

**Classroom Ecology: Identifying the Dynamics of Classroom Life
in Three Public High School EFL Classrooms to Customize Language
Learning Activities.**

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**Universidad Industrial de Santander
Faculty of Human Sciences
School of Languages
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Bucaramanga
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A Project Submitted to the School of Languages in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor in Teaching English as a
Foreign Language

Director: Maribel Vega Martinez

**Universidad Industrial de Santander
Faculty of Human Sciences
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Dedication

We want to thank God for our lives, our families and for blessing us with the opportunity to study a university program and giving us the abilities to success in our academic and professional lives.

We want to say thank you to our families for being there during the thick and thins, for being a support to go on and for all the unconditional love that gave us the strength and motivation to keep going, facing life with happiness and hope.

We would like to thank our professor Maribel Vega, for her patience, guidance and understanding during all these years at university, especially during the practicum and our graduation project; and to all people who at some point of our lives modeled our academic and professional growth.

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Summary

Title: Classroom Ecology: Identifying the Dynamics of Classroom Life in Three Public High School EFL Classrooms to Customize Language Learning Activities. *

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Marylin Blanco Rios**

Keywords: Classroom Ecology, classroom climate, teaching style, student engagement, disruptive behavior.

Description:

This action research Project was developed due to the lack of importance that some pre-service teachers show towards the understanding of the classroom ecology before the beginning of their practicum. As Murri and King State, to identify the classroom ecology is very important for understanding and managing student behavior. But they also address that is not only enough to identify the classroom ecology, but also to understand and reflect it on the teaching practices (2006).

Identifying the aspects that compose classroom ecology was useful, to help us in customizing activities that met students' needs, likes and dislikes, using an approach that let them have an active role, which was the Cooperative Learning Approach. The results were positive, students began to attend classes and be on time in a regular basis, to display an appropriate behavior and to be responsible for their language learning.

The creation of a newspaper (11-1 and 11-2) and a spelling bee contest (9-3) were designed in order to achieve that goal, where students worked in groups and had a specific role and functions to perform. As a result, all students were engaged in the class activities, so disruptive behavior decreased. These activities took place during the second phase (focused observation) which included eight lessons. At this stage, students had the opportunity to practice the L2 and to be focused more on content than on grammatical rules.

* Degree Project

** Faculty of Human Sciences

School of Languages

Director Maribel Vega

Resumen

- Título:** Classroom Ecology: Identifying the Dynamics of Classroom Life in Three Public High School EFL Classrooms to Customize Language Learning Activities. *
- Autores:** Elizabeth Sarmiento Godoy
Maria Noelia Cristancho Hernández
Marylin Blanco Ríos**
- Palabras clave:** Classroom Ecology, classroom climate, teaching style, student engagement, disruptive behavior.

Este proyecto se llevó a cabo debido a la falta de importancia que algunos practicantes ven en entender la ecología del salón de clase antes de iniciar sus prácticas pedagógicas. Así como lo plantean Murri and King, identificar la ecología del salón es muy importante para entender y dirigir el comportamiento de los estudiantes. Pero ellos aseguran que no solo es importante entenderla, sino también reflejarla en la práctica docente (2006).

Identificar los aspectos que la componen fue muy importante, ya que esto nos llevó a adaptar las actividades según sus gustos y necesidades usando un enfoque que permitiera que ellos tomaran parte activa, como lo fue el método cooperativo. Los resultados obtenidos fueron positivos, los estudiantes empezaron a atender a clase y llegar temprano de forma regular, tener un comportamiento apropiado en la clase y a ser responsables en su aprendizaje de la lengua.

Con el fin de lograrlo, se diseñaron actividades como la creación de un periódico (11-1 y 11-2) y un concurso de deletreo (9-3), donde todos los estudiantes trabajaban en grupo y tenían un rol específico con funciones que cumplir. De esta forma, todos los estudiantes estaban envueltos en las actividades de la clase, reduciendo el comportamiento negativo. Estas actividades se llevaron a cabo durante la segunda fase, con un total de ocho clases, dando a los estudiantes la oportunidad de practicar la segunda lengua, enfocados más en el contenido que en las reglas gramaticales.

* Proyecto de Grado

** Facultad de Ciencias Humanas

Escuela de Idiomas

Directora Maribel Vega

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The notion of classroom ecology as defined by Doyle and Ponder refers to the interplay of both personal and classroom factors having an effect on both students and teachers behavior; thus shaping the dynamics of what takes place in the classroom (as cited in Gordon, et al, 1996).

Pre-service teachers come to face the ecology of a public high school classroom during their teaching practicum; that is, small classrooms, large size groups of high schoolers of varying language levels, interests, needs, and attitudes; a limited access to quality materials and the institutional constraints that can make teaching more trying.

As the planning stages of their teaching takes place, pre service teachers tend to focus all their energies on the more formal aspects of teaching which include having a lesson plan with all the different components they were taught it should have.

When pre-services teachers came to face the classroom they realized that the planned learning activities did not match the specific classroom characteristics of their target population, which translated into lack of student engagement; misbehavior, waste of time and absenteeism; behaviors which deviated the teacher's energy, efforts, and procedural knowledge into trying to manage students, taking away from teaching.

1.2 Justification

During our practicum, we have experienced some shortage related to our training to teach large size groups of high schoolers. For this reason, we consider important to understand classroom ecology as each group of students has different needs, interests, likes and dislikes that influence their behavior and the relationship among them, and between students and the teacher. Thus, as pre-service teachers, we have to take into account which of these factors is more salient when designing activities to address the specific characteristics of students.

It is also important that teacher preparation programs support pre- service teachers in bridging connections of theory and practice with large size groups of high schoolers by critically addressing classroom ecology at the onset of their teaching assignment, in order to effectively plan and guide their teaching.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE

2.1 General objective

- The objective of this project is to identify and become familiar with the classroom ecology in the 11-1, 11-2 and 9-3 high school groups in order to customize activities that engage students in language learning.

2.2 Specific objectives

- To design class activities that take into account the classroom ecology of the three targeted groups.
- To identify initial student responses to classroom activities.

2.3 Research Questions

- What is the classroom ecology of the 11-1, 11-2, and 9,3 high school groups at Institución Educativa las Americas?
- After analyzing the Classroom Ecology of 11-1, 11-2, and 9-3 grade levels at Institución Educativa Las Americas, what activities can we plan and implement to engage students in language learning?
- How do students initially respond to the new activities?

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Literature Review

Classroom Ecology

For many years, the teaching of a language has focused mainly on addressing a curriculum, which was aimed to teach grammar rules without taking into account the students' context and interests. Nowadays teachers have realized that learning takes place in a broad context composed of many factors presented in the classroom. These factors include classroom climate, teaching style, teachers and students' interaction, students' engagement, and development of activities compose the classroom ecology.

The International Reading Association IRA (**IRA**) defines classroom ecology as the interaction of students, teachers, and the physical attributes of the classroom (1995). As it is stated by Murri and King, identifying the classroom ecology is very important for understanding and managing student behavior (2006). In fact, they also assert that it is not enough to identify the classroom ecology, but also, to understand it, and the best way to do this is by reflecting on teaching practices. The teacher has the responsibility of creating a physical setting that supports academic and social goals, establishing expectations for behavior, communicating with students in culturally consistent ways, and using appropriate interventions to assist students with behavior problems(2006). As Everston & Harris, stated "classroom ecology is the teacher actions to create, implement, and maintain a classroom environment that supports learning". This is confirmed by Doyle who states that classroom ecology is the actions and strategies teachers use to solve the problem of order in classrooms, rather than responses to disciplinary situations (Doyle, 1996). Ellison carried out a study to gain

descriptive insights into the routines, practices, perceptions, and interactions that constitute the everyday ecology of classrooms serving African American children from low-income backgrounds. The underlying theory guiding the study is that learning does not happen in an isolated context, but takes place in a broad one composed of numerous factors present in the classroom **(2000)**.

In sum, classroom ecology focuses on the interplay of the students' and teacher interaction, and the physical attributes of the classrooms. Classroom ecology level addresses the potential for needs satisfaction; classroom climate; group interaction patterns; level and type of class organization; mechanisms for conflict resolution; teaching style; physical environment; relevance of content; and the wider school ecology (2009).

Classroom Climate

Adelman and Taylor affirm that classroom climate is a perceived quality of the setting. As it emerges from many immediate environmental factors (e.g., physical, material, organizational, operational, and social variables) classroom climate is a complex factor to take into account when understanding classroom ecology **(2005)**. In this project, the related aspects are environment, classroom layout, classroom climate and use of reprimands in the classroom.

According to Crotty having an environment where students feel safe, nurtured, and intellectually stimulated is a must for students to learn to their potential **(2002)**. Similarly, Glasser states that positive classroom climate allows for students to meet their basic needs of physical and mental health **(2002)**. Whereas, the Center for Teaching Excellence of Plattsburgh

University in their article **“Best Teaching Practices: Classroom Climate”** states that the classroom climate flows specifically from the attitude the instructor brings to class. Thus, classroom climate is the type of environment that is created for students by the school, teachers, and peers.

One aspect that belongs to Classroom climate is the classroom layout. The physical surroundings of a class can encourage or inhibit interaction, and hence learning. Making distinct efforts to arrange the furniture of a classroom to promote a particular kind of interaction also sends strong messages to participants, used to conventional layouts that the class is something different. (Atherton J S, 2009). Among others, the classroom layout can be arranged in rows or groups. Deaking et.al state that rows are the typical environment for a teacher-centered classroom and/or individual learning. Students are aligned in such a way as they all face the 'front' of the class. The teacher conducts the instruction from this 'front' position. This type of physical set-up can be an effective method of behavior management. They point out that groups are typical of student-centered learning. They provide an effective environment for collaborative, cooperative, individualistic and competitive learning. The classroom dynamics are considerably more complex in this environment as the teacher uses facilitating techniques to ensure that students are engaged with the learning process. Students in groups should be situated in close proximity to the other members of the group so they can share knowledge, eye-contact and materials without having to disrupt the other groups in the class. With this in mind, the most appropriate setting for a group is in circles (2009).

Apart from the classroom layout, there is another aspect in the classroom climate that makes for a warm atmosphere in the classroom, which is learning

students' names. A teacher who does not know his or her students' names may be perceived as remote and unapproachable. "When the professor engages the student in personal conversation, recognizes her by name, and seems to include her in the domain of attention, the subject matter seems more accessible. The nonverbal message goes out that the student is a part of the community of people who can do mathematics, statistics, chemistry, or whatever the subject is" (Willemsen, 1995). Kumar points out in his article "Creating Conducive Classroom Climate" The teacher who knows and uses students' names has more influence over those students than, he has over unknown students. The students must feel that the teacher is interested in them as individuals as well as students. Hence it is better to address students by names as often as possible (2007). In large classes, the task of learning student names can seem overwhelming, but even if the professor learns the names of only a portion of the class, a caring, inclusive atmosphere will be established. Calling students by name signifies a positive relationship between teachers and students. Students who recognize that their teachers think of them as individuals with individual needs will feel more comfortable in class and be more responsive in discussions.

To keep a positive relationship between teachers and students it is also necessary to know how to use reprimands in the classroom. Three studies carried out by Van Hauten et.al show the results of using reprimands in the classrooms. The results of these studies identified three factors that influence the efficacy of reprimands. The first study showed that nonverbal aspects of reprimands such as eye contact potentiated the influence of verbal reprimands. The second study showed that reprimands were more effective when delivered from nearby the student than when delivered from across the

room. The last study showed that the delivery of reprimands to one student reduced the disruptive behavior of an adjacent peer (1982).

Although the previously cited studies have shown that reprimands can be effective, it should be noted that reprimands, if used improperly, can also produce unwanted side effects. In this regard, reprimands are like any other punishment procedure. For example, Redd, Morris, and Martin (1975) indicated that although reprimands were the most effective procedure, the adults who were associated with their exclusive use were less preferred by the children than the adults who delivered praise or remained neutral. Similarly, Willner, Braukmann, Kirigin, Fixsen, Phillips, and Wolf (1977) found that adolescents disliked it when adults described only what they had done wrong. Van Hauten et.al conclude that the results of these studies show that reprimands can often be very effective when properly delivered; it would be unwise to base a strategy for classroom control upon their exclusive use. Instead, reprimanding should be viewed as a technique that can often be used in conjunction with programs that place primary emphasis upon forms of reinforcement such as praise. When used as part of a program that is heavily weighted in favor of reinforcement, it is highly unlikely that undesirable side effects would occur.

A positive Classroom Climate is also conducive of students' participation. Thus, one of the teacher's aims is to encourage students to participate in class, as Kumar states in his article "Creating Conducive Classroom Climate" to encourage more student involvement in lessons teachers must be concerned with their emotional, social and academic needs (2007). Also, Weimer adds that it is important for students and teachers to find out about each other from the beginning of a course to help to create a classroom

climate of respect that can encourage students to ask questions, make comments, and participate in dialogue throughout the course (2009). This leads the students to achieve the course goals proposed by the teacher. Moreover the teacher sets clear goals it will be easier for students to achieve them, as Penick and Bonnstetter affirm in their journal “Classroom Climate and Instruction: New Goals Demand New Approaches” traditional teachers ignore the importance of goals that emphasize attitude, communication, creativity, and application of knowledge. Thus, the classroom language learning was not successful. They also suggest how to provide instructions that lead to the expressed goals (1993).

Another aspect included in Classroom climate is the process of achieving course goals where there may be students who are not engaged in the tasks. Those students are likely to perform disruptive behavior, so the teacher may consider necessary to use proximity control. The main idea behind this technique is to put a teacher in close proximity to students who are showing signs of getting off task. If you know from prior experience that a particular group of students is likely to disrupt class, standing or sitting close to them while you lead an activity or give directions will control a fair amount of the unwanted behavior (Elliot, 2005). The proximity control is a way to avoid misbehavior, keeping a positive atmosphere.

A positive atmosphere allows students to feel safe to participate and at the same time to make mistakes without any fear, during the learning process. Kumar states that for effective learning, students must participate fully in the learning process. This means they must be encouraged to ask and answer questions, attempt new approaches, make mistakes, and ask for assistance (2007). The chapter five of the book “Managing Students & the

Classroom Climate” also highlights the importance of the classroom climate in terms of helping students feel safe participate in class; he adds that if praise occurs in everyday conversation, it will help students to participate more freely. Also, he talks about the importance of correcting students’ mistakes without putting a student down for trying (1989). If teachers can create this positive classroom climate they also help students achieve their language learning. “It is important that students know there is safety and comfort in the classrooms and that they will be treated properly when they do contribute. Wrong answers should not provoke negative reactions on the part of the teacher, but need to be perceived as part of student’s learning process” (Kumar, 2007).

Teaching Style

The term teaching style itself has no agreed definition but the more widely accepted is Galton’s definition that referred to it as “a set of teaching tactics” that is, the teacher’s decision that include classroom organization, management of the learning activities and the balance of the curriculum (1980). Bennette related teaching style to philosophies of teaching or to specific learning outcomes. Moreover, The Virtual University Design and Technology VUDAT of Michigan State University states that instructors develop a teaching style based on their beliefs about what constitutes good teaching, personal preferences, their abilities, and the norms of their particular discipline. Nevertheless, Doherty considered that relying on personal preference is an unstable basis for effective teaching and that selection of a teaching style must be done on a more logical and scientific basis (2003).

Teaching style refers to the teaching strategies and methods employed by the teacher no matter what those are based on. One of the strategies a teacher can use to encourage students in language learning is setting goals. Pickering and Pollock in their book "Classroom Instruction that works", state that it is important for teachers to set goals for student learning. However, it is also necessary to give students some flexibility. For example, when a teacher presents students with general learning goals, then students can personalize them. However, students might need assistance setting specific personal learning goals. Moreover, it is difficult to determine whether a goal has been achieved, if it is too abstract. Therefore, effective goals must be stated specifically and concretely enough to give direction, yet general enough to provide flexibility. Goals should support performance, not constrain the teachers. (2001) Pickering and Pollock also point out that setting specific goals in any situation makes it more likely that students will complete the tasks necessary to meet the goal and succeed in meeting the goal itself. In fact, goal setting in the classroom increases the chances that students will accomplish their academic goals. Besides, contracting with students regarding their specific goals for a unit of instruction is a way to formalize the goal-setting process (2001). Also, research shows a consistent, positive relationship between setting goals and successfully performing tasks. In fact, successful people attribute much of their achievement to their ability to set, monitor, and achieve goals. Pickering and Pollock conclude by assuring that providing students with a goal-setting process or sharing goal-setting guidelines with them can help them more efficiently set and monitor their progress toward their goals.

Teaching style also includes monitoring, which is a way to assess students in order to ensure they are progressing. It is a highly valuable tool

for teachers to use for many reasons. Firstly, teachers need to monitor students in order to gauge student receptivity during a lesson. Teachers are also able to use monitoring to check for advancement toward the goals for long-term instruction. In addition, monitoring is useful for helping teachers decide what works and what doesn't work in regards to their instructional procedures (Hofmeister & Lubke, 1999).

Other strategies a teacher can use to help students understand better and encourage them to participate are the use of body language, technology, and visual aids. In the article "Creating a Positive Classroom Climate" the author states that one way to encourage participation is to provide verbal and non-verbal encouragement of student participation. Making frequent eye contact, moving around the room saying "good" or writing student response on the board, flip chart or screen are all ways to acknowledge contributions (2009).

Technology is considered the key to success in any classroom, and particularly with English language learners. Wappel in her article "Technology in the ESL Classroom" states that technology has made a huge impact on the teaching and learning of English as a Second Language. No longer are teachers limited to cassette tapes or CD's for pronunciation, or handouts or games for practicing skills. Instead they may utilize a multitude of new technology to help students with the difficult transition from their native language to English. Video streaming is high-tech tool used in the ESL classroom. To introduce or reinforce material visually, teachers download clips or entire videos to make their classroom come alive and spark active participation. Finally, using video cameras to record presentations helps students observe "body language" and strengthen their organizational and oral skills. They are much more apt to accept constructive criticism when they

are able to see the mistakes they have made. Technology has made learning English much more enjoyable. It inspires teachers to be more creative and encourages students to be more involved in classroom activities.

Teaching style also involves students' evaluation. Evaluating the students' work and performance in class is relevant to measure the students' language learning. The online article "What is curriculum redesign?" states that evaluation is the process through which teachers judge the quality of students work (2004). Also there are many ways to evaluate students' work such as materials, exams, quizzes, tasks, and rubrics. Hayden in her article states that rubrics allow students to know exactly how their work will be evaluated allow them to produce higher quality work (2007)

Classroom Interaction Patterns

The dictionary of sociology Gordon Marshall defines classroom interaction as the form and content of behavior or social interaction in the classroom (1998). In a classroom the interaction between teacher and students is necessary during the development of the activities. According to the Teaching English website interaction patterns are the different ways learners and teachers can interact in the class. It also stated that the success of any activity and the achievement of aims are obtained if the right interaction patterns are used; and affirms that the main interaction pattern is teacher to the whole group (T-Ss). Other patterns include pair work (S-S), and group work (Ss-Ss) (2009).

Language Learning Activities

The Ministry of Education in Wellington, New Zealand states that language learning takes place when students understand language input and when they use language to engage in interaction. Their depth of processing of

ideas and language is important. In fact, this is part of developing language complexity; students learn more language when they spend time elaborating and exploring one area, using the associated language in many different ways.

The authors propose that the teacher can use activities repeatedly in any curriculum area. It allows students to become familiar with key strategies for processing ideas and language. Then teachers can encourage students to use these strategies independently.

Students can use activities in English, or they can decide to complete parts in different languages. For example, they might have discussions in English and then write up their conclusions in a bilingual version. Some activities propose the use of Cooperative group work (problem solving, creating, inventing, evaluating, ranking), where students engage in exploratory talks about a topic and make final written or spoken presentations of their ideas

Student Engagement

In terms of student engagement, Dunleavy & Milton, in their multi-year research talk about the importance of paying attention to the influence of school context, particularly the relationships between school climate and students' experience of engagement. They stated two dimensions in the study of student's engagement. Those were Social engagement – participation in the “life” of school, and Academic engagement – participation in the requirements of success in school (2009). Similarly, a journal of Eric Digest “Assessing Student Engagement Rates” agreed with the definitions of student engagement that Dunleavy & Milton stated in their research, and also added that students who are engaged showed continued behavioral involvement in the learning activities (2009). In Chapman's article, a different

perspective identifies the levels of students' engagement that monitor and guide the learning processes; those are the use of cognitive, meta-cognitive and self-regulatory strategies (1977). In conclusion, students who are engaged show sustained behavioral involvement in learning activities. They select tasks that maximize their competencies, initiate action when given the opportunity, and make use of intense effort and concentration in the implementation of learning tasks.

Disruptive Behavior

As Daniels states in her article "How to manage disruptive behavior in inclusive classroom", disruptive behavior is the result of a mismatch between teaching style and the learning styles of students (2009). She also states that many aspects of classroom life contribute to students' misbehavior, such as the physical arrangement of the classroom, boredom or frustration, transitional periods, lack of awareness of what is going on in every area of the classroom. Furthermore, Amada points out in his article "Coping with Misconduct in the College Classroom: A Practical Model" that disruptive behavior is detrimental to the academic community because it interferes with the students' learning process, inhibits the ability of instructors to teach most effectively, diverts energy and resources away from the educational mission, and may indicate a significant level of personal problems or distress on the part of the disrupter (1999)

Cooperative Learning

Johnson and Johnson affirm in their article "Cooperative Learning" that the purpose of Cooperative learning is getting the learner working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative activities individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and beneficial to all other group members. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that

students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. The idea is simple. Class members are organized into small groups after receiving instruction from the teacher. They then work through the assignment until all group members successfully understand and complete it. Cooperative efforts result in participants striving for mutual benefit so that all group members gain from each other's efforts, recognizing that all group members share a common fate, knowing that one's performance is mutually caused by oneself and one's colleague, and feeling proud and jointly celebrating when a group member is recognized for achievement. In cooperative learning situations there is a positive interdependence among students' goal attainments; students perceive that they can reach their learning goals if and only if the other students in the learning group also reach their goals (1989). A team member's success in creating a multi-media presentation on saving the environment, for example, depends on both individual effort and the efforts of other group members who contribute needed knowledge, skills, and resources. No one group member will possess all of the information, skills, or resources necessary for the highest possible quality presentation.

Johnson, Johnson, and Smith also address this issue in their article "Cooperative Learning: Increasing College Faculty Instructional Productivity", as they state that instrumental teachers are including cooperative learning to increase students' achievement, create positive relationships among students, and promote students' healthy psychological adjustment to school. It is about structuring learning situations cooperatively so that students work together to achieve shared goals (1992). At the same time, the concept of collaborative learning, the grouping and pairing of learners for the purpose of achieving a learning goal, has been widely researched and advocated - the term. As Srinivas said in his article "Collaborative Learning" collaborative

learning refers to an instruction method in which learners at various performance levels work together in small groups toward a common goal. The learners are responsible for one another's learning as well as their own. Thus, the success of one learner helps other students to be successful. Proponents of collaborative learning claim that the active exchange of ideas within small groups not only increases interest among the participants but also promotes critical thinking. There is persuasive evidence that cooperative teams achieve at higher levels of thought and retain information longer than learners who work quietly as individuals. The shared learning gives learners an opportunity to engage in discussion, take responsibility for their own learning, and thus become critical thinkers. (2009)

Therefore, Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve on their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn; thus creating an atmosphere of achievement. Students work through the assignment until all group members successfully understand and complete it.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

This is an Action Research Project because as pre-services teachers we wanted to improve our teaching practice, since we became concerned that the planned activities were not working out as we wished, we needed to find out and implement a new initiative, but we were unsure about how to approach this. Thus, we wanted to find a way of sorting out our concerns that offered practical solutions, deriving from the specific circumstances of our practicum.

4.2 Sampling

The population of this action research project was composed by three groups of high school (11-1, 11-2, 9-3) from Institución Educativa las Americas, where both girls and boys attended classes. These groups were selected randomly by each pre-service teacher. The demographic information shows that the age of the students varied between 14 and 19 years old and they belonged to low-middle class. Most of them had been going to this institution since primary school.

4.3 Instruments

The instruments used in this project were open ended observations, which provided data on all the aspects of classroom ecology; during focused observations customized activities were designed under the light of Cooperative Learning Approach in order to match the students' needs, likes and dislikes to involve students in language learning; and a study survey to access the participants' perspective directly.

4.3.1 Open-ended Observation

In the Open ended observations (peer, cooperating teacher, pre-service teacher, and supervisor): Each of the participants of this project observed their peers in 9^o and 11^o grade at Institucion Educativa Las Americas.

4.3.2 Focused Observation

At this point, the pre-service teachers observed each other focusing on the group activities students were involved in.

4.3.3 Survey

A survey was applied to corroborate the initial students' responses to the Cooperative Learning activities.

5. PROCEDURE

5. 1 First Phase

This research project was initiated to identify and become familiar with the classroom ecology in the 11-1, 11-2 and 9-3 high school groups at Americas school in order to customize activities that engage them in effective Language Learning. At Institución Educativa Las Americas students are grouped according to their behavior and academic development; thus groups whose nomenclature ends in 1; that is 11-1,10-1, 9-1 have the best behaved and high achieving students; groups whose nomenclature ends in 2; that is 11-2, 10-2, 9-2 have students who both behave and perform well in class; and groups whose nomenclature ends in 3; that is: 11-3, 10-3 and 9-3 have students in need of improvement on their behavior and academic performance.

6. FINDINGS

6.1 OPEN- ENDED OBSERVATIONS

11-1 Grade Level

The initial analysis of the data from the open ended observations showed that in terms of classroom climate of 11-1 grade, the classroom layout was in straight rows, teacher learnt students' surnames to get them to participate in class or to correct their disruptive behavior; when checking homework the pre-service teacher did not accept excuses for missed work; however, she used gentle reprimands to avoid criticizing students, and acknowledge those students who were responsible for homework thus, the pre-service teacher encouraged students to achieve the course goals. The teacher used proximity control to make stops by those students who were easily sidetracked or needy.

The importance of the classroom climate is that it defines the context in which students can work, learn, and feel safe taking risk and making mistakes, as it is evidenced in the following pre-service comment:

"The classroom is already arranged in straight rows. T posts the agenda on the board. In there students find all the topics that they will be studying today and the homework. When all ss arrive, she checks attendance, calling ss by their surname. After that, she checks homework randomly. Some of them did all the homework, but some did not. She reminds them the importance of homework, taking into account that it is also graded, to make it real; she gives grades to the ones who did it properly. " (Observation Sample from Observer teacher Marilyn Blanco) September 2nd 2009.

The teaching style of the pre-service teacher revolved around: setting goals for the tasks by writing down on the board the agenda for each class time, monitoring students' work by circulating around the classroom, checking

for understanding and comprehension by avoiding the use of yes/no questions, using quizzes, using hand signals and translation (where appropriate and possible). The teacher used technology (cds, video, and computer), flashcards, and posters to help students understand better. The teacher evaluated class performance, presentation of assignments, oral presentations and class materials.

The following comments are taken from a journal entry that a pre-service wrote during the development of the class activity:

“T begins the lesson plan about food by asking ss when they have breakfast, and she asks the ss who talk the most, so she gets their attention.”... T posts a chart with the structures about likes and dislikes. She explains the differences and the grammatical rules using different colors. She writes questions on the board, so they can use them as examples. Then she asks ss to complete the handout in pairs, asking ss when necessary” (Observation Sample from Observer teacher Marylin Blanco) September 2nd 2009.

The classroom interaction patterns of students in grade level 11-1 showed that students asked for help to the pre-service teacher, and the supervisor, (to check understanding of instructions, new vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar structures), when asking for permission to leave the classroom they asked to the cooperating teacher, when checking only for vocabulary, students asked the observer teacher. Students also asked for help to their peers when they needed to check understanding of instructions and new vocabulary.

Classroom interaction describes how students participate orally in class, who, and what they ask for, as it is noted by the observer:

“... Students are working in groups of four students, creating a poster about the food pyramid. They were given a piece of paper with information that they must take into account and the idea is that they add food that they know according to the section that they have. They do not know the words in English for some food, so they keep asking the pre-service teacher and supervisor.” (Observation Sample from Observer teacher Marilyn Blanco) September 7th 2009.

A tasks analysis of the activities proposed by the pre-service teacher at the beginning of the practicum showed that the class centered around completing handouts on specific grammatical points explained by the pre-service teacher (See graph 1)

Graph 1

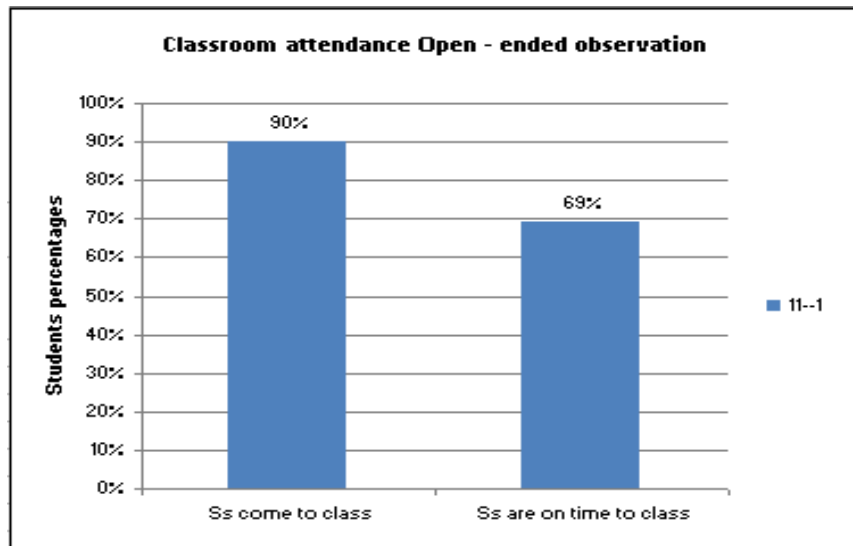
TASK COMPONENTS		OBSERVATIONS
Goal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will distinguish between regular and irregular verbs. 2. Students will learn to use the Past Simple structure 	Taking into account that they are going to take the ICFES exam it was important to emphasize the English grammar rules
Input	T writes on the board some verbs (already known by Ss, regular and irregular ones), asks for the meaning of each verb to make sure Ss know them.	The majority of the students already knew the past simple tense.
Activities	<p>T hands some cards with the Past Simple form of those verbs out. Ss go to the board; as T names them, and sticks the card next to the corresponding verb in its base form.</p> <p>T gives feedback. Asks: Do you see something different for some verb past simple forms? Elicit answers from the Ss, explains the rule for regular verbs and makes emphasis on irregular verbs.</p>	<p>This lesson plan was not effective for the students because they already knew the structure.</p> <p>The class was so boring and they did not enjoy</p>

	<p>Delivers the handout 1 and collect the money. T has Ss to classify the verbs into a chart (see Appendix 1, exercise I from the Handout 1) taking into account just two categories: regular and irregular verbs. Asks for any volunteer to read the instructions, asks another Student to explain in L1 what they are going to do and gives an example before Ss start doing the exercise.</p> <p>T reads a verb on the white board and Ss say if they classified this verb as regular or irregular. T gives feedback and repeats the same process until she has read all the verbs.</p> <p>Then T has Ss to participate in a choral drill by repeating the verbs in its infinitive form followed by its past simple form. Then erases the infinitive verb forms and has students to repeat after her, including those words erased.</p> <p>T writes on the board <u>yesterday</u> and provides three options to finish the sentence (1. I play football, 2. I'm playing football and 3. I played football). Asks Ss for the correct option and explains them the reason why they cannot use the others.</p> <p>Ss work on the handout exercise II Asks a student to look at the exercise and predict what they need to do in this one. T says the instructions and Ss complete the sentences with the past simple form of each verb.</p>	the lesson.
Teacher's role	Instruction giver and monitor	T just gives instructions and explains the grammar rules.
Learner role	Listener and instructions follower	Ss listen and follow instructions
Setting	Classroom	Ss work in the regular classroom in rows.

(This task analysis makes use of material in D. Nunan, *Designing tasks for the Communicative Classroom*, Cambridge University P, Press, 1989)

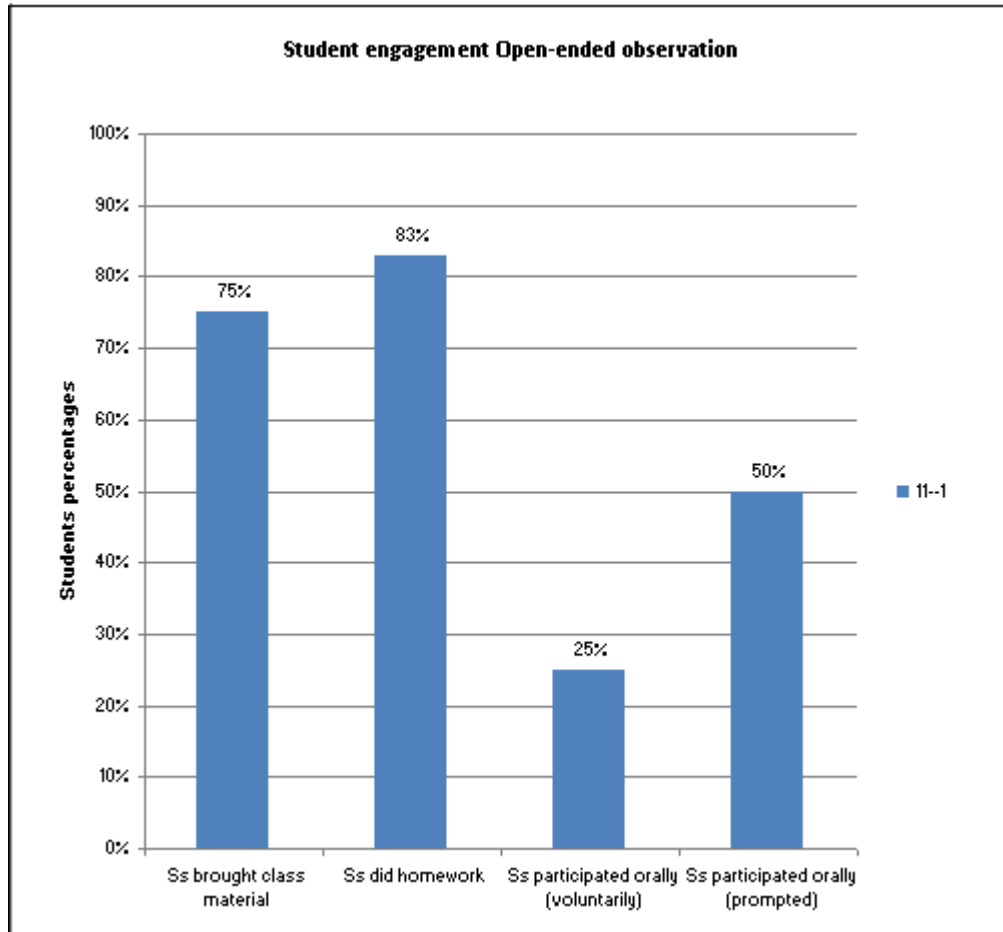
In grade level 11-1, 90% of students attended class and 62% of those students were on time. (See graph 2)

Graph 2



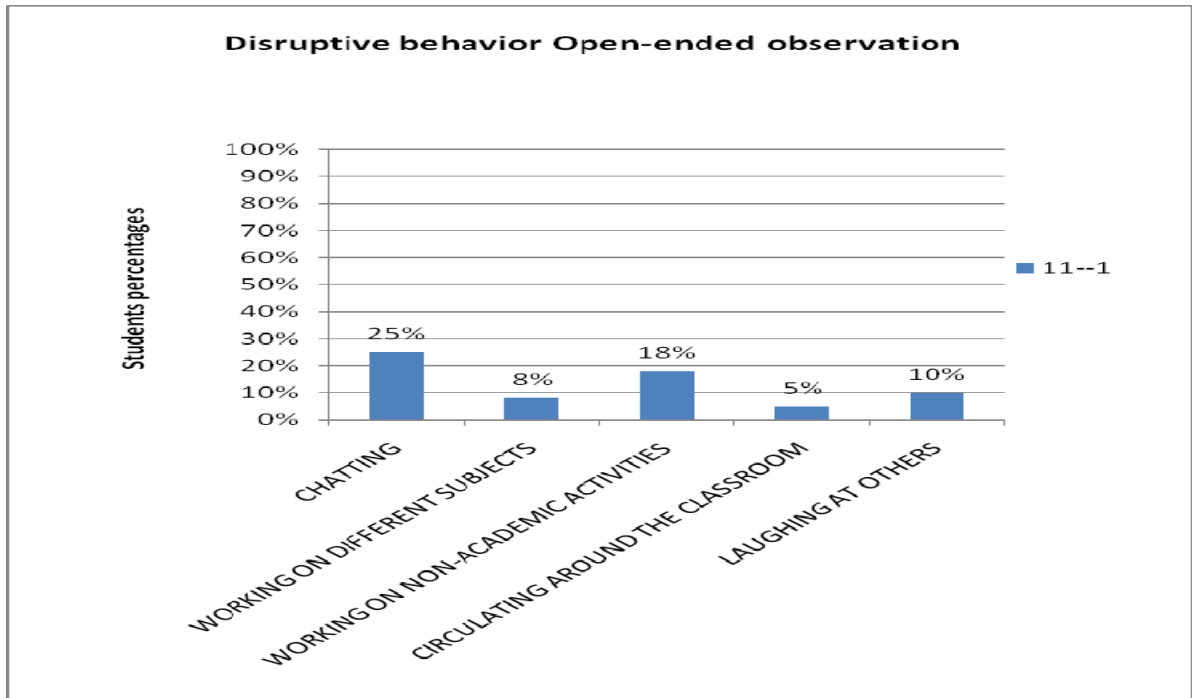
It also showed 75% of students in 11-1 grade brought class material (dictionary, folder, notebook), 83% of students did homework, 25% of students participated by answering questions voluntarily (personal opinions, answers from handouts), and 50% of students participated by answering questions prompted by the pre-service teacher using L2 and L1 in some cases. They worked on the tasks and finished them in class. (See graph 3)

Graph 3



During the development of the activities, some students showed some disruptive behavior: 25% of students chatted during the lesson development, 8% worked on different subjects, 18% worked on non-academic activities (putting make up, note writing, doodling, using cell phone, mp4, and camera), 5% moved around the classroom, and 10% of students laughed at others when they made mistakes or mispronounce words.(see graph 4)

Graph 4



Disruptive behavior was performed during the classes as the pre-service teacher wrote:

“T explains the grammar rule, explains the instruction of the activity and delivers handout, but some students on the back part are not paying attention. They are talking about a soccer game. When she gives time and asks ss to do the activity, they begin to ask peer about what they have to do”. (Observation Sample from Observer teacher Marilyn Blanco) September 21st 2009.

11-2 Grade Level

The initial analysis of the data from the open ended observations showed that in terms of classroom climate of 11-2 grade, the classroom layout was in straight rows, learn students' surnames to get them to participate in class or to correct their inappropriate behavior; when checking homework the pre-

service teacher did not accept excuses for missed work; however, she used gentle reprimands to avoid criticizing students, and acknowledge those students who were responsible for homework, thus, the pre-service teacher encouraged students to achieve the course goals. The teacher used proximity control to make stops by those students who were easily sidetracked or needy.

Classroom climate defines the context in which students can work, learn, and feel safe taking risk and making mistakes, as depicted in the following comment:

“There are some students making an oral presentation about the food pyramid, there are some students chatting and not paying attention to their peers; the teacher calls those students who are talking by their surnames and asks them to listen to their peers. There is a group of students that did not make the poster to present the part of the food pyramid they have to explain, teacher asks students to explain their part using a poster already paste on the walls made by 11-1 group; but the teacher reminds to the whole class that homework is grade”. (Sample observation from Observer teacher Elizabeth Sarmiento) September 9th 2009

The teaching style of the pre-service teacher revolved around: setting goals for the tasks by writing down on the board the agenda for each class time , monitoring students' work by circulating around the classroom, checking for understanding and comprehension by avoiding the use of yes/no questions, using quizzes, using hand signals and translation (where appropriate and possible). The teacher used technology (cds, video, and computer), flashcards, and posters to help students understand better. The teacher evaluated class performance, presentation of assignments, oral presentations and class materials.

The importance of the teaching style is that it shows the methodology and methods that the teacher used during the development of the lessons, as it is depicted in the following comment:

“T starts the class asking Ss to write down the agenda. T pastes on the board a poster with the structure “I like and I dislikes” T explains the rules for those structures and then delivers a handout for Ss to complete. T asks Ss to work individually on their handouts. T monitors the Ss’ work.” (Sample observation from Observer teacher Elizabeth Sarmiento) September 9th 2009

The classroom interaction patterns of students in grade level 11-2 showed that students asked for help to the pre-service teacher, and the supervisor, (to check understanding of instructions, new vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar structures), when asking for permission to leave the classroom they asked to the cooperating teacher, when checking only for vocabulary, students asked the observer teacher. Students also asked for help to their peers when they needed to check understanding of instructions and new vocabulary.

The following comment describes how students participate orally in class, who, and what they ask for:

“T divides the group in four groups and gives the instructions for the game. Then T gives the material and assigned time (10 min) students have problems with the vocabulary and ask other classmates. There is a student that asks for permission to go to the bath to the Cooperating teacher, but the cooperating teacher asks the student to ask for permission to the pre-service teacher. There are some students that have problems with the vocabulary and ask other classmates.” (Sample observation from Observer teacher Elizabeth Sarmiento) September 4th 2009

A tasks analysis of the activities proposed by the pre-service teacher at the beginning of the practicum showed that the class centered around completing handouts on specific grammatical points explained by the pre-service teacher) (see Graph 5)

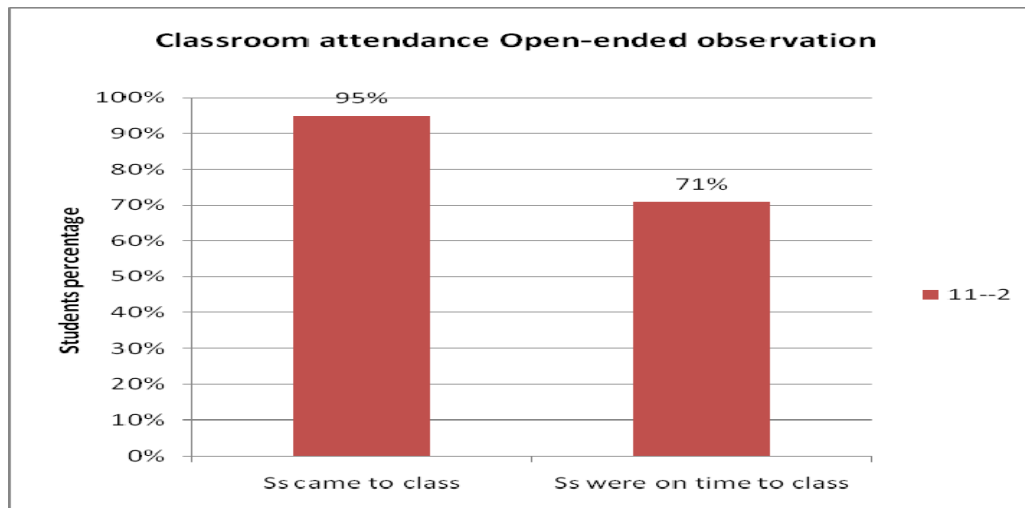
Graph 5

Task components		observations
Goal	<p>1. The students will understand the use of the food pyramid.</p> <p>2. The students will Identify foods that keep our bodies healthy.</p>	Taking into account that they are about to graduate, the idea is to do a thematic unit, where students are the center.
Input	T shows a short video about different kind of food. T talks about the importance of having good eating habits and the possible problems of not doing it. T mentions some diseases and asks Ss to add more examples.	Students felt identified with the topic mentioned, and the idea was that they felt connected and not only that they had to fulfill the class requirements.
Activities	<p>T divides the group into 7 groups (according to the ss list) and gives each group a part of text (jigsaw reading). Each group will read a different paragraph about the food pyramid groups.</p> <p>T also gives each group a mini- white poster, and markers. T asks them to read the paragraph, make a poster to present the information to the class about food in front of the class. T explains that the group who has the topic "about the pyramid" has to draw the pyramid and explain what the pyramid is and its layout.</p> <p>T asks Ss to present their information group by group, all members of the group. The group who has the topic "food guide pyramid" has to present the information first, then the others groups.</p> <p>T asks ss to write on the pyramid the name of each food group and write on each one what kind of food they eat every day. T asks them to use the dictionary.</p>	<p>It was important to explain the whole information to them, so they received their pieces of paper. They began to work in their groups, sharing ideas and trying to analyze the whole purpose.</p> <p>They did a great effort with the posters, using colors and drawings. When they did so, it was clearer for them.</p> <p>They shared ideas with their classmates, so all of them got information about all the aspects of the food pyramid.</p>
Teacher role	Instructions giver	T stays in front of the ss and gives instructions, checking for understanding when necessary.
Learner role	Listener Follower of instructions	Students listen and pay attention to the instructions as it is needed.
Setting	Classroom	Due to the assignment, ss worked in the regular classroom, so they did their posters more comfortable.

(This task analysis makes use of material in D. Nunan, *Designing tasks for the Communicative Classroom*, Cambridge University P, Press, 1989)

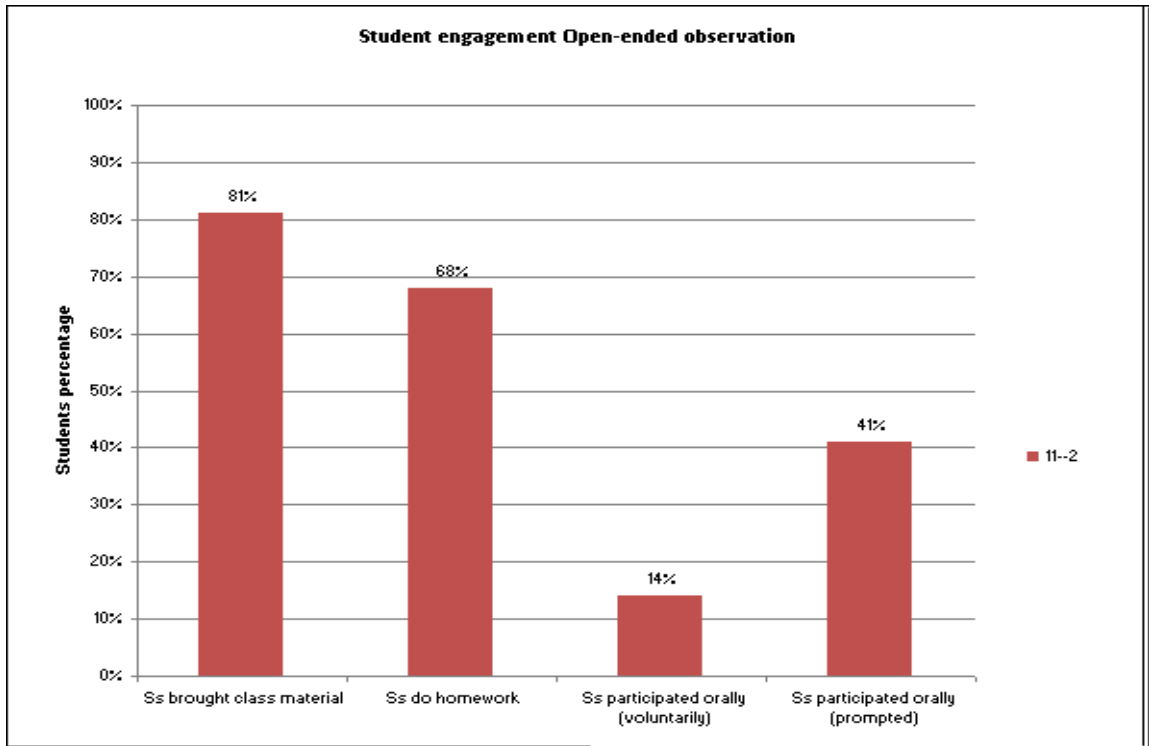
11-2 the 95% of the students attended classes and the 71% of students was on time. (See graph 6)

Graph 6



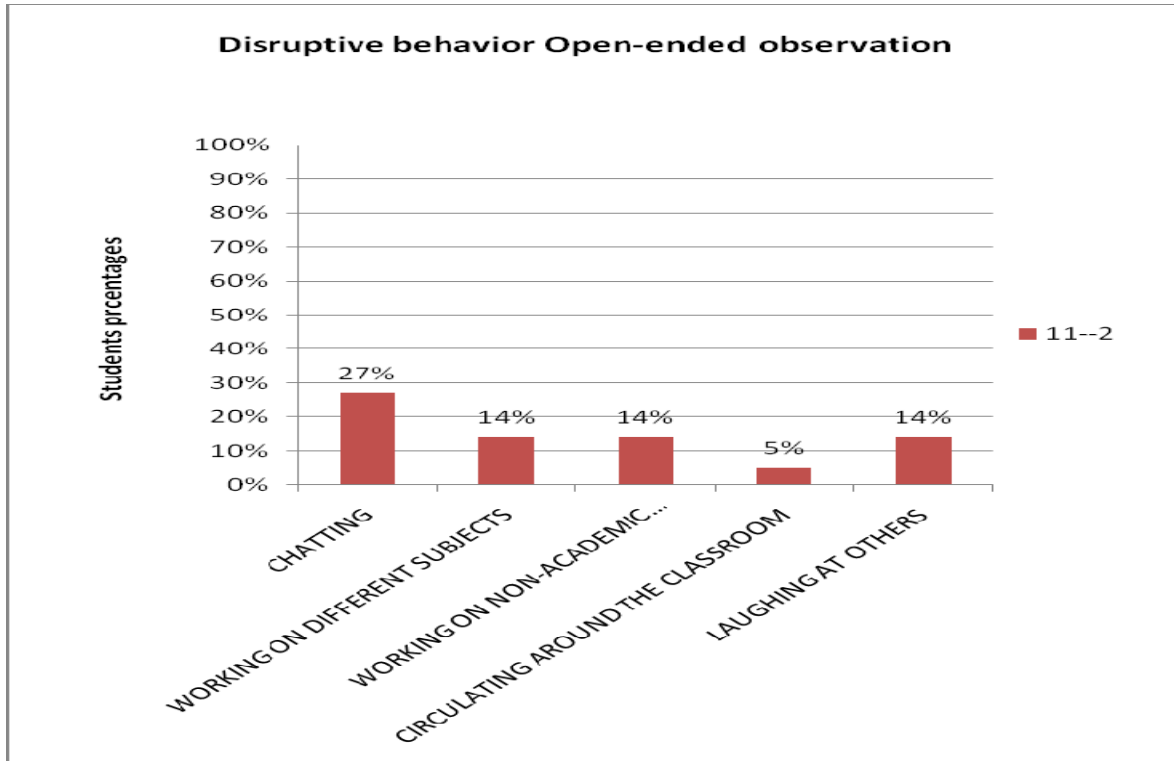
The data showed that 81% of students in 11-2 grade brought class material (dictionary, folder, notebook), the 68% of students did homework, the 14% of students participated by answering questions voluntarily (personal opinions, answers from handouts), and the 41% of students participated by answering questions prompted by the pre-service teacher using L2 and L1 in some cases. They worked on the tasks and finished them in class. (See graph 7)

Graph 7



During the development of the activities some students showed some disruptive behavior: 27% of students chatted during the lesson development, 14% worked on different subjects, 14% worked on non-academic activities (putting make up, note writing, doodling, using cell phone, mp4, and camera), 5% moved around the classroom, and 14% laughed at others when they made mistakes or mispronounce words. (See graph 8)

Graph 8



Disruptive behavior performed in a class describes the students' lack of engagement during the lesson, as it is stated in the following example:

"Students seem lost; they do not understand very good the instructions, there is a student circulating around the classroom asking their peers about the exercise. T explains the next exercise and asks them to work. There are 2 students talking about personal things". (Sample observation from Observer teacher Elizabeth Sarmiento) September 9th 2009

9-3 Grade Level

The initial analysis of the data from the open ended observations showed that in terms of classroom climate of grade 9-3, the classroom layout was in

straight rows; learn students' names to get them to participate in class. To correct their inappropriate behavior the pre-service teacher used disciplinary notices; when checking homework the pre-service teacher did not accept excuses for missed work; however, she used gentle reprimands to avoid criticizing students, and acknowledge those students who were responsible for homework. Thus, the pre-service teacher encouraged students to achieve the course goals. The teacher employed proximity control by placing students near her to make them work. That proximity also allowed the teacher to monitor individual progress. When circulating around the classroom, the teacher was sure to make stops by those students who were easily sidetracked or needy. For instance, the observer teacher wrote:

"T calls the attention of a student calling him by his name. T smiles and thanks (never shouts)". (Sample observation from the observer teacher Yeimy Roberto) August 24th 2009

"T assigns an activity and gives two minutes during which she keeps on moving around the classroom" (Sample observation from the observer teacher Yeimi Roberto). September 1st 2009

"T delivered a previous activity and congratulated publicly the group. She promised extra points." (Sample observation from the observer teacher Yeimi Roberto) September 7th 2009

"T attitude and voice are accurate for this classroom" (Sample observation from the observer teacher Yeimi Roberto) September 7th 2009

"T greets the class and starts moving some students from their chairs to specific places in the classroom." (Sample observation from the observer teacher Yeimi Roberto) September 29th 2009

The teaching style of the pre-service teacher revolved around: setting goals for the tasks by writing down them on the board, monitoring students'

work by circulating around the classroom, checking for understanding and comprehension by avoiding the use of yes/no questions, using quizzes, using hand signals and translation (where appropriate and possible). The teacher used cd player, cds, flashcards, and posters to help students understand better. The teacher evaluated class performance, presentation of assignments, oral presentations and class materials.

This was described by the observer teacher as follows:

“T presents the indicator with an activity with balloons. Ss get really engaged in it. T delivers a handout for an individual work. T stops the activity for explaining a new student the class rules. T walks around the classroom while students are paying attention to the listening. It is played 4 times. T checks the activity with students answering aloud and writing the answers on the board. T gives a chocolate to a student who gave a correct answer. T works on pronunciation by making them repeat the sentences on the board. T is explaining the points to evaluate for the next two classes. T brought a nice example of a poster for the presentations students must do on Friday.”
(Sample observation from the observer teacher Yeimi Roberto) September 21st 2009

The classroom interaction patterns of students in grade level 9-3 showed that students asked for help to the pre-service teacher (to check understanding of instructions, new vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar structures), they asked the cooperating teacher for permission to leave the classroom and also for help as she assisted them during class activities and quizzes; when checking only for vocabulary, students asked the observer teacher. Students also asked for help to their peers when they needed to check understanding of instructions and new vocabulary. The following description is taken from a journal entry that two observer teachers wrote:

“The cooperating teacher arrives 5 minutes late, sits down at the front of the classroom. She closes her ears and tries not to help some students who are asking her about vocabulary.” (Sample observation from the observer teacher Yeimi Roberto) *September 1st 2009.*

A tasks analysis of the activities proposed by the pre-service teacher at the beginning of the practicum showed that the class centered around specific grammatical points explained by the pre-service teacher focused on completing handouts. (See graph 9)

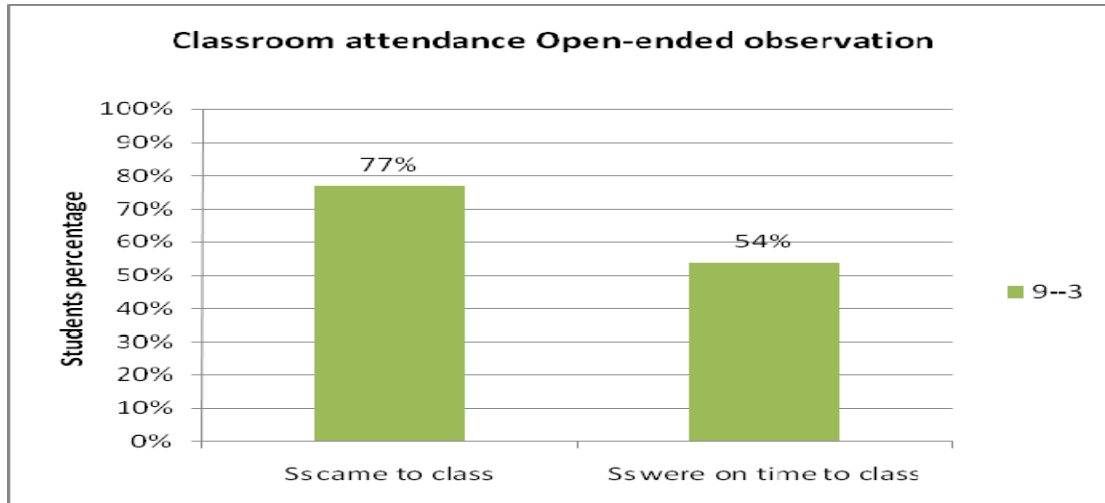
Graph 9

	<u>Task components</u>	<u>Observations</u>
<u>Goal</u>	Students will be able to name and relate occupations to pictures.	I think this is a goal that is not in the general lesson plan of the cooperating teacher but I think they are not familiar with this vocabulary which will be necessary to develop the next lessons.
<u>Input</u>	T introduces the word "occupations" as a synonym of "jobs" by writing them on the board. T asks students to say any names for occupations that they know in English.	Some students were able to mention other occupations they knew; the others were definitely not familiar with this vocabulary.
<u>Activities</u>	T places a poster on the board with a list of occupations. T reads out the occupations as Ss repeat. T gives a handout with pictures of occupations. Ss complete the first exercise of the handout with the words from the poster. T tells Ss they have 5 minutes to complete the handout. T tells Ss to check their answers while they listen to a recording.	I think the poster helped a lot so students could see the words and learnt how to write them. They also repeated each word and I encouraged them to pronounce accurately. I wanted to check they really understood and learnt the new vocabulary so I gave them a handout which had nice pictures of different jobs; they only had to use the words from the list to complete it. So I think it was an easy activity to start even the listening was easy to follow and they were already familiar with the sounds as I had repeated them previously. During the activity some students were talkative but I realized that during the listening exercise they all got quiet.
<u>Teacher role</u>	<u>Instruction giver</u>	
<u>Learner role</u>	<u>Listener / follower of instructions</u>	
<u>Setting</u>	<u>Classroom</u>	

(This task analysis makes use of material in D. Nunan, *Designing tasks for the Communicative Classroom*, Cambridge University P, Press, 1989)

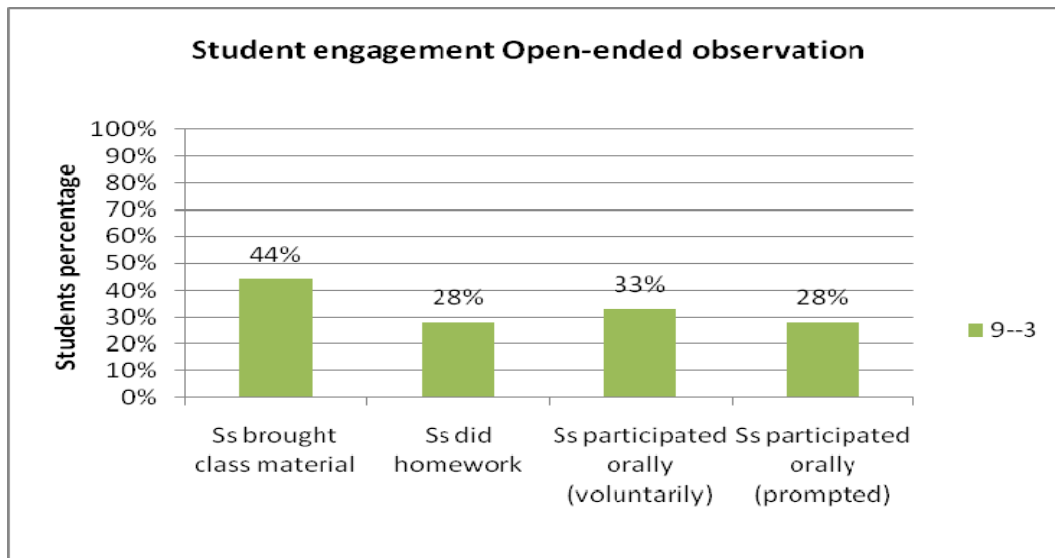
In terms of engagement, 77% of the students attended classes and 54% was on time. (See graph 10)

Graph 10



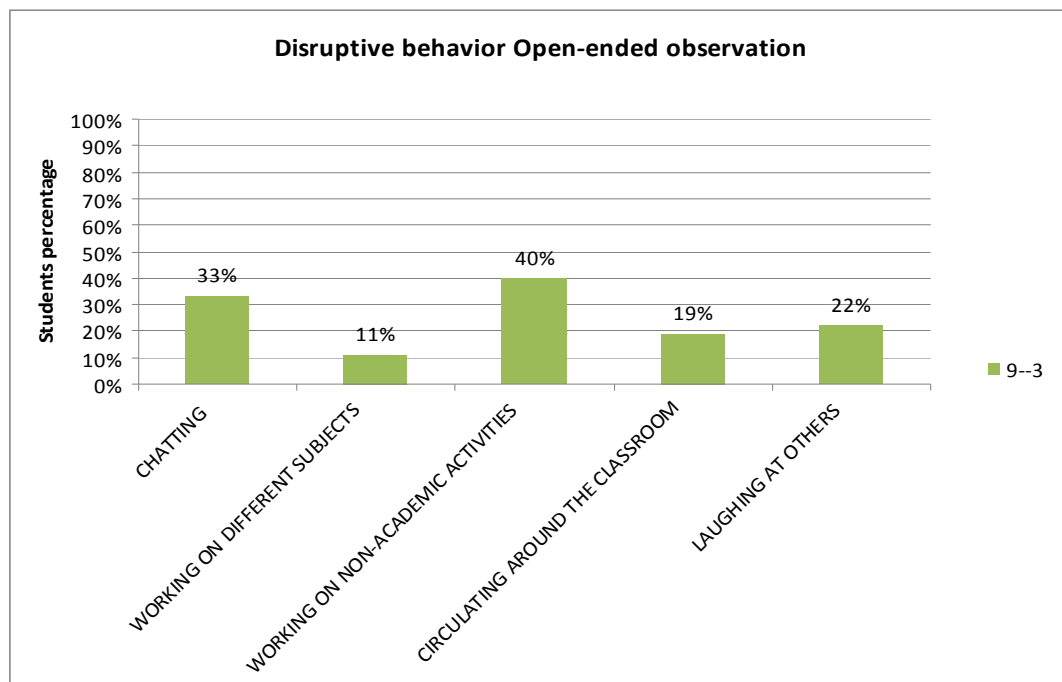
The data showed that 44% of students in 9-3 grade brought class material (dictionary, folder, notebook), 28% did homework, 33% participated by answering questions voluntarily (personal opinions, answers from handouts), and 28% participated by answering questions prompted by the pre-service teacher using L2 and L1 in some cases. They worked on the tasks and finished them in class. (See graph 11)

Graph 11



During the development of the activities students followed the class rules and always were willing to work in class. However, some students showed some disruptive behavior: 33% of students chatted during the lesson development, 11% worked on different subjects, 40% worked on non-academic activities (putting make up, note writing, doodling, using cell phone, mp4, and camera), 19% moved around the classroom, and 22% laughed at others when they made mistakes or mispronounce words or when they wanted to make fun of peers. (See graph 12)

Graph 12



The following illustrates the disruptive behavior of students in 9-3 grade level described by the observer teacher:

“There is a very noisy girl who spends her time putting make up. At one moment she was crying. There is a group of 8 students at the back of the classroom... they are very distracted.” (Observation sample from observer teacher Yeimi Roberto.) September 7th 2009

RESULTS OPEN – ENDED OBSERVATIONS

The initial analysis of the data from the open-ended observation showed that in terms of classroom climate in the three groups 11-1, 11-2, 9-3, the data showed that the layout of the classroom was in straight rows, the teacher learnt students' surnames or names to get them to participate in class. They used gentle reprimands to avoid criticizing students, and acknowledge those students who were responsible with homework. However, in 9-3 grade level the pre-service teacher used proximity control and disciplinary notices as they were necessary to correct the disruptive behavior of some students in class.

The teaching style of the pre-service teachers in 11-1, 11-2, and 9-3 grade levels evidenced that they used the same strategies during the lessons such as setting goals for the tasks, monitoring students' work, checking for understanding and comprehension and using visual aids to help students understand better. The pre-service teachers evaluated the same aspects class performance, presentation of assignments, oral presentations and class materials.

The classroom interaction patterns of students in 11-1, 11-2 and 9-3 grade levels had some similarities since students asked for help during class activities not only to the pre-service teachers but also to the cooperating, supervisor, observer teachers and peers.

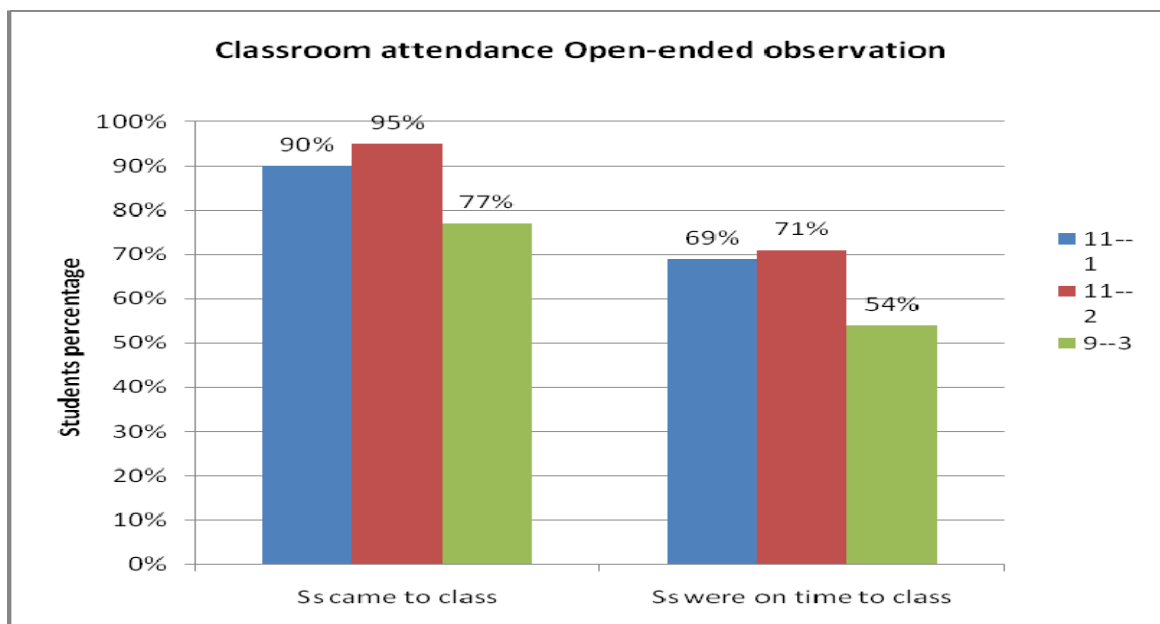
The data from the task analysis showed that the pre-service teachers in 11-1, 11-2, and 9-3 had the same procedure to develop the lessons, that is, the teacher explained rules and then students received handouts to work in class. The teachers' roles were instruction giver and monitor and students were listeners and instruction followers.

In terms of students' engagement, the data showed that in 11-1 and 11-2 grade level the students attendance was similar as the percentage of students who attended classes was 90% and 95% respectively. While in 9-3

grade level it was 77%. Students punctuality to class was different in each group; in 11-1 69% were on time, in 11-2 71% and in 9-3 only 54%.

The data evidenced that both students attendance and students punctuality are the highest percentage in 11-2 grade level, it was followed by 11-1 grade level and the lowest percentage was evidenced in 9-3 grade level. (See graph 13)

Graph 13

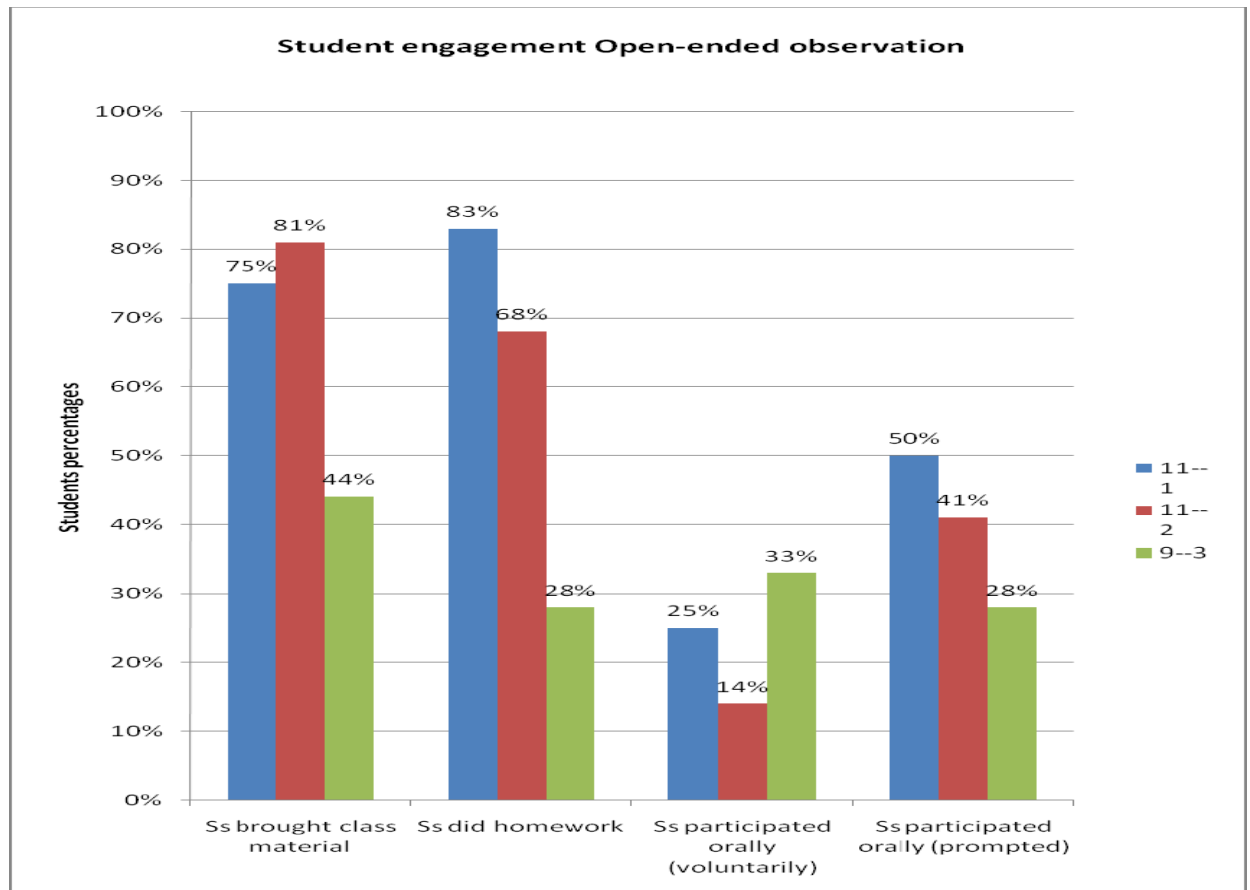


Other aspects of students' engagement were clearly different as it is presented in the graph below where 75% of students in 11-1 brought class material, in 11-2 a 81% while 9-3 a 44%. These percentages varied in the category of students who did homework, since the highest percentage was in 11-1 grade with 83% followed by 11- 2 with 68% and finally 9-3 with 28%.

In terms of students participation, in 9-3 grade level had 33% of students who participated voluntarily which is the highest percentage, followed by 11-1

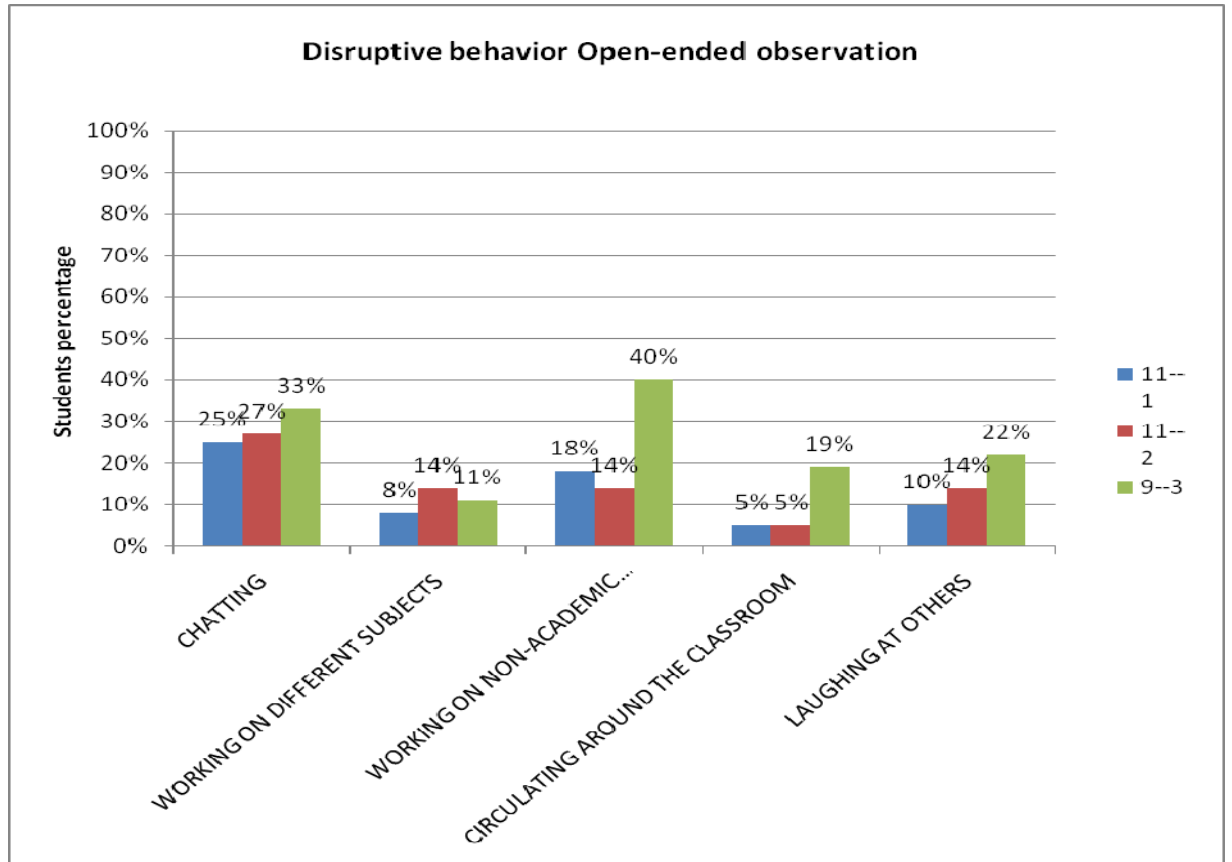
with a 25% and 11-2 with a 14%. In prompted participation, 11-1 had 50% of students, 11-2 41% and 9-3 28% . (See graph 14)

Graph 14



The data evidenced that in 11-1, 11-2 and 9-3 students performed disruptive behavior during the development of the activities however, the highest percentages of misbehavior was in 9-3 grade level in which 33% of students chatted, 40% worked on non-academic activities, 19% circulated around the classroom and 22% laughed at others. (See graph 15)

Graph 15



Based on the findings and the results from the open-ended observations, the emergent questions for the focused observation are:

- After analyzing the Classroom Ecology of 11-1, 11-2, and 9-3 grade levels at Institución Educativa Las Americas, what activities can we plan and implement to engage students in language learning?
- How do students initially respond to the new activities?

SECOND PHASE

FINDINGS FOCUSED OBSERVATIONS

After analyzing the data from the open-ended observations, the pre-service teachers reflected on the Classroom Ecology of 11-1, 11-2 and 9-3 grades at Institución Educativa Las Americas. Those reflections led to modify the class activities and assign tasks based on the Cooperative Learning Approach to match the classroom ecology of the grades mentioned previously. This approach was implemented as it provided a space for students to work in groups in a way that each student contributes to the group work in activities in which they have a goal to achieve. For the development of the tasks, it was necessary to apply some changes in the classroom climate and teaching style. The results in each group were:

11-1 Grade Level

The initial analysis of the data from the focused observations showed that in terms of classroom climate of 11-1 grade level, the layout of the classroom was arranged in u-shape by the pre-service teacher, she used students roles and surnames to get them to participate in class or to correct their disruptive behavior; when checking homework the pre-service teacher did not accept excuses for missed work; however, she used gentle reprimands to avoid criticizing students, and acknowledge those students who were responsible for homework, thus the pre-service teacher encouraged students to achieve the course goals.

The importance of the classroom climate is that it defines the context in which students can work, learn, and feel safe taking risk and making mistakes, as it is evidenced in the following comment:

“...After explaining the instructions, T explains ss that they will be working in groups of 4 students and that they will have four roles: speaker, writer, checker and time and material manager. She posts the functions of each role on the board and clarifies the meaning of each one, avoiding the use of L1 as much as possible. Then she delivers the roles to each student. She sticks numbers from 1 to 7 on the wall, so when they make the groups, they create and U shape. She numbers each group and asks them to stay next to their number.” (Observation sample from observer teacher Marylin Blanco) September 7th 2009.

The teaching style of the pre-service teacher revolved around: setting goals for the tasks by writing down them on the board, numbering off groups, assigning roles and functions, giving instructions, monitoring students' work by circulating around the classroom, checking for understanding and comprehension by checking students work, using hand signals, translation (where appropriate and possible) and realia. The teacher used videos, flashcards, and posters to give examples and help students understand better. The teacher evaluated class performance of students according to their roles, presentation of group assignments, oral presentations and class materials.

The following comments about teaching style are taken from a journal entry that the observer wrote during the development of the tasks:

“... T writes the agenda on the board and recycles information from the previous class. Then she asked ss to write down a headline and answer 5 age questions about a text. She asked ss to work in the same groups they have been working, then, she delivers ss the roles; after that, she delivered a story, so they answer the questions. She assigns time and then posts some

pictures related to the vocabulary from the story. She asks which picture belongs to which word, and they answer voluntarily...”(Observation sample from observer teacher Marylin Blanco) October 19th 2009.

The classroom interaction patterns of students in 11-1 grade level showed that students asked for help to the pre-service teacher (to check understanding of instructions, new vocabulary, and pronunciation), they also asked her for permission to leave the classroom. When checking only for vocabulary, students asked the supervisor and the observer teacher. Students also asked for help to their peers to develop the group work. The importance of the classroom interaction is that it describes how students participate orally in class, who, and what they ask for, as it is noted by the observer:

“... students are working in the groups they have been working during the previous classes. T writes on the board 9 newspaper sections and the groups they belong to. After that, she asks each group to brainstorm ideas about the info they want to include in their articles. Students begin to look on the dictionary, when they write long sentences, they ask for help to the pre-service teacher, supervisor and the observer teacher. They asked their peers more for vocabulary or a short translation.” (Observation sample from observer teacher Marylin Blanco) November 3rd 2009.

For the development of the cooperative learning tasks, the pre-service teacher arranged the classroom in u-shape to have better control of the group, set goals by writing the agenda on the board, numbered off group members, limited group size, explained the role functions, assigned roles, divided tasks equally among members, engaged students in initial practice, monitored students' work and encouraged students to evaluate themselves.

A task analysis of the task proposed by the pre-service teacher showed that the class centered around the Cooperative Learning Approach where the students worked in groups, had some roles and functions to accomplish a group goal. (See graph 16)

Graph 16

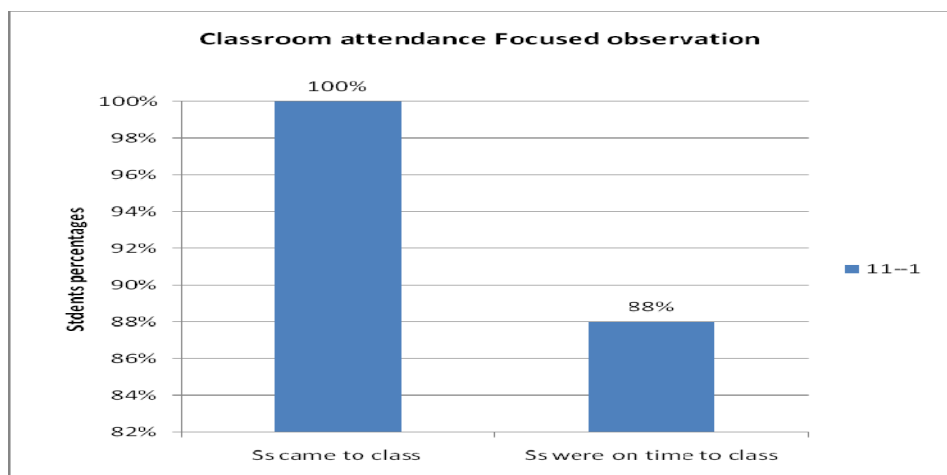
TASK COMPONENTS		OBSERVATIONS
Goal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. students will identify the parts of a newspaper 2. students will create a section of a newspaper 	This activity was designed to create a newspaper to present it in the cultural week.
Input	T asks students the importance of newspaper and asks them to give examples from some. Also to mention the sections of the newspaper and write them on the board.	Ss participated, some did it in Spanish and other s named the newspapers in English.
Activities	<p>T shows to the students a sample front page from a selected newspaper. T asks students what they notice about the format if it is different from other texts they read (e.g., black and white ink, graphics, headline, column format). And T writes the answers on the board.</p> <p>T divides the class into groups of three to four students, numbered students from 1 to 4 and asks the 1s, 2s, 3s, and 4s to form groups of 4 people. T explains to the students that they will explore a newspaper, paying attention to the layout and format. T asks students to study the front page first and discuss what different parts they notice from one of the newspapers they bring to class.</p> <p>T asks each group to report to the whole class what each group noticed was contained on the front page. T ticks the ones there are on the board and adds more to the list. (e.g., title, headlines, pictures or graphics, captions, date, subtitles, table of contents/index, etc.). Students should notice similarities between different newspapers.</p> <p>T discusses with the class how newspapers use a standard</p>	<p>Ss worked actively in the activity.</p> <p>Ss worked in groups in a cooperative way; they really enjoyed working in groups.</p>

	format. In their groups, have students continue to explore copies of newspapers. What kinds of things do they notice? Students should begin to identify sections and features that are specific to newspapers. Have the groups again report to the whole class what types of items they noticed in their paper. Continue keeping the list of items on the board. (Additional items may include: editorials, cartoons, horoscope, local news, weddings, classifieds, advertising, etc.)	Ss did the activity some in Spanish and others tried to translate them into English.
Teacher role	Instruction giver, monitor , and facilitator	T just gave instructions and monitored the activity.
Learner role	Speaker, time and material manager, checker, and recorder.	Ss listened and followed instructions
Setting	Classroom	Ss worked in the regular classroom in u- shape.

(This task analysis makes use of material in D. Nunan, *Designing tasks for the Communicative Classroom*, Cambridge University P, Press, 1989)

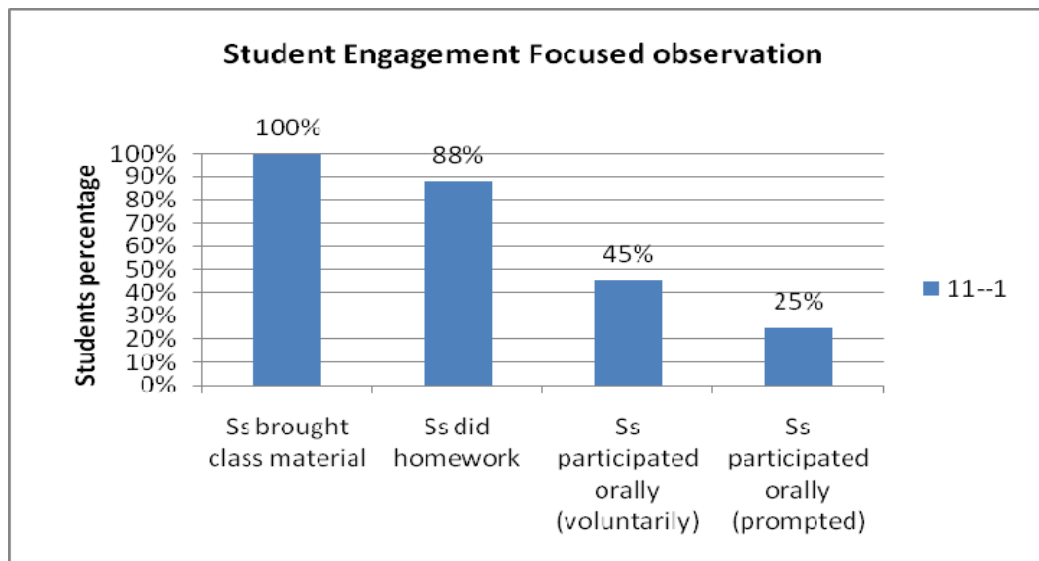
In terms of engagement, in 11-1 grade level 100% of students attended class and 88% of students were on time. (See graph 17

Graph 17



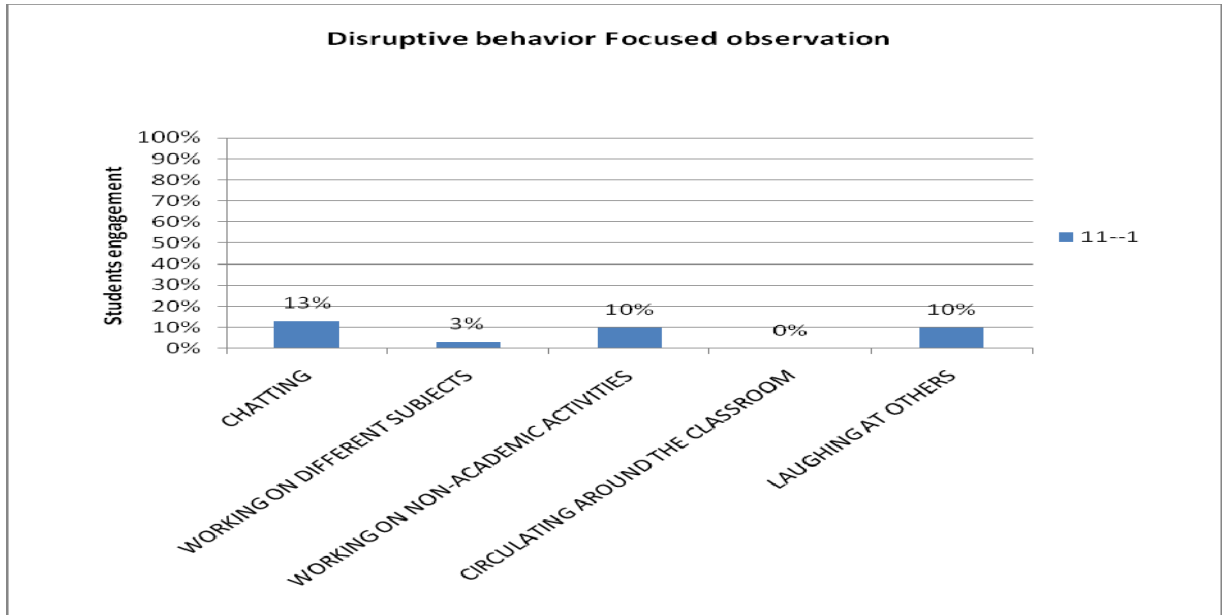
The data showed that 100% of students in 11-1 grade brought class material (dictionary, folder, notebook), 88% did homework, 45% participated by answering questions voluntarily (personal opinions, and comments about class work) and 25% participated by answering questions prompted by the pre-service teacher using L2 and L1 in some cases. They worked on the tasks and finished them in class. (See graph 18)

Graph 18



During the development of the tasks students followed the class rules and were always willing to work in class. However, some students showed some disruptive behavior: 13% of students chatted during the lesson development, 3% worked on different subjects, 10% worked on non-academic activities (note writing, doodling, using cell phone, mp4, and camera), none student circulated around the classroom and 10% laughed at others. (See graph 19)

Graph 19



Disruptive behavior describes the students' lack of engagement during the lesson, as it is stated in the following example:

"...Teacher asks each speaker and writer of each group to go to the board to write and talk about their news. When they begin to explain, some of their peers were talking and not paying attention. Teacher reminds checkers the functions they have inside the group and call some ss to get their attention. "
(Observation sample from observer teacher Marylin Blanco) October 19th 2009

11-2 Grade Level

The initial analysis of the data from the focused observations showed that in terms of classroom climate of 11-2 grade level, the layout of the classroom was arranged in u-shape by the pre-service teacher, she used students roles and surnames to get them to participate in class or to correct their disruptive

behavior; when checking homework the pre-service teacher did not accept excuses for missed work; however, she used gentle reprimands to avoid criticizing students, and acknowledge those students who were responsible for homework. The pre-service teacher also encouraged students to achieve the course goals.

Classroom climate defines the context in which students can work, learn, and feel safe taking risk and making mistakes, as depicted in the following comment:

“T gives instructions and asks students to join in the same groups they were working the last class. T asks each group to sit forming a U-shape according to the numbers pasted on the wall around the classroom. T calls the “time and material manager” students and delivers them the roles they are going to work on today.” (Sample observation from observer teacher-Elizabeth Sarmiento) October 16th 2009.

The teaching style of the pre-service teacher revolved around: setting goals for the tasks by writing them down on the board, numbering off groups, assigning roles and functions, giving instructions, monitoring students' work by circulating around the classroom, checking for understanding and comprehension by checking students work, using hand signals, translation (where appropriate and possible) and realia. The teacher used videos, flashcards, and posters to give examples and help students understand better. The teacher evaluated class performance of students according to their roles, presentation of group assignments, oral presentations and class materials.

Teaching style is represented by the methodology and methods that the teacher uses during the development of the lessons, as it is depicted in the following comment:

“T greets the class, asks Ss to join the groups they were working last class. T asks the Material managers to deliver the roles to their groups. Then T asks Ss to take out the newspapers Ss have to bring to class. T asks Ss to analyze the front page and complete a chart with the information,(font, size, sections....)Ss work in their groups and the checkers check their peers’ materials and work.” (Sample observation from observer teacher-Elizabeth Sarmiento) October 21st 2009.

The classroom interaction patterns of students in 11-2 grade level showed that students asked for help to the pre-service teacher (to check understanding of instructions, new vocabulary, and pronunciation), they also asked her for permission to leave the classroom. When checking only for vocabulary, students asked the observer teacher. Students also asked for help to their peers to develop the group work.

Classroom interaction describes how students participate orally in class, who, and what they ask for, as described in the following comment:

“T asks the material manager Ss distribute a handout to fill with the newspaper sections. T gives instructions to the whole class and then assigned time. There are some Ss that asked from the teacher clarifications about the activity, T asks Ss to ask from the checker the clarifications about the activity.” (Sample observation from observer teacher-Elizabeth Sarmiento) October 28th 2009.

For the development of the cooperative learning tasks, the pre-service teacher arranged the classroom in u-shape to have better control of the group, set goals by writing the agenda on the board, numbered off group members, limited group size, explained the role functions, assigned roles,

divided tasks equally among members, engaged students in initial practice, monitored students' work and encouraged students to evaluate themselves.

A task analysis of the task proposed by the pre-service teacher showed that the class centered around the Cooperative Learning Approach where the students worked in groups, had some roles and functions to accomplish a group goal. (See graph 20)

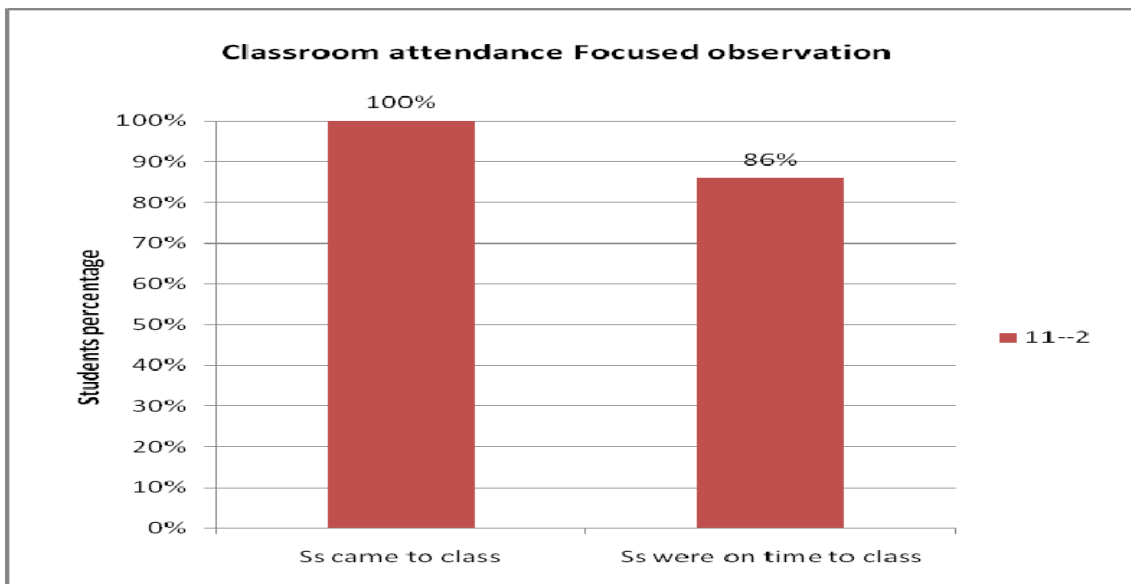
Graph 20

Task components		observations
Goal	students will identify the parts of a newspaper students will create a section of a newspaper	This is a final project for the students, so they will be focused more on the content than the grammatical structures.
Input	T asks and writes on the board "Why do people read newspapers". T elicits answers from Ss and writes on the board "Reason" and "section". T delivers the handouts to the "time and material managers" of each group and they deliver them to their peers. T writes two examples (using just keywords) on the board, then T asks Ss complete the handout in their groups, using just keywords. When Ss finish completing their chart, T asks each group socialize their answers. T asks a speaker and a recorder of each group to write one example on the board (for reason and section). T asks Ss to complete their charts with the other groups' answers using a different color.	Taking into account that students need a reason to read newspaper, the idea is that they analyze the section and possible need in their groups. When they socialize, they also listen to answers from their peers and collect new information that is useful for their projects.
Activities	When Ss complete their charts, T asks Ss " Why do people read the front page ". T elicits answers of Ss and writes some keywords on the board. After that, T shows Ss the front page of a newspaper and asks Ss the characteristics they see a first sight. Then tells Ss that they have to identify the characteristics of a front page of the newspaper they brought to class. T writes " Characteristics of the front page " and 6 categories on the board: Heading, layout, font, graphics, column format and miscellaneous. T writes two examples (using keywords). T delivers handout 2 to the time and material manager and asks Ss to complete each category. When Ss finish completing their chart, T asks each group to socialize their answers. T asks a speaker and a recorder of each group to write and present one example on the board. T asks Ss to complete their charts with the other groups' answers using a different color. When Ss finish completing their charts, T asks Ss "does the front page help us to know the content of a newspaper? Then T asks about the headlines of the news they see in the front page and asks "Where does it belong?" and completes the list of sections on the board. Then T asks Ss if all sections present the same type of news. T elicits answers from Ss.	They had to analyze the first page of the newspaper. Taking into account that they already had the roles, they performed the activity on time and properly, plus they collected information for their newspaper. Once again, they had the opportunity to socialize their answers. Speakers did their job properly, and their peers paid attention. At this point, they had a better idea about the sections of the newspapers, so they could classify headlines easily.
Teacher role	Monitor	The pre-service teacher was just a monitor, students tried as much as possible to work and solve doubts with the member of their group.
Learner role	Speaker Time and material manager Recorder Checker	They had clear the functions that they had to follow, and all of them did it great.
Setting	Classroom	The groups were in the classroom, making a horse-shoe shape. The space was good enough for them.

(This task analysis makes use of material in D. Nunan, *Designing tasks for the Communicative Classroom*, Cambridge University P, Press, 1989)

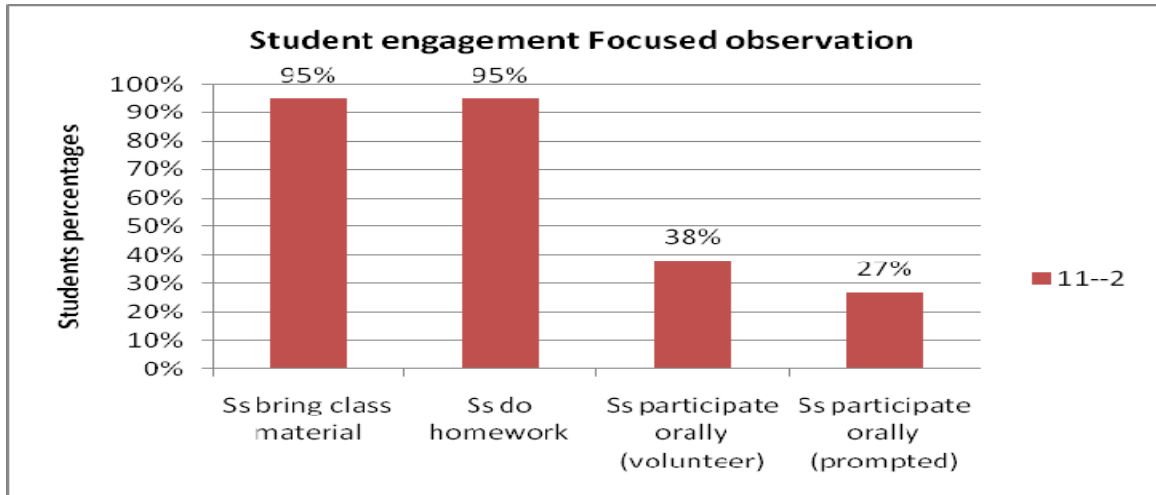
In terms of engagement, in 11-2 grade level 100% of students assisted to class and 86% were on time. (See graph 21)

Graph 21



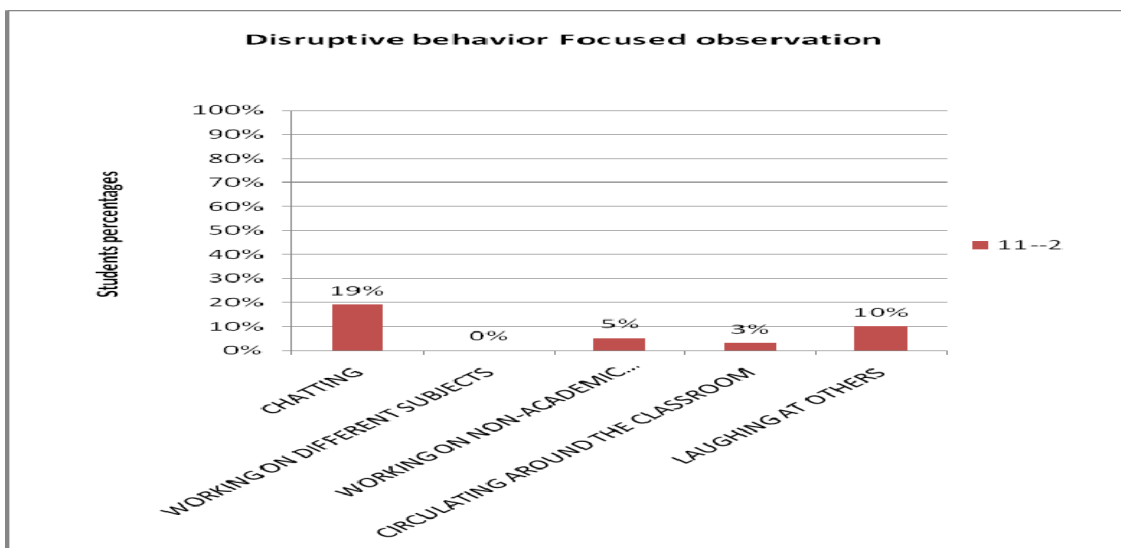
The data showed that 95% of students in 11-2 grade brought class material (dictionary, folder, notebook), 95% did homework, 38% participated by answering questions voluntarily (personal opinions, and comments about class work) and 27% participated by answering questions prompted by the pre-service teacher using L2 and L1 in some cases. They worked on the tasks and finished them in class. (See graph 22)

Graph 22



During the development of the tasks, students followed the class rules and were always willing to work in class. However, some students showed some disruptive behavior: 19% of students chatted during the lesson development, none student worked on different subjects, 5% worked on non-academic activities (note writing, doodling, using cell phone, mp4, and camera), 3% moved around the classroom, and 10% laughed at others. (See graph 23)

Graph 23



Disruptive behavior performed in a class describes the students' lack of engagement during the lesson, as it is stated in the following example:

"Then T asks the speakers to share the information with the class. Some students laugh because their news are very funny" the disruptive behavior in the students is less performed because all of them are engage in the creation of the newspaper" (Sample observation from observer teacher-Elizabeth Sarmiento) October 28th 2009.

9-3 Grade Level

The initial analysis of the data from the open ended observations showed that in terms of classroom climate of 9-3 grade, the pre service teacher kept the classroom layout in straight rows keeping close those students who had the same role, used students' roles to get them to participate in class. Teacher acknowledged students for their class work. She also encouraged students to achieve the course goals, and monitored group progress. One of the observer teachers wrote:

"T establishes the seats. T asks the leader of each group to take the control of their group. After each group says the sentence T asks students to applause. T uses invitational words to the students. T collects the material and asks students to order the rows". (Sample observation from observer teacher-Elizabeth Sarmiento) October 13th 2009.

The teaching style of the pre-service teacher revolved around: monitoring students' work, checking for understanding, comprehension, and pronunciation by asking students to spell words, using hand signals. The teacher used cd player, cds, and a list of vocabulary to help students understand better. The teacher made students to evaluate peers class performance, and oral presentations. As one observer teacher noted:

“ T writes on the board some roles . T tells Ss they will continue with the exercise they did last class. T tells Ss that they have to choose 10 Ss to participate in the Spelling Bee contest in the cultural week. T asks Ss to raise hands while T names the roles. T asks a S to pick up a paper from a plastic bag. And then the S has to spell the word after the T reads it. Ss listen attentively and enjoy the activity” (Sample observation from observer teacher-Elizabeth Sarmiento) October 27th 2009.

The classroom interaction patterns of students in 9-3 grade level showed that students asked for help to the pre-service teacher (to check understanding of new vocabulary, and pronunciation), they also asked her for permission to leave the classroom. When checking only for vocabulary. Students also asked for help to their peers to develop the group work. As one observer teacher noted:

“There is a student who does not know how to pronounce a word, he goes and asks the pre-service teacher, T says it aloud for the whole group so they can hear the word.” (Sample observation from observer teacher-Elizabeth Sarmiento) October 27th 2009.

For the development of the cooperative learning tasks, the pre-service teacher arranged the classroom in straight rows assigning a specific place to students who had the same role, numbered off group members, limited group size, explained the role functions, assigned roles, divided tasks equally among members, engaged students in initial practice, monitored students' work and encouraged students to evaluate themselves.

A task analysis of the task proposed by the pre-service teacher showed that the class centered around the Cooperative Learning Approach where the

students worked in groups, had some roles and functions to accomplish a group goal. (See graph 24)

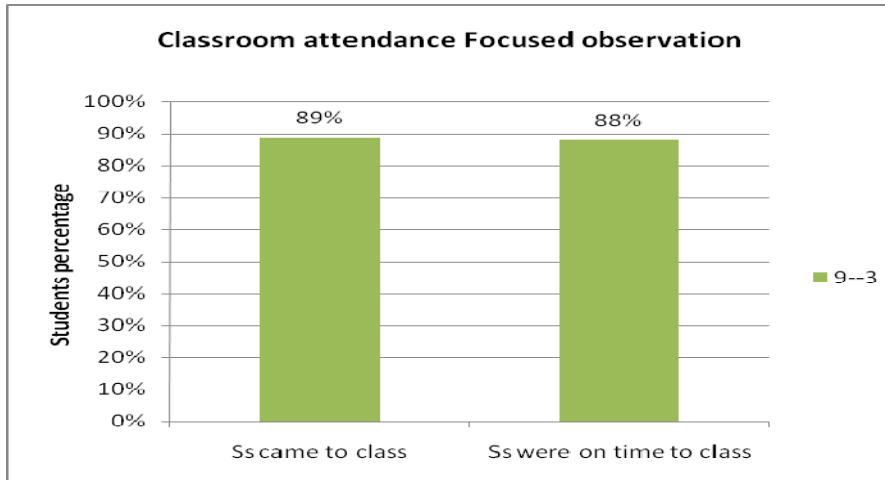
Graph 24

Goal	Students will say the alphabet Students will spell the words from a given list.	This is a very important goal for students to achieve as they are going to participate in the cultural week at school.
Input	T writes the alphabet on the board and asks Ss to repeat. T gives Ss a card in which they classify the alphabet letters in columns according to their sounds. T plays the alphabet song T writes some common acronyms on the board and asks Ss to spell them : (dvd, dj, vip, ok)	The first thing I did was to teach them the alphabet though some of them already knew it, it was necessary to practice pronunciation. I chose some common acronyms that are used in daily life and I realized it worked well because they spelt it easily.
Activities	T numbers off students from 1 to 5. Those Ss with the same number get together in a group. T gives each S a piece of paper with a role. Each group has 5 Ss with different roles. T explains the function of each role. T asks SS to take out the list of the 100 words they were given previously for the spelling bee contest of the cultural week at school. T asks Ss to start working on the spelling following the functions they were given. T tells Ss to switch roles so everyone could spell the words.	At the beginning of the activity students were confused about the roles and the functions so I had to repeat the instructions again and gave two examples. Then it seemed they understood because they started working so I just went around the groups to monitor their work. I noticed they were enjoying the activity.
Teacher role	Task setter, facilitator, and monitor.	
Learner role	Speaker Time keeper Quiet captain Group checker Participant	
Setting	Classroom	

(This task analysis makes use of material in D. Nunan, *Designing tasks for the Communicative Classroom*, Cambridge University P, Press, 1989)

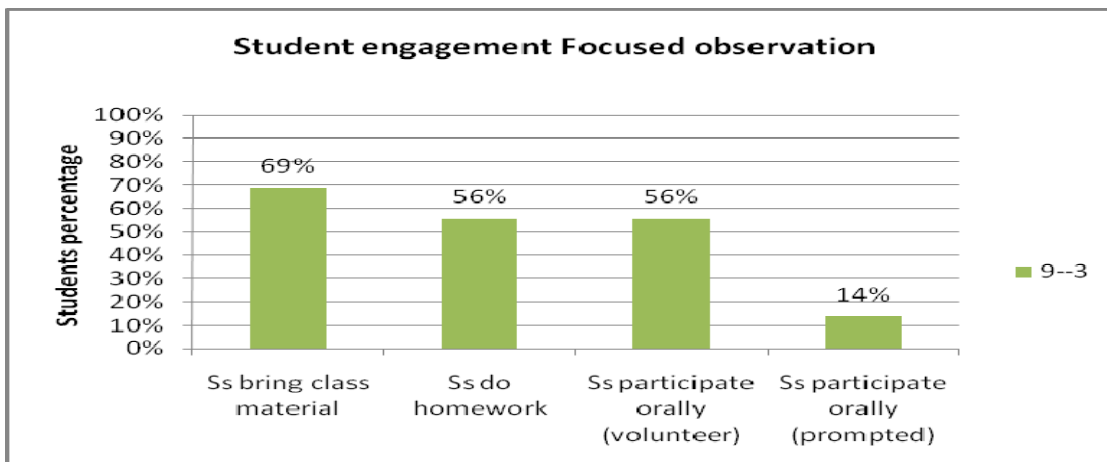
In terms of engagement, grade level 9-3 89% of the students attended classes and 88% was on time. (See graph 25)

Graph 25



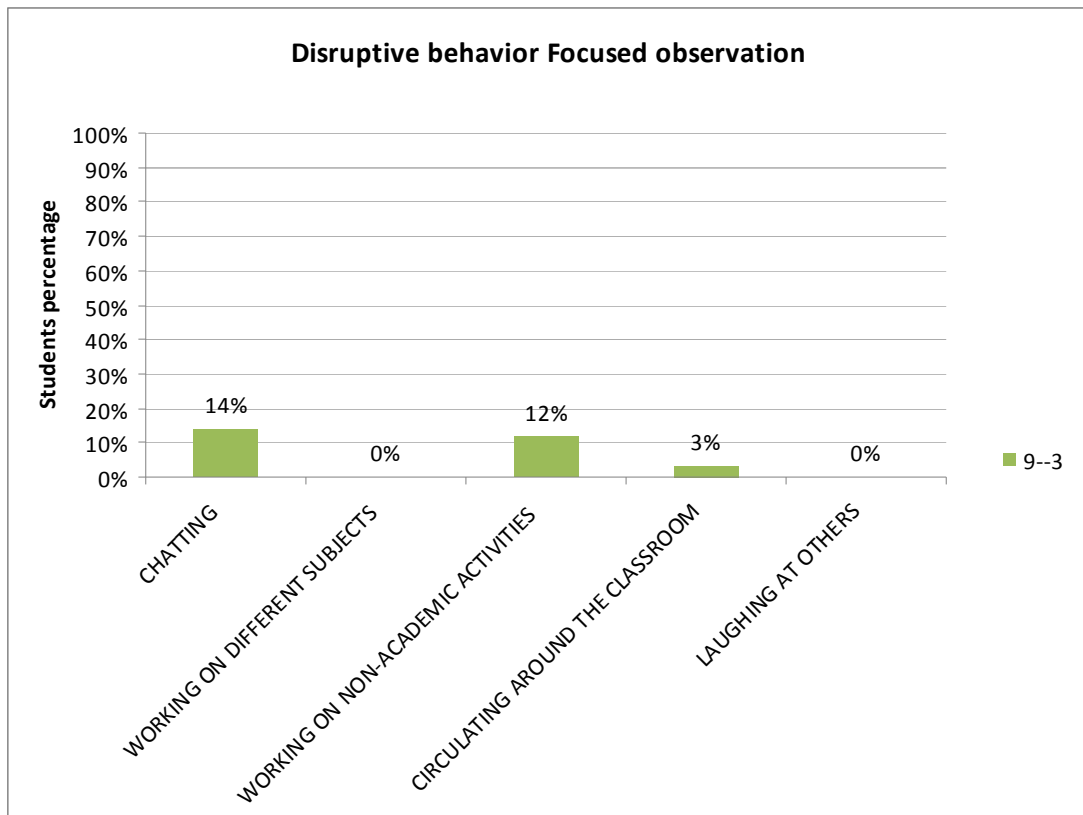
The data showed that 69% of students in 9-3 grade brought class material (dictionary, folder, notebook), 56% did homework, 56% participated by answering questions voluntarily (personal opinions, and comments about class work) and 14% participated by answering questions prompted by the pre-service teacher using L2 and L1 in some cases. They worked on the tasks and finished them in class. (See graph 26)

Graph 26



During the development of the tasks students followed the class rules and were always willing to work in class. However, some students showed some disruptive behavior: 14% of students chatted during the lesson development, none student worked on different subjects, 12% worked on non-academic activities (doodling), 3% moved around the classroom, and 10% laughed at others. (See graph 27)

Graph 27



The following comments illustrate how students' disruptive behaviors decrease and did not interfere in the class:

"Ss look interested in the activity, Ss seem to enjoy it, and perform well their roles. Though there are some students doing other things- using a cell

pone- they are not working on their role functions”(from observer teacher Elizabeth Sarmiento) October 27th 2009.

“...Ss were very engaged in this Spelling bee practice. All your students were involved during the practice.” (comments from the Supervisor Nidia Abril) October 30th 2009

“Me gustó la forma en que desarrolló la actividad, parecía otro salón” (comments from the Supervisor Nidia Abril) November 2009.

6.4 RESULTS OPEN-ENDED / FOCUSED OBSERVATION COMPARISON

After analyzing the findings from the open-ended observation in 11-1, 11-2, and 9-3 at Institución Educativa Las Americas and understanding the classroom ecology of those groups, the pre-service teachers customized the Language Learning tasks based on the Cooperative Learning Approach and implemented them to engage students in Language Learning.

The findings from the focused observations were compared with the findings from the open observation and these are the results:

In terms of classroom climate in the three groups 11-1, 11-2, 9-3, the data evidenced some changes. In the seating arrangement the classroom was arranged in u-shape instead of straight rows used in the open ended observation. This change helped the pre-service teachers to have more visibility and control of the class. The teacher not only called students by their surnames but also by their roles to get them to participate in class. In 9-3 grade level the pre-service teacher did not use proximity control and disciplinary notices anymore.

The teaching style of the pre-service teachers in 11-1, 11-2, and 9-3 grade levels evidenced that they used the same strategies during the lessons

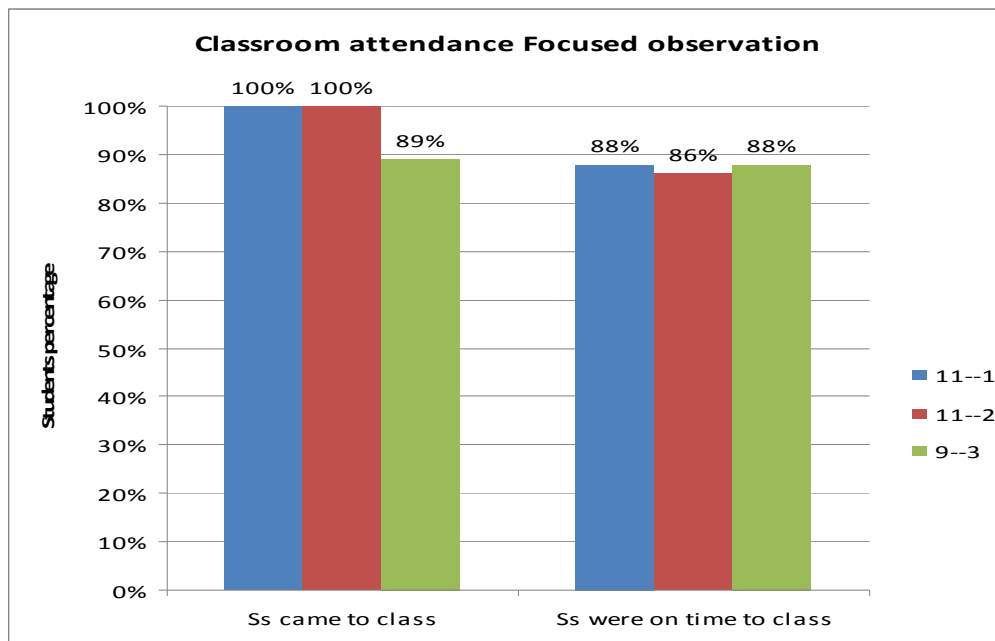
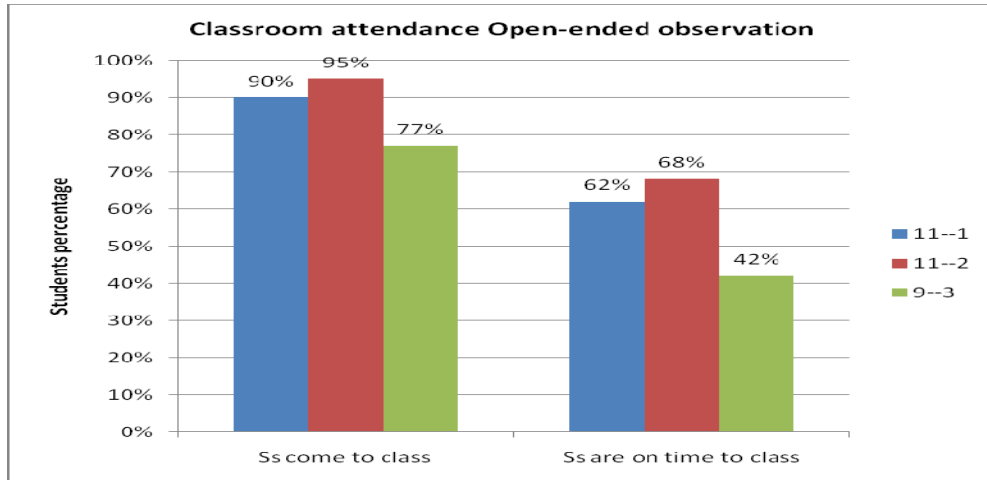
in the open-ended and focused observations such as setting goals for the tasks, monitoring students' work, checking for understanding and comprehension and using visual aids to help students understand better; and others were included like numbering off groups and assigning roles and functions. The pre-service teachers evaluated the same aspects, that is, class performance, presentation of assignments, oral presentations and class materials.

In the open-ended observations the classroom interaction patterns of students in 11-1, 11-2 and 9-3 grade levels had some similarities since students asked for help during class activities not only to the pre-service teachers but also to the cooperating, supervisor, observer teachers and peers. These same patterns of classroom interaction were evidenced in the focused observations and no changes were seen.

The data from the task analysis showed that the pre-service teachers in 11-1, 11-2, and 9-3 changed the procedure to develop the lessons. Instead of explaining the grammatical rules and being an instruction giver, the teacher started implementing customized language learning tasks based on the Cooperative learning Approach.

The data from the focused observation showed that in 11-1, 11-2 and 9-3 the percentages of students' engagement increased and in some grade levels they were more salient than the others; the percentage of classroom attendance increased in the three grade levels. The percentage of students who came to class in 11-1 and 11-2 in the focus observation was 100%. While in the open –ended observation it was 90% and 95% respectively. In 9-3 grade level the percentage of students who attended classes increased from a 77% in the open-ended observation to 89% in the focused observation. (See graph 28)

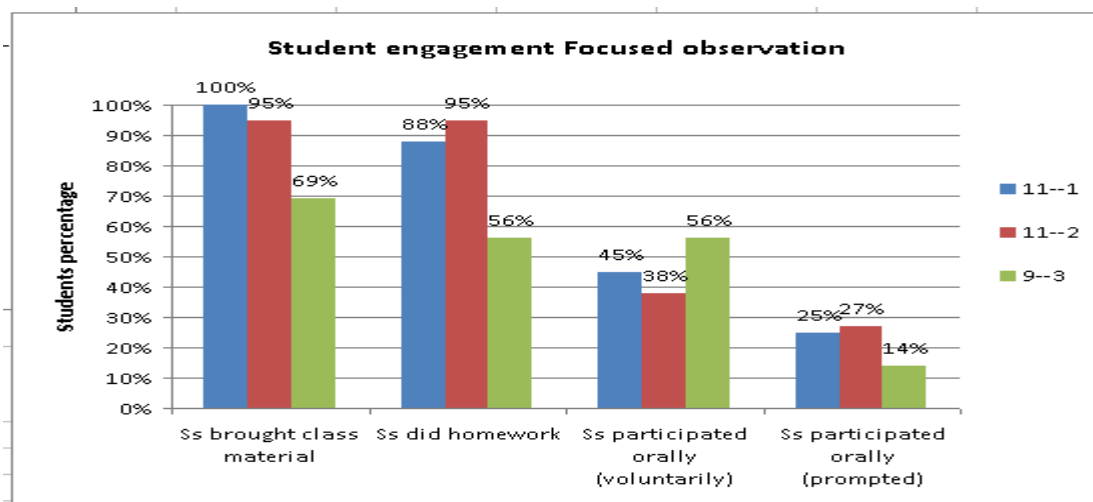
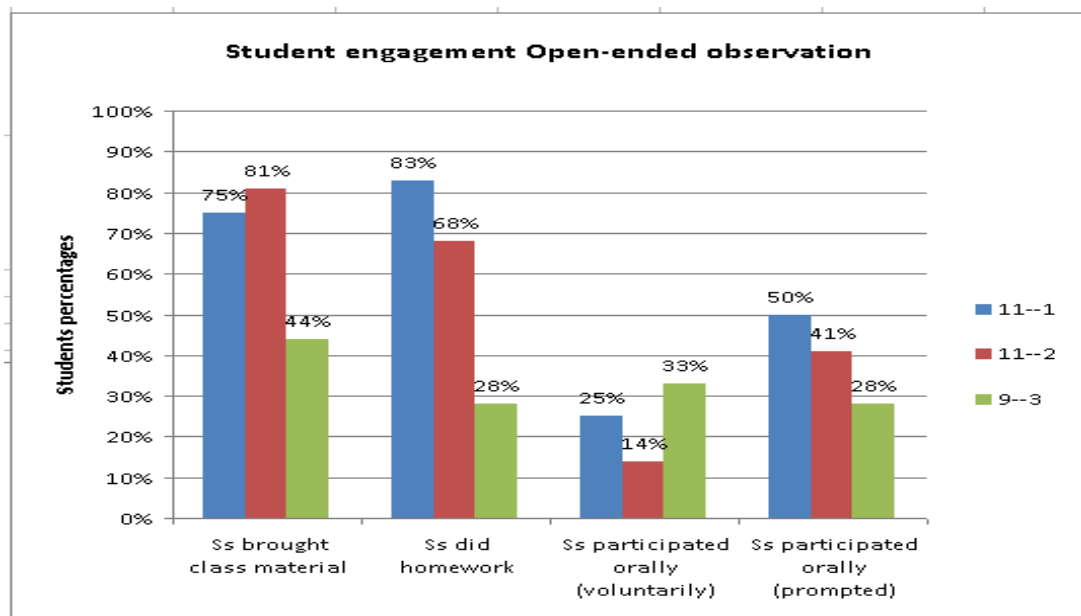
Graph 28



In 11-1 grade level, the percentage of students who brought class material increased from a 75% to a 100%. The percentage of students who did homework increased from 83% to 88%. The percentage of students who participated voluntarily increased from 25% to 45%; but the prompted participation decreases, from 50% to 25%. In 11-2 grade level, there was also

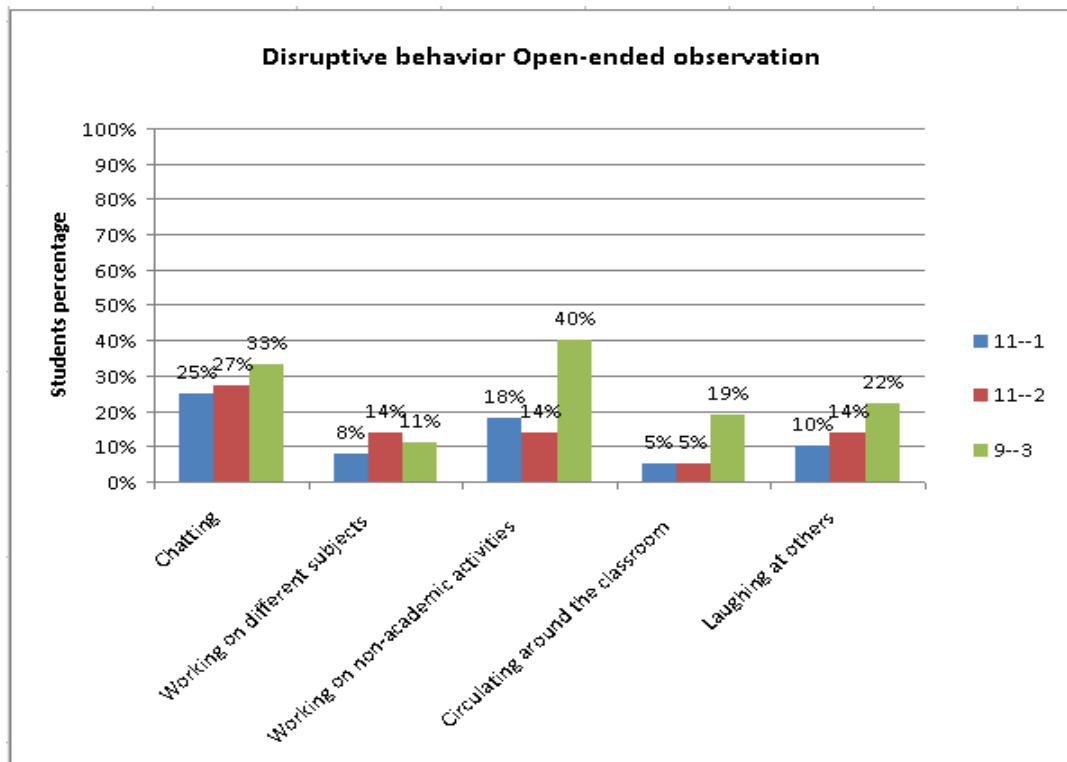
an important increase in the percentage of students who participated voluntarily as it changed from a 14% to a 38%. In 9-3 grade level the percentage of students who brought class material increased from a 44% to a 69%. The percentage of students who did homework increased from a 28% to a 69%. The percentage of students who participated voluntarily increased from 33% to 56%; but the prompted participation decreased, from 28% to 14%. (See graph 25)

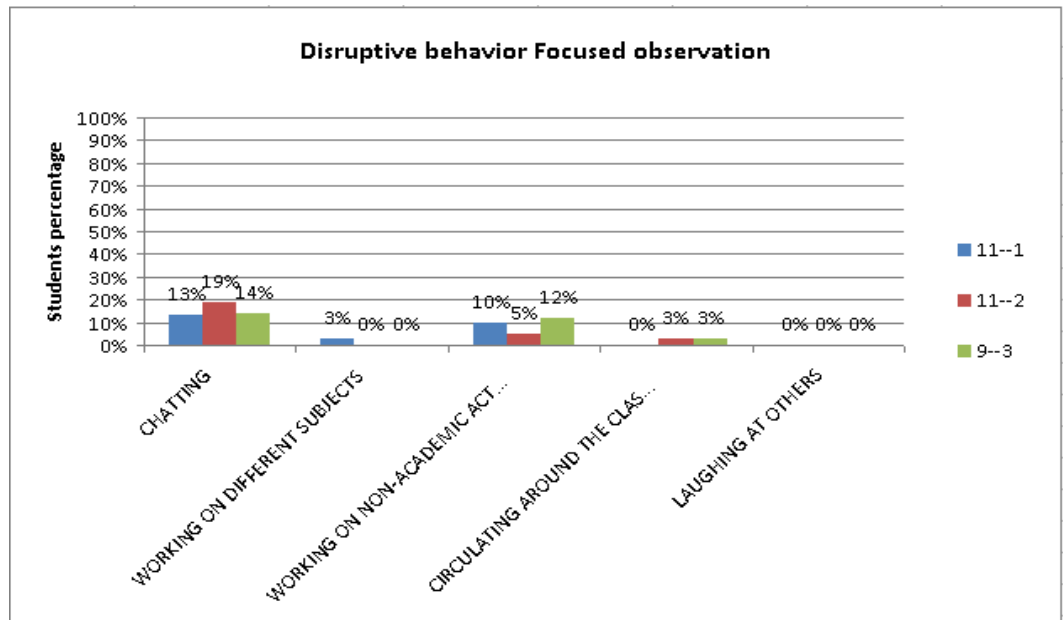
Graph 29



The data from the focused observation evidenced that in 11-1, 11-2 and 9-3 some disruptive behavior of students decreased and some others disappeared. The most noticeable percentages were in 9-3 where the percentage of students who chatted changed from a 33% to a 14%. The percentage of students who worked on different subjects was only performed in 11-1 as in 11-2 and 9-3 this behavior was not observed in the students. In 9-3 the percentage of students who worked on non-academic subjects changed from a 40% to a 12%. In 11-2 and 9-3 the percentage of students who circulated around the classroom varied from a 5% to a 3% and from a 19% to a 3% respectively; while in 11-1 there was not evidence of this behavior. Laughing at others was a behavior that had the same percentage in the three groups. (See graph 30)

Graph 30





After analyzing the results from the focused observation, the initial responses of the students to the customized tasks were identified. To corroborate those initial responses a survey was applied to students in the third phase.

6.5 THIRD PHASE SURVEY ANALYSIS

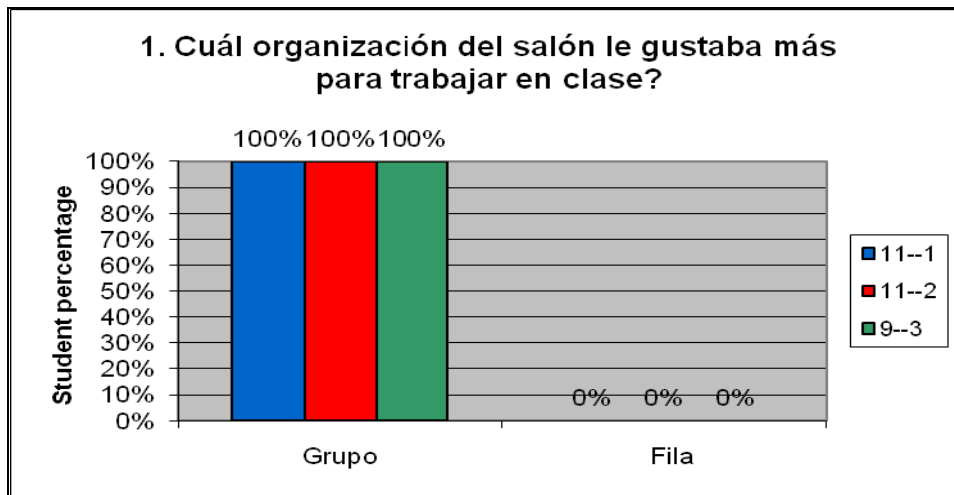
After understanding the classroom ecology of 11-1, 11-2 and 9-3 grade levels at Institución Educativa Las Americas, the pre-service teachers planned and customized activities based on Cooperative Learning approach to engage students in language learning. The initial responses of students towards those activities were observed in the focused observations, where some changes were evidenced in terms of classroom climate, teaching style, classroom interaction patterns, students' engagement and disruptive behavior. To corroborate the data from the focused observations, the pre-

service teachers applied a survey to a randomly selected sample of 5 students from each group 11-1, 11-2, and 9-3.

The survey had 7 questions from which 2, 5, and 6, were open-ended questions, questions number 3, 4 and 7 were closed ended and question number 1 was both open and closed ended question. The results from the open-ended questions were analyzed using the Spradley's model of Domain analysis. The closed questions were analyzed using statistics.

The results from the survey in question N. 1, showed that the 100 % of students in 11-1, 11-2, and 9-3 grade levels liked to work in groups because it changed the class routine, they could work better as they shared ideas about the class work with their peers, and also they could help each other. (See graph 36)

Graph 36



In question N. 2 in the three groups 11-1, 11-2, and 9-3 grade levels students expressed that it was important for them to know the agenda and class indicator at the beginning of the class because it was a guide for them

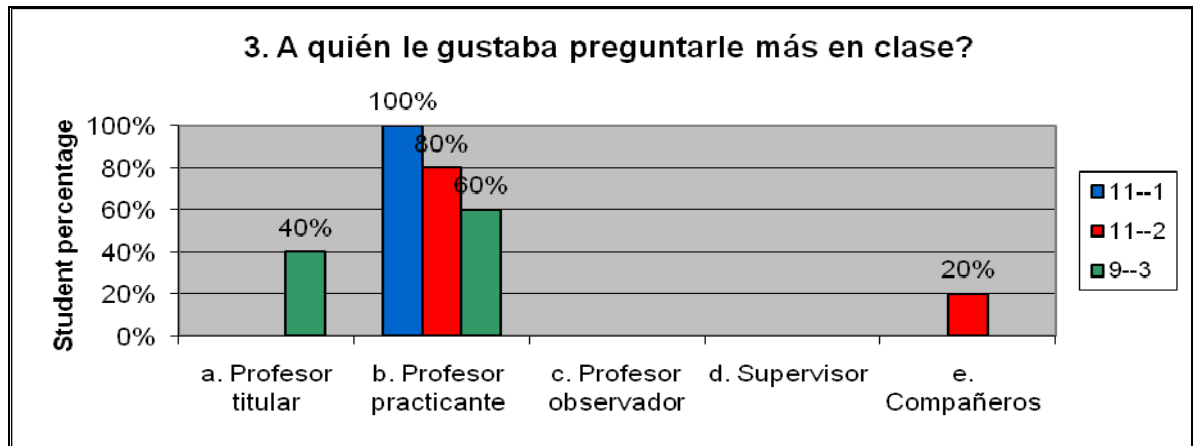
to know what was going to be taught; they could be prepared and knew what to do in the class. (See graph 37)

Graph 37

THE AGENDA CLASS INDICATOR	IS USED FOR	por organización de la clase Para saber lo que se iba a hacer en la clase Saber más Saber que responder en la clase Guia para saber lo que se iba a aprender Estar preparada para la clase
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In question N. 3, 100% of students in 11-1 grade level answered they tended to ask the pre-service teacher, in 11-2 80% of students asked the pre-service teacher and 20% to peers. In 9-3 40% asked the cooperating teacher and 60% asked the pre-service teacher. (See graph 38)

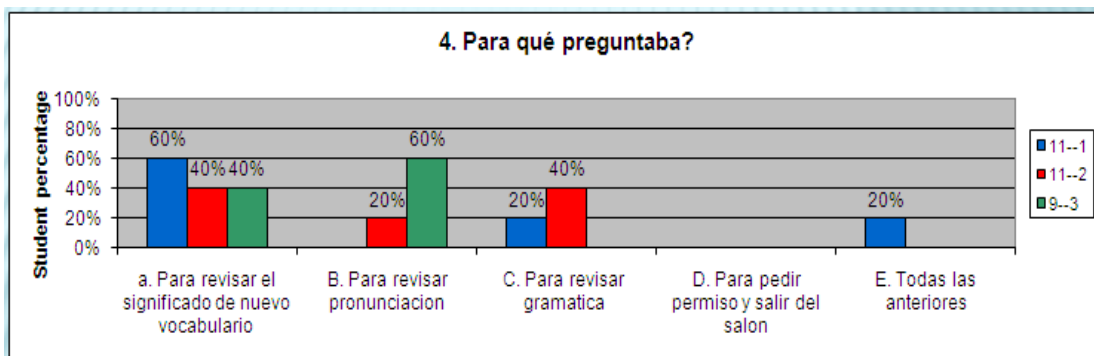
Graph 38



In question N. 4 students answered what for they asked for help to the pre-service, cooperating teacher and peers. In 11-1 60% of students wanted

to check vocabulary, 20% checked pronunciation, and 20% checked for grammar. In 11-2 40% of students asked to check vocabulary, 20% checked grammar and 20% checked pronunciation. In 9-3 40% checked for vocabulary, and 60% checked pronunciation. (See graph 39)

Graph 39



Question N. 5 evidenced that the activity students liked the most in 11-1 and 11-2 was the creation of a newspaper with the 100%. In 9-3 grade level the activity students liked the most were the spelling bee contest preparation with an 80% and listening with a 20%. (See graph 40)

Graph 40

Creating a newspaper	IS A KIND OF	Classroom activity
Spelling bee contest		
Listening		

In questions N. 6 students gave the reasons why they liked to work using roles. The reasons were that they were organized, they had a goal to achieve, and they had the opportunity to express themselves in English using new vocabulary. (See graph 41)

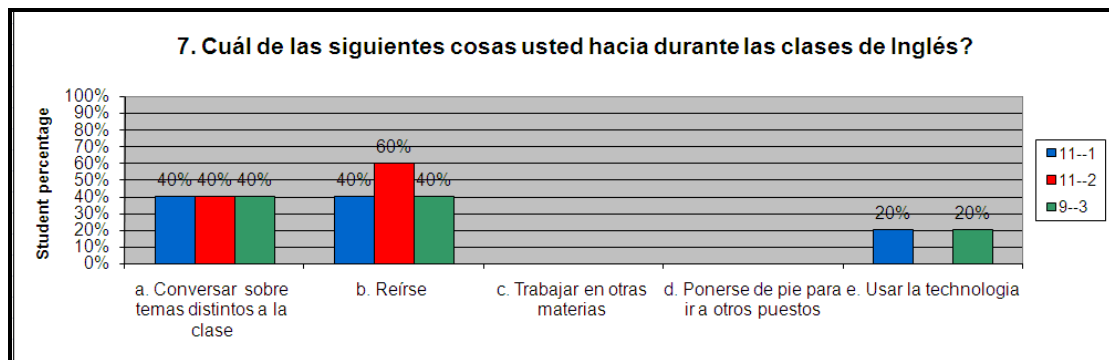
Graph 41

everyone worked in groups Work ed organized Worked for a goal they expressed themselves in English Learning more	IS THE RESULT OF	Working using roles
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Students in 11-1, 11-2 and 9-3 grade levels stated in question N. 7 that during the development of the activities they performed some disruptive behavior. In 11-1 grade level 40% laughed, 40% talked about non-academic activities, 0% worked on different subjects, 0% circulated around the classroom and 20% used technology. In 11-2 grade level 60% of students laughed, 40% talked about non-academic activities, 0% worked on different subjects, 0% circulated around the classroom and 0% used technology. In 9-3 grade level 40% of students laughed, 40% talked about non-academic activities, 0% worked on different subjects, 0% circulated around the classroom and 20% used technology.

But they considered that those misbehaviors were less performed during the development of the activities they liked the most: spelling bee preparation and the newspaper creation. (See graph 42)

Graph 42



7. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The present Action Research project had three phases. The first one was initiated to identify and understand the classroom ecology of students in 11-1, 11-2 and 9-3 grade levels at Institucion Educativa Las Americas in order to customize activities that engage those students in language learning. The second one included the implementation of tasks under the light of Cooperative Learning Approach and to identify the initial students' responses to those tasks. Finally, in the third phase a survey was applied to students to corroborate the observed responses to the tasks.

Customizing class activities implied assigning a task in which students had a group goal to achieve; thus it meant changes in language learning activities, teaching style, and classroom layout, as a result the classroom ecology of those groups showed some changes in the students' behavior and engagement.

The language learning activities in the open-ended observations were isolated and the only purpose was to learn grammar rules, while in the focused observations the customized tasks involved activities in which students had a group goal to achieve. This idea was supported by the New Zealand Ministry of Education who promoted that students learn more language when they use different language activities to achieve a goal (2009). This was confirmed by the target students in the survey who said that working on those activities let them get more interested in the language learning and they affirmed to have the opportunity to do their best to accomplish the goal. The following comment was taken from a student of 9-3 level:

“Me gusto mas la actividad del spelling bee porque practicabamos para el concurso de deletreo”

Also, it was stated by one student of 11-1

“Me gusto mucho trabajar en la creación del articulo para la semana cultural porque nosotros mismos inventábamos la historia”

The tasks used during the practicum were based on the Cooperative Learning approach which implied changes in the teaching style and roles; the teacher’s role was not only of an instruction giver but also, a facilitator and monitor; the students were not only listeners and followers of instructions but also, they had roles and functions within the groups that made them be on task. Srinvas also mentions this in his article where he says that each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn (2009). The students pointed out in the survey that having roles in a group was a way to help themselves, and to have a responsibility within the group. It is corroborated by one student of 11-2 grade:

“Me gusto porque cada quien tenía su responsabilidad y sabia lo que tenía que hacer”.

An student of 11-1 said:

“Trabajar con los roles nos permitió trabajar en equipo, cada uno tenía una responsabilidad que cumplir en el grupo y además yo me sentía importante”

The change of the tasks allowed changes in the classroom interaction patterns. It changed from T-Ss to S-S and Ss-Ss and this interaction pattern did not cause disruptive behavior because they were focused on the tasks.

The dictionary of sociology Gordon Marshall defines that the interaction between teacher and students is necessary during the development of the activities. It also stated that the success of any activity and the achievement of aims are obtained if the right interaction patterns are used; and affirms that the main interaction pattern is teacher to the whole group (T-Ss). Other patterns include pair work (S-S), and group work (Ss-Ss) (2009). The students state on the survey that they checked for understanding and doubts among them. A student of 11-2 grade level affirms: *“trabajar en grupos me facilitaba el trabajo porque cualquier duda que tuviera le preguntaba a mis compañeros del grupo”*

The classroom layout in the three target groups 11-1, 11-2 and 9-3 was changed from straight rows to groups. Deaking et.al, state that arranging the classroom in groups provide an effective environment for collaborative, cooperative, individualistic and competitive learning (2009). This was evidenced during the development of the tasks on the second phase of the project where students worked in groups and so they shared knowledge with their peers, and worked cooperatively. The students expressed in the survey that they liked working in groups as they could change the class routine, they were able to help each other and work better on the tasks. It is supported by a student of 9-3 grade level:

“Me gustaba más trabajar en grupo porque cambiaba la rutina del salón, y era más fácil trabajar con mis compañeros”

The changes made in the language learning activities, the teaching style and the classroom layout had an influence in the students' language learning engagement. The number of students who attended classes, was on time, and brought class materials increased. As students were involved in the tasks

the disruptive behavior decreased. In the survey, students stated that they did not have chance to misbehave as they were focused on the tasks, as it was assured by one student of 11-1:

“cuando estábamos trabajando en el periódico, ya no hablaba tanto de otras cosas, estaba más enfocada en la creación del artículo”.

Also, one student of 9-3 said:

“Durante el concurso de spelling bee yo estaba más concentrado, ya que era juez y debía poner atención a los errores que ellos cometían ”

As students were on task because of their responsibilities and contributions to group work, it was not necessary for the pre-service teacher to use proximity control or reprimands any longer which were used to avoid misbehavior as stated by Elliot, “The proximity control is a way to avoid misbehavior keeping a positive atmosphere” (2005).

In conclusion, factors like lack of engagement in language learning, misbehavior in class, students’ absenteeism and unpunctuality, can be avoided by the teachers if there is an understanding of the classroom ecology. Based on this understanding the teachers should make decisions about the activities that best match that specific classroom ecology and promote language learning in students.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER STUDY

Future pre-service teachers should identify and understand the classroom ecology of their classrooms in order to design effective language learning activities that engage students in language learning and avoid any misbehavior that affect the development of the class. These activities must be designed under the light of a method or approach that matches the students' needs, likes and dislikes. The Cooperative Learning Approach is recommended since it allows students to work cooperatively and responsibly as they will have roles and specific functions to follow, also they will have a specific goal to achieve.

Further research about classroom ecology could undertake other aspects, since classroom ecology is a broad concept that includes other issues apart from the ones studied in this project such as gender, students' language learning styles, socio economic background, mechanisms for conflict resolutions, the physical environment, and wider school ecology. Furthermore, after identifying the classroom ecology the pre-service teachers should use a Method or an Approach that matches the identified classroom ecology.

8. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CONCEPTUALIZATION & OPERATIONALIZATION

CLASSROOM ECOLOGY

It is the interaction of students, teacher, and the physical attributes of the classrooms. At the classroom ecology level, it includes potential for needs satisfaction; classroom climate; group interaction patterns; level and type of class organization; mechanisms for conflict resolution; teaching style; physical environment; relevance of content; and the wider school ecology.

<http://books.google.com.co/books?id=t17cB6VLLkC&pg=PA2&dq=.+At+the+classroom+ecology+level,+it+includes+potential+for+needs+satisfaction%3B+classroom+climate%3B+group+interaction+patterns%3B+level+and+type+of+class+organization%3B+mechanisms+for+conflict+resolution&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false>

Classroom Climate

http://wik.ed.uiuc.edu/index.php/Classroom_Climate

Classroom climate is defined as the type of environment that is created for students by the school, teachers, and peers. When interacting with students it is important to recognize individual differences, learn names, and arrange the seating where all students are angled to receive instruction, establish expectations immediately, make yourself (as the teacher) available to your student and encourage students positively to achieve.

- Teacher arranges the classroom
- Teacher gets involved with the students
- Teacher deals with the students present behavior
- Teacher does not accept excuses for missed work
- Teacher does not punish or criticize students for miss work
- Teacher acknowledge students for their responsible behavior
- Teacher corrects inappropriate behavior
- Teacher uses gentle reprimands
- Teacher deals with students' tardies

Group Interaction patterns

- Student asks the pre-service teacher
- Student asks the cooperating teacher
- Student asks the supervisor
- Student asks the observer teacher
- Student asks peers

Teaching style

http://edutechwiki.unige.ch/en/Teaching_style

Teaching style refers to the teaching strategies and methods employed plus use of certain kinds of rhetoric.

- Teacher sets goals for the tasks in the groups
- Teacher monitors students' work
- Teacher checks for understanding and comprehension
- Teacher monitors progress
- Teacher numbers off group members
- Teacher limits group size
- Teacher divides tasks equally among members
- Teacher assigns roles
- Teacher manages individual group work in classroom
 - Monitoring of performance
 - Presentation of assignments
 - Selection of assignments
 - Evaluation of assignments
- Teacher employs Proximity Control
 - Personal space
 - Classroom space
- Teacher writes disciplinary notes
- Teacher monitors the class to avoid:
 - Off task students
 - Disruptive behavior
 - Slowdowns
- Teacher uses technology
 - Computers
 - Videos
 - Cds

- Teacher manages time
 - Timing of lesson
 - Timing of class
- Teacher acknowledge students for their responsible behavior
- Teacher corrects inappropriate behavior
- Teacher uses gentle reprimands

- Teacher encourages students to evaluate themselves

RELEVANCE OF CONTENT

Student engagement

Students who are engaged show sustained behavioral involvement in learning activities accompanied by a positive emotional tone. They select tasks at the border of their competencies, initiate action when given the opportunity, and exert intense effort and concentration in the implementation of learning tasks; they show generally positive emotions during ongoing action.

<http://www.ericdigests.org/2005-2/engagement.html>

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/15/a7/4d.pdf

- **Coming prepared to class**
 - Student brings material
 - Student does homework
 - Student comes to class
 - Student arrives on time

- **Preparedness for class**
 - Student spends little time to get their classroom materials ready
 - Student is ready to follow teacher's instruction

- Student is ready to work in groups
- Student gives proper answers
- Student spends the class time on the task
- **Voluntarily class participation**
 - Student makes lesson – related contributions during the class
 - Student asks questions to the teacher
 - Student works actively in groups
 - Student answers questions voluntarily
 - Student expresses opinions
 - Student gives definitions
 - Student reads aloud

Effective language learning activities

Effective Language learning takes place when students understand language input and when they use language to engage in interaction. Their depth of processing of ideas and language is important. This is part of developing language complexity . Students learn more language when they spend time elaborating and exploring one area, using the associated language in many different ways.

[http://leap.tki.org.nz/supporting language development/curriculum and language development/effective language learning activities](http://leap.tki.org.nz/supporting_language_development/curriculum_and_language_development/effective_language_learning_activities)

- Information transfer (diagrams, tables, graphs, maps, and texts)
- Split information
- Cooperative group work (problem solving, creating, inventing, evaluating, ranking)
- Brainstorming, including structured brainstorming
- Mental images, mind maps and concept maps
- Role-play, ‘Say It’, simulation, and drama
- **Teacher uses technology**

- Computers
- Videos
- Cds
- **Activities**
 - Student makes debates
 - Student makes investigations
 - Student makes exploration exercises
 - Role plays
- **Teacher uses Cooperative learning**
 - Positive Interdependence
 - Face-to-Face Interaction
 - Individual & Group Accountability
 - Interpersonal & Small-Group Skills
 - Student actively participates
 - Teacher becomes learner at times, and learners sometimes teach
 - Projects and questions interest and challenge students
 - Student learns skills for resolving conflicts when they arise
 - Student draws upon his past experience and knowledge
 - Student is invested in their own learning.
 - Student gets involved in the class activities
- **Teacher gives effective instructions**
 - Teacher specifies what students are going to learn.

- Teacher teaches what is going to be learned.
- Teacher teaches how it is to be learned.
- Teacher engages students in initial practice.
- Teacher monitors progress.
- Teacher provides systematic feedback.
- Teacher monitors and provides opportunities for independent work.
- Teacher writes assignments on board, as well as present orally.
- Teacher clarifies assignments to students at end of class/day.
- Teacher provides students with handouts
- Teacher provides assistance with organizing materials.
- Teacher has the student sit up front, close to the teacher. Seats the student away from distractions (e.g., the door,).
- Teacher limits visual distractions
- Teacher reduces noise level during tasks requiring concentration.
- Teacher checks for understanding and comprehension.
 - Teacher avoids Yes/No Questions
 - Teacher asks Students to summarize with their own Words
 - Teacher asks Students to Reflect
 - Teacher uses Quizzes
 - Teacher uses pictures to distinguish between similar objects
 - Teacher uses discrimination to check function and register
 - Teacher uses translation (where appropriate and possible).
 - Teacher uses extensions to consolidate understanding. Homework often reveals lack of understanding, as do guided practice exercises.

- Student follows instructions immediately
- Student brings material for the task.
- Student spends the class time on the task.

- **Prompted participation**
 - Student does things only when directed by the teacher
 - Answers questions
 - Expresses opinion
 - Makes comments related to the lesson
 - Reads aloud
 - Comes to the board

- **Disruptive behavior**
 - Student talks on the phone during class
 - Student leaves the classroom during class
 - Student talks over the teacher during class
 - Student makes fun of others
 - Student giggles in class
 - Student throws objects

- **Off-task**
 - Student works on non-academic subjects
 - Student works on different academic subjects
 - Student plays games on the cell phone

APPENDIX B
DOMAIN OPEN - ENDED OBSERVATION

Being quiet Chatting Being curious giggling	Is a kind of	Students behavior
Oral presentations Videos Readings Miming Games	Is a kind of	Class activities
Hand out Notebooks Flashcards Posters Dictionary PPT presentations Videos	Is a kind of	Class materials
Asking other Ss Using the dictionary Repeating Answering questions Reading silently Reading aloud	Is a way of	Learning
Calling students from the		

list attendance Asking for volunteers Giving extra points to quizzes	Is a way of	Doing students participate
Translating into L1 Answering questions	Is a way of	Showing understanding
Looking at peers Asking to classmates Asking other teachers	Is a way of	Confirming information
Individually Groups Pairs	Is a way of	Working in class
Do not follow instructions	Is a cause of	Having a bad English command
Looking for seats Not good listening skills	Is a characteristic of	Students
Mispronouncing Laughing at others peers	Is a characteristic of	Making disorder
Not clear instructions Arriving late to class	Is a reason for	Getting lost
Behaving bad in class Arriving late	Is a reason for	Having bad grades
Sitting in the back part of the classroom Sitting in the middle	Is a place for	Making disorder Avoiding participation
In the back part In the middle	Is a place for	Students arrange

In the front part		
Being limited to use the tools in the classroom. Not having all the materials ready	Is a reason for	Improvise the class
Having the class when the other students do not have class Asking for so much money for the handouts grades	Is a reason for	Students complain
Quizzes Questions Doing the first example of an activity	Is used for	Checking understanding
Doing choral drills	Is used for	Improving students pronunciation
Using the board	Is used for	Giving feedback Giving examples Clarifying Ss doubts
Using low pitch Raising hands	Is used for	Answering questions
Dictionary Asking peers	Is used for	Checking meaning
Sitting on the back part	Is used for	Getting distracted Chatting Messy Singing Whistling

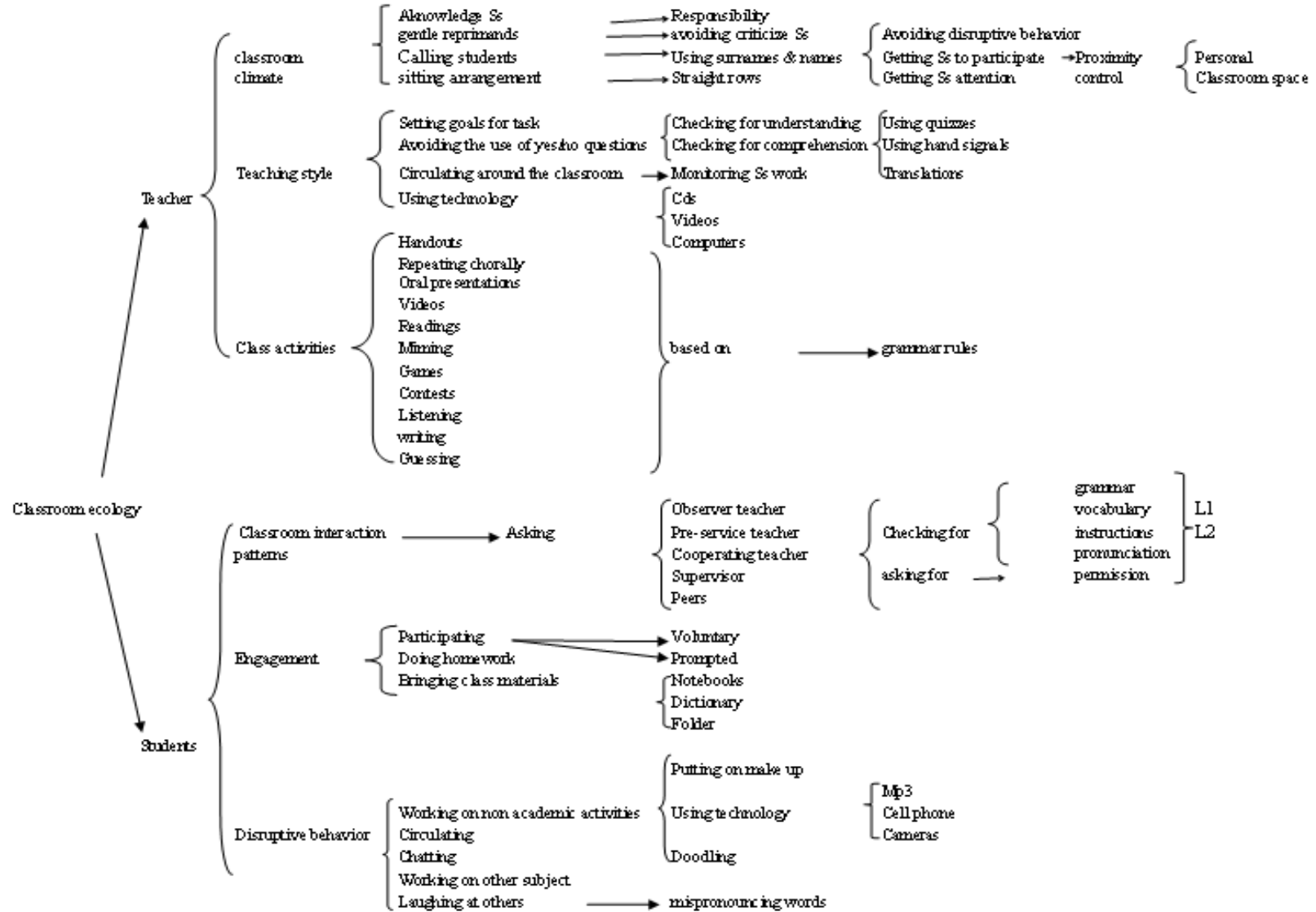
Singing Clapping legs Whistling	Is used for	Get distracted
Repeating chorally Guessing	Is used for	Learning vocabulary
Asking students to remind quiet	Is used for	Getting discipline
Being sick	Is used for	Avoiding participation

APPENDIX C

TAXONOMIC ANALYSIS OPEN ENDED OBSERVATION

APPENDIX C2

TAXONOMIC ANALYSIS OPEN ENDED OBSERVATION



APPENDIX D
DOMAIN ANALYSIS FOCUSED OBSERVATIONS

Being quiet Chatting Being curious giggling	Is a kind of	Students behavior
Oral presentations Videos Readings Miming Games Contests Listening	Is a kind of	Class activities
Hand outs Notebooks Flashcards Posters Dictionary PPT presentations Videos Role cards Cd Cd player	Is a kind of	Class materials
Asking other Ss Using the dictionary		

Repeating Answering questions Reading mentally Reading aloud Using flashcards Using miming Doing homework Playing games	Is a way of	Learning Activities
Calling students from the list attendance Grading participation	Is a way to	Making students participate
Translating into L1 Answering questions Giving the right answers Explaining classmates Retelling instructions	Is a way of	Showing understanding
Looking at peers Asking to classmates Asking the T	Is a way of	Ss confirming information
Individually Groups Pairs	Is a way of	Working in class
Using low voice Raising hands	Is used for	Answering questions
Dictionary		

Asking peers Asking the T Asking the CT Asking the observer T	Is used for	Checking meaning
Sitting on the back part	Is used for	Getting distracted Chatting Messy Singing Whistling Sleeping Using the cell phone Working on other subject
Singing Clapping legs Whistling Using cell phones Using technology Looking through the window	Is used for	Getting distracted
Repeating chorally Guessing Using the dictionary Writing sentences Using flashcards Miming	Is used for	Learning vocabulary
Asking students to remain	Is used for	Getting discipline

<p>quiet</p> <p>Monitoring Ss during class activities</p> <p>Changing a student from his/her place in the classroom</p> <p>Introducing class rules</p> <p>Telling Ss about the consequences of breaking class rules</p> <p>Stop explaining the class when SS are talking <i>over</i></p>		
<p>Do not follow instructions</p> <p>Not participating orally in class</p> <p>Getting bad grades</p>	<p>Is a cause of</p>	<p>Having a bad English command</p>
<p>Looking for seats</p> <p>Not good listening skills</p> <p>Arriving late to class</p> <p>Not preparing presentations</p> <p>Not doing homework</p> <p>Not coming to class</p> <p>Yelling at others</p> <p>Talking in L1</p> <p>Chatting</p> <p>No bringing class material</p>	<p>Is a characteristic of</p>	<p>Students</p>

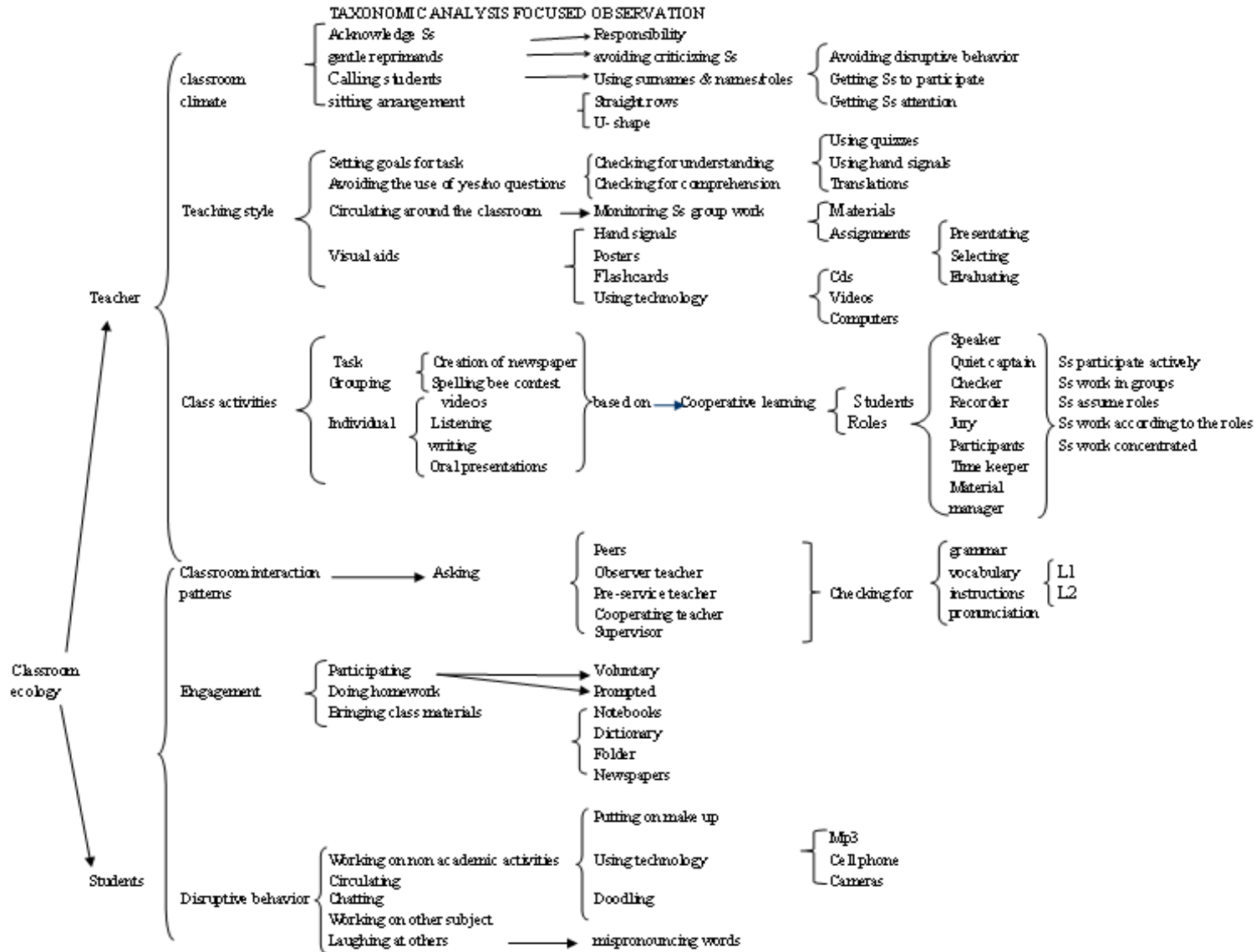
Working in other subjects In a hurry to finish class		
Mispronouncing Laughing at others	Is a characteristic of	Making disorder
Giving clear instructions Using plain English Giving examples	Is a reason for	Ss understanding better
Behaving bad in class Arriving late Not bringing homework Not bringing material Not using properly the dress code	Is a reason for	Having bad grades
Sitting in the back part of the classroom Sitting in the middle	Is a place for	Making disorder Avoiding participation Sleeping Chatting Working on other subjects Using the cell phone
In the back part, In the middle, In the front part	Is a place for	Students sitting arrangement
Arranging the class in u-shape	Is used for	Avoiding disruption Avoiding misbehavior Monitoring Ss

		Getting SS attention Checking Ss work
Doing quizzes Doing exams Checking material Revising folder and notebooks Oral presentations Using rubrics Doing auto evaluation Contests Participating in class Interchanging homework	Is a way to	Evaluate Ss
Flashcards Posters Videos Board	Is a kind of	Visual aid
Speaker Recorder Checker Quiet captain Jury Participants Time keeper Material manager	Is a kind of	Student role
Not eating in class		

<p>Being on time</p> <p>Respecting T and classmates</p> <p>Being honest</p> <p>Keeping dress code</p> <p>No cheating</p> <p>Bringing class material</p> <p>Coming prepared to class</p>	<p>Is a kind of</p>	<p>Class rule</p>
<p>Mp3</p> <p>Cell phone</p> <p>Cameras</p>	<p>Is a kind of</p>	<p>Technology SS use in class</p>
<p>Ss participate actively</p> <p>Ss work in groups</p> <p>Ss assume roles</p> <p>Ss work according to their roles</p> <p>Ss work concentrated</p>	<p>Is a characteristic of</p>	<p>Cooperative learning</p>

APPENDIX E

TAXONOMIC ANALYSIS FOCUSED OBSERVATIONS

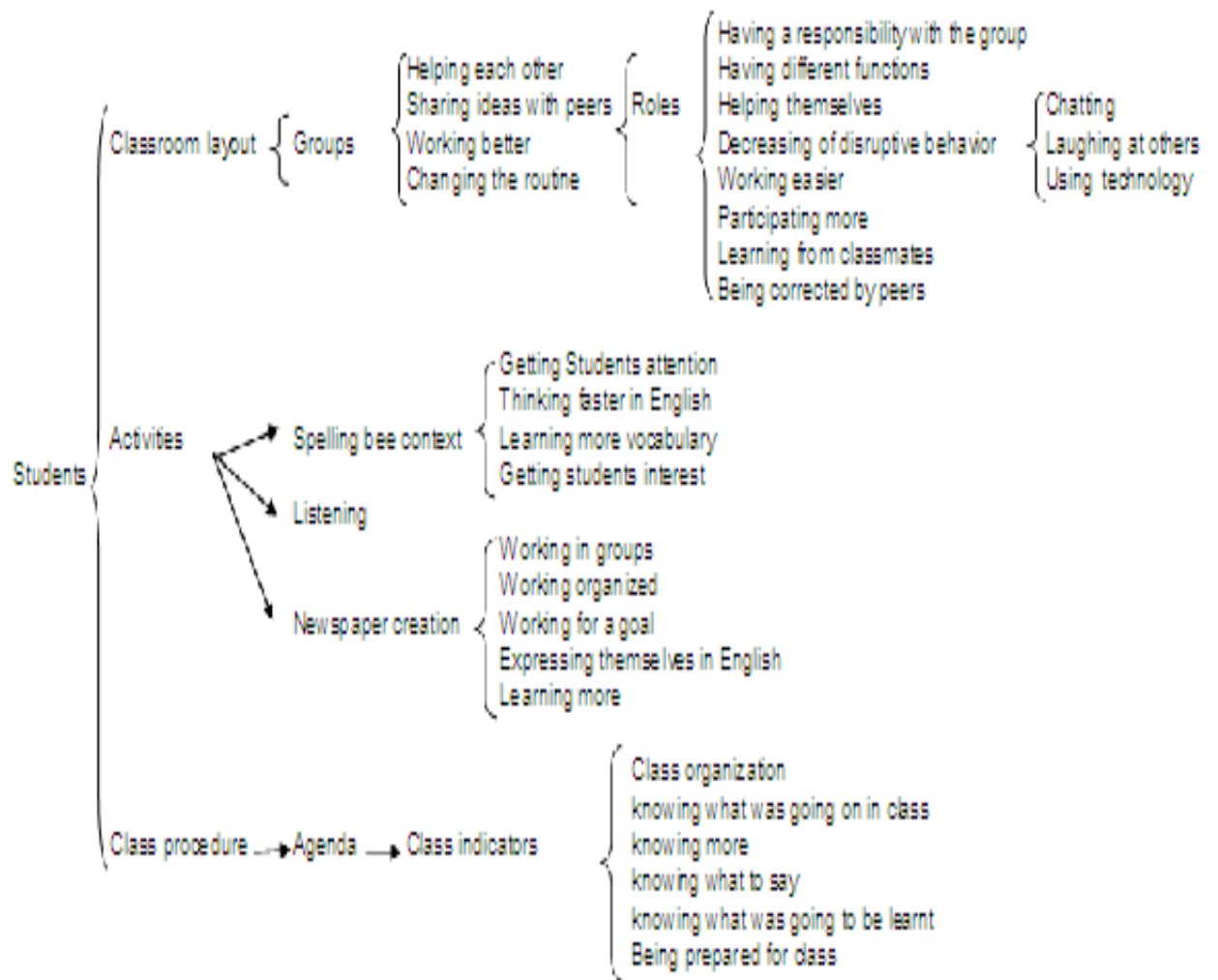


APPENDIX F
SURVEY ANALYSIS
OPEN QUESTIONS

Porque se podía trabajar mejor Por cambiar la rutina Compartir ideas con los compañeros Tener la ayuda de los compañeros	IS A RESULT OF	Working in groups
Group rows	IS A WAY OF	Organizing the classroom
THE AGENDA CLASS INDICATOR	IS USED FOR	por organización de la clase Para saber lo que se iba a hacer en la clase Saber más Saber que responder en la clase Guia para saber lo que se iba a aprender Estar preparada para la clase
Creating a newspaper Spelling bee contest Listening	IS A KIND OF	Classroom activity
everyone worked in groups Work ed organized Worked for a goal	IS THE RESULT OF	Working with roles

they expressed themselves in English Learning more		
Chatting Laughing at others Using technology	IS A KIND OF	Disruptive behavior
because I had a responsibility with the group Because the activity was good Everyone had a different function Helped themselves	IS A REASON OF	Having roles in a group
The decrease of disruptive behavior The work was easier Everyone participated Learning from classmates Being corrected by peers	IS A RESULT OF	Having roles in a group
Getting Students attention Thinking faster in English Learning more vocabulary Getting students interest	IS THE RESULT OF	Working on the spelling bee contest

APPENDIX G
TAXONOMIC SURVEY ANALYSIS
OPEN QUESTIONS



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