



**UNIVERSIDAD
ALBERTO HURTADO**

UNIVERSIDAD ALBERTO HURTADO

FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN

PEDAGOGÍA EN INGLÉS

**INVOLVEMENT IN THE ENGLISH CLASS: THE
SIGNIFICANCE OF CONSIDERING STUDENTS'
INTERESTS**

BELÉN PASTORA GONZÁLEZ ZÚÑIGA

Tutor Teacher

Victoria Cabañas

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract.....	3
Resumen.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Context.....	6
Research Question.....	7
Objectives.....	8
Theoretical Framework.....	9
Methodology.....	16
Data collection.....	18
- Students' Questionnaire.....	18
- Activities.....	25
Data Analysis.....	28
Findings.....	31
Plan of Action.....	35
Conclusion.....	37
- Outcomes.....	37
- Reflections.....	41
References.....	42
Appendix.....	43

ABSTRACT

The following Action Research project was originated due to the lack of students' involvement in English classes observed during the practicum at Liceo Industrial A-38. That is why the objective of this AR was to increase the number of students that get involved in the English class.

First of all, in order to fulfill that there was created a questionnaire that students had to answer. This questionnaire was done with the objective of recognizing students' interests.

After having the results of it, activities focused on the Active Learning Approach were collected. The activities from the Active learning approach chosen were combined with students' interests in order to have a more integrated method.

Thus, several activities were applied during the term, some of them worked some of them did not. At the end of the AR it was observed that the activities that presented better results were the ones that considered students' interests taken from the questionnaire.

RESUMEN

La siguiente investigación se origina a partir de una notoria falta de interés de los estudiantes observada durante la práctica profesional en el Liceo Industrial A-38. Es por esto que el objetivo de este AR es incrementar el número de estudiantes que se involucran en la clase de inglés.

Para el logro de este objetivo, se creó un cuestionario que los estudiantes debieron responder, con el objetivo de reconocer sus intereses y preferencias.

Una vez obtenidos los resultados, se identificaron y aplicaron, actividades basadas en el enfoque de Active Learning, las que, a su vez, se combinaron con los intereses de los estudiantes.

Finalmente, se compararon los resultados de antes y después de las nuevas actividades aplicadas en la clase.

INTRODUCTION

This Action Research will be focused on the suitable activities that could be applied in order to get more students involved in a 9th grade English class from Liceo A-38. I decided to be centered on this problematic because I noticed students were not getting involved in the activities I brought to them. I realized most of the activities I brought to them were based on my own interests instead of students'. Also, I observed that some of the students did not find the importance of the English language in their life. Thus, the AR question was originated due to the aspects previously discussed. That is why the purpose of this study is to make more students get involved in the English class. However, I will attempt to practice new approaches in order to change a little bit the paradigm in which students are learning the language. I think this would be significant for students because they will be able to learn the language in a different way. Also, I think this study would be important in order to realize if it would be possible to make more students get involved in the English class. What is more, I believe this study could be fundamental in order to improve my own practice. I think I will be able to recognize personal weaknesses and strengths that I will have to take into account in future practices. Besides, I will observe the results I obtain from this AR and I will be aware of them in the future.

CONTEXT

This semester I am teaching a 9th grade from Liceo Industrial A-38 de Recoleta. This is a public and vulnerable institution where most of the students come from families which are related to drugs, delinquency and alcohol. Also, this is an Industrial Technical and coeducational school in which students have three hours of English per week. Another important aspect to take into consideration is that most of the students have a low level of English and the amount of students per class is about 20. Also, students from Liceo Industrial have been taught with traditional approaches based on grammar methods. In addition, students are not very interested in learning English because they do not understand the usefulness of learning it. They think they are not going to be able to travel abroad; therefore, they do not care about learning another language.

That is why the research question of this AR is “What activities should be implemented in a 9th grade class at Liceo Industrial A-38 with the objective of getting more students involved in the English class?” As it was said before, this question is related to the context in the sense that students are not interested in learning English because they do not think it is something fundamental in their future life. That is why most of them are not getting involved in the classes and they prefer to do other things instead of learning English. Thus, I have noticed that students are not getting involved in the activities that I have planned. Most of the classes I have prepared activities I think the students would like, but I think it was not enough. What is more, the last two classes I have not been able to develop the post activities because students were distracted and not interested.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What activities should be implemented in a 9th grade class at Liceo Industrial A38 with the objective of getting more students involved in the English class?

OBJETCTIVES

General Objective

Increase the number of students that get involved in the English class.

Specific Objectives

1. Identify student's likes and dislikes about their personal preferences.
2. Apply suitable activities based on the Active Learning Approach considering students' interests.
3. Compare the number of students that get involved in the class before and after the new activities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Nowadays, English classes tend to be focused on grammar and translation. Sometimes, this paradigm can be boring and tedious for students and they start being distracted and not interested in the class. Thus, before starting working on the problem it is important to recognize some psychological and human development characteristics that can be affecting their performance. Also, it is fundamental to identify other approaches and theories that can be applied at classes.

First of all, considering this Action Research, it is important to take into consideration the human development stages from students of 9th grade class. Theories of development are fundamental in order to identify emotional, psychological, social and physical student's progress throughout the life. According to this, Erickson tells us that during the early adolescence period teenagers are acquiring a sense of identity versus role of confusion. What is more, he states that:

When acquiring a sense of identity and role of confusion there is rapid body growth and sexual maturation (...) Feelings of acceptance or rejections of peers are important. Conflicts frequently arise when peer say one thing and society says another. Identity is essential for making adult decisions about vocation and family life. Youth select people who mean the most to them as significant adults. (Gallahue, Ozmun & Goodway, 2012, p.38)

Therefore, according to the author:

During this stage of development, the individual slowly moves into society as an independent and contributing member. A sense of identity assures the individuals a definite place within his or her corner of society (...) Failure and unsuccessful

experiences, on the other hand, contribute to a sense of role confusion.”(Gallahue et.al, 2012, p.38)

Thus, the information above helps us to understand student’s development, but also helps us to distinguish manners of procedure inside of the classroom.

Moreover, it is also important be conscious about the cognitive development of our students in order to get involved in their learning processes. Therefore, according to some authors “cognitive development refers to the changes and stability in mental abilities, such as learning, attention, memory, language, thinking, reasoning, and creativity.” (Sunita, 2012, p.1). According to this, Jean Piaget proposes four stages of cognitive development which are fundamental through the human life. However, we will only be focused on the fourth stage which is the one that is related to 9th grade student development process. Regarding Piaget, the stage is called Formal operational stage and it is focused on 12 years to adulthood.

Piaget’s final stage coincides with the beginning of adolescence, and marks the start of abstract thought and deductive reasoning. Thought is more flexible, rational, and systematic. The individual can now conceive all the possible ways they can solve a problem, and can approach a problem from several points of view. (Piaget, 1973, p. 36)

Furthermore, it is also fundamental to be aware of several movements that have been essential throughout the history and that will be helpful when working with adolescents. Hence, as it was said before, early adolescent is described as someone who started to develop identity, they start to get involved in the society, and they are able to think in a more abstract mode. According to this, this research will be centered on a progressive movement, such as constructivism because it is concerned about the cognitive

aspect of the human being but also the social aspect of them. This will be significant because this movement is closely related with some important characteristics of the adolescent people. Thus, some of the main authors who contribute in constructivism are John Dewey and Lev Vygotsky. Dewey (1944)

Dewey promoted the value of personal experience in learning. He placed relatively little emphasis on maturational factors and taught that human beings understand the world through interaction with their environment and, thus, knowledge is constructed by the individual. Dewey proposed that a primary function of schooling was to prepare young people to live in a democratic society and that one's reflection on personal experiences would provide the foundation for the development of the necessary attributes for successful living (Dewey, 1944, as cited in Lutz & Huitt, 2004, p.1)

Considering this, progressive theories state that "education should be child centered; education should be both active and interactive; and education must involve the social world of the child and the community"(Harris, 2011, p.1). Within the same assumptions Vygotsky appears but he is even emphatic saying that social and cultural factors have an impact in the cognitive development of the human beings.

To Vygotsky, "the development of the mind is the interweaving of biological development of the human body and the appropriation of the cultural/ideal/material heritage which exists in the present to coordinate people with each other and the physical world (...)Social interaction plays a critical role in cognitive development in relation to what is learned and when and how learning occurs. This principle asserts that without the learning that occurs as a result of social interaction, without self awareness or the use of signs and symbols that allow us to think in more

complex ways, we would remain slaves to the situation, responding directly to the environment. (Vygotsky, 1978 as cited in Lutz & Huitt, 2004, p.5)

It is important to reflect on these authors' theories because they talk about how the learning is affected by the society. This is extremely important when talking about adolescents because considering their psychological human development stage; they need to share with others in order to develop identity. Hence, it is possible to affirm that:

Learning is no longer seen simply as a process of habit formation. Learners and the cognitive processes they engage in as they learn are seen as fundamentally important to the learning process. Additionally, in recent years, learning as a social process is increasingly emphasized, and sociocultural theories are beginning to be drawn on in addition to (or even in preference to) cognitive theories. (Nunan, 2004, p.6)

Furthermore, in relation to the human development and also considering the sociocultural movements, it is observed that the learning is not only seen as something technical. According to this, "these days it is generally accepted that language is more than a set of grammatical rules, with attendant sets of vocabulary, to be memorized. It is a dynamic resource for creating meaning". (Loc.cit) regarding this reflection, Communicative Learning Teaching concept appears:

Language can be thought of as a tool for communication rather than as sets of phonological, grammatical and lexical items to be memorized led to the notion of developing different learning programs to reflect the different communicative needs of disparate groups of learners. No longer was it necessary to teach an item simply because it is 'there' in the language. (Op.cit, p.30)

Considering this, communicative learning teaching is very important when talking about adolescents because they need to communicate more than be focused on grammar.

That is why; taking into account this action research, a communicative learning teaching method will be taken into account rather than a technical one.

Nevertheless, it is also important to consider that the context of Liceo Industrial A-38 can be difficult in order to confront a communicative learning teaching method. It is an industrial school; therefore, students are being taught within technical methods. It means that the way that the English is taught and the objectives taken from English are far from a communicative learning teaching approach. Students are learning the language aiming at knowing the vocabulary related to their future work but not in a communicative method. According to that English has started growing as a technical tool which has been taught related to technology, economy, commerce, business, among other things. However, Nunan and Hutchison state that the communicative learning teaching approach and the English for specific purposes approach can work together.

Breen is suggesting that when we place communication at the centre of the curriculum the goal of that curriculum (individuals who are capable of communicating in the target language) and the means (classroom procedures that develop this capability) begin to merge: learners learn to communicate by communicating. The ends and the means become one and the same. (Breen, 1984 as cited in Nunan, 2004, p.8)

Considering this, it is important to take into account that sometimes when students are exposed to new approaches they tend to get demotivated because they are introduced to new experiences that can affect their routine.

Hence, another important topic that will be fundamental in this action research is related to motivation. If the objective is to get more students involved in the class is

necessary to ask ourselves if the students are motivated or not. That is why according to

Lai:

Motivation involves a constellation of beliefs, perceptions, values, interests, and actions that are all closely related. As a result, various approaches to motivation can focus on cognitive behaviors (such as monitoring and strategy use), non-cognitive aspects (such as perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes), or both. (Lai, 2011, p.5)

Regarding this, this research we will be focused on the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and how it can affect student's involvement in the class. Therefore, Lai states that:

Intrinsic motivation is motivation that is animated by personal enjoyment, interest, or pleasure. Intrinsic motivation energizes and sustains activities through the spontaneous satisfactions inherent in effective volitional action. It is manifest in behaviors such as play, exploration, and challenge seeking that people often do for external reward. Researchers often contrast intrinsic motivation with extrinsic motivation, which is motivation governed by reinforcement contingencies. Traditionally, educators consider intrinsic motivation to be more desirable and to result in better learning outcomes than extrinsic motivation. (Op.cit, p.34)

Thus, this research will consider intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in order to understand student's behavior when they are exposed to new methodologies.

According to this, there are other factors that can affect student's motivation. Most of the time, it is difficult that all of the students get involved in the class activities because students have different learning styles and multiple intelligences. Unfortunately, sometimes teachers do not consider these differences and this situation can let the students to a demotivated attitude. Taking this into account, it is necessary to be also aware of students

multiple intelligences and learning styles in order to get more students involved in the activity. Therefore, focused on Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, "today there are nine intelligences and the possibility of others may eventually expand the list. These intelligences (or competencies) relate to a person's unique aptitude set of capabilities and ways they might prefer to demonstrate intellectual abilities." (Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center, n.d. p.1)

Subsequently, considering all the topics previously developed this Action Research will be focused on the Active Learning Approach because this one can be applied taking into consideration the themes we have discussed. Thus, Silberman states that:

When learning is active, students do most of the work. They use their brains...studying ideas, solving problems, and applying what they learn. Active learning is fast-paced, fun, supportive and personally engaging...to learn something well it helps to hear it, see it, ask questions about it, and discuss it with others. Above all students need to "do it" – figure things out by themselves, come up with examples, try out skills, and do assignments that depend on knowledge that they already have or must develop. (Silberman, 1996)

Therefore, this is a method where students are at the center of the learning process. That is why this will be the approach I will follow during the application of activities because it is an approach where students are not passive. Considering the context of Liceo A-38 students are used to be very passive because the teacher is at the center of the class; however, with this approach students will be at the center, which will be essential in the development of activities selected to perform by students during the term.

METHODOLOGY

In order to fulfill the specific objective number one (Identify student's likes and dislikes) a questionnaire will be created. This questionnaire will be made combining several sources found that will set up a final questionnaire combining all of them. Subsequently, the questionnaires will be applied in a 9th grade English class at Liceo Industrial A-38. This questionnaire consisted of a list of activities where students had to circle their preferences in a range of 1, 2 or 3. Thus, Number 1 meant "No me gusta", number 2 meant "No me gusta ni me disgusta" and number 3 meant "Me gusta". Also, this one will include open questions in order to go in depth in the students' interests. Furthermore, I will implement this questionnaire in order to recognize students' interests because I think it is an appropriate tool to be used in this case. Also, I believe it is important to start considering students' interests if we want to get more students involved in an activity.

Concerning the specific objective number two (Apply suitable activities based on the Active Learning Approach considering students' interests), I will put into practice three activities, based on the Active Learning Approach, that I believe are fundamental in relation to the topic I will be working on. I decided to focus on this approach because it is not a traditional one; it is based on communication and interaction and it is student centered. The activities I will use are Reaction to a Video, Group Work and Game-Like. I think these can be motivating for students because they are not used to be exposed to these kind of activities, they are used to use traditional methods such as translation. Regarding this, I will use visual aids because I think they are interesting and motivating for students. Also, according to Piaget (1973) people at 9th grade stage are able to think abstractly which allows them to have abstract and deductive reasoning. That is why I think visual aids will

be appropriate for students' involvement and learning because they will have to be able to react to a video, commenting and reflecting on it. Besides, I will use Group Work as an activity because according to Dewey (1944) throughout interaction people can construct knowledge. What is more, Penny Ur (1996) states that throughout group work activities students' motivation and feeling of cooperation can increase. The third activity I will use will be game-like because I think it is always motivating for students. I believe it can be fun but also students can learn throughout it. What is more, I will combine the activities chosen with students' interests taken from the questionnaire in order to have a more integrated activity. This will be done because according to Penny Ur (1996), the students' motivation and performance will depend on the interest and enjoyment generated by the activity. Hence, I will be observing and monitoring the development of the activities in order to recognize if the students are getting involved in them. In this stage I will be accomplishing the cyclical Action Research model of Kemmis and Mc Taggart.

Finally, in order to fulfill the objective number three (Compare the number of students that get involved in the class before and after the new activities), I will reflect on all the activities applied and I will compare the number of the students involved in the activities. This evaluation will be accomplished throughout direct observation. To conclude, I will use graphs as a tool in order to express the change. Also, I will be able to realize about other situations I must take into consideration and work on it as a teacher in the future.

DATA COLLECTION

Students' questionnaire

In order to fulfill the specific objective number one I created a questionnaire taking into consideration a variety of activities I thought students would be interested in. The questionnaire was divided in three options. First, there was “me gusta” option, then “no me gusta ni me disgusta” option and finally “no me gusta” option. Thus, students had to be able to express their preferences based on the numbers they chose. Also, the questionnaire will include open questions that students had to answer in order to be able to collect more specific information regarding their interests. It was applied to 17 students out of 20. And the results were the following:

In relation to “me gusta” option, there were 3 activities which were predominant. They were “armar y desarmar objetos”, “dibujar y pintar”, and “realizar la clase en el patio”. According to the first one, it had a 58% of acceptance; it means that only 2 students did not like the activity and only 5 were not sure about it. Regarding the second one, the same number of students got interested in “Dibujar y Pintar”, it means 58 % of the students. Only 3 students did not like the activity and 4 were not sure about it. Finally, the third activity which was “realizar la clase en el patio” got the highest score with 76% of acceptance. It is important to highlight that none of the students chose “no me gusta” option and only 4 students were not sure about the activity.

Me gusta

Table 1

		Armar y desarmar objetos			
		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta	2	11,8	11,8	11,8
	No me gusta ni me disgusta	5	29,4	29,4	41,2
	Me gusta	10	58,8	58,8	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Table 2

		Dibujar y pintar			
		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta	3	17,6	17,6	17,6
	No me gusta ni me disgusta	4	23,5	23,5	41,2
	Me gusta	10	58,8	58,8	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Table 3

		Realizar la clase en el patio			
		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta ni me disgusta	4	23,5	23,5	23,5
	Me gusta	13	76,5	76,5	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

On the other hand, we had “no me gusta ni me disgusta” option, there were 9 activities that were predominant. They were “discutir en clases (opinar)”, “escribir cuentos o historias”, “jugar en Inglés”, “hacer figuras de greda”, “recortar pegar y hacer collage”,

“leer historias o cuentos”, “hacer maquetas”, and “deletrear”. During the process of investigation it is important also to take them into consideration because sometimes some of the activities can be useful at classes because of the number of “me gusta” option they received. Therefore, as more “me gusta” more viable is the activity.

No me gusta ni me disgusta

Table 4

		Discutir en clases (opinar)			
		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta	4	23,5	23,5	23,5
	No me gusta ni me disgusta	7	41,2	41,2	64,7
	Me gusta	6	35,3	35,3	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Table 5

		Escribir cuentos o historias			
		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta	7	41,2	41,2	41,2
	No me gusta ni me disgusta	7	41,2	41,2	82,4
	Me gusta	3	17,6	17,6	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Table 6

		Escribir cuentos o historias			
		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta	7	41,2	41,2	41,2
	No me gusta ni me disgusta	7	41,2	41,2	82,4
	Me gusta	3	17,6	17,6	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Table 7

		Jugar en inglés			
		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta	4	23,5	25,0	25,0
	No me gusta ni me disgusta	6	35,3	37,5	62,5
	Me gusta	6	35,3	37,5	100,0
	Total	16	94,1	100,0	
Perdidos	9	1	5,9		
Total		17	100,0		

Table 8

		Hacer figuras de greda			
		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta	3	17,6	17,6	17,6
	No me gusta ni me disgusta	7	41,2	41,2	58,8
	Me gusta	7	41,2	41,2	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Table 9

Recortar, pegar y hacer collage

		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta	7	41,2	41,2	41,2
	No me gusta ni me disgusta	6	35,3	35,3	76,5
	Me gusta	4	23,5	23,5	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Table 10

Leer historias o cuentos

		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta	6	35,3	35,3	35,3
	No me gusta ni me disgusta	4	23,5	23,5	58,8
	Me gusta	7	41,2	41,2	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Table 11

Hacer maquetas

		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta	5	29,4	29,4	29,4
	No me gusta ni me disgusta	6	35,3	35,3	64,7
	Me gusta	6	35,3	35,3	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Finally, we had “no me gusta” option, there were 4 activities which were predominant. They were “cantar”, “cocinar”, “actuar” and “disertar”. According to the first and the second activity, one had only the 17% of the students’ acceptance and the other the 29%. And according to the third and fourth one, one had 11% of student’s acceptance and the other the 5%.

No me gusta

Table 12

		Cantar			
		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta	10	58,8	58,8	58,8
	No me gusta ni me disgusta	4	23,5	23,5	82,4
	Me gusta	3	17,6	17,6	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Table 13

		Cocinar			
		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta	7	41,2	41,2	41,2
	No me gusta ni me disgusta	5	29,4	29,4	70,6
	Me gusta	5	29,4	29,4	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Table 14

		Actuar			
		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta	10	58,8	58,8	58,8
	No me gusta ni me disgusta	5	29,4	29,4	88,2
	Me gusta	2	11,8	11,8	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Table 15

		Disertar			
		Frecuencia	Porcentaje	Porcentaje válido	Porcentaje acumulado
Válidos	No me gusta	9	52,9	52,9	52,9
	No me gusta ni me disgusta	7	41,2	41,2	94,1
	Me gusta	1	5,9	5,9	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Therefore, I decided to use a questionnaire to collect data because I think it would not be difficult to apply and analyze, taking into consideration the lack of time we are facing. Thus, I produced the questionnaire considering several sources and according to these I was able to build a questionnaire in order to recognize students' interests. In relation to the data analysis, I decided to divide the results in three options "me gusta", "no me gusta ni me disgusta" and "no me gusta" in order to recognize which activities were suitable to apply with them. According to that, considering the results it can be said that the predominant interests of the students' group are centered on "armar y desarmar objetos", "dibujar y pintar", and "realizar la clase en el patio". I decided to be focus on students' interests because I think they are fundamental when talking about students' involvement in

a class. I personally believe more students will get involved in the class if their preferences are taken into account. I also included an open question page where students had to express themselves. Throughout this I could realized that most of the students were also interested of mechanic and automotive topics. Even though the activities I will use will be based on the Active Learning Approach, the students' interests I could recognize will help me to develop the approach. Considering students' interests and activities from the Active learning approach can help students' learning process. Therefore, "armar y desarmar", "dibujar y pintar" and "realizar la clase en el patio" are the activities I will work with in the following interventions at classes.

Active Learning Approach activities

This AR will also consider some activities related to the Active Learning Approach taking into account students' context and interests. These activities are video reaction, game-like and group work. Talking about the video Penny Ur states, "video is an excellent source of authentic spoken language material; it is also attractive and motivating. It is flexible you can start and stop it, run forward or back, freeze frames in order to talk about them" (Ur,1996, p.191) . Also, group work will be performed, regarding Penny Ur states that:

In group work, learners perform a learning task throughout small- group interaction (...) it fosters learners responsibility and independence, can improve motivation and contribute to a feeling of cooperation and warmth in the class. There is some research that indicates that the use of group work improves learning outcomes. (Op.cit. p.232)

Moreover, according to Penny Ur, "children in general learn well when they are active; and when action is channeled into an enjoyable game they are often willing to invest

considerable time and effort to playing it” (Op. cit,290) . However, Penny Ur has not always promoted games as a learning technique,

Games are essentially recreational “time out” activities whose main purpose enjoyment; language study is serious goal- oriented work, whose main purpose is personal learning. Once you call a language learning activity a “game” you convey the message that it is just fun, not to be taken too seriously.(Op.cit, 289)

Thus, she says that games can be a useful tool only if they are promoting the language learning, otherwise it is only fun. Thus, in this AR I will try to apply a game but taking into consideration Penny Ur’s thought about games and their real meaning.

What is more, McKinney provides the teachers with the definition of each activity in order to be able to perform at classes. First, she defines Group work as a:

Collaborative learning groups that may be formal or informal, graded or not, short-term or long-term. Generally, you assign students to heterogeneous groups of 3-6 students. They choose a leader and a scribe (note-taker). They are given a task to work on together. Often, student preparation for the CLG has been required earlier (reading or homework). The group produces a group answer or paper or project. (McKinney, 2011, p.1)

Secondly, she defines:

Games such as jeopardy and crossword puzzles can be adapted to course material and used for review, for assignments, or for exams. They can be used at the individual, small group or full class levels. There are now some computer programs, for example, to help you create crossword puzzles. (Op.cit, p.2)

In third place, she defines reaction to a video and she states that:

Videos offer an alternative presentation mode for course material. Videos should be relatively short (5-20 minutes). Screen them to make sure they are worth showing. Prepare students ahead of time with reaction or discussion questions or a list of ideas on which to focus; this will help them pay attention. After the video, have them work alone or in pairs to answer critical questions, write a "review" or reaction, or apply a theory. (Loc.cit)

DATA ANALYSIS

Consequently, in this part of the AR I will fulfill specific objective number two (Apply suitable activities based on the Active Learning Approach combining students' interests). Therefore, I applied three activities based on the Active Learning Approach which is the method I decided to focus on. The activities I decided to use were "reaction to a video", "group work" and "games-like" and I combined them with students' interests.

The first activity was that put in to practice during the while period of a class consisted of a reaction to a video. The topic of the class was predicting the future; therefore, students had to watch a video called "imagine", this one represented the meaning of a song through several images. Then, after watching the video students had to comment impressions about it. The comments were based on two aspects; first, they had to think if the video had something to do with the song they had previously listened to; second, they had to reflect on the video and tell the class what they thought about it. Thus, the aim of the activity was that the students could be able to understand the song not only by following the lyrics but also throughout a visual aid device. The idea was that students could express their thoughts in order to generate discussion about the video. I thought this method could be appropriate because visual aids in the English class were new for students. So, I believed students could be motivated and interested on it. Also, I decided to use this method because students are not used to discuss in classes and according to the questionnaire they chose the discussion option as "no me gusta ni me disgusta". Hence, I thought it was appropriate to use this because regarding students' interests it was not something they did not like to accomplish.

Due to the lack of time we were facing I decided to apply another activity the same day in the same class. The second activity was employed during the post stage of the class and the activity was a group work. Thus, in the activity students were divided into groups of three. The activity consisted of drawing future predictions on a cardboard. Then, according to the drawing students had created they had to write one or more sentences which represented what they meant with the drawing. At the end of the class they were able to present their work and most of the students fulfilled the objective of the activity which was to be able to create written future predictions in order to represent their own drawings. I determined to use group work because I wanted them to work collaboratively. According to Dewey (1944) interaction is fundamental in order to construct knowledge. Apart from being collaborative it was social, because they had to predict future situations that will happen in our own world; therefore, there was also a connection with the world they are living in. According to progressive theories (Harris, 2011), education should be active, interactive and should include the social world and the community of the child. Also, I determined to use drawings combined with the activity because according to the questionnaire this was one of the most scored as “me gusta”.

The third activity I applied was a game-like. It was put into practice during the post stage of the class and it was a Bingo Game. The topic of the class was safety caution at work place, so there was a vocabulary already introduced. The activity consisted on a Bingo card which had several images of professions, so students had to mark the profession they heard according to the description of it the teacher said. For instance, if the teacher said “he or she is a person who wears an apron and works in a restaurant” students were supposed to mark the image of a Chef. The bingo game was played in pairs; thus, every pair had to mark their own bingo card. The first pair that finished the card would win the

game. Even though in the questionnaire games were scored with “no me gusta ni me disgunata” option, I determined to use it because I thought games were always motivating for students. Also, I believed that learning could be accomplished throughout fun activities. Regarding this activity, I also combined one of the open questions students’ interests applied which was focused on mechanics and automotive topic.

The fourth activity I decided to use was group work again because this was one of the activities that had better results the 9th grade class. This time students were divided into pairs and the topic of the class was safety precautions. Students had to draw the shape of a body on a cardboard, then students had to place the body protection object they must use at workplace in every part of the shape of the body they draw, (ear protection- eye protection- body protection- head protection- foot wears protection). The teacher wrote on pieces of paper all the objects they had to place on the cardboard which were placed on a bench at the schoolyard. This activity was done outside of the classroom; students performed the activity at the schoolyard. Thus, students had to be able to relate the vocabulary learnt with the corresponding body part, it means that they had to draw the object and the word in the correct place. At the end of the class some of the pairs presented their work to the rest of the class. I determined to use group work because I wanted them to work collaboratively. This time I decided to work at the schoolyard because according to the questionnaire it was one of the most scored one with “me gusta” option, actually none of the students did not like the alternative. According to this activity, I also decided to include open question students’ interests. As said before, it was related to mechanics and automotive topics.

FINDINGS

Considering the first active learning activity, I observed that bringing visual aids to the class worked in the sense that the students were interested. The students were involved in the activity only when they had to watch the video; however, when they had to comment and reflect about it they were not interested. Also, I noticed students were a little bit confused about what they had to do. They did not understand the instructions; thus, some students started to do other things and only 8 students were involved in the activity. It was not possible to end the activity because students were not paying attention at all and I had to carry on with the following activity. Hence, after observing the situation and the activity applied I can say that one of the main reasons students were not interested in the activity was because I had not been clear enough when giving the instruction. That is why students were a little bit confused and some of them did not know what to do after watching the video. Actually, I realized the activity was not well planned because according to my tutor teacher I could have taken more advantage of the video. In that sense maybe I could have prepared students before watching the video. It means, made sure that students understood the instructions and then had shown the video. Also, I could have made students to be focused on something specific related to the video in order to make sure that they had something to pay attention to.

Another thing that I realized was that students were used to working according to traditional methods; therefore, those new methods were not being interesting for them. In fact, this kind of approach was centered on students thinking, feelings or communication; however, traditional methods are more centered on the structure of the language. Another thing that I realized was that students answered all the questions in Spanish, actually some

of them fulfilled understanding but they did not use English. Thus, visual aids worked in the sense of catching students' attention but not in order to make practice the language. This time only 8 students out of 20 got involved in the activity. However, there were many factors that could influence the development of the activity. Those ones have to be taken into account in future applications because I think the activity could have succeeded if those factors were not interrupting the activity.

According to the second active learning activity, I observed that most of the students got involved in the activity; it means that 15 students were working on it. Thus, they were able to draw their future predictions on the cardboard, meanwhile some of the members of the group were drawing others were painting. I noticed that students were also able to write the interpretation of their own work. It means, that they were capable to create sentences that showed what they wanted to express through the drawing. Most of the sentences were not grammatically correct but at least students were able to express themselves in English and to be understood. Another thing that I observed was that most of them worked collaboratively. I became aware of this because meanwhile I was monitoring the activity some students of the groups asked me to perform different roles inside of the group. For instance, some of the students were not good at drawing; therefore, they preferred to help in writing the representation of the drawing. Other members decided to present the work in front of the class, the ones that were better at speaking. Thus, basically I think the work group activity worked in this 9th grade class with the aim of getting more students involved in the class. What is more, I believe one of the most important aspects that helped in order to have students involved in the class was students' interests. In this activity I combined the activity with one of the more scored students' interest regarding the

questionnaire. That is why I think I will consider group work as an activity in future practices in this 9th grade class.

Considering the third active learning activity, I decided to use game-like activity. Unfortunately, this time I noticed students were not really involved in the class. In this occasion only 10 students out of 17 were involved in the class. It means that the students who were not involved in the class were doing other things or simply not paying attention. I observed that when I gave the instructions of the game most of the students were worried about the results of a test the guide teacher was giving to them more than the game itself. Thus, when they had to play the game they were not sure about what they really had to accomplish. Hence, one of the reasons I personally believe the activity did not work it was because I was not very clear at giving the instructions of the game, so several students were not even worried about the game because they did not know what to do. This time I considered students' interests exposed in the questionnaire but I chose one of the "no me gusta ni me disgusta option" because I always thought games were interesting for students. Even though, only 10 of the students were involved in the class, there was a winner. It means that some of them could accomplish the activity successfully.

Talking about the fourth active learning activity, this time I observed the activity completely worked, 16 out of 16 students got involved the class, and this means all of them. I noticed students loved to perform the class outside of the classroom and I think this was one of the main factors to get them involved in it. When we were at the schoolyard I gave them all the materials, such as cardboard, markers, crayons, etc. Subsequently, I observed all of the students got in pairs and started to work immediately. Thus, I personally believe that taking students out of the routine really helped them to work in the activity. Another important thing I considered after observing the situation was that most of the students were

getting used to doing group work. I think this could have influenced their performance because they already had done several group work activities during the term; therefore, they know what this meant. Another essential aspect to take into consideration was that they were able to work collaboratively, this time they helped each other and they were able to fulfill the objective satisfactorily. I noticed some of them were drawing while others were painting. Some of them were worried about the words they had to place on the body while others were worried about the presentation. However, one aspect I noticed I would have improved is that the activity students performed contained isolated vocabulary rather than learning the vocabulary with a communicative approach. Thus, I definitely would use work group again as an activity in order to get students involved in the class. Also, I would take always students' interest into account. This activity showed me how important they are when talking about students' involvement in an English class.

PLAN OF ACTION

Concerning the findings, I think one of most important aspects I have to take into consideration is related to giving instructions when facing future practices. I noticed two of the activities performed could not be accomplished because the students did not understand the instructions I provided. Thus, I think this would be one of the topics I will be focused on in future Action Research projects. I realized how fundamental instructions are when we aim at getting students involved in the class.

Another important aspect I observed throughout this AR has to do with students' interests. I realized how important they can be in order to aim students' involvement and learning in an English class. As it was previously exposed and proved, the activities which were most successfully performed were the ones that integrated students interests with the "me gusta" option taken from the questionnaire. Thus, in future practices I definitely will start for considering them.

Nonetheless, if I had the opportunity to work with this class again, one of the things I would like to incorporate in the classes would be topics related to the specialty the school presented. This means, dealing more with topics related to industrial and automotive mechanics. Even though I had the opportunity to work with this kind of topics in classes, I think it would be better to start from the beginning of the term with them because that way English would become more meaningful for students if the specialization and the English are implemented with a communicative learning approach. I believe that incorporating the specialty with the English language can be an important step in order to demonstrate students that English is not something distant from them. Also, it will help students to understand English as a communicative tool not as something isolated and useless.

Unfortunately, I think I could not deal with the specialization with a communicative learning approach; therefore, I believe if I had the opportunity to work with this class again it would be fundamental to work on it.

CONCLUSION

Outcomes

After applying the first activity only 5 students got involved in the class. According to the reaction to video activity 8 students out of 20 got involved in the class. It means the students' involvement increased in a 15%. However, this result was not good enough because 60% were not still involved.

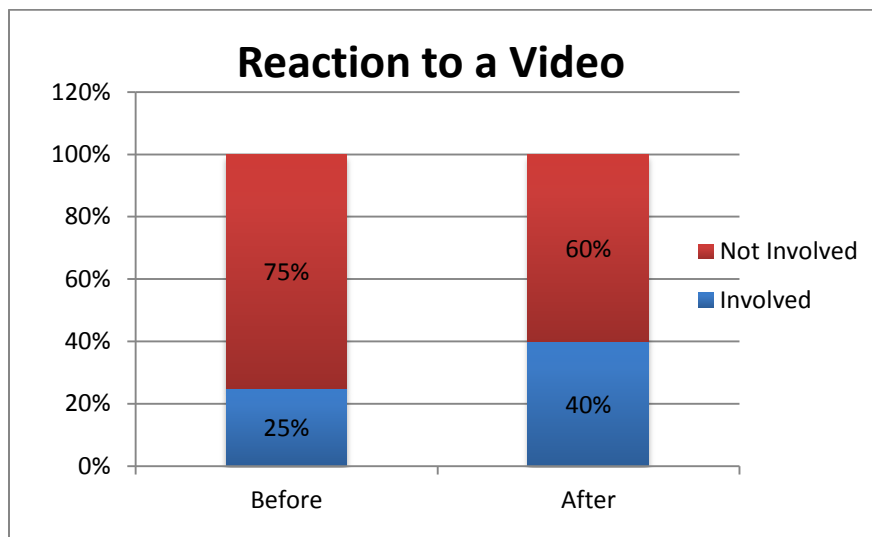


Figure 1. Reaction to a video

Regarding the first activity and the graph results, it is proved that the activity did not work in order to get more students involved in the class. This situation is demonstrated by the graph in the sense that there was a low increase in the percentage of the students' involvement in the class. As it was mentioned before, I noticed visual aids were interesting for students, but they got demotivated when they had to discuss; therefore, the problem was in the discussion in the visual aid itself. Also, I think I was not able to give the instructions of the activity appropriately, that is why students got confused and they did not know what to do. Finally, I believe the activity could have been a little bit challenging for students

because they low level of English. This was the first Active learning activity I applied and most of the students were not used to this new approach.

After applying the second activity 15 students got involved in the class. According to group work activity 15 students out of 20 got involved in the class. It means the students' involvement increased in a 50%. Thus, this result was good enough because only 25% of the students were not still involved in the class.

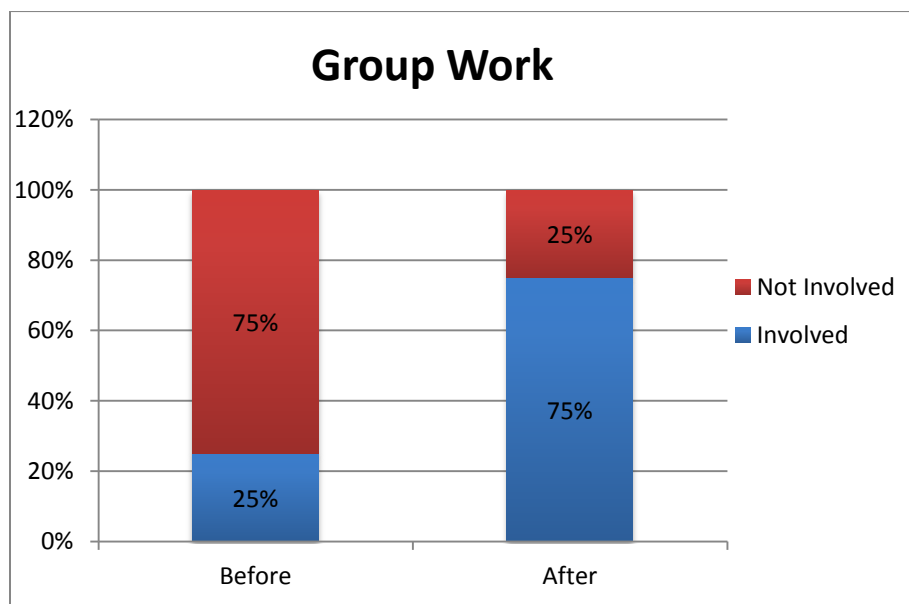


Figure 2. Group Work

Considering the second activity and the graph results, it is shown that this time the activity worked. I believe one of the most important things that influenced in the increase of the percentage was related to the combination of activity with students' interests taken from the questionnaire. This time I could combine group work with drawings which was one of the most scored alternative with "me gusta" option. I believe this combination allowed students to get involved in the class because they were performing something they like but also they were learning.

After applying the third activity only 10 students got involved in the class.

According to game-like activity 10 students out of 17 got involved in the class. It means the students' involvement increased in a 30%. Thus, this result was not good because 41% of the students were not still involved in the class.

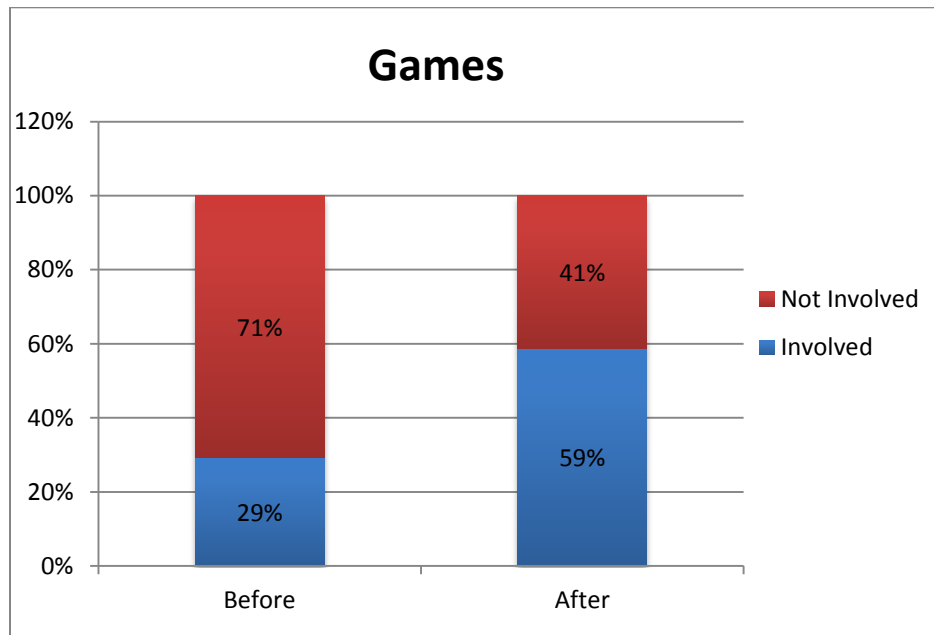


Figure 3. Games

Talking about the third activity and the graph results, it is shown that the activity did not work as expected. I thought games were always interesting for students; however, with this activity I realized it is important to take into account students' interests. In the results of the questionnaire applied students scored games with a "no me gusta ni me disgusta" option. I considered this when I planned the activity, but I thought this would have better results. Another important aspect that influenced the results had to do with instructions. This time I was not able to give the instructions satisfactorily; therefore, students got lost and they did not know what to do.

After applying the fourth activity all of the students got involved in the class. According to work group activity 16 students out of 16 got involved in the class. It means the students' involvement increased in a 70%. Thus, this result was excellent because 100% of the students were involved in the class.

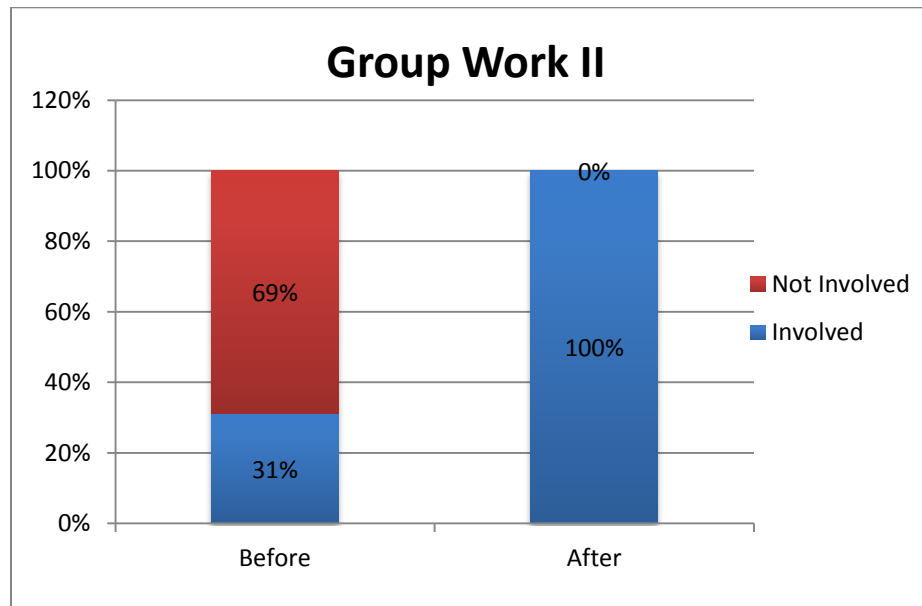


Figure 4. Group Work II

Considering the fourth activity and the graph results, it is shown that the activity worked because all of the students got involved in the class. I think one of the most important things that helped in order to increase the number of students' involved in the class is related to taking students out of the routine. I believe this new alternative was fundamental because students were able to break the routine they are in. Also, this was one of students preferences in the students' interests questionnaire, this illustrates that it is important to be aware of students' interests when planning the activities. Another important aspect that could have influenced the increase of numbers is that most of the students were getting used to working in groups, as they have been doing group work activities several times.

Reflections

To conclude, one of the most important aspects which was fundamental in order to successes in this Action Research is related to the disposition of the school. I think that throughout this practicum I was allowed to work as I preferred inside of the school. I was never restricted by the guide teacher or other members of the school. This term my guide teacher was not very concerned about our performance at school; therefore, it allowed us to attempt on several activities. This helped me to grow as a teacher because I could notice several issues I did not know how to deal with and I will be able to consider in future practices. Talking about the difficulties lived in order to accomplish this AR; I personally believe one of the most important aspects that affected negatively the AR development had to do with the lack of time. I think the time given was not enough, considering the work we had to do in order to fulfill an AR project. Although, the lack of time could affect the AR process I think I learnt a variety of aspects I had not noticed were important in relation to my practice. This project and this practicum helped me to recognize strengths and weaknesses I have as a teacher. I learnt how important is to be aware of the students' interest and how it can affect students' involvement and learning. Also, I learned I have to work in several aspects I had not noticed I had problems with, for instance, giving instructions which was one of the factors that influenced the development of two of the four activities. Besides, this practicum and this project helped me to get involved in a new approach which is English with specific purposes. As it was said, this was a technical school; therefore, I had to get involved with terms I did not manage. I learnt a lot about it; however, I was not able to deal with the approach because I was really vocabulary centered instead of communication centered. However, I was able to realize about it; therefore, I will be able to improve this in future practices.

REFERENCES

- Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center. (n.d). *Howard gardner's theory of multiple intelligences*. Northern Illinois University.
- Gallahue, D., Ozmun, J., & Goodway, J. (2012). *Understanding motor development: Infants, children, adolescents, adults*. (7th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Harris, L (2011) *Presentation Notes for C.G Mooney's Theories of Childhood*
- Lai, E. (2011). *Motivation: A literature review research report*. Pearson.
- Lutz, S., & Huitt, W. (2004). *Connecting cognitive development and constructivism: Implications from theory for instruction and assessment*. *Constructivism in the Human Sciences*,9(1), 67-90.
- McKinney, K. (2011). *Active learning*. Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology
- Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Papalia, D. E., Olds, S. W., & Feldma R. D. 2007. *Human development*. 10th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill.
- Piaget, J. (1973). *Main Trends in Psychology*. London: George Allen & Unwin
- Silberman, M. (1996). *Active learning: 101 strategies to teach any subject*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Sunita, H. (2012). *A comparative study of piaget's and vygotsky's cognitive development theory*. (Vol. 1). Maharashtra: Lokavishkar International E-Journal.
- Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching: Practice and theory*. (17th ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ur, P. (1981). *Discussions that work: Task-centred fluency practice*. (29th ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

APPENDIX

Cuestionario de Gustos e Intereses

Nombre:

Fecha:

Querido estudiante: El objetivo de este cuestionario es conocer tus gustos e intereses.

Primera parte.

Instrucciones: A continuación se presenta una lista de actividades en las que debes marcar con un círculo si te gusta o no te gusta realizarlas.

Si la actividad no te gusta marca el número 1; si la actividad no te gusta, pero tampoco te disgusta, marca el número 2; y si la actividad te gusta el número 3.

1: significa **No me gusta**

2: significa: **No me gusta ni me disgusta**

3: significa **Me gusta**

- Armar y desarmar objetos
1 2 3

- Discutir en clases (opinar)
1 2 3

- Dibujar y pintar
1 2 3

- Escribir cuentos o historias

1 2 3

- Recortar, pegar y hacer collage
1 2 3

- Leer historias o cuentos
1 2 3

- Hacer maquetas
1 2 3

- Hacer la clase en el patio

1 2 3

- Cantar
1 2 3

- Hacer figuras de greda
1 2 3

- Actuar
1 2 3

- Disertar
1 2 3

- Deletrear
1 2 3

- Jugar en inglés
1 2 3

- Cocinar
1 2 3

Segunda Parte.

Instrucciones: A continuación se presenta una serie de preguntas que debes responder de acuerdo a lo que te gusta hacer.

a) ¿Qué música te gusta escuchar?

b) ¿Qué programas de tv te gusta ver?

c) ¿Qué películas te gustan?

d) ¿Qué deportes te gustan?

e) ¿Sobre qué temas te gustaría aprender?

f) En clase, ¿te gusta trabajar solo o con compañeros? ¿Por qué?

g) En caso de que se organizaran charlas en la escuela, ¿qué temas son los que más te interesarían?

h) ¿Te gustan las clases en las que se usa data?

¡Gracias por participar!