noticed the use of technology to motivate interaction. Teachers

should encourage student interaction and provide opportunities for students to engage in deep and meaningful conversations with clear learning content (Sedova, et al, 2019).

This is why embracing technology as a tool for grouping techniques in classes is an important aspect of promoting interaction in the target language. Not only that but also this type of grouping technique can help students to process language more quickly and spontaneously. It allows them to move from simple sentence structures to more complex ones at a faster pace, they can talk about topics that are relevant and interesting to them. This leads to better long-term retention of the language. (Salas, 2005) Students seemed to have noticed opportunities of interaction with someone else besides the person they had been more comfortable working together with in most of the previous courses.

Session 3

The students' expectations during the implementation of the grouping technique in session three increased much more compared to the previous sessions. Salas (2005) gives examples of two techniques that have been commonly seen as easy ones to apply. One of them consisted of giving numbers to students and then grouping them according to the numbers. Another one which she referred to as the easiest one had to do with asking students to get in threes or fours. Both of them are clear examples of how grouping techniques are not necessarily meant to be complex nor time-consuming for teachers to apply or create. In the case of this study, and especially this session, the use of colored strips of paper could make a simple grouping technique a collaborative activity.

Using small square colored pieces of paper was a strategy that came out when we were facing a lack of materials where the activity was being carried out. Students tend to like

working with their favorite pairs so Salas (2005) also explains that not only working in groups makes the learning process more enjoyable and engaging for students which provides a social context for language use and learning, allowing students to develop a sense of social identity within the group. But also it allows them to participate in longer conversations and feel more confident in expressing their opinions (Salas, 2005). The more comfortable students seemed to feel when using the language, the more they seemed to have succeeded in understanding the intention and the communicative objectives established. This may have had a direct impact on their learning process followed by their emotional commitment to the class, helping them to communicate in the target language and making the implementation of grouping techniques a useful strategy. The outcome was communicating in a target language.

➤ Axis 2: Teacher Talking Time

Session 1

The teacher identified the factors of having a low level of Teacher Talking Time at the beginning of the session. This showed a commitment to the grouping techniques, prompting students to have active participation and interaction through the activities. In terms of participation, we can mention the importance of the distribution of the students within the class. This may show how crucial it is to have small groups in class to reduce Teacher Talking Time. Correa, et al. (2017) found something related to this, They argue that:

The learners' attitude towards separate-table distribution is positive, highlighting that it emphasizes their role in the lesson and that it allows them to pay more attention to the teacher, with classes running more smoothly...

Thus, the participants might be fond of this seating arrangement because the pressure of participating individually is lifted, being now the group's responsibility to carry out tasks and activities successfully (p.156).

This means that the increase in students' participation in class will eventually reduce TTT, as seen in this session. How also the teacher prompted students to correct their own mistakes, lowering the teacher interference and becoming more of a guide throughout the lesson.

Session 2

In session 2, students followed the instructions made by the teacher to promote interaction. Luoma (2004) and Brown (2001) cited by Correa, et al. (2017) highlight "that interaction plays a crucial role in the modern approach towards teaching a foreign language and pinpoints the importance of negotiation and the exchange of information when interacting" (p.147) which plus clear instructions seemed to lower TTT. The article also emphasizes that "teachers must reorganize activities to foster more interaction in the classroom, the right pattern helps achieve learning aims and learning productivity" (Correa, et al., 2017). Therefore, teachers can choose the appropriate pattern of interaction based on the learning objectives and the activity being conducted once they become aware of reducing TTT, and can be aware of the benefits that implementing grouping techniques in class can have in terms of students' participation.

Session 3

It seemed that the teacher learned from before that the clearer and shorter the instructions are, the more comfortable students feel. Correa, et al. (2017) also identified that clear instructions represent a key aspect of activities. In the study they found that "some students say that they only participate occa-

sionally due to lack of comprehension of the instructions in L2 and the task itself" (p.155). As well Sedova, et al. (2019) identified this and recommended that teachers need to "learn about methods of talk-intensive teaching and be guided in creating conditions for a more proportionate participation of all students, regardless of their achievement, skills, or other characteristics. The study also suggests that teachers should "be aware of the possible link between classroom talk and achievement and strive to invite all students in the classroom to participate in classroom conversations" (Sedova, et al., 2019, p. 9) Consequently, the right use of clear instructions while doing the planning of the class, identifying all the key aspects of the interaction and the acknowledgment of the class, in general, can effectively reduce the TTT. Necessary and appropriate lesson planning based on less TTT while giving instructions and becoming a monitor instead, plus the interaction among students made their motivation and commitment increase when taking part in the grouping technique.

➤ Axis 3: Student Talking Time

Session 1

During every class session, students have a mission to accomplish regarding the use of the target language during most of the class. Correa, et al. (2017) establishes that students' interaction in the target language may eventually correlate with the seating arrangement. This particular aspect gave us a prompt to consider not only the activities to be carried out themselves, but also the environment itself when implementing the activities. Seating arrangements may imply the importance of having students interact and support themselves randomly with other students, bringing high benefits to the learning process of the students and English speaking skills. This was

evident in the lesson that was executed thanks to the pre established instruction of seating arrangement in the grouping technique that most of the time teachers may take for granted, not considering the big impact on students' participation.

Session 2

While the session was conducted, the correlation between the objectives set in the classroom and the activities at this point of the study is essential since according to Sari (2019) who said that teachers could emphasize “student-centered approaches and by using a variety of activities such as hands-on activities, group work, peer work, individual work, projects, and discussion to engage students and encourage active participation” (p.9). By this, elements can be useful when planning a speaking activity depending on the type of lesson we want to achieve and the expectations on the performance of each student.

Students' expectations on who they were going to work with by using a tech tool that set groups randomly could evoke the excitement of emotionally-inclusive practices. As the patterns of interaction “occurred between teacher and student or student and student. Meaning that the students seemed to be active and participated in interactive and communicative activities such as games, exercises, and discussion” (Sari, 2019, p. 8). Intriguing students or at least creating that sense of intrigue in class will develop an atmosphere of interest on teachers' practices within the classroom. A positive aspect to be considered is the teaching phenomenon of growing expectations when students are wondering what is about to happen next, especially without knowing who they are to work with.

Session 3

During this session, a set of questions was established to model a speaking exercise. The questionnaire included the target language to be implemented as part of the didactic unit of the course. Working on how the questions were going to be presented led to the initiative of using a grouping technique to enhance the interaction among students. Sari (2019) did an activity that is very connected to what was done during this session. She argues that “patterns of interaction that emerged during the teaching and learning process in the observed EFL classes included group work, choral responses, closed-ended teacher questioning Initiation Response and Feedback (IRF), individual work, student initiates-teacher answers, open-ended teacher questioning, and collaboration” (p.9). In the same study, Sari (2019) also notes that “group work can foster learner responsibility and independence, improve motivation, and contribute to a feeling of cooperation and warmth in the class” (p.8), which is highly connected to the process that the teacher did during this session and boosted the level of autonomy in students. Students are exposed to a direct negotiation when the interaction comes, having as a result an independence referring to their communicative competence in action.

Moreover, awareness of the process could be seen by students during this session. Correa, et al. (2017) also identified in their study the importance of doing so to make students aware of their process. They argue that:

Although the participants do not seem confident enough to declare whether group participation fosters or hinders the learning of a foreign language, they can clearly distinguish the positive elements it brings—contribution, interaction, help— as well as the negative elements— conversation, distraction and lack of participation— when working in groups (p.156).

Whenever teachers reach the awakening of students' interest in language learning strategies, identifying positive and negative aspects of their own performance may eventually support and help to keep in the long-term memory those activities to be developed.

PHASE

5

Learnings and Experiences

In this part, the learnings and experiences will be presented. The reflective teaching practice had an influence on the process carried out in this research. It highly benefited the critical thinking of the researchers in the process of gathering, clarifying, and shaping the research and experiences which became the main aspect of being a teacher-researcher. Indeed, collecting data for this paper made us more aware of our teaching practice by reflecting on the process we carried out and how solidly the reflective teaching practice can help everyone involved in the process grow.

During the implementation of the grouping techniques, it was identified in our view that the use of group work in the classroom should be researched more and be implemented in pedagogical approaches worldwide. The use of grouping techniques demonstrated, in this study, the benefits of collaborative learning on academic performance enhancing communication skills and confidence among students when using EFL in the classroom.

Even if the benefits of the use of grouping techniques are on the table by this session, it is also important to consider the drawbacks as part of the reflection that is required and intended to establish within the context of the classroom being characterized as group size, age, cultural background, teamwork leadership, and problem-solving situations students can eventually face and deal with during class time. It is the teacher who has to impact positively on the fact that students' interaction occurs when common interests are involved.

In the process of analysis of the grouping techniques that were chosen at first and implemented later, it was shown the necessity of communication as a path of construction in the learning process of the acquisition of English as a Foreign language as an object of study leading the integration of student and teacher talking time among the execution of the activities that were planned in the conduction of this study.

We also had some experiences in terms of STT, it was identified in the classes, and observed some opportunities to improve during class time too. At the beginning of the study, we noticed that students had a kind of comfort zone, especially with their closer classmates in the parts that interaction was involved within activities.

Those students who felt not having strong communication or socio-linguistic skills used to inhibit their participation and talking in front of the class or among their classmates, this changed when the grouping techniques were applied, making them feel more comfortable and confident of taking part in activities that fostered interaction. The increase of the level of STT helped students have opportunities to participate in the target language, which is a key principle of the CLT approach and the functional view of the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali.

The teacher is responsible for making the appropriate decisions in terms of planning the activities that will be carried out during class time, the teacher at the Colombo Americano Cali can not forget that the activities must address the enhancement of STT and not only mere interaction, in depth, use of the target language to prompt sociolinguistic skills, thus the foreign language interaction can take place during class time.

In regards to TTT, over-explanation can highly increase the level of TTT, this is shown to lower the interaction expected in class. Classes exposed to the over explanation will not benefit from class participation, instead showing the teacher as the only source of knowledge, leaving behind the role of the activities themselves or the importance of the role of students as part of the learning process.

The overuse of teaching instruction will eventually lead to less use of the target language in students, turning the teacher into an active participant instead of being a facilitator of the language learning process. This goes against the CLT approach, perhaps making the learning process biased.

Within the observation carried out in this study, it was also found that the misleading of the process to excessive use of TTT in regards to study telling about personal life, is a process that becomes time-consuming and a process that does not take into account collaboration among students, thus, the implementation of grouping techniques can find a spot to rehearse, becoming a tool that teachers can use to foster participation and linguistic competence.

Some of the global learnings that we have based on this research paper have helped us reflect on teaching practices, we can assert now the grouping techniques are indeed tools that help lower TTT, and the techniques empower students to feel comfortable when using the target language increasing and potential-

izing the level of STT in the classroom. Thus, Foreign language proficiency will increase in all aspects, becoming a communicative tool for the learning process in the institution.

It is highly recommended to maintain and increase the STT in the classroom to build, arrange, and scaffold the communicative competence in students, especially sociolinguistic and intercultural skills.

The grouping techniques used could also become a methodology to identify from the very first class some weaknesses in terms of communication that students may have, this can also help teachers not to fit into misjudgment when evaluating students at first sight.

The affective filter is a feature that teachers could face in class, students tend to arrive to class very nervous because of not having previous educational background in terms of language learning. Hence, an effective filter becomes a turning point if not addressed appropriately when the classes start. Therefore, grouping techniques can help teachers manage the level of affective filter that can show up in a student's performance.

In regards to time-consuming, the grouping techniques can affect time-consuming for the good, this is because it mostly uses the time for oral production and use of the language where student interaction is aimed. The grouping techniques used in this paper showed student-centered activities consuming more time in the class, giving students more opportunities to participate and foreign language interaction.

Many learnings and experiences come along the way in the process of becoming a researcher. Identifying a problem by observing, analyzing, and reflecting was the key to determining the object of study of this systematization. Moreover, had not we had the opportunity to do so, we would have found and thought of grouping techniques as a useful strategy in the teaching practice within a

learning environment in context. For example, Grouping techniques can also be used as a first aid kit when having large classes to maximize the interaction in the process of foreign language acquisition in either public or private school classrooms in the Colombian context.

It was also spotted the relevance in foreign language teaching the appropriate use of techniques that aim at prompting students to use the target language in class, fostering interaction among students will eventually come along with cultural settings that students could take advantage and benefit from, create perhaps learning experiences that could last long in their memories due to certain kind of immersion and finally find it useful whenever they face intercultural experiences.

Even if executing the grouping techniques seemed easy to implement, the impact in the classrooms and the significance of applying them is huge and dynamic. Still, within the Integrative pedagogical practice of the CLT overlaps Classroom Management comes to a setting up of objectives to enhance the students' participation, soundrounded by, in this case, speaking activities at any level accompanied with appropriate Grouping Techniques.

This paper aims at becoming a useful aid for teachers to improve their current pedagogical practice, it also comes to scene how pertinent it turns out to be for a teacher to build and systematize the process they carry out in class, allowing them for the possibility to grow by contributing with experiences and finding patterns, this as the fuel for new and perhaps more applicable teaching practices to the coming generations of students.

Furthermore, the reason why it was decided to implement grouping techniques as an object of study in this systematization generated a significant impact session by session. It is thought that having this kind of pedagogical practice shows expected outcomes and results. Looking ahead to future

generations of teachers involved in the day-by-day challenge of teaching students from different backgrounds, will eventually face new challenges according to specific features such as the type of students that will always be heterogeneous.

It is also important to mention that grouping techniques can benefit students' talking time by lowering the amount of teacher talking time within the constant regulation and the setting of clear instructions to proceed in the class. This could positively affect the figure of teacher identity where teachers will feel more empowered, being able to autonomously make decisions right on the spot when needed.

As researchers, we found that the systematization process can highly influence teaching as a part of research, and it is a tool that teachers can use to improve their teaching practices by reflecting, analyzing, and applying the output to transformative Foreign Language Teaching and Foreign Language Learning as well. Also, as part of the exploratory interpretation, it was found that many other factors can contribute to the FLA, not only identifying useful classroom management strategies such as grouping techniques but also

During the search for academic papers to go over this systematization, it was found the existence of an app that is meant to measure TTT and STT. It was found to be an innovative and revolutionary tool to be applied in the classroom which perhaps followed by a further process of research could eventually lead to reviews to be discussed in future papers.

In fact, in this research paper, there were also some concerns and other nuances in terms of grouping techniques. For instance, what if the overuse of grouping techniques has any impact on the performance of STT? Instead of benefiting students could decrease the class time for students' exposure to the intercultural aspect of the language, or which

of these should consume more classroom time? This is an aspect to be considered and discussed in further research.

In addition, as teachers, we have learned that seating arrangements can relate a lot to the development of students' interaction in their process of learning. The multiple designs in which seats can be arranged inside the classroom would lead not only to an increase in social skills or emotional filters but also in the sociopragmatic aspect of learning English as a foreign language as their process at different levels of understanding and production is being held. Grouping techniques strengthen by taking into account the spatial arrangement, available furniture, and the number of students in a class during the pedagogical practice. It is also important to acknowledge that a quick seating change can facilitate higher expectations in students toward the lesson to be taught.

Grouping and pairing students can be uncomfortable at times when students, in their depths of friendship, do not want to be separated from the peers they get along with the most. However, the creation of opportunities to talk to someone would help them gain confidence, increase their fluency in the target language, and socialize more effectively, different from pairing up students with the one next to the other. It could be a good idea to implement different strategies of grouping or pairing without them knowing who they would work with in advance.

Nevertheless, using controlled grouping techniques seems to be necessary even if the teacher is not aware of the background in terms of the type of class he or she is receiving. Controlled grouping techniques can be seen as a powerful tool when it comes to identifying the type of students that are in the classroom at first. Teachers tend to start identifying the type of students from the first day of class which allows them to make decisions on what

is best for them to be addressed or what the best way to give the instructions works best.

As a matter of fact, there must be a certain amount of diversification in the methodology to be implemented. Not only the activities themselves but also the grouping techniques being carried out due to those teachers who might get tempted to overuse the same grouping techniques during class time, students may eventually find it easy to follow as a command or strategy. In contrast, recycling grouping techniques from time to time can also end up being beneficial at last. It could eventually be considered that grouping and pairing students may not have the expected outcome and if so, putting students together has to be done once their individual needs have been previously identified so major decisions can be made.

➤ References

- Burhan-Horasanlı, E., & Ortaçtepe, D. (2016). Reflective practice-oriented online discussions: A study on EFL teachers' reflection-on, in and for-action. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 59, 372-382. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.07.002>
- Correa, R., Lara, E., Pino, P., & Vera, T. (2017). Relationship between group seating arrangement in the classroom and student participation in speaking activities in EFL classes at a secondary school in Chile. *Folios*, (45), 145-158.
- Domingo, A. (2021). La practica reflexiva: Un modelo transformador de la praxis docente. *Zona Próxima*, (34), 3-21. <https://doi.org/10.14482/zp.34.370.71>
- Larasanti, S. (2019). *Using buzz group technique in writing activity for EFL students at senior high school* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Negeri Padang). <http://repository.unp.ac.id/21573/>

Ramírez Salas, M. (2005). Grouping techniques in an EFL classroom. *Actualidades Investigativas en Educación*, 5, 1-14.

Sari, F. M. (2019). Patterns of teaching-learning interaction in the EFL classroom. *Teknosastik*, 16(2), 41-48.

Sedova, K., Sedlacek, M., Svaricek, R., Majcik, M., Navratilova, J., Drexlerova, A., Kychler, J., & Salamounova, Z. (2019). Do those who talk more learn more? The relationship between student classroom talk and student achievement. *Learning and Instruction*, 63, 101217. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2019.101217>

VIII

Fluency First: Empowering Learners' Independent Communication in English by Using the WordReference App

BY

Luis Felipe López Gil



➤ Introduction

Class observation is an essential component of reflective teaching in English language teaching. Reflective teaching involves the analysis and evaluation of teaching practices to identify areas for improvement and to enhance the effectiveness of teaching. Through class observation, teachers can gather information on student learning, teaching strategies, and classroom management. This information can help teachers to adjust their teaching practices to meet the needs of their students.

The impact of class observation on reflective teaching in English language teaching is significant. Teachers who engage in reflective practices are more likely to improve their classes in terms of methodologies and strategies, which can lead to better student outcomes. Through class observation and self-observation, English language teachers can develop a deeper understanding of their students, their own teaching practices, and the impact of their teaching on student learning.

A systematization as an approach to classroom research is essential for promoting efficiency and effectiveness in various domains. By systematically organizing and categorizing information, processes, or data, individuals and organizations can streamline their operations and optimize their resources. Systematization enables easy retrieval and access to relevant information, reducing the time and effort required to locate specific data or resources. It enhances decision-making by providing a comprehensive overview of the available information and allows for informed choices based on systematic analysis. Moreover, systematization facilitates collaboration and knowledge sharing within teams and across organizations, as it provides a common framework and language for understanding and discussing complex topics.

This report presents a comprehensive systematization of a teaching practice aimed at tackling the issue of over-reliance on the question “How do you say _____ in English?” within the realm of language education. The primary objective of this initiative is to foster fluency and independence in oral communication among students, promoting a more dynamic and engaging learning environment. The cornerstone of this approach lies in the integration of the WordReference app (1999), which empowers learners to explore language nuances and meanings collaboratively. This innovative teaching practice not only enhances students’ language proficiency but also encourages active participation, critical thinking, and cooperative learning. The success and positive impact observed in this systematization reinforce the potential for further integration of technology and collaborative methodologies in language instruction, fostering a more profound and sustainable learning experience for all involved.

PHASE

1

Identification of the Teaching Practice

In the following phase I will describe the context of the institution and the teaching practice problem that was observed in one of the classes that I selected to carry out the systematization project.

The Colombo Americano Cultural Center in Cali, a non-profit foundation and officially recognized Binational Center by the Embassy of the United States in Bogotá, has been providing English language education and promoting culture since 1954. The institution is guided by Colombian Technical Standard 5580 for language education. The institution has two branches in Cali. Colombo offers programs and services related to the English language, providing spaces that promote cultural exchange and allow the community to connect with the world through language learning and usage. It strives for continuous improvement and ensures the fulfillment of its stakeholders' requirements.

In order to identify an area of class observation I observed an Independent 3 class in the 4 pm schedule with few students in it. It is relevant to highlight how teachers have the freedom to create their classes using different tools and resources but always following the “Instructivo de cómo enseñar una clase” and the pacing document prepared by the institution. At the beginning of the class there were only 4 students as most of them arrived late. I noticed that one of the challenges students were facing was related to strategic competence.

Students at this point are still asking “How do you say _____?” questions to know specific words, and it is clearly seen how this has an impact on their fluency. It is suggested that teachers encourage students to start expressing their doubts about specific words with other words that they know, giving examples of the word, describing the words by contextualizing the idea they have about the word. By using these strategies, students should be able to be fluent and continue expressing their thoughts and avoid stopping talking due to the lack of knowledge of a word.

➤ The Identification of The Teaching Practice

Didactic Strategy: Promoting Fluency and Independence in Oral Communication

To address the issue of over-reliance on the question “How do you say _____ in English?” and promote fluency and independence in oral communication, I planned to implement a three-class teaching strategy that incorporated a technological tool which in this case was the WordReference app.

➤ Session 1: Awareness and Vocabulary Building

Objective of the class:

- To describe special dates during the year.

In the first class, I sought to raise students' awareness of the issue and enhance their vocabulary to express ideas effectively. First, students engaged in an open discussion to understand the importance of fluency and independence in oral communication. They shared their experiences and challenges related to constantly seeking translations.

Next, students dove into vocabulary building activities. Together, the teacher explored the vocabulary of the class with students and asked them to try to provide synonyms for every word, so they could go surf the net or write synonyms they knew. Additionally, I introduced a technological tool designed to assist us in our language learning journey; we introduced the WordReference app. The teacher asked students to look on the net for ways of using the WordReference app to learn and practice the language. Then, the teacher provided students with some ideas on how to use it to promote their fluency and avoid asking the teacher for translations.

To put the new vocabulary into practice, students engaged in a speaking activity. Working in pairs or small groups, students discussed the topic of the class, using the vocabulary they had learned. Instead of relying on the question “How do you say _____ in English?” Students used the WordReference app to support their communication, encouraging them to become more independent and fluent in expressing their ideas.

➤ Session 2: Fluency and Autonomy Development

Objective of the Session:

- To mention where places are.

In this session, the focus was on improving our fluency and promoting autonomous communication without relying on constant translation assistance. Students dove into role-play and simulated conversations. Through various scenarios, they practiced communicating effectively using the vocabulary they had learned. Students took turns playing different roles and engaged in conversations that required them to express themselves freely and independently. The goal was to focus on fluency, coherence, and confidence, rather than worrying about minor errors.

After each role-play or conversation, students provided constructive feedback to their peers. By actively participating in the feedback process, students developed their own metacognitive skills and gained insights into their strengths and areas for improvement. They also discussed strategies for overcoming language barriers without relying on constant translation.

➤ Session 3: Independent Communication Practice

Objective of the session

- To order food from a menu.

In the final session, I focused on strengthening the ability to communicate independently and fluently by providing opportunities for self-expression and feedback. To start, the teacher provided a topic based on the pacing of the book for a short individual presentation. Each of the students had the chance to share their thoughts and ideas on the topics. This was a moment to showcase their progress in fluency and independent communication.

Following the presentations, students engaged in peer evaluation. They provided feedback to their peers, highlighting their strengths and offering suggestions for improvement. Additionally, students reflected on their own progress and assessed their development in terms of fluency and independence.

➤ The Objective of the Reflective Teaching Project

The objective of this teaching strategy is to address the issue of over-reliance on the question “How do you say _____ in English?” and promote fluency and independence in oral communication using the WordReference app.

PHASE

2

Establishing the Objective and Axes of the Systematization

Through systematic analysis and reflection, I endeavor to provide insights into the effectiveness of this integration as a didactic strategy to enhance language learners' autonomy and fluency.

➤ Systematization Objective

The objective of this systematization study is to reflect on the integration of the WordReference app to address the issue of over-reliance on the question “How do you say _____ in English?”

➤ The Axes of the Reconstruction of the Teaching Practice

The reconstruction of the teaching practice problem can be approached from different axes or perspectives to ensure comprehensive understanding. I am going to focus on these 3 axes:

Axis 1

The implementation of the didactic strategy to address the issue of over-reliance on the question “How do you say _____ in English?”

Axis 2

The improvement of strategic competence, particularly in oral communication.

Axis 3

The integration of the WordReference app into their language learning process to promote autonomy and fluency.

PHASE

3

Reconstruction of the Teaching Practice

In Phase 3, I elucidate the outcomes observed across the three sessions within the context of the aforementioned axes. I meticulously detail the evolution of student engagement with the WordReference App and its consequent impact on language learning. In addition to the observed group, it is pivotal to mention that the didactic strategy was implemented in a separate group consisting of Fundamental 1 level students. These implications will be mentioned in detail in the following phase as I analyze the learnings and experiences taken from the systematization didactic strategy.

➤ **Axis 1: The implementation of the Didactic Strategy to Address the Issue of Over-Reliance on the Question “How do you say _____ in English?”**

Session 1

On the first day students had the discussion on how important fluency was. They agreed on the importance of fluency so that they do not hesitate when speaking. Additionally, they claimed that in order to achieve fluency they needed to expand their vocabulary range.

During the discussion, the topic of reference materials arose, prompting inquiry into students' familiarity with such resources. Several students expressed prior use of reference materials as aids in finding words they were unfamiliar with in English. Consequently, they collectively acknowledged the indispensability of such tools to lessen dependence on the teacher for immediate word retrieval.

Session 2

On day number 2 students used the WordReference App to look for some vocabulary for a role-play activity. There was some help from the teacher since some translations from the WordReference app needed some context.

As they crafted their conversation, they encountered words whose translations or equivalents in English eluded them. Rather than immediately seeking assistance from the teacher, students opted to utilize reference tools. However, it is worth noting that some students encountered challenges with the application, particularly due to the extensive list of translations provided, requiring them to discern the most appropriate translation for the context. Despite these challenges, students ultimately succeeded in locating and

utilizing the desired vocabulary, effectively completing the role-play activity.

Session 3

On day 3 students used the WordReference App again to look for vocabulary relating to ordering food from a menu. Nevertheless, they still relied on “how do you say” when trying to speak every now and then.

It was noted that students did not utilize the reference tool to the extent expected. While they did employ the app to search for specific food-related vocabulary, their usage was limited beyond this scope. Despite previous encouragement to rely on the tool rather than seeking immediate assistance, students persisted in asking the teacher for clarification. Although they eventually utilized the application, it was not as extensive as anticipated.

➤ **Axis 2: The improvement of Strategic Competence, Particularly in Oral Communication**

Session 1

Students discussed the importance of fluency and how they could benefit from being more fluent. They were introduced to the App and discussed the advantages of having a dictionary when learning a new language so that they did not rely on the teacher so much. Students agreed on how the app could be beneficial to them and provide them with more independence and autonomy when it comes to finding strategies to communicate in the second language.

Session 2

Students started to show some autonomy while using the App. This was evidenced as on day 2 students were not relying on “How do

you say _____? that much as in the previous classes. However, they were still asking too many questions about vocabulary to the teacher. There is no question that the teacher's role was still necessary when helping students with vocabulary.

Session 3

On the third day students used the app a little more when looking for some words which shows some kind of improvement on the autonomy they should handle when trying to express themselves. Nevertheless, the assistance from the teacher was still needed in great proportion during the speaking activities when ordering food from a restaurant.

➤ Axis 3: Integration of the WordReference App into Their Language Learning Process to Promote Autonomy and Fluency

Session 1

On the first day, students had difficulties setting up the WordReference App on their phones as the app has many options in terms of languages, bilingual and monolingual options or also looking up synonyms or antonyms. Some of the students were struggling as they did not know which options were appropriate to set the app up. They needed some guidance but, in the end, they were able to do it and use it to test it.

Session 2

On the second day students started using the WordReference app to look up words related to the role-play activity. They still needed the assistance from the teacher, but they showed some autonomy as they were able to translate some of their conversations into the second language without the teachers' aid only by using the WordReference app.

Session 3

On the third day students used the WordReference App to look for some vocabulary related to ordering food from a menu. Still, they asked "How do you say? However, they started acquiring some independence when looking for new vocabulary; we could see this during the activity of creating dialogues when ordering food. Students started to show how they could look up the words on the app without needing the teacher's assistance.

PHASE

4

Interpretation of the Teaching Practice

In the upcoming phase, I delve into a comprehensive analysis of the outcomes observed throughout the three sessions, framing our exploration within the context of the previously outlined axes. My focus remains meticulous as I intricately unravel the progression of student interaction with the WordReference App and the ensuing ramifications for language acquisition. By delving into the content of academic papers, I aim to understand the narrative of how these axes have manifested in practice, offering a nuanced perspective on the evolution of vocabulary acquisition and strategic autonomy among learners.

➤ Axis 1: The implementation of the Didactic Strategy to Address the Issue of Over-Reliance on the Question “How do you say _____ in English?”

Session 1

Although students most of the time had their smartphones handy, they did not use them properly to solve their doubts about vocabulary. They bombarded the teacher with the question “How do you say _____?” and as Paiman, et al., (2022, p. 2) said, “Smartphones and mobile technology have a significant role in education. They have many functions as learning tools, such as YouTube, video, electronic dictionary, etc. They can motivate and stimulate students to improve student’s English ability.” As teachers, we may think that the use of smartphones could be a huge distraction or enemy in our teaching process, but we can evidence that it could become an ally when we teach students how to use it properly to achieve a learning goal. After the discussion among students, the usefulness of the smartphone at the time of learning a second language and supporting their learning process was accepted.

Session 2

Technology has provided us with many tools to help students develop their skills. We presented the WordReference App to our students in order to increase their autonomy and their capacity to solve their doubts related to vocabulary. I believe that this tool can help students develop their speaking skills as shown in the article “Effects of using educational technology tools to enhance EFL student’s speaking performance.” According to Asratie, et al. (2023, p. 2), the authors mention that “students’ speaking performance can be

enhanced when using educational speaking technologies such as YouGlish, Zoom, FORVO, Oxford Advanced Dictionary (8th ed.) Amharic- English Dictionary, the Color vowel Chart, WhatsApp, Skype, BBC Learning English, and VOA learning English.” Here I may add Word Reference to this list. I noticed that at the time of presenting this App, students needed some help to understand the meaning of the word they looked for in the dictionary. We guided students to the examples the dictionary provides us, where the words are put in context. I do not want students only to understand a word but also show them how they can use it in different situations.

Session 3

In the third session, I noticed that students, although they already knew the app, continued asking the teacher, “How do you say?” They may do it unconsciously as a result of their lack of independence or perhaps they do not feel confident because they need more examples. We need to push our students to go to the dictionary and try to conceptualize the word they just learned. In order to improve their speaking skills, they need vocabulary. “Accuracy is also gained through vocabulary mastery, where appropriate words are used in appropriate contexts” (Paiman, et al., 2022, p. 2). The constant use of the new words that students gained by using the app and the correct context will teach students to be more independent when looking for new vocabulary to be applied in the speaking context.

➤ Axis 2: The improvement of Strategic Competence, Particularly in Oral Communication

Session 1

People do not use certain tools unless they understand how to use them and the benefits that the tool would bring. It was important for me to reflect with the students about the importance of using Word Reference and many other tools to support the learning process and foster independence. Douglas says that utilizing educational speaking technology in speaking lessons is needed to fill current gaps faced by the conventional methods of teaching speaking skills. Speaking is a challenging practice that requires fluency and coherence, lexical resources, grammatical range and accuracy, and pronunciation (Douglas, 2018). As teachers we cannot pretend to be there all the time to solve our students' questions. It is essential to provide our students with enough tools so that they can develop their speaking skills and solve their doubts with a tool they have at hand.

Session 2

One of the benefits of attending a traditional classroom setting is the direct interaction with the teacher. During my observations, I noted that despite students having access to technological aids provided in previous sessions, they still frequently approached their teacher with questions, most commonly asking, "How do you say?" While these technological tools are undoubtedly valuable, our observation led us to the conclusion that the teacher's role in assisting students to recognize and clarify mistakes remains crucial and needs to be done in a face-to-face environment as it was shown in the study by Asratie, et al. (2023). It's important to note that the study conducted

by Asratie et al. (2023) was carried out in a virtual classroom setting, which aligns with my conclusion of the necessity for peer-correction, particularly for speaking performance in an oral setting. In this study, they found that despite students showing positive attitudes towards virtual classrooms, many disagreed on their effectiveness in helping them identify oral mistakes. Consequently, students perceived that the absence of face-to-face communication, coupled with challenges in error recognition and feedback, negatively impacted their communication skills in virtual settings. The observations underscore the pivotal role of teachers in aiding students' language learning journey, particularly in recognizing and rectifying mistakes. While technological tools offer valuable support, the findings reinforce the importance of face-to-face interaction and personalized guidance in fostering effective communication skills.

Session 3

In the third session I noticed that students started to use the Word Reference app more and with it an improvement in autonomy, I know that all these technological tools students can have in their mobiles would help them to become more fluent as it was concluded here.

According to Paiman, et al. (2022), the proliferation of mobile devices offers language learners a vast array of resources for language acquisition, enhancing convenience and effectiveness in learning. Smartphones, in particular, stand out as valuable tools for improving speaking skills, aiding learners in achieving fluency, accuracy, and overall proficiency in English. Their recent study investigated the impact of smartphones on students' speaking abilities and explored how such usage influences skill development. Smartphones serve as versatile platforms with features catering to diverse learning styles, including access to

educational videos on platforms like YouTube. Additionally, electronic dictionaries assist in comprehension, pronunciation, and mastering of word collocations, further bolstering language proficiency. This underscores the importance of speaking practice for English as a Foreign Language students and highlights the significant role of smartphone applications in enhancing oral communication skills.

➤ **Axis 3: Integration of the WordReference App into Their Language Learning Process to Promote Autonomy and Fluency**

Session 1

In the context of my study, the integration of technological tools like the WordReference app plays a crucial role in facilitating language learning and promoting student autonomy. While there exists a myriad of digital applications aimed at enhancing English language skills, it is imperative for teachers to provide guidance to students on their effective utilization. As noted by O'Neill (2019), advancements in technology have transformed the landscape of second language acquisition, rendering traditional paper dictionaries obsolete. Free online dictionaries and translators, easily accessible via smartphones or tablets, offer learners instant assistance in understanding vocabulary and translating text. This accessibility underscores the importance of educators being well-informed about available resources and their potential impact on language learning processes. Therefore, within our teaching practice, we acknowledge the significance of guiding students in harnessing the benefits of tools like the WordReference app to foster autonomy and fluency in language acquisition.

Session 2

It is necessary to think about different activities that can help us to present the digital tools in an interactive way so that the students can see the benefits and different uses of a tool or an app, we may ask as a teacher what activity could I suggest my students so they feel the necessity and how useful is the tool we are providing?

It is necessary to understand as teachers what would be the best option at the time of presenting our students with a technological tool, as happened in this research:

In the study by O'Neill (2019), in order to determine the possible effects both of writing with one of the two tools (OT Google Translate or OD WordReference) and training in the use of each tool, participants were randomly placed into one of five groups: writing with the permitted use of Google Translate with prior training (GT+T), Google Translate without prior training (GT-T), WordReference with prior training (WR+T), and WordReference without prior training (WR-T), with an independent group that used neither tool (control group). The conclusion of the study indicated that the groups with prior training on the tools (GT+T and WR+T) performed better than those that did not receive any training at all.

Session 3

In this session, the observation reveals that students began utilizing the WordReference app more frequently, albeit with some continued reliance on direct queries such as "How do you say?" when attempting to communicate. This observation aligns with findings from O'Neill (2019), who emphasizes the importance of training students in the effective use of online translators and dictionaries. While students showed improvement in autonomy by using the app to look up vocabulary related to ordering food from a menu, they still exhib-

ited a degree of dependence on the teacher for immediate clarification during speaking activities.

Furthermore, the session underscores the notion that technology integration alone may not suffice to address language learners' reliance on direct queries. As discussed by Asratie, et al. (2023), students may perceive a lack of face-to-face communication and feedback in virtual environments, which could impede their oral communication development. Despite the availability of the WordReference app, students may still seek reassurance from the teacher, highlighting the ongoing need for personalized guidance and support in language learning contexts.

Moreover, the observation suggests a gradual shift towards greater autonomy and fluency as students familiarize themselves with the WordReference app. This aligns with the findings of Paiman, et al. (2022), who emphasize the role of smartphones and digital tools in enhancing language learners' fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary mastery. The study underscores the practical benefits of using smartphone apps, such as online dictionaries, in improving students' oral skills and overall language proficiency.

Overall, Session three reflects a dynamic interplay between technology integration, teacher support, and student autonomy in language learning. While the WordReference app offers valuable resources for vocabulary acquisition, students may still require scaffolded support and encouragement to fully leverage its potential in promoting independent communication and fluency. This highlights the need for a balanced approach that combines technological tools with effective pedagogical strategies to optimize language learning outcomes.

PHASE

5

Learnings and Experiences

Throughout this systematization project, several key learnings and experiences emerged, shedding light on the effectiveness of integrating the WordReference app to promote fluency and independence in English language learning.

Despite the notable differences in language proficiency and learning needs between the observed independent group and the fundamental group in which the didactic strategy was applied, the implementation yielded valuable insights into the adaptability and efficacy of the pedagogical approach across diverse learner populations.

As both a teacher and researcher, my perspective on this implementation is crucial. From a teacher's viewpoint, I observed the eagerness of students to improve their oral communication skills and their willingness to engage with technological tools. Despite initial challenges, such as the lower language proficiency of some students, targeted scaffolding and instructional support facilitated the integration of the WordReference app into their language learning process. Through structured role-play activities and simulated conversations, students gradually developed strategic competence and autonomy in utilizing the app to enhance their speaking fluency. Peer collaboration and teacher guidance played instrumental roles in scaffolding their learning experience and fostering a supportive learning environment conducive to linguistic growth.

From a researcher’s standpoint, this implementation underscores the versatility and adaptability of the approach in catering to the diverse needs and abilities of language learners across different proficiency levels. Drawing upon insights from various authors, including Paiman, et al. (2022), O’Neill (2019), and Asratie, et al. (2023), the following conclusions have been synthesized:

1. Importance of Technological Integration: Paiman, et al. (2022) underscored the transformative role of technology in language learning, emphasizing the accessibility and versatility of digital tools such as the WordReference app. By leveraging smartphone applications, learners can enhance their English fluency, word accuracy, and overall language proficiency, aligning with the objectives of our teaching strategy.
2. Guided Usage of Technology: O’Neill (2019) highlighted the pivotal role of teachers in guiding students’ usage of online dictionaries and translators. While technological tools offer unprecedented convenience, effective utilization requires guidance and training to maximize their educational benefits. Our project echoed this sentiment by emphasizing the importance of teacher facilitation in navigating language learning applications.
3. Challenges in Virtual Learning Environments: Asratie, et al. (2023) identified challenges inherent in virtual classrooms, particularly concerning students’ perceptions of oral communication skills development. Despite positive attitudes towards virtual learning, students expressed concerns about the efficacy of online platforms in facilitating feedback and error correction. This insight underscores the nuanced nature

of language instruction, highlighting the need for a balanced approach that integrates technology with traditional teaching methodologies.

4. Empowerment Through Autonomous Learning: Across all sessions, a recurring theme was the gradual empowerment of students to independently navigate language challenges using the WordReference app. While initial sessions revealed a reliance on teacher assistance, subsequent classes showcased a growing autonomy among learners in utilizing digital resources to enhance their speaking skills. This transition aligns with the overarching objective of promoting fluency and independence in oral communication, as advocated by the authors cited.

In conclusion, the systematization project provided valuable insights into the interplay between technology, pedagogy, and learner autonomy in English language education. By synthesizing findings from academic literature with practical teaching experiences, we have gained a deeper understanding of effective strategies for fostering linguistic proficiency and independence in language learners. As both a teacher and researcher, I believe that this project has not only enhanced my pedagogical practices but has also contributed to the broader discourse on innovative language teaching methodologies.

➤ References

- Asratie, M. G., Wale, B. D., & Aylet, Y. T. (2023). Effects of using educational technology tools to enhance EFL students’ speaking performance. *Educational Information Technology*, 28, 10031–10051. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11562-y>

Douglas, H. B. (2018). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Pearson Longman.

O'Neill, E. (2019). Training students to use online translators and dictionaries: The impact on second language writing scores. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrsl.2019.4002>

Paiman, P., Yundayani, A., & Suciati, S. (2018). The use of smartphones in improving the students' speaking skill. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 14(1), 1009-1018. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i1.597>

WordReference Dictionary. (1999). <https://www.wordreference.com/>

➤ Appendices

Click [HERE](#)

VIII

The Systematization of the Collaborative Tech Tool “Web-Based Processor Google Docs” to Facilitate Students’ Oral Intervention Opportunities in the Virtual Classroom at CCCA

BY

Libia Angélica Taborda Ossa



➤ Introduction

Teaching, in general, is a practice that requires “observation.” This is a process that makes us reflect on our daily practice and how methods and strategies are applied before, during, and after the class. Horasanlı et al. (2016) quoted Dewey (1933) mentioning that “reflective practice is a systematic process of problem-solving through a teacher’s deliberate thoughtful dwelling on a specific event, incident or situation.” (p. 373). So, Practice makes the teacher reflect on improvement as a result of daily practice. This constant process involves academic discussion and pupils’ interests, weaknesses, and strengths.

Speaking personally, I would say that observation is a hard task because it is vital to delimit and set a line between this and judgment. Besides this, observation as self-observation in the teaching language field makes us understand through reflection that we are constantly evolving as people and as professionals, which is how we care about our students’ learning acquisition and learning process.

Somehow, this everyday practice helps us to grow as a community; this practice is necessary, and as I said before it is not easy to be willing to accept things that need to be improved in our daily practice. As a teacher, I would say that sometimes I feel in a comfort zone, and I think that what I am doing is enough for my class. Then I realized that there is a different way to apply different methods and pedagogical tools, and this is taught by the professional academic community through the exchange of experiences.

In addition, the impact of class observation as a part of reflective teaching in ELT is a positive activity that enriches our professional development, and it starts as an individual process but must be analyzed and shared to promote reflective discussion that helps provide a different method and pedagogical tools in the academic field.

Also, the systematization process helps us to identify, describe, define, and justify the teaching practice and how to carry out activities that allow students to achieve accuracy in the target language and positive outcomes inside the classroom.

PHASE

1

Identification of the Teaching Practice

In this phase, we will describe the teaching context and how, after observing a class session in the virtual adult program, we were able to identify a teaching problem which will lead us to develop a didactic strategy divided into 3 sessions, in which the objectives will help us to find a technological tool and a methodology that will allow students to improve their oral production skills by having more opportunities to intervene during the sessions.

➤ Teaching context

Since the COVID-19 pandemic started in 2021, public and private institutions around the world, including Colombia, started implementing synchronous teaching classes through virtual platforms such as Zoom, Teams, and Meet among others. Fortunately, these web tools allow learners and teachers to access their classes and interact synchronously. Indeed technology had an essential role in connecting, helping, performing, and delivering tasks.

The same happened in Valle del Cauca, Colombia, at the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano, which is a non-profit organization that works in the teaching of the English language through CLT methodology and where teachers have the freedom to implement tools and methodologies in their classes. The CCCA was not the exception and started using Google Meet supported by Google Classroom as a way of teaching synchronous sessions.

Different difficulties were encountered in the ESL classroom, as Teo and Melor (2021) mention that “these challenges range from ICT skills, lack of motivation and training, and poor access to the Internet, resources, and materials, to name just a few” (p. 2).

➤ The Teaching Problem

My systematization teaching project is based upon my observation of class session #4 in the Virtual Adult Program Fundamental Plus 3, (CEFR A-2 level), Monday-Thursday with 8 hours of synchronous sessions a week. It was identified that the teacher used tech tools to promote students’ motivation and participation during the class without a communicative purpose. As a result, teacher talking time reduced student speaking opportunities during the 2-hour session.

It must be taken into account that the systematization reconstruction and implementation will be applied in an Independent 1 Virtual Adult Program.

➤ Didactic Strategy

I believe this strategy will facilitate the improvement of students’ oral intervention opportunities in the virtual program at CCCA because the use of Google Docs will allow students to collaborate and increase oral intervention opportunities during the synchronous session, as well as to carry out students’ tasks while they cooperate, interact, and mediate target language during the class.

➤ The Objective of the Teaching Practice

The objective of the teaching practice in this classroom research study is to facilitate the improvement of students’ oral intervention

opportunities in the virtual program at CCCA using collaborative Google Docs (web-based processor).

To achieve my goal I will carry out a three-session teaching strategy where 16 students from an Independent virtual program will collaboratively use Google documents to improve intervention opportunities.

Session 1

Reading Comprehension Activities and Collaborative Writing

The objective of this first session is to promote and generate students' collaboration and participation in reading comprehension activities about culture and identity. The teacher used Google documents and the textbook on page 10 of *Life 4*, from which she took a screenshot and pasted the reading with exercises 1, 2, 3, and 4. The teacher provided clear instructions on how to work collaboratively in an online document editor and will post the link as evidence; the teacher will check their progress and guide students during the activity and clarify doubts if it is possible.

Session 2

Critical Thinking

In this session, the goal is to explore the students' critical thinking through reading by filling the gaps in a text called "A World Together" and writing their answers collaboratively using the author's view and their own. By the end of this activity, the teacher will call volunteers from each group and ask about their answers. Here other students will provide their own opinions about this topic.

Session 3

Collaborative Research and Presentation

The objective of this session is to collaborate in groups (breakout rooms) and create a presentation about a country that has globalized other cultures through music, clothes, food, sports, technology, and movies. The same groups use an online presentation from session 2 and select a country such as China or the USA. By the end of the session, students will present to other classmates their findings, Finally in a Vocaroo audio, they individually will report the presentations focusing on identifying and concluding how "international" or interconnected they feel in their own country. The teacher will ask some volunteers in the main session about how international or interconnected they feel in Colombia and if this brings a positive or negative impact to our culture.

PHASE

2

Establishing the Objective and Axes of the Systematization

During this phase, the didactic strategy during the 3 sessions in class was taken into account as well as the observation of each one. It was necessary to find two axes of analysis in which the systematization process would be reflected. For this reason, our principal

objective during this phase was to analyze the effectiveness and improvement of student speaking opportunities through collaborative writing tech tools like the online word processor Google Documents.

➤ Axes

The intent of my systematization project is based on two axes of analysis

Axis 1

Analyzing the effectiveness of using collaborative Google documents to improve students' oral intervention opportunities through reading comprehension activities

Axis 2

Improvement of students' oral intervention opportunities during the task.

PHASE

3

Reconstruction of the Teaching Practice

During this phase, we can find the description of the implementation of the didactic strategy explained above which took place during 3 sessions where we took into account the effectiveness of the tool used and the improvement of the oral intervention opportunities that the students had during these sessions.

➤ Axis 1 The Effectiveness of Using Collaborative Google Documents to Improve Students' Oral Intervention Opportunities Through Reading Comprehension Activities

Session 1 Reading Comprehension Activities and Collaborative Writing

The teacher began the class and did a warm-up about the topic of the unit, presented the instructions, and read step by step what to do, emphasizing collaboration (sharing the permission and document link through the chat) and the use of microphones during the task. Considering that this was the first time doing this type of work, some groups required teacher guidance with students who did not know how to create and share the document. Finally, they went to the breakout rooms with copies of the paper and started working on it; the teacher constantly went through the groups, opening the group link and checking if both users were writing and participating in the same document. The teacher supported some students, but her talking time was reduced.

Session 2 Critical Thinking

During this session, the teacher gave a context about "globalization" by playing a video. After that, students gave their own opinions about what this word meant. Teacher gave instructions to make new groups and make a copy of the Google document they were using each day. Students easily understood the instructions and went to breakout rooms and created a copy and shared the document. One student shared the screen, and in that way both could see what they were doing. Then they filled in the gaps to complete the

article, and they made emphasis on identifying examples in the article about globalization. The teacher's role was as an advisor, clarifying and guiding during the task. By the end of the session, volunteers from each group took their notes and answered the questions. Also, some of them intervened and presented their views, which turned into a little discussion about the topic in the main room.

Session 3 Collaborative Research and Presentation

Students had the opportunity to listen to classmates' content using examples about globalization in different countries, and then they came into the main session with different ideas that could contrast these countries. They also presented the pros and cons of globalization, and finally they recorded their audios analyzing a complete view.

➤ Axis 2: Improvement of Students' Oral Intervention Opportunities During the Task

Session 1 Reading Comprehension

Students took turns reading the article and together solved the reading comprehension exercise, constantly asking each other questions and correcting as well. They agreed on the answers and posted the links.

Session 2 Critical Thinking

Indeed, students in breakout rooms were active, reading and understanding the article to fill the gaps. This helped them to pay attention to the paper and how the author used examples to make a point. Students could participate in the main session due to their

previous collaboration, and when one of them participated, his/her partner supported and helped in the intervention.

Session 3 Collaborative Research and Presentation

Students came into the main session, and they were already working, discussing, and analyzing. They took the time to interpret, prepare, and analyze the information in the breakout rooms. When the teacher called them again to the principal session, they took turns presenting their ideas about how other countries were more globalized by using examples. They also talked about the pros and cons of globalization. On this occasion, more students participated, showing confidence about the topic. They could explain different ideas that were previously contrasted between these countries.

PHASE

4

Interpretation of the Teaching Practice

After presenting the reconstruction of the implementation of the teaching practice, we will continue analyzing the situations that were present during each session (based on my teacher's point of view) and supporting it under the spotlight of some relevant authors who will enrich this systematization project with current evidence.

➤ **Axis 1 The Effectiveness of Using Collaborative Google Documents to Improve Students' Oral Intervention Opportunities Through Reading Comprehension Activities**

During the observation was evident that technology allows students to collaborate, engage, and learn in class. On reflection, it can be seen that the intention is that the students feel engaged in the class and can carry out their tasks; but how do we generate interaction and results while they perform a reading or writing task? And how can they explore, interact, generate outcomes, and express themselves during the task?

One of the main challenges presented after the observation stage was understanding why, despite bringing different tools (Jeopardylabs, Kahoot, etc.) to virtual class to encourage participation, students' interventions during the session were limited, allowing the most expressive students always participate, leaving behind the less extroverted ones. As Ward and Thomason (2022) explained, it "is critical that educators consider the authenticity and intentionality with which they use technology in language classrooms" (p.36). We all already understand the importance of including technology that allows students to collaborate, engage, and learn in class, but is it clear that tech tools should be presented with a specific objective in mind? In this case the objective is to help students to develop their communicative competence through activities which grant interaction and more opportunities to communicate and express their ideas. Reaching this objective is only achieved by understanding that technology is more effective when it is used with a specific outcome and instructional goals.

Therefore, focusing on finding a tool that facilitates students to collaborate in reading

and writing while making use of their oral production was only possible through the use of Google documents and presentations. If we know how to approach the task, we can give clear instructions to students on how to share the document and work in breakout rooms in the virtual classroom. They will have the ability from the beginning to lead, ask for opinions, seek information, and make verbal exchanges to complete the task. It is vital in this part that the teacher has a guiding and observing role, interfering orally only when students have doubts or encouraging them to continue and highlighting their progress positively.

As Fathi, et al. (2021) claims, using Google Docs is a way to promote and increase motivation and social skills while expanding digital literacy awareness. As stated by Harmer (2001) students that collaborate and work in groups or pairs on a task, in general, have more opportunities to participate independently, helping them to practice the language by generating more ideas and seeking solutions to solve problems together. This author also states that writing tasks in groups specifically generate more motivation, as this process involves content search, discussions, peer evaluation, self-regulation, group pride, and task accomplishment. In conclusion, collaborative writing for both student and teacher helps to make a class more dynamic by focusing on the development and practice of production skills such as writing and speaking.

➤ **Axis 2: Improvement of Students' Oral Intervention Opportunities During the Task**

A feature to be taken into account during this process of reconstructing the activities was the importance of using a collaborative tool that would allow interaction and practice of the oral production skill, increasing the possibilities of student intervention during

the task. Previously in the interpretation of Axis 1, it can be evidenced that collaborative writing tasks in pairs or groups generate education and greater possibilities of participation through interaction and the development of strategies such as problem-solving.

Harmer (2001) states that one of the advantages of pairwork is that it “dramatically increases the amount of speaking time any one student gets in class” (p.165). He also points out the advantages of group work such as increased opportunities for students to intervene, which is positive as it generates more opinions and different points of view which promotes negotiation.

Another advantage of this type of activity as mentioned by Al-Roomy, et al. (2016) is that “Working collaboratively could be the key for such students who are willing to ask questions but wish to avoid embarrassment because it allows students to learn from each other and to work at their own pace in a relaxed mood” (p.28). This is very positive for students who are very shy in class. This practice in groups or pairs can help to improve students’ confidence and self-esteem as they feel they are in a safe environment where they do not feel judged and can explore their abilities.

PHASE

5

Learnings and Experiences

In this phase, there is a description of the teacher’s learning and experience during the observation process, reconstruction of the teaching practice, and observations about the academic role of the teacher during this systematization process. As could be seen, the main axes of this practice were 1. The effectiveness of using collaborative Google documents to improve students’ oral intervention opportunities through reading comprehension activities and 2. Improvement of students’ oral intervention opportunities during the task.

During the analysis of axis 1 in my role as a teacher, the effectiveness of using collaborative Google documents to improve students’ oral intervention opportunities through reading comprehension activities was observed. It is important to reflect on the implementation and use of collaborative technological tools in both virtual and face-to-face classes, taking into account clear objectives and which skills, whether receptive (listening and reading) or productive (writing and speaking), are expected to be worked on in class. In this way we can guarantee that students can satisfactorily achieve the objectives of the class, thus assuring centrality in the student’s learning process.

This brings us to axis 2. As a researcher, I could evidence the improvement of students’ oral intervention opportunities during the task. It was evident that the use of collaborative documents allowed students to work in pairs, and this generated an environment of participation with greater opportunities for intervention

and enhanced the use of language through negotiation. As a result, it was also possible to observe greater motivation of students in groups, more responsibility in roles and security of peers to feel in an environment where they could relate to each other without any pressure, which is generated regularly in the main session in teacher-student interventions.

➤ Future Implementations

As mentioned above, different online web processors allow students to interact in groups at a distance and also within a face-to-face classroom. For example, teachers can use Google Documents through the use of Classroom and can include collaborative tools such as Padlet, Peardeck, Jamboard, Nearpod, among others, which could help teachers to enhance collaboration and oral production while focusing on a task.

On the other hand, it is necessary to take into account the physical resources for virtual classes, such as computers, a good internet connection, and microphones that the teacher and the student have to carry out the task. It is also necessary to take into account the experience and training that both the teacher and the student have at the moment of using a web tool. It is then important for teachers to know what the qualities of the tool are, exploring it first and getting to know whether it can help students work on productive or receptive skills or both during an assignment. The teacher needs to consider giving instructions with examples on how to use it in real-time during the breakout rooms.

It can take time at the beginning, but if we prepare our students to carry out these tasks in the future, they can become experts in the subject, can be able to help and collaborate with new students, and in time can help other teachers who receive this group of students by

reducing the time it takes to give instructions or present a new web tool.

It is important to consider the level of the students, as it is not the same to work with beginner or advanced levels. A teacher can start with basic instructions and web tools at more elementary levels, so that they have the space to use these tools and know them without fear that they will not be able to achieve it because they belong to elementary courses. In this way when they reach a more advanced level, they will be able to use the tools efficiently.

To conclude, it can be said that the result of this systematization process could be divided into two parts: as a teacher and as a researcher. As a teacher, I can reflect that even when teaching daily, sometimes one closes oneself to different possibilities or perhaps one becomes unaware of other refreshing ideas and new methodologies that are emerging daily. Perhaps without having the possibility to observe one's practice from an evaluator's perspective, it could lead to a lack of knowledge of what is being done and how to do it. So, as a researcher who systematized this experience, I would like to say that it is a work that goes from the observation to the reconstruction of our teaching practice and although it is an exhaustive process, it is a reflection that is necessary, as it leads us to listen to other teachers' voices and to get involved with the educational community and future implementations for virtual or face-to-face or hybrid class as well.

➤ References

Al-Roomy, M. (2016). Developing students' EFL writing skills by enhancing their oral interactions. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 5(5), 24-31.

- Fathi, J., Saharkhiz Arabani, A., & Mohamadi, P. (2021). The effect of collaborative writing using Google Docs on EFL learners' writing performance and writing self-regulation. *Language Related Research*, 12(5), 333–359.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching* (3rd ed.). Longman.
- Burhan-Horasanlı, E., & Ortaçtepe, D. (2016). Reflective practice-oriented online discussions: A study on EFL teachers' reflection-on, in and for action. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 59, 373. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.07.002>
- Dummett, P. (2014). *Life* 4. National Geographic.
- Teo, W. C., & Yunus, M. (2023). Exploring teachers' technology acceptance during COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review (2020-2022). *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, 12, 956-968. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v12i2.25398>.

Research Impacts: Expanding Perspectives is a labor of love led by our Assistant Academic Director, Brayan Portilla, and our Academic Advisor, Mabel Johanna Londoño. These two professionals have nurtured an exceptional group of teachers in these systematization projects. This publication is the result of an exploration of two types of actions: those that can affect the wider teaching population and actions that individual teachers can do to improve their own teaching practice.

The collection of articles in this volume adds to the universe of existing literature generated in binational centers in Latin America, contributing to an area of language research that has seen surprisingly few publications despite the number of teachers and the volume of students that BNCs have. We hope that this 70-year celebration publication reveals what makes the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano in Cali special as well as providing a contribution to the field of language instruction in Colombia and Latin America.

➤ **JoEllen M. Simpson, Ph.D.**

General Director

Centro Cultural Colombo Americano de Cali