

A MEANINGFUL CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT THROUGH COLLABORATIVE
WORK TO IMPROVE SELF-REGULATION ATTITUDES

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2. Descripción
<p>Este estudio cualitativo de investigación-acción en el aula, se propone describir el impacto de un ambiente significativo de aprendizaje creado a través de actividades realizadas de forma colaborativa, sobre el desarrollo de actitudes de auto-regulación en estudiantes de quinto grado en el Colegio Aníbal Fernández de Soto (IED), durante el aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera. Para tal fin, se propone la aplicación de una estrategia pedagógica que privilegie el trabajo en equipo y a su vez, permita a los estudiantes elaborar materiales que puedan asistir su proceso de aprendizaje, con la intención de brindarles un ambiente significativo, mientras siguen los parámetros de un proceso de auto-regulación que les ayude a adquirir hábitos de estudio.</p>

3. Fuentes
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4. Contenidos

Este proyecto de investigación contiene 6 capítulos. En el primero se hace una descripción del contexto de la institución y los estudiantes con quienes se realizó el estudio; además, hace un planteamiento del problema, se justifica la importancia de llevar a cabo la intervención pedagógica, y finalmente, se plantean la pregunta de investigación y los objetivos. El segundo capítulo, reseña los referentes teóricos que fueron considerados de vital importancia para el desarrollo de la investigación y a partir de ellos, se plantean los tres constructos bajo los que ésta se rigió. El tercer capítulo, describe el tipo de investigación que se llevó a cabo, así como, los instrumentos y procedimientos para la recolección de datos. El cuarto capítulo, presenta las visiones de currículo, lenguaje, aprendizaje y aula de clase, que fueron seguidas durante el desarrollo del diseño instruccional, que a su vez, también es detallado a lo largo de este apartado. El quinto capítulo, expone los resultados que surgieron a partir de los datos; y el sexto capítulo expone las conclusiones, las implicaciones, las limitaciones y las recomendaciones que surgieron a partir de los hallazgos hechos por este estudio.

5. Metodología

Este estudio cualitativo de investigación-acción tomó lugar en el Colegio Aníbal Fernández de Soto (IED), con 34 niños de grado quinto en edades entre los 8 y 12 años de edad. Los instrumentos de recolección de datos fueron, logs del profesor, diarios de aprendizaje y cuestionarios semi-estructurados. Por otro lado, este proyecto fue realizado en tres fases. Durante la primera se determinó el problema y se diseñó una estrategia de enseñanza para dar respuesta a las demandas del contexto. En la segunda fase, se llevó a cabo la implementación de la propuesta pedagógica y a su vez, se aplicaron los instrumentos de recolección de datos cuya información, fue analizada durante la tercera fase. Finalmente, a partir de los hallazgos realizados en el campo, surgieron las conclusiones y aportes de esta investigación dentro del campo de estudio.

6. Conclusiones

La realización de este trabajo permitió concluir que a través del diseño de un ambiente significativo de aprendizaje construido a través del trabajo colaborativo de los estudiantes, fue posible desarrollar en ellos algunas actitudes de auto-regulación tales como: autonomía para tomar acciones por su cuenta que les permita mejorar su proceso de aprendizaje, reflexión sobre los aspectos positivos y negativos de su desempeño y finalmente, iniciativa para diseñar planes y estrategias que les permita potenciar su proceso.

Finalmente, fue posible determinar que dentro de las dinámicas planteadas por el nuevo escenario de aprendizaje del que hicieron parte los estudiantes, se dieron las condiciones adecuadas para que ellos desarrollaran y mejoraran varios aspectos de su competencia comunicativa en la lengua extranjera.

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Abstract

This qualitative action research study was intended to describe the impact of creating a meaningful classroom environment through collaborative activities on students' self-regulation attitudes, as well as to determine how this setting might help children to develop and improve their English learning process. The research was developed along the two semesters of 2015 and the first semester of 2016 with thirty-four fifth graders of Aníbal Fernández de Soto School (IED). Data was collected through teacher's logs, students' learning diaries and semi-structured questionnaires applied to work teams. The findings revealed that the setting of a meaningful classroom environment built by students' collaborative work had a significant influence over the development of students' existential competences along the process, and at the same time, it was possible to describe the way it affected their learning, likewise, their communicative competence in the object language.

Key words: Meaningful learning environment, collaborative work and self-regulation process.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Context

In order to improve learning processes of English as a foreign language in Aníbal Fernández de Soto IED (that from now on will be termed *The Institution*), it is necessary to take into consideration the main features of the context. The Institution is a public school founded in 1974 and approved by decree No. 0122 of august 2nd, 1974. Nowadays, the Institution is located in San José Spring (CR 50 No. 143-33). It is composed by three buildings of one flat and a playground designed for students from Kindergarten to fifth grade levels. Almost all teachers have a degree in the subject they teach. However, as the English Program is being implemented since last year, the school does not have English teachers or enough resources in terms of materials such as books, audio and didactic aids to boost teachers' practices and students' learning.

According to a study carried out by the Institution in 2002 with the intention of identifying the socio-cultural and economic issues of students' surrounding living environment in terms of their possibilities, needs and problems, it was determined that their social stratum is 3 and almost all of them live in *Spring, Prado Pinzón* and *Prado Veraniego* neighborhoods; they count on Social Security and belong to a Promoter Entity of Health (EPS) or SISBEN. On the other hand, it was identified that some students do not have habits of self-care which has a deep impact on their health, self-esteem and

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social acceptance. This can be caused mainly because most of their parents work 8 to 10 hours a day, 5 to 6 days a week. Finally, school concluded that the daily lives of some students are affected by the breakup of affective bounds such as: parents' divorce or the loss of important relatives.

In contrast with the information above and the observations made in field, it was noticed that most of students had a strong influence of social media and their free time is spent in front of a TV set or a computer while parents or care providers get home or do their own activities. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that this fact do not affect their academic performance significantly, because it was detected that some of them receive enough help to accomplish school's goals and the results are reflected in assignment's outcomes (Field Notes, Day 8, Line 15. Appendix A).

Added to that, it was observed that the 34 fifth graders are in ages between 8 and 11 years old and according to their growth development stage, they tend towards communicating and describing the way they perceive their environment. By virtue of this interest, it was noticed that students had a deep interest in learning English on the one hand, due to the impact that it could have in the future for them to get a well-paid job or obtain a university's degree in Colombia or in foreign countries, and on the other hand, because they want to name and tell their ideas about the world.

On top of that, their attitude during English lessons showed that they are very perceptive to new vocabulary and a sort of different activities intended to produce meaning through the use of the object language, but they did not have the possibility of being constantly exposed to the foreign language. Nonetheless, resources disposed to

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assist their learning process during English lessons in the classroom were quite limited; although the classroom has a T.V. set and it is possible to play DVD's or audio CD's, school does not have a resources bank that might be used during sessions.

Statement of the problem

To be a proficient user of a foreign language implies to be able to perform a set of competences. According to the CEFR (2011), this group of competences is composed of four main aspects: *declarative knowledge (savoir)*, *skills and know how (savoir-faire)*, *existencial competence (savoir-être)* and *ability to learn (savoir-apprendre)* (p, 101-108). Following this idea and taking into account the population needs, languages programs are free to “[focus] on a particular dimension and [decide] on the extent to which other dimensions should be considered and ways of [take] account of these” (Council of Europe, 2011, p. 10).

In view of this, learners are not just supposed to develop certain linguistic abilities to be proficient users of the object language but also, they must be able to know how to establish and boost their motivations, and how to “exploit strenghts and overcome weaknesses” (Council of Europe, 2011, p, 106), because these factors affect their roles in communicative acts and their *ability to learn*. Thereupon, in this degree, the development of students' *language and communication awareness* and *study skills* (i.e. to co-operate effectively in pair and group work, to make rapid and frequent active use of the language learnt and, to organize and use materials for self-directed learning) “enables the learner to

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deal more effectively and independently with new language learning challenges”

(Council of Europe, 2011, p, 107).

On the other hand, according to the *Basic Standards of Competences in Foreign Languages* established by National Ministry of Education in 2006, fourth and fifth graders must mainly be able to understand and write short, simple and illustrated texts about daily, personal and literary topics, and speak in a moderate and clear way with their teacher and classmates about topics related to their contexts. However, the *existential* and *ability to learn* competences are not considered within the core structure of the *standards*’ document as it is not contemplated the development of *language and communication awareness* and *study skills*. Furthermore, taking into account the Institution’s principles to assess kids’ learning, school’s curriculum states that, as it is important to consider their academic performance and their learning process, it is also pivotal to take into account their attitudinal achievements along the development of lessons (Colegio Aníbal Fernández de Soto, 2010, p, 12).

However, bearing in mind the diagnosis applied to the students’ population, it was observed that on the one hand, their attitudes and motivations were not contemplated in the design of English lessons with the purpose of developing *study skills* and *language and communication awareness*, and moreover, they did not have a continuous learning process. The process mostly focused on memorizing a prompt of vocabulary and paid special attention to understand basic expressions that are not frequently used in students’ daily lives. It happened partially because of the lack of resources for boosting English learning at school and the small amount of time disposed for English lessons.

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Regarding time of lessons, along a session of two hours, kids were supposed to develop listening, writing, speaking and reading skills (the four basics to be proficient in terms of linguistic competence) through the study of the topics proposed in the English syllabus, by means of memorizing and repeating, but not making sense of what they learnt and relating it with their previous knowledge in places outside the classroom. Therefore, the input they received and the time disposed for interaction among peers was limited and they did not have any clear purpose or tools to boost their learning at home.

Thence, considering what was observed within the dynamics of English lessons, it was contemplated the possibility of guiding students in the creation of a meaningful classroom environment through collaborative activities, in order to offer them the opportunity of increasing their interaction time while creating their own resources, with the main purpose of developing self-regulated attitudes that might help them to become long-life learners.

Rationale

Dynamics of today's world demand persons that could be able of transforming their context and solve creatively problems. Likewise students exhibited to have strong motivations and their own opinions about the importance of learning English, to help them to become leaders of their own learning processes could be a plausible opportunity for encouraging them to be agents of change and long-life learners. Hence a self-regulative practice seems to be an accurate strategy to boost kids' learning when considering the way they can assist their own process, and how this dynamic sets a

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meaningful environment since it takes into account their abilities and the way they relate what they learn with the structures of their setting.

Furthermore, regarding the fact that to work collaboratively is a reliable tool to make individuals aware of the importance of considering others as potentially valuable partners in terms of what they could provide from their own experiences and abilities, this study kept in mind that teamwork not just could give students the possibility of receive meaningful input but also, it could offer them the occasion of reflect upon their performance through a reflection process of peers' assessment, which on the one hand help them to notice the aspects it is possible to strength, and on the other hand support a healthier classroom atmosphere in terms of convivence.

Research Question and Objectives

This study looks at a meaningful classroom environment within the dynamics of collaborative work as a tool to improve self-regulation attitudes in fifth-graders. In doing so, the main focus of the research was to centre on the development of students' *existential competences* as a way to improve their communicative competence in EFL.

Research Question

What is the possible effect of a meaningful classroom environment built by collaborative activities on the development of fifth graders' self-regulation attitudes?

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General Objective

To analyze the possible effects of a meaningful classroom environment designed through collaborative activities in the development of fifth graders self-regulated attitudes.

Specific Objectives

- To employ collaborative activities in a meaningful classroom environment design.
- To describe the influence of a meaningful classroom environment design on fifth graders self-regulated attitudes.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter considers first, a literature review on some relevant studies that were based on researches that deal with self-regulation processes, collaborative work dynamics in the classroom, and the importance of a meaningful environment. After, the key theoretical constructs that support this study which are: *Meaningful Learning and its importance in the development of a communicative environment*, *Collaborative work in the creation of a meaningful classroom environment*, and *Self-regulation to spread the impact of a meaningful classroom environment*, are described and characterized.

State of art

Based on the challenges that helping students to develop self-regulated attitudes involves, some strategies have been applied through the design of pedagogical proposals addressed to action-research studies. Particularly, these strategies have been directed to monitor the process during the accomplishment of some tasks at the hand of the improvement of skills as the main goal, giving focal attention to students' attitudes and behaviors facing their own process in order to lead them to be aware of it and take autonomous actions.

Designed strategies focused on common class activities that are enhanced taking into account students' needs, interests and abilities have shown to be effective to boost self-regulated attitudes. The first study, that was considered relevant regarding this subject, was carried out by Góngora (2005). The research titled *Meaningful homework*

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monitoring process for an EFL classroom took place in IED Liceo Femenino Mercedes Nariño with 41 third graders. It concluded that through the basis of the implementation of meaningful homework, students can be active agents of their own learning process by becoming more aware of their own progress and receiving individual and groupal assessment. However, researcher suggested to analyze in depth the implications of students' motivations and autonomy during the accomplishment of assignments in order to go in depth to possible implications upon students' improvement of language skills.

Afterwards, students researchers Báez and Pinilla (2009) delved into the study field of attitudes towards English as a tool to encourage individuals to set up and accomplish their own learning objectives through the implementation of tasks addressed to Project Based Learning Approach. The project *The self-regulation process through the project based learning*, grounded on students' interests and abilities, aimed to foster Intermediate students of Languages Centre's motivations regarding their skills development progress. Along the process of the project's pedagogical intervention, they could conclude that "Self-regulated behaviors depend on students' awareness about their own learning processes and also about the specific activities they do in order to improve or get over the failures they present" (Pinilla and Báez, 2009, p. 55).

The principles stated before were key when designing the pedagogical proposal that will be illustrated in chapter 4. First at all, because self-regulated attitudes have proved to be effective since they foster students' capacity to create their own means to progress along language learning process. However, studies on self-regulated attitudes

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with primary students to stimulate and develop autonomy have not been carried out in detail.

Now, looking at similar studies that were performed in foreign countries, meaningful learning as an approach in the design of tasks to improve self-regulation attitudes' studies were considered in order to observe its possible impact upon the accomplishment of this research purposes. Regarding this matter, it was considered pivotal the study titled *Learning strategies and self-regulation in vocabulary acquisition: a research project about EFL learners study experience and achievement*. This study was carried out by teachers in training of the Universidad de Chile. Araya, Peña, Rodríguez, Spate and Vergara (2013) proposed to describe the effects of self-regulation levels on the accurate use of learning strategies to acquire vocabulary by working with first year undergraduate students of the program of English Linguistics and Literature at their university.

They found that learners are more successful in vocabulary acquisition when they are able to self-regulate themselves in terms of the use of learning strategies and by controlling their predispositions to study, because “providing self-regulatory training to students and make them aware of it, can be considered as the foundation for general learning” (Araya, Peña, Rodríguez, Spate and Vergara, 2013, p, 55). Furthermore, they came upon the conclusion that not just a metacognitive awareness could be the main reason why learners carry out conscious decisions but also, the possibility of a meaningful surrounding environment makes learning process easier. Nevertheless, as a suggestion to further research, they recommended the use of collaborative work and

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explicit teaching of strategies to help students get better results in the acquisition of vocabulary.

Afterwards, the study titled *A metacognitive perspective on the growth of self-regulated EFL student writers* was examined. Ruan (2005) carried out this research with Chinese undergraduate students who participated in a self-regulated EFL writing program to describe the linkage between metacognitive knowledge of the second language and writing behaviors performance, in order to explore the possibility of helping students to become skilled and independent writers through a process-oriented self-regulated writing instruction.

His findings acquaint the implications of a new teacher's role that have a powerful influence over students' motivation and the impact of peers and self-assessment over the boosting of students' autonomy. On the one hand, its findings not just showed that the engagement of students in self-regulation strategies helped them to acquire metacognitive knowledge of the foreign language which in a long term matured their L2 writing production processes, but also, he noticed that "students appreciated the shift of the teacher's role from a judgemental examiner of what they wrote to a source of formative feedback and encouragement" (Ruan, 2005, p, 184); this highlights the importance that the teacher's role plays in the creation of a suitable learning environment that encourages self-regulation.

Delving into the principle stated before, the researcher besides observed that "when they [students] were able to make their own decisions regarding writing topics and task procedures, interest and personal involvement in class activities seemed to be

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heightened” (Ruan, 2005, p. 199). Finally, regarding the assessment stage of the process, researcher found out that “the application of (...) self-evaluation and self-revision might help to develop the sense of the self as an active cognitive agent and as the causal centre of their own cognitive activity” (Ruan, 2005, p, 200) which in perspective strengthens the metacognitive process of each student and benefits self-regulation itself.

Ensuing last outcomes, it would be important to carry out a research study taking into account prior suggestions when executing a pedagogical proposal that aims to examine students’ motivations to encourage self-regulated attitudes through the development of collaborative work tasks intended to create a meaningful environment that at the same time will have a strong effect in students’ learning process with a new possible relevance in the application of such pedagogical proposal in primary students.

Literature Review

The following excerpt presents, under the light of theory, the three constructs of this research study. First, it is considered the importance of meaningful learning in the development of an effective communicative competence. Second, the dynamics of collaborative work in the setting of a meaningful classroom environment and finally, the significance of following a self-regulation process to spread the impact of a meaningful classroom environment.

Meaningful Learning and its importance in the development of a communicative environment

According to Ausubel (2000) the concept of Meaningful Learning refers to the way individuals relate new knowledge to previous relevant concepts they already knew and the importance of that interaction between new knowledge and previous structures to transfer what it has been learnt to *long-term* memory. Taking as referent Atkinson-Shiffrin memory model, all new information is received by sense organs and gets in the *sensory memory* which moves in the *short-term memory*. However, to not to be forgotten it needs to be absorbed by *long-term memory*. This way, information would need to be rehearsed and elaborated as Shiffrin later submitted (Raaijmakers & Shiffrin, 2003, p. 26). It suggests that to foster learners' long-term memory it is necessary to create an environment which involves students in a constant creation of meaning by rehearsing and elaborating it.

For research purposes, to focus the attention on the concept of Meaningful learning helps to consider students learning process within a cognitive theory of learning. This provides a view on it as "a clearly articulated and precisely differentiated conscious experience that emerges when potentially meaningful signs, symbols, concepts, or propositions are related to and incorporated within a given individual's cognitive structure" (Takač, 2008) which is crucial to consider each individual's learning style. But, how to construct this experience?

First, it is important to clarify that this meaningful experience that is composed of all the elements stated before may be designed by the students themselves under the

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teacher's guidance to wit, teacher will be responsible of encouraging students to use the prompts of the new linguistic code with communicative purposes.

Nevertheless, once learners become users of the new linguistic code by social communicative interaction, it is a pivotal matter, to provide the appropriate conditions to accomplish this aim through the employment of all possible resources that the context may provide. But as Moon suggests:

“Children only make use of these means if [you] develop the right kind of learning environment -one in which they have plenty of exposure to a variety of meaningful input, feel free to take risks and experiment, want to use the language to communicate with [you] and other class mates and get feedback on their learning”. (2000, p.16)

At this point, it can be conclude that teacher, in her role of guide and monitor, is responsible of designing a set of activities that leads students to create the materials that will constitute their meaningful classroom environment. Subsequently, it is important to mention that, when kids are involved in this creation process, the experience becomes more meaningful. Not just their motivations increase but also at the same time, they are rehearsing and elaborating the new knowledge they are learning.

Collaborative work in the creation of a meaningful classroom environment

In terms of a meaningful classroom environment, it is necessary to consider the importance of counting on the necessary resources to foster learning processes. But it is also important to offer a significant amount of input to students with the purpose of

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providing the right conditions of a communicative environment that helps students to become competent users of language.

Working together at a classroom level has shown to be a reliable way of offsetting the lack of certain resources and possibilities. Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider what collaborative work means in classroom dynamics. According to Johnson and Halubec (1990), collaborative work is “the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning” (p. 3). Thereupon, by means of Collaborative work on the one hand, as Harmer (1989) indicated, the opportunities of students’ talking time will increase as they will have the opportunity of exchanging points of view, feedback and knowledge that in the long term as Vygotsky (1978) suggested will not just provide sufficient input but also will allow students to develop individual thought by interaction.

Appealing to collaborative work as a useful tool to create a health and encouraging classroom atmosphere which takes into account individual’s particular features, abilities and points of view as a valuable contribution to accomplish group goals, even teacher and students’ roles change in favor of meaningful learning. As Smith (1992) has stated:

“(…) teachers are not the ones that possess all the knowledge (...). From a collaborative sense, the real meaning of this technique is not only the generation of students’ encounters in which they are given a task to develop, but also are given the opportunity to give opinions, self-correction and peer

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correction as tools to promote tolerance and idea-sharing, planning projects, among other important benefits of Collaborative Learning” (p.15)

Following this idea, it can be said that students could perform a valuable role, from the moment they assimilate class dynamics and lead some activities to become guides. Referring to this point, according to Moon (2000), students could be used as resources by playing different roles such as: “partners for other children to practice English, as tutors to help each other learn English, as models or demonstrators to help you show other children what to do, and as makers of learning resources for other children (or themselves)” (p, 140).

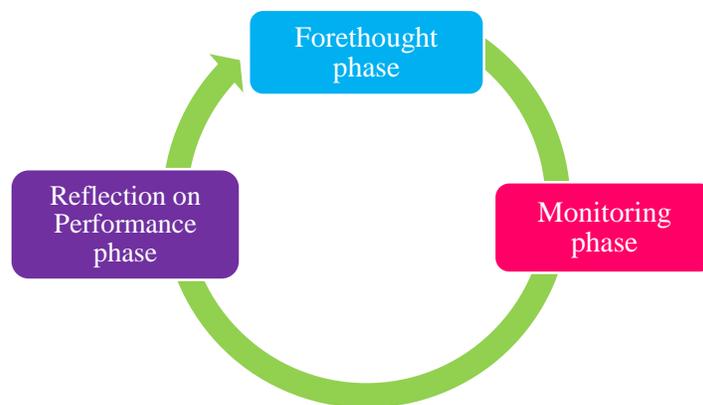
From this perspective, this research study is nurtured by the view of collaborative work as the practical matter from which a meaningful environment has the possibility to emerge thanks to the participative work of students and teacher, following the main goal of creating a meaningful communicative environment of which it is possible to obtain valuable rewards in terms of effective language learning.

Nevertheless, it is important to consider the specific features of each individual in terms of his/her own thoughts, feelings and motivations as a field which must concern the design of a meaningful classroom environment, since the appropriate management of this field affects their learning experience too.

Self-regulation to spread the impact of a meaningful classroom environment

A self-regulated learning process is an essential guide for students to manage their thoughts, behaviors and feelings directed to acquire learning habits, in order to accomplish a successful learning experience. This process takes place when students direct their actions and purposes towards the accomplishment of some particular learning goals that they may set by means of self-reflection regarding school curriculum, their own motivations, the way they best learn and the improvement of certain skills. Zimmerman (2000) has proposed a cyclical model that discusses three different phases involving self-regulated learning (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Cyclic process of self-regulated learning



The main actions involving each phase have to do with: setting specific goals on *forethought phase*, applying strategies to make progress on a learning task and observing their effectiveness during a *monitoring phase*, and evaluating the performance on a learning task in the course of a *reflection on performance phase* (Zimmerman, 2000).

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Moreover and taking into account the findings made during diagnosis phase, participants of the current research study have manifested a considerable enthusiasm towards English learning. This issue is brought into consideration because it has been demonstrated that motivation is a key principle to apply successfully a self-regulation strategy. As Zumbrunn, Tadlock and Roberts (2011) have pointed:

“When students are motivated to learn, they are more likely to invest the necessary time and energy needed to learn and apply appropriate SRL skills, and when students are able to successfully employ self-regulation strategies, they are often more motivated to complete learning tasks”. (pp. 8-9)

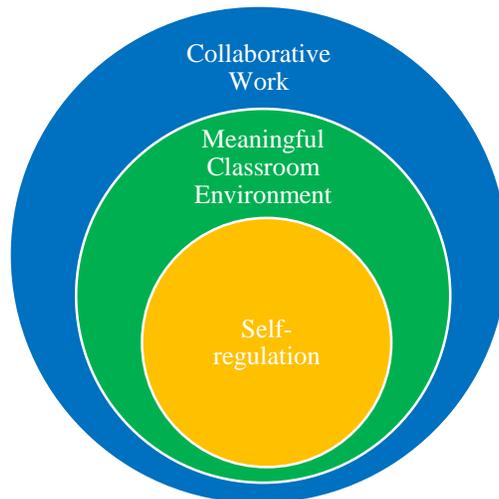
However, it is necessary that this displayed motivation should be addressed through a daily and guided experience that in the long term leads into the development of a positive attitude of autonomy and strong learning habits that make students aware of the way they are able to learn best, and how in such manner, it helps them to become long-life learners.

Finally and regarding one of the key aims of this research study, Zumbrunn, Tadlock and Roberts (2011) considers that to encourage the development of students self-regulated learning turns the teacher and student’s performance into a reflective practice that benefits kids population. On the one hand, it allows to adapt and examine strategies of self-regulation according each individual learning style; and on the other hand, it supports and fosters the most effective and fitting use of self-regulation strategies while “teachers can better create meaningful learning experiences for their students” (Gibson, Hauf, & Long, 2011).

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Hence, as it is shown in *Figure 2*, collaborative work is a powerful tool that conducts the tasks along the development of the class sessions, and its products are intended to build, compose and organize the setting of a meaningful classroom environment which in turn disposes the setting to carry out a process of self-regulation that intends to improve and boost students' learning skills.

Figure 2. A meaningful classroom environment through collaborative work to improve self-regulation.



All in all, along the development of this chapter, the pertinence of the constructs for this research purposes, enlightened by the existent theory on meaningful learning, collaborative work and self-regulation process, were established to clarify the principles that guided the design of the strategies embedded in the pedagogical intervention. The following chapter presents the approach and type of investigation that was carried out, as well as, the instruments of data collection that were used.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

Along the development of the following chapter the approach and the type of research will be considered. Thereupon, ethical issues along the study process will be addressed. Finally, the instruments of data collection and their criteria selection will be pointed out taking into account the research features such as reliability, validity and triangulation.

Research paradigm

To follow the guidelines of a qualitative research paradigm helped to determine the progress of students' self-regulation process. Bearing in mind that the observations of study's population were made in context and the fact that, data came out from the scholar environment in which students are involved, on the one hand, through this paradigm, it was possible to monitor and describe their performance along the course of the activities designed by following the pedagogical proposal stated in chapter 4. Its pertinence was considered because the object of analysis emerged from a real context and it is at the same time the source of the data. Then, the researcher "attempts to observe, describe and interpret settings as they are maintaining an *empathic neutrality*" (Patton, 1990, p. 55).

On top of that, qualitative approach practices "turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3); it means that researcher had the opportunity of collecting and analyzing the data from different and reliable perspectives,

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but more than anything, from the actors' point of view regarding their own process as individuals and members of a collaborative group that are performing the actions and strategies that they designed under teacher's guidance, in order to accomplish the learning objectives they fixed. According to Hatch (2000) their voices are prominent in the final report.

Finally, it is necessary to consider that to establish the strong significance of this study as a qualitative research that might impact the educational field, it was important to consider that the insights and findings of the study "may be epistemologically in harmony with the reader's experience" (Stake, 1978, p. 5) or at least familiar to offer to other colleagues grounded judgements that could enrich, as well, their own practices.

Type of Research

Bearing in mind that this research looked upon the needs emerged during observation in a real classroom context by taking into account students and setting features, this was an action-research study. Firstly, it is necessary to highlight the pertinence of this type of research to the outgoing study. As Hatch (2000) stated "action research is concerned with activity and change. It is undertaken for the sake of investigating practice (...) and improving that practice based on what is discovered" (p. 31). That implied not just the description and interpretation of a problematic situation but the design of a strategy to improve kids' learning process and researcher's teaching practice.

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On the other hand, the data observed at the beginning allowed “to intervene in a deliberate way in the problematic situation in order to bring about changes and, even better, improvements in practice” (Burns, 2010, p. 2). Therefore, while researcher carried out an action research study, she had the opportunity of enrich her perspective as teacher by anticipating a wide view in regards pedagogical issues and also, she provided valuable insights to school based on reliable data. Nevertheless, it is important to clarify that the main aim of an action research study “is not with generating theory or generalizations that can be applied [exactly on the same way] in other settings” (Hatch, 2000, p. 31).

Added to that, to follow the guidelines of action-research it was necessary to fulfill a cyclic process composed of four basic stages (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988, p. 11) such as planning (the design of lessons under research purposes), action (application of lesson plans to achieve students’ self-regulated attitudes through collaborative work) , observation (monitoring of students’ attitudes and their achievements and difficulties) and reflection (assesment of process to plan and take new actions), it was possible to reach a reflective understanding of problematic issues and simultaneously, to provide new creative and attractive solutions focused on the particular features of context regarding the key aim of the project.

Incidentally, it is significant to bring into consideration the fact that teachers involved in action-research have a huge interest in finding new and appropriate ways of teaching more effectively centering attention in student’s population needs and their contexts, in order to supply suitable and creative outcomes that transcend classroom contexts. As a result “the teacher becomes an ‘investigator’ or ‘explorer’ of his or her

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personal teaching context, while at the same time being one of the participants in it” (Burns, 2010, p.2). Under this principle, researcher acted as the teacher responsible of designing and leading activities to be carried out in the level, as at the same time, she was responsible of observing, collecting and analyzing data that afterwards was the basis of subsequent strategies proposals.

Instruments for data collection

To achieve data analysis stage, it was necessary to consider the use of instruments such as, teacher’s logs, students’ learning diaries and questionnaires to students, in order to keep a reliable record of different perspectives and sources regarding the process carried out through the development of the research project. As it is observed in *Table 1*, instruments were designed taking into account each objective determined at the beginning of this study.

Table 1. Data Collection instruments

Research Objectives	Data Source # 1	Data Source # 2	Data Source # 3
To employ collaborative work strategies in a meaningful classroom environment design.	<i>Teacher’s logs</i>	<i>Student’s learning diaries</i>	<i>Questionnaires</i>
To describe the influence of a meaningful classroom environment design on fifth graders self-regulated attitudes.	<i>Teacher’s logs</i>	<i>Student’s learning diaries</i>	<i>Questionnaires</i>

Teacher’s log. This instrument is according to (Buehl, 2009) a tool for keeping a record of thoughts and ideas facing teaching practices following the guidelines

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determined by project's research purposes. Logs were selected in order to monitor and have a register of students' performance and reactions towards classroom new setting along each work session. With this in mind, to accomplish this objective, it was necessary to employ and determine three different sections that were proposed taking into account the specific phenomena that researcher needed to describe following the study guidelines. It means, that it was examined kids' collaborative work performance, self-regulation attitudes and kids' achievements in terms of lessons' goals from teacher's view, along each teaching session (Appendix B). Hence, the first teacher log was completed on August 24th, 2015 and from then, at the end of each lesson until March 11th, 2016.

Learning diaries. Secondly, learning diaries which are conceived according to Moon (2000) as “vehicles for reflection” were necessary for “making explicit and recording the learning that occurred” from the students' perspective. These artifacts gave the researcher “a lot of information about their feelings and attitudes” (Moon, 2000, p. 19) but more than anything addressed a wide and significant overview on kids' self-monitoring process (Appendix C). However, it is important to mention that it was required to suggest students some conductive questions that could guide them through the completion of their diaries.

Thus, questions were directed to inquire what were their study habits at home, their opinions towards the way their performed during class sessions and their feelings when they were or were not able to accomplish a task. Therefore, students wrote down their opinions and thoughts regarding the principles stated before, along the course of the

last session of every cycle. It was on October 19th and November 16th, 2015; and on March 11th, 2016.

Semi-structured questionnaires. Finally, semi-structured questionnaires were applied to students during the last stage of the pedagogical intervention stated in Chapter 4 (Appendix D). According to Wilson and McNeal (1994) “the questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured (...) data, (...) and often being comparatively straightforward to analyze” (p. 3).

Furthermore it was determined that it would be semi-structured because “a series of questions, statements or items [can be] presented and the respondents are asked to answer, respond to or comment on them in a way that they think best” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 321). It means that, although the survey had a visible structure and sequence, the questions’ format was open-ended and answers could offer a wide view when establishing categories along the data analysis process. Then, in the face of the guidelines specified before, these questionnaires were answered by work teams on an extra work session on October 15th, 2015 and at the end of cycles 2 and 3, on November 11th, 2015 and on March 11th, 2016.

Once it was examined each instrument of data collection, it was needed to contemplate as Check & Schutt (2012) stated, that not just an instrument gives “a whole and accurate picture of what is happening” and that is the main reason why “teacher researchers need multiple perspectives, represented by a range of data collection techniques, to illustrate different aspects of the same question or problem”. (p. 267).

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Then, according to the main aim of this research study, through triangulation of the three instruments of data collection, it was possible to analyze and describe the effects of creating a meaningful classroom environment through collaborative work on students' self-regulated attitudes.

Data collection procedures

To start the data collection process, it was necessary to carry out an internal testing at the beginning of the study, on the first semester of 2015, to prove the reliability of instruments. Then, samples of logs were examined by experienced teachers' researchers, and questionnaires were applied on the field to validate their efficiency before being used during the execution of each pedagogical proposal phase. After reaching that stage, data was collected during 13 weeks at the school with 34 fifth graders, beginning on August 24th, and finishing on March 11th, 2016, along the course of 14 sessions. Thereupon, in order to collect data systematically, some steps were followed. Firstly, consent forms were delivered to students' parents to be signed (Appendix E); Afterwards, pedagogical intervention and observation processes were fulfilled along the 90 minutes disposed for English sessions by institution. This process took place along 7 months, working a session per week.

From then on, teacher's logs were written at the end of each session from August 24th, 2015 to March 11th, 2016, and it was possible to fulfill 14 formats. There, it was described the phenomena that addressed kids' self-regulated and collaborative work attitudes and their performance regarding learning outcomes, all that, from teacher-

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researcher's point of view. Additionally, three semi-structured questionnaires were applied to classroom work teams at the end on each cycle on October 15th and November 9th, 2015; and on March 11th, 2016. These artifacts allowed to determine students' views on the success of collaborative tasks and their feelings and attitudes towards their role as members of a group, as well as, the strategies they planned to set to accomplish upcoming tasks in the most accurately way.

Finally, students gave a report of their views, attitudes and feelings along the accomplishment of tasks during lessons through the completion of a learning diary, where they were free to express their opinions regarding class dynamics. Although, not all students made daily entries, it is necessary to clarify that regarding the *Reflection on performance phase* of the self-regulated process that was accomplished at the end of each cycle during *Reflection and new strategies stage* of the pedagogical intervention, their reports were checked on October 19th and November 16th, 2015; and on March 11th, 2016.

All things considered, this chapter presented the methodological framework that guided the development of this research study as well as the instruments and procedures that were used to collect data. On the one hand, the study was situated in the qualitative research paradigm as an action-research project carried out in a real classroom context. And on the other hand, the data collection instruments were defined as well as, the procedures for collecting data were explained. Thereupon, the next chapter presents a description of the instructional design that guided the course of all pedagogical interventions of this study.

CHAPTER IV

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Along the development of this chapter, the instructional design as a plan designed and aimed to provide an answer to the stated research problem in terms of language learning objectives is described. Thus, this section explores some general considerations in regard to concepts such as: visions of curriculum, language, learning and classroom that underpin the present proposal. Finally, the instructional design stages are presented.

Vision of curriculum

To follow a self-regulation process by the means of collaborative work to create a meaningful classroom environment it was necessary to consider curriculum from an *Experiential Approach*. According to Zaba (as cited by Laevers, 2004) it is important to understand that “curriculum consists of two different things: the content (subject matter) and the learning experiences (the mental operations that students employ in learning subject matter)” (p.2). Herewith, to accomplish an effective learning experience, it is necessary to focus on two different dimensions: *well-being* and *involvement* (Laevers, 1994).

As stated by Laevers (2004), the degree of *well-being* is reached when children show self-confidence and feel at ease in their learning environment because their physical, emotional, cognitive, social and moral needs were considered. On the other hand, at the level of *involvement*, teachers are responsible to provide pupils with appropriate stimuli that helps them to include their capabilities in order to achieve a *deep*

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level learning of the subject matter goals. This happens by means of setting the suitable conditions even from the classroom environment. For this research purposes it was taken into account Leavers and Moons (1997) *ten action points* for supporting *well-being* and *involvement*.

Each statement enriched researcher's understanding in different manners. Firstly, it gave important views on how to build a meaningful classroom setting rich in appropriate materials and resources that assists the creation of more challenging and appealing activities. Secondly, it brought into mind the importance of create positive relationships between teacher and students, and even between class mates, which benefits collaborative work. Finally, it considered the importance of exploring activities that encourage kids to think about their feelings and motivations along the accomplishment of class tasks. This is pivotal when talking about a self-regulation process in which students have the opportunity to reflect on their emotions in order to set new plans and strategies to reach a future outcome.

Vision of Language

Beyond being an abstract system which is organized under a group of rules, units and relationships at phonologic, morphologic, syntactic and semantic levels, language is also a vehicle that reflects culture. It is "a way of seeing, understanding and communicating about the world" (Scarino and Liddicoat, 2009, p. 16). Following the outlines of this research project, then, language in its communicative purpose is, as stated

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by Kramersch (as cited by Scarino and Liddicoat, 2009), “not simply a body of knowledge to be learnt but a social practice in which to participate” (p. 16).

Therefore, to improve self-regulation attitudes, this research project followed the principle of language as a social practice that is heightened by the constant interaction that provides collaborative work in an environment in which students have the opportunity of constantly be involved in the use of the code with meaningful purposes.

Vision of learning

From the curricular vision stated before, this study kept in mind a definition of learning from an experiential perspective. According to Kolb (1984) learning is “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p.41). To make this process possible it is necessary to conceive learning as a holistic process of adaptation.

On that subject Kolb and Kolb (2008) declare that learning “is not just the result of cognition but involves the integrated functioning of the total person –thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving”. This particular view allows to consider the cognitive process of the individual and also, students’ opinions and feelings regarding i.e. the performance of a task, to provide new and improved ideas in the designing of future strategies to address a future task which in summary enhances the proposed dynamics of the entire instructional design.

Vision of classroom

Taking into account that acquisition “occurs unconsciously and spontaneously, does lead to conversational fluency, and arises from naturalistic language use” (Oxford, 1990), the classroom environment that this study addresses is one in which students must have around them not just all the necessary tools to carry on their learning tasks but also a considerable amount of input in the target language.

On account of that fact, Justice (2004) proposes that a language-rich classroom environment “is one in which children are exposed deliberately and recurrently to high quality verbal input among peers and adults and in which adult-child verbal interactions are characterized by high levels of adult responsiveness” (p. 37). Following this principle, researcher carried out all interventions using English to communicate with the students in order to give them a great amount of exposure.

Finally, it is necessary to consider the importance of the classroom display, taking into account that it is considerably relevant when talking about kids’ motivation. According to Moon (2000) the display is “an attractive collection of things which are arranged in a meaningful way with a clear learning purpose” (p. 145). In terms of a meaningful classroom environment through collaborative work, the display of classroom is a product of the materials that the groups of students make to boost their own learning and that is available for them to keep practicing.

Instructional Design

Taking into account that a *self-regulation* perspective framed the development of this pedagogical intervention, the pedagogical proposal intended to design a meaningful classroom environment by accomplishing collaborative work tasks that at the same time could help students improve learning habits and attitudes as a group and individually. During the course of intervention, students had the opportunity of developing some tasks that were directed to reach their particular objectives facing their own English learning process, and to accomplish school's established goals for each term period. It is important to clarify that this pedagogical intervention aimed to increase student's autonomous behavior but was not directed to develop a particular language skill, though it aimed to encourage self-regulated attitudes that led to the improvement of language competence.

In the same way they worked in a collaborative way as Moon(2000) stated, students performed “as partners for others, as tutors in helping others, as models or demonstrators, and as resource makers” (p.140) increasing the use of language through the meaningful classroom environment design and attending to a communicative approach that expected from them “to participate in classroom activities (...), to become comfortable with listening to their peers in group work or pair work tasks, rather than relying on the teacher for a model and to take on a greater degree of responsibility for their own learning” (Richards, 2006, p. 5) in order to develop an effective *communicative competence*.

Bearing in mind research objectives and the development of the three self-regulation phases stated by Zimmerman (2000) considered in Chapter 2, this pedagogical

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intervention was designed to follow four stages that were applied along three cycles during the second and third phase of the teaching-practice. These were: instructive stage, collaborative work stage, exchange of materials and peer's assessment, and reflection and new strategies' plan stage. See table 2.

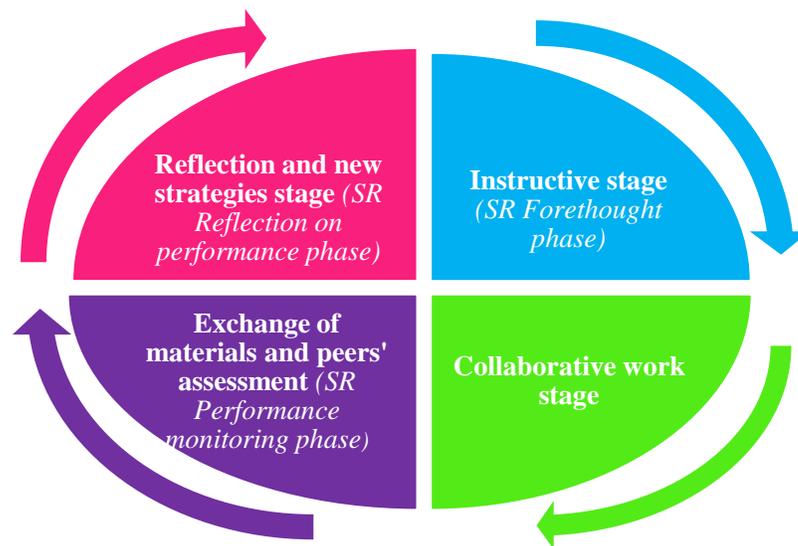
Table 2.. Cycles of the study and pedagogical stages

CYCLE	SYLLABUS TOPIC	INTERVENTION STAGES	MAIN AIMS	ESTIMATED TIME
1	Numbers from 0-100	Instructive	Analyse and propose possible learning outcomes regarding syllabus topics	1 session (2 academic hours) August 24 th , 2015.
		Collaborative work	Monitor and analyse kids' attitudes of collaboration when working in groups.	3 sessions (6 academic hours) August 31 st , September 7 th and September 14 th , 2015.
		Exchange of materials and peer's assessment	Use materials elaborated by teams to reach learning outcomes.	1 session (2 academic hours) September 21 st , 2015.
		Reflection and new strategies plan	Evaluate each kid and team's performance and propose new strategies to improve what they are aware it is necessary to improve	1 session (1 academic hour) October 19 th , 2015.
2	Telling the time	Instructive	Discuss learning outcomes and fix some new regarding syllabus topics.	1 session (1 academic hour) October 19 th , 2015.
		Collaborative work	Monitor kids' attitudes of collaboration along the elaboration of materials.	1 session (2 academic hours) October 26 th , 2015.
		Exchange of materials and peer's assessment	Ask and tell the time among partners using materials.	1 session (2 academic hours) November 9 th , 2015.
		Reflection and new strategies plan	Evaluate each kid and team's performance and monitor their reflections upon their performance.	1 session (2 academic hours) November 16 th , 2015.
3	Wild and domestic animals	Instructive	Propose possible learning outcome	1 session (2 academic hours) February 19 th , 2016.
		Collaborative work	Monitor kids' attitudes of collaboration and encourage them to help each other when a task is difficult for someone.	1 session (2 academic hours) February 26 th , 2016.
		Exchange of materials and peer's assessment	Exchange materials among teams and help each other to accomplish the learning task.	1 session (2 academic hours) March 4 th , 2016.
		Reflection and new strategies plan	Evaluate each kid and team's performance and compare the learning outcomes they fixed and their actual outcomes.	1 session (2 academic hours) March 11 th , 2016.

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Intending to improve self-regulation attitudes in fourth graders, process were designed to be cyclic and to be accomplished with each instructional design stage. As it is seen in *Figure 3*.

Figure 3. Instructional design cyclic process based on self-regulation phases



Therefore, students could train on the steps of a self regulation process each time a unit began to be studied. Subsequently, considering the way collaborative work and self regulation were linked to embody a meaningful classroom environment that at the same time improve their attitudes to learn English in order to boost their communicative competences through the strenghtening of their existential competences, stages of the pedagogical proposal were accomplished this way: during the *instructive stage*, lessons were oriented to present students the topics of school syllabus and course goals regarding learning objectives. Habits such as the use of classroom commands and to communicate

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as much as possible in English with their classmates were established in order to set up the dynamics of the new classroom environment. Thus far, as students are aware of tasks, they are ready to start a *forethought and planing phase*, that according to (Zumbrunn, Tadlock & Roberts, 2011) let them “analyze the learning task and set specific goals toward completing that task” (p.4). The setting of their own personal goals as individuals included some personal tasks they designed for themselves and that they accomplished each week along the development of the whole cyclic process of the pedagogical intervention. They wrote down in a learning diary what they learnt, what were their difficulties in terms of accomplishing a task, and their feelings, in order to share their personal outcomes at home with their classmates at the end of the cyclic.

Then, at the *collaborative work stage* groups of work were formed with the intention of including students able to provide different abilities as individuals to the accomplishment of proposed tasks, taking into account that “learning preferences are personal learning strengths and weaknesses, and different approaches or ways of learning” (Fu, 2009) that enriched collaborative work process. Then, following syllabus topics, groups were responsible of developing tasks designed by teacher in training, to produce a sort of materials that could be exchanged amongst groups at the third stage of the pedagogical intervention.

During the execution of *exchange of materials and peers' assessment stage*, lessons were carried out to fulfil the *performance monitoring phase* of a self-regulated process that allowed students to “employ strategies to make progress on the learning task and monitor the effectiveness of those strategies as well as their motivation for continuing

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progress toward the goals of the task” (Zumbrunn, Tadlock and Roberts, 2011, p. 5); ensuing this principle, students had to monitor their peers performance based on the effectiveness of designed materials and those attitudes that were favorable or not too positive, regarding the elaboration of materials during the collaborative work stage, and the quality of other groups materials. Finally at *reflection and new strategies' plan stage*, students followed a *reflection on performance phase* as the final stage of the self-regulation process. Through this stage students “evaluate their performance on the learning task with respect to the effectiveness of the strategies that they chose” and “also manage their emotions about the outcomes of the learning experience” (Zumbrunn, Tadlock and Roberts, 2011, p. 5). Thus, students were able to evaluate themselves as members of a work team and as self-regulated individuals outside the classroom by sharing their work achievements as group and their personal accomplishments at home. The outcomes of this reflection let them to propose new strategies and tasks for them to follow when beginning a new unit.

In conclusion, along the execution of the pedagogical intervention students set their own learning objectives based on what is required by school’s curriculum, used English as a mean to communicate with their classmates and teacher, accomplished tasks along each session carried out following a lesson plan (Appendix F) to acquire new language knowledge, designed materials to share and practice what they learnt, and were able to monitor their performance in order to propose new strategies to perform upcoming learning tasks.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Along the development of the following chapter data collected and research-findings are presented. First, the approach used to analyze data as well as the procedures such as theoretical sampling, coding and constant comparison are described. Then, the categories that emerged from the analysis and the findings are discussed.

Procedures for data analysis

During the process of the pedagogical intervention the data collected were stored in three different color folders: green (cycle 1), pink (cycle 2) and purple (cycle 3), in order to keep an organized record of the data collected on each cycle. In such manner, once a cycle ended, the data collected was filed in a folder, classified and organized taking into account the instruments of data collection. It means that the data in each folder was divided into three different color sheets as well: blue (logs), yellow (questionnaires) and orange (learning diaries samples), which allowed the researcher to code and classify the new information in an orderly way and later, to analyze and organize it easier.

To analyze the data, it was necessary to follow the guidelines of the *grounded approach*. This kind of approach, as stated by Strauss and Corbin (1994) allows to determine research categories grounded in the analyzed data collected on field. On one hand, it was pertinent because “in everyday life, actions are interconnected and people

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make connections naturally, (...) grounded theory catches the naturalistic element of research and formulates it into a systematic methodology” (Glaser, 1996). From this point of view, patterns were implicit in data collected and by means of a systematic analysis these categories emerged from data in order to obtain theory that fit accurately the situation that was being studied. Thereupon, this was an inductive process (Glaser, 1996) in which categories emerged themselves from data as events that are interconnected with others inside the situation.

At this point, taking into account that the main objective of this research study was to analyze the possible effects of creating a meaningful classroom environment through collaborative work in the development of self-regulated attitudes in the population, it was necessary to carry out a process of *theoretical sampling* along the procedure of data collection with the purpose of gathering enough and reliable information from students and teacher’s points of view. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) this *theoretical sampling* method allows researcher to “keep on adding [data] to the sample until there is enough to describe what is going on in the context or situation under study” with the purpose of developing his/her categories as they emerge from the data.

Once all the information was gathered by means of *theoretical sampling*, all data was assembled by means of coding. Since at the beginning of analysis everything seems to be broken apart into paragraphs and quotes “these fragments are rearranged through coding to produce a new understanding that explores similarities and differences” (Ezzy,

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2002, p. 94). Following this principle, to code information under the guidelines of grounded approach, it was necessary to execute *open*, *axial* and *selective coding*.

Firstly, at *open coding* researcher examined the data in search of recurring meanings, actions, feelings and events to create “new codes and categories and subcategories where necessary and integrating codes where relevant until the coding is complete”. Secondly, at *axial coding* according to Cresswell (1998) researcher analyzed “the interconnectedness of categories” to find out relationships among them and integrate them as much as possible to the axes of central categories. Thirdly, at *selective coding* researcher was able to “write a story that integrated the categories in the axial coding” (Cresswell, 1998, p.57), and so on, the coding scheme emerged as research findings.

Finally, it is important to mention that along the *coding* process a *constant comparison* method was carried out. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) the relevance of this process “resonates with the methodological notion of triangulation” (p. 493). Then, the comparison process helped the researcher to compare categories time after time as far as no more dissimilarities occurred and this assured the reliability of the findings.

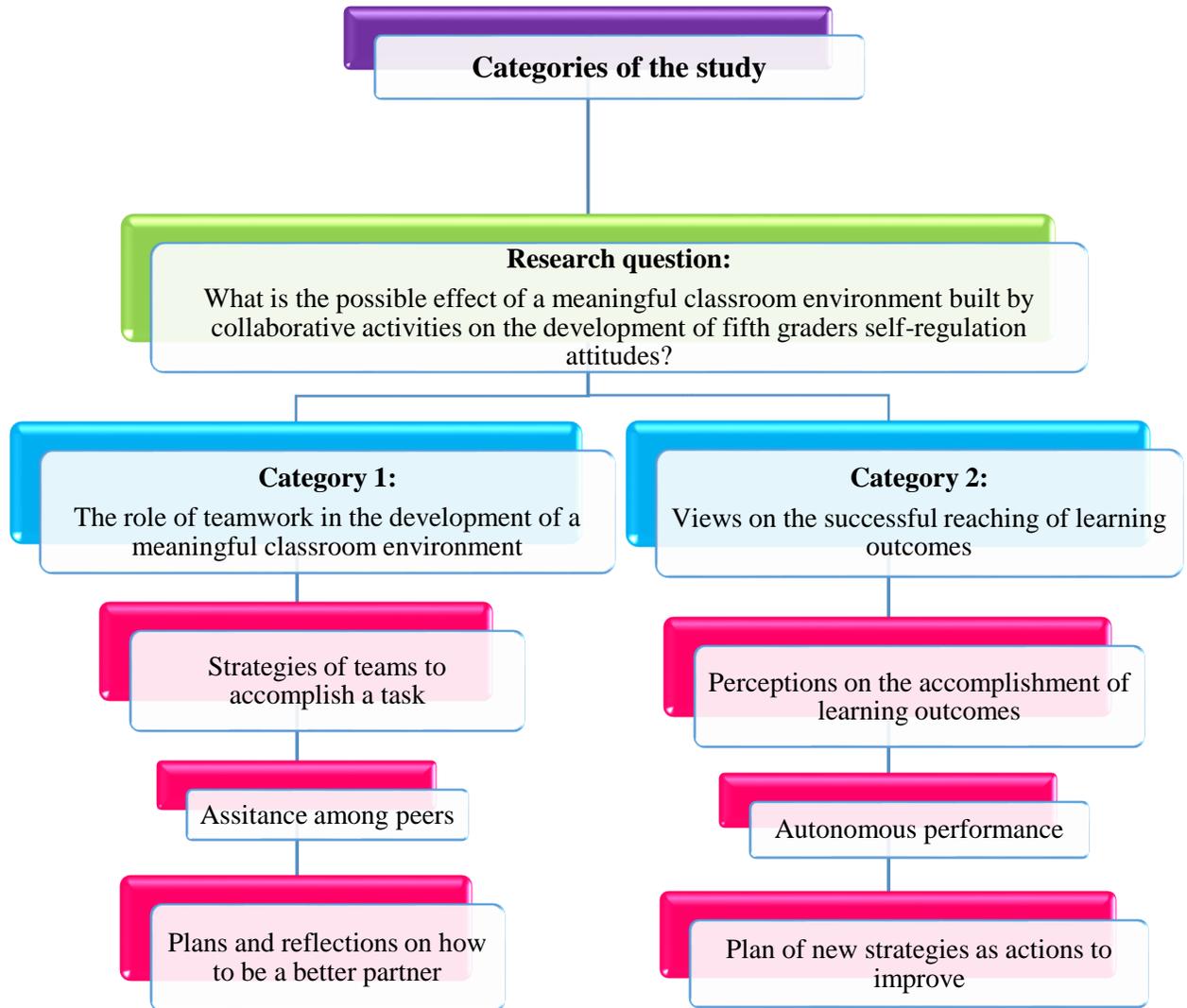
Categories of the analysis

The main aim of this research study was to analyze the effects of creating a meaningful classroom environment by means of collaborative work strategies, in the progress of fifth graders self-regulated attitudes along the process. The graphic displayed

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in *Figure 4* is a visual representation of the categories and subcategories emerged from data to answer the research question.

Figure 4. Categories and subcategories of the study



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The first category *the role of teamwork in the development of a meaningful classroom environment* appeared in response to the study's inquiry as it described how the meaningful classroom environment emerged from the collaborative work activities and how at the same time it motivated the development of self-regulated attitudes likewise as individuals and as members of a group. Along the analysis of the data, it could be determined that during the development of the activities intended to create a meaningful classroom environment through collaborative work *strategies of teams to accomplish a task* emerged as different mechanisms that were refined along the process, to assure the fulfillment of each task. Then, as class dynamics were transformed by the new setting, the subcategory of *assistance among peers* allowed to describe how students were able to monitor and assess their peers when they had difficulties and also set *plans and reflections on how to be a better partner* as a strategy to create a friendlier class atmosphere that allowed them to accomplish upcoming tasks in more effective ways.

On the other hand, the second category *views on the successful reaching of learning outcomes* allowed to monitor kids learning from teacher and kids' perspectives to examine the efficiency of the self-regulation process that the setting was carrying out. Through the subcategory of *perceptions on the accomplishment of learning outcomes* it was possible to determine if topics were apprehended for meaningful purposes and how kids defined if an outcome was successfully reached or not. At that point, the *autonomous performance* of kids, addressed the actions that kids took progressively in the classroom with the intention of fulfilling their tasks in the most effective way. Finally, the last subcategory, *plan of new strategies as actions to improve* outlines what kind of actions

students thought would be helpful to learn better and how those actions complement their efforts at places outside the classroom.

Category 1: the role of teamwork in the development of a meaningful classroom environment

This category refers to the role that teamwork played in the setting of the new classroom environment. The notion that emerged from the data refers to Smith's (1992) concept of the benefits of *collaborative learning* considered in Chapter 2, displayed through the opportunity of sharing ideas and give assistance among peers during the development of tasks with the purpose, on the other hand, of improving individual thought and communicative skills through interaction as stated by Vygotsky (1978), and how these elements are pivotal to compose the design of a meaningful classroom environment.

The data revealed that the activities proposed with the intention of making kids work together to develop materials that boost their own learning and assisting their peers when necessary to supply the lack of certain resources (Moon, 2000), helped work teams to set strategies, encouraged students to give assistance to others when one or more members of the team had difficulties or doubts regarding the topics, and fostered kids to reflect upon which attitudes should be improved when they could not get along with their peers. In this way, the events enlightened by the data in this category provided record of

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emerging self-regulation attitudes (Zumbrunn, Tadlock and Roberts, 2011), and under light of theory, subcategories are discussed in the following section with data samples.

Strategies of teams to accomplish a task. According to Takač (2008), as stated in Chapter 2, meaningful learning emerges when new structures are incorporated within each individual's particular cognitive structure. Then, taking into account that the dynamics of teamwork involve to consider each member abilities as a valuable contribution in the accomplishment of a task, it was observed that along the process, teams progressively created strategies among them to perform in a more effective way in the course of class activities.

However, it is important to remark that at the beginning of the process, the main strategy was to divide the tasks, which did not support the principles of collaborative work, due to de fact that they were not used to work in group, as it is shown by teacher's comments on her log and some student's opinions:

11. **T:** When solving the anagrams and guessing the missing words of the text as a team,
12. teacher realized that kids tend to divide the exercise, in order to solve each one's part
13. individually"

[Teacher's log. August 31st, 2015]

WT2: (...) Digamos, son dos hojas, pues que cada uno haga una.

[Questionnaire No. 2. Team 2. November 12th, 2015]

It was also observed, that some members of the group were inclined to let their partners do all the job and they did not participate:

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3. **T:** Some kids had problems to take responsibility for the assignment and let others
4. to do all tasks while they talked or loose time distracting other teams' members.

[Teacher's log. September 14th, 2015]

5. **S. 10** "La verdad, no me gustó trabajar en equipo. Me tocó hacer todo a mí sola."

[Learning diary. September 14th, 2015]

On account of the fact that these are common problems that occur in classrooms daily, during the *Reflection on performance phase* of self-regulation process, suggested by Zimmerman (2000), data enlightened that this reflection process helped kids to take responsibility for their actions. On the other hand, teacher could perceived that students might got used to work in a more accurate way as teams progressively. For that purpose, during some sessions children worked first with their seat's partners, later in groups of 3 and so on, until they could work in bigger groups:

3. **T:** Kids showed a better disposition after reflecting upon their performance along last
4. sessions. They were very receptive to the explanation of new topic and showed to be very
5. Enthusiastic with upcoming activities. (...) It was observed too, that the pairs's work was
6. a good "training" before the work by teams. Almost all kids were able to work faster and
7. take their own risks.

[Teacher's log. September 28th, 2015]

Then, as a result of class dynamics, data showed that it was notorious that kids started to embrace teamwork's dynamics. First, they just not divided the tasks randomly with the intention to work faster, but they took into account each one's abilities to provide something valuable to the work. Each individual began to play a role, some as leaders of the group, some as the ones who organized the materials and others as tutors of their partners:

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6. **WT4:** Todos pensamos ideas. Todos ayudamos y aportamos algo. Alguien de pronto daba
7. una idea, otros también y luego las escribían mientras los otros dibujaban y así... hasta
8. que terminábamos todo.

[Questionnaire No. 1. Team 4. October 15th, 2015]

Subsequently, after exploring the progress of strategies that work teams started to employ in order to accomplish a task, it is necessary to delve into the dynamics of peers' assessment that students developed and provided among them. This is deeply considered along the following subcategory.

Assistance among peers. As it was stated in Chapter 2 considering Moon's (2000) ideas on how kids may perform the role of monitor and tutors for their peers along the development of the meaningful classroom environment setting, the data gathered displayed students' progress along the process by showing their views on why or why not helping others was useful and how this assistance could be useful when performing tasks as work teams. At the beginning of cycle 1 described in Chapter 4, data illustrated that some kids were reluctant to share materials, work together and even, help others.

3. **S5:** "(...) para mí fue negativo trabajar con ellos. Si uno es inteligente y el otro es tonto, el
4. Inteligente lo responde todo".

[Learning diary. Student 5. September 21st, 2015]

10. **T:** When working in pairs, some kids refused to work with their seat's partner. Some of
11. them did not want to share materials with those kids who did not have enough supplies.

13. (...) I tried to make them aware about the importance of helping each other and sharing
14. with their peers.

[Teacher's log. September 24th, 2015]

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Nevertheless, through the development of sessions, as stated before in the teacher's log, it was necessary to remember kids how valuable it was to share ideas and if possible solve other's doubts, because that could help them to improve not just their classmate's learning but their own (Smith, 1992). Then it was revealed that, in this way, students started to become aware of the value of working with their peers as a tool to improve their own and each other's learning:

7. **S31.** “Entre dos cabecitas, mi compañero y yo, podemos sacar mejores calificaciones.
8. Puedo aprender de lo que no sé y ella o él también”

[Learning diary. Student 11. October 26th, 2015]

WT4: Todos podemos mejorar no diciendo, “tú no sabes nada”, eso no es mejorar.

[Questionnaire No. 3. Work Team 4. March 11th, 2016]

It is important to mention that the assistance mainly took place during the *Monitoring phase* of the self-regulation process (Zimmerman, 2000), when kids were carrying out the *Exchange of materials and peers' assessment* stage of the pedagogical intervention. The way they supported their partners could be noticed in the data in this way:

WT6: El día que nos explicaron los números A no vino, entonces no sabía cómo se leían, pero nosotros le ayudamos y entendió.

[Questionnaire No. 1. Work team 6. October 15th, 2015]

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4. **T:** I heard some kids trying to help some students that were struggling with the activity
5. that involved them attempting to put the clock's hands according to the times asked by
6. me.

[Teacher's log. October 26th, 2015]

Even though, some incidents kept appearing, the class atmosphere was enhanced and children were able to use what they learnt in sessions with communicative purposes, since they had to discuss topics among them to accomplish learning tasks together within an interactional dynamic that allowed them to give and receive meaningful input and to develop their cognitive structure (Vygotsky, 1978).

Reflections on how to be a better partner. As it was observed in data gathered, children had some difficulties to work as a team and that affected sometimes their performance on the tasks. Therefore, it was necessary to consider, as an important part of the process, their plans and strategies on how to improve as partners during the *Reflection on performance phase* of self-regulation (Zimmerman, 2000) in order to observe which actions they thought, would be more effective to enhance collaborative work dynamics.

Some kids were aware of how challenging can be to perform as a team. The data suggested that they reflected on the attitudes they should improve, as an opportunity to booster the meaningful learning environment they were building by means of collaborative work:

WT1: Trabajar en equipo a veces puede ser molesto, pero lo solucionamos en equipo... nuestros problemas. No terminamos pero no nos pusimos a pelear.

[Questionnaire No.3. Work team 11. March 11th, 2016]

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30. **S25:** “Yo tengo que aprender a mejorar la paciencia, no ponerme tan brava y a aceptar a
31. ellos como son, no debo regañar tanto a mis compañeros”.

[Learning diary. Student 25. November 7th, 2015]

As it can be observed, they were able to deduce what kind of attitudes were not too favorable to accomplish successfully a task within a work team. Nevertheless, teacher observed that:

12. **T:** Although they do not fight too much now, it is always necessary to keep remember
13. them the importance of working together as a team and of taking responsibility for their
14. actions along the performance of the class’ tasks.

[Teacher’s log. March 4th, 2016]

To sum up it all up, it was possible to deduce from the data, that the process surely influenced, in a favorable way, students’ attitudes in relation to working with others as a team. As a result of this perspective change, they were able to notice which kind of attitudes affected negatively their performance as a group and progressively, they attempted to apply new strategies with the main purpose of improving the convivence atmosphere of the work teams.

Category 2: Views on the successful reaching of learning outcomes

After considering the elements that constituted the setting of the meaningful classroom environment built by students’ collaborative work, this category had to do with the concept of *Meaningful learning*, stated in Chapter 2. According to Ausubel (2000) it refers to the moment in which students are able to relate the new topics they addressed in

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the classroom with previous relevant concepts they already knew, and how it is possible that an interaction between this new knowledge and their cognitive structures transfers what it has been learnt into their *long-term* memory.

On the other hand, considering the conceptions of Raaijmakers and Shiffrin (2003) on how this process is possible, the data gathered showed how students' involvement in the meaningful environment they built, allowed them to constantly rehearse and elaborate the new knowledge they addressed along the sessions to finally store it in their long-term memory by following a self-regulation process.

Perceptions on the accomplishment of learning tasks. Bearing in mind that students were able to reflect upon their performance at the end of each cycle regarding the learning outcomes they fixed at the beginning, data displayed which were their perceptions on the accomplishment of their purposes and how different aspects such as, their beliefs regarding good and bad grades as proofs that they have learnt, and their comments on what they were able to do after addressing a topic, made evident the influence of the meaningful classroom environment over their learning. First, it could be observed that, it was recurrent that kids performed their tasks paying more attention to the grades they obtained than to the things they were able to do with what they just have learnt:

18. **T:** When receiving the results of their last class exercises, almost all kids were glad to
19. obtain good results. However, those who did not improve their grades were very
20. disappointed. Teacher invited them to ask any question or express their doubts regarding

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21. the topic, in order to help them to perform better in upcoming activities.

[Teacher's log. September 7th, 2015]

S33: “Aprendí mucho más de lo esperado. Mis logros de aprendizaje fueron 4.7”.

[Learning diary. Student 33. September 14th, 2015]

S11: “Yo no hice bien mis logros de aprendizaje, creo... me saque 3.0 pero al menos pasé”

[Learning diary. Student 11. September 14th, 2015]

Examining these perceptions, it was evident that children evaluated their learning with regard to the grade that was given to them by the head teacher. However, during the course of the interventions of cycle 2, and after giving them a wider view on what a learning outcome meant in terms of learning, it was identified different ideas on their performance:

- 10. **T:** Kids are starting to use numbers for communicative purposes by solving maths
- 11. operations and answering simple questions regarding topics such as how much days have
- 12. a week or a year, or how many brothers or friends do they have.

[Teacher's log. September 21st, 2015]

S16. “Mi logro fue saber cómo ordenar las palabras, o sea, las oraciones con preposiciones y animales”.

[Learning diary. Student 16. March 4th, 2015]

The last perceptions, specially, the one stated by Student 16, reflected how the new setting aided kids, as stated by Raaijmakers and Shiffrin (2003), to rehearse and elaborate meaning of the new topics they addressed, helping them, to store what they learnt, following the dynamics of meaningful learning. It is important to mention too, that

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some kids manifested the efficacy of offering them meaningful input by carrying out lessons just using English. As stated by Moon (2000), it motivated them to want to use English to communicate with teacher, with their classmates and offered them the opportunity to enrich their learning experience:

31. **T:** I considered, it is necessary to use just English to give kids directions. They receive
32. plenty of input and start to repeat and learn new prompts that improve their
33. communicative competence. It was surprising to watch them do it along the development
34. of bingo game...

[Teacher's log. September 21st, 2015]

S19: Hoy la profe habló todo el tiempo en inglés, así aprendíamos más.

[Learning diary. Student 19. September 28th, 2015]

On the other hand, it is required to address other issues that data exposed regarding the difficulties children had to accomplish their learning tasks:

3. **T:** Almost all kids did not know how to read an analog clock. As they were not able to tell
4. Time in Spanish, it was too hard for them to tell it in English.

[Teacher's log. October 19th, 2015]

At this point, it can be observed that kids could not perform accurately this task, because they did not have previous concepts that helped them to relate the new prompts of the language object to previous structures. It is known that, *telling the time* is a process that is first carried out during math lessons, and it is strengthened along the process, until children become aware of the way time passes by and how they can set forth it, by telling the time. For that reason, it was necessary to transform the structure of the lessons, and

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the clocks which kids used. Then, from that point to the end of the cycle, clocks were no longer analog but digital. After that, data showed that:

5. **T:** Kids had good results at the test. The designed exercises were not too challenging.
6. Nevertheless, I know they still have difficulties to tell the time accurately.

[Teacher's log. October 26th, 2015]

As a result, it was possible to determine that part of the success of a task is to follow a teaching sequence that takes into account kids needs and integrates into its plans some boosting stages that helps them to acquire the necessary tools to accomplish more complex activities. Despite this, it was possible to give students a suitable introduction to the topic that in the future may be developed in upcoming lessons.

Autonomous performance. This subcategory refers to the actions and strategies that kids took in the classroom to improve their learning practices. In the same way, data exposed that this actions were refined along the process. It means that, at the beginning they were not too evident but after some sessions, these appeared as students' strategies to accomplish their tasks that were regulated by their motivations as stated by Zumbrunn, Tadlock and Roberts (2011) in Chapter 2. Following this principles, first it was noticed that for students it was difficult to pay attention and even, to use the closest tools they had on their hands to accomplish the tasks:

01. **T:** Kids have difficulties to pay attention each time the topic is explained and when
02. fulfilling activities, I think they are not aware of the usefulness of checking their own

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03. notes to find feedback that help them to accomplish class' tasks.

[Teacher's log. September 7th, 2015]

As a consequence of their lack of attention and initiative to use the nearest tools they had to accomplish tasks, the data revealed that students depended too much on teacher, and a considerable amount of time was spent on asking questions about how things must be written and disposed on the notebook:

17. **T:** They took too much time to take notes on their notebooks and have difficulties to
18. follow directions.

[Teacher's log. August 31st, 2015]

Along the way, they developed certain degree of self-confidence that was boosted when the teacher said to them that they were on their own to accomplish tasks, and they could only ask questions related to the topic, or request some advice, when the work was done:

19. **T:** Kids asked questions about the writing and correct pronunciation of the numbers. (...)
20. Anytime someone had a doubt regarding the topic, they asked teacher. But, some
21. Teams tried to solve their own doubts and then, asked teacher to check the work. It was
22. possible to see some teams working and solving doubts together.

[Teacher's log. September 21st, 2015]

01. Kids used tools they had (their lists of numbers and supplies) to find the correct answers
02. along the development of the pairs' work and then, the teamwork.

[Teacher's log. September 28th, 2015]

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After that, it seemed that kids were more focused during lessons. As their motivations changed, their questions changed too. But it is also important to mention that even, they tried to find support at home, when they realized they needed to boost a topic:

07. **T:** I noticed that some children that were struggling to read the analog clock, asked their
08. parents at home to help them. They stated they were worried, because they wanted to
09. learn how to tell the time properly both in Spanish and English.
10. When they had to perform the class' tasks, they were able to improve their results.

[Teacher's log. October 26th, 2015]

As it was noted, kids were spreading the impact of the self-regulation process that was being carried out in the classroom by making of the classroom dynamics a practice that in the future could be learning habit. The last subcategory delved deeper into this matter.

Plan of new strategies as actions to improve. Along the development of every *Reflection and new strategies' plan* stage fulfilled at the end of each cycle and described on Chapter 4, students were able to follow the *Reflection on performance phase* of self-regulation process (Zimmerman, 2000). Gathered data showed that they set plans to improve, on the one hand, their attitudes when studying, and on the other hand, their English learning:

S9: Yo creo que puedo mejorar en no pararme tanto del puesto ser atenta y concentrarme más la próxima vez para entender mejor.

[Learning diary. Student 9. February 26th, 2016]

S25: Hay que acomodarnos rápido la próxima vez. Yo creo que puedo ser más positivo. A veces me da miedo hablar inglés pero me puedo arriesgar.

[Learning diary. Student 25. February 26th, 2016]

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S31: Tengo que seguir viniendo, mejorar la letra y tener listas las tareas.

[Learning diary. Student 31. February 26th, 2016]

The insights made by students showed that along the process, they were able to develop their awareness on which attitudes could benefit the dynamics of the collaborative work and their own learning process. It was possible for them to encourage attitudes that with bigger effort will be useful to strength their learning habits in the future. As Zumbrunn, Tadlock and Roberts (2011) stated, as well as students' motivations increase, they invested more time in learning and applying self-regulation strategies. In the light of the finding presented before, data revealed what kind of activities kids thought they could do at home to improve their English learning:

S7: Para mejorar, yo creo que se pueden ver los videos que vimos en clase y otros. También las canciones en inglés, así puedo mejorar como escribo los animales y como se pronuncian.

[Learning diary. Student 7. March 11th, 2016]

S34: Por ejemplo puedo repasar los días que no hay clase o en las horas de recreo y en la casa para aprovechar el tiempo.

[Learning diary. Student 34. March 11th, 2016]

Their intentions allowed to conclude that self-regulation process influenced the way they conceived learning, but also, the way it encouraged their learning habits and how it could affect their communicative competence, since it seemed that they do not just count on the input they receive at the classroom, but the input they can access at home. It

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is possible to observe that if they keep receiving motivation and guidance, they could become long-life learners.

Summing up, along the development of this chapter, the categories and subcategories that emerged from data under the guidelines of grounded approach were displayed, in order to bring into mind the influence that the classroom environment setting had on students' self-regulation attitudes and how this affected their English learning in terms of the development of their communicative competence. Once and for all, the following chapter illustrates the conclusions, implications and further research recommendations that arose from the findings presented before.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter displays the main conclusions of the research enlightened by the findings detailed before. Then, the implications of the study for other teachers' researchers, the institution where the study took place along the process, and the participants are considered. Moreover, the limitations are stated. Finally, some suggestions for further research are proposed.

Conclusions

This action-research study intended to describe the effect of creating a meaningful classroom environment by means of collaborative activities on populations' self-regulation attitudes. To answer the research question, the data showed that the accomplishment of collaborative activities to build a meaningful classroom environment had mainly two effects on the progress of students' self-regulation attitudes: first, it helped kids to set strategies for achieving collaborative learning through peers' assessment and second, it improved their English learning by means of an environment that allowed them to take responsibility for their actions and at the same time, to plan and perform their own strategies as autonomous learners.

Considering the first effect that the process had on kids' attitudes, the data revealed that the collaborative activities to set a meaningful classroom environment let to differentiate three actions that kids took along the process: First, the use of strategies that

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work teams refined along the process to accomplish a task which at the beginning, consisted on dividing the work to fulfill the activities faster, and at the end, on considering each member's abilities to elaborate the assignment accurately. In relation to this point, it is important to mention that the improvement of the strategies occurred thanks to the *Reflection on performance phase* (Zimmerman, 2000) of the self-regulation process that took place along the *reflection and new strategies' plan stage* at the end of each cycle, where kids had the opportunity to become aware of the performance that suits best the dynamics of teamwork.

The second action that students performed along the development of the collaborative activities was the attempt to assist their peers with the main purpose of strengthening the development of the activity in order to assure the success of the task when working together. On the one hand, it was possible to conclude that it takes some time to get used to share ideas or materials and even to transform opinions regarding peers' weaknesses. As some kids considered that some others could not contribute something useful to the development of the tasks and they refused to work together, during the progress of sessions it was possible for them to take the role of guides and monitors, after noticing that to assist others when they did not understand something would benefit the dynamics of teamwork and even their own learning because it helped them to rehearse and elaborate new concepts together (Vygotsky, 1978) to strength their communicative competence as well as they have the opportunity to produce, give and receive input.

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Moreover, regarding the third action that students took through the collaborative elaboration of activities, it was possible to observe that when asking kids which kind of actions they must take to improve their performance as individuals and as members of a group, they usually listed the attitudes they should change to be better partners. Then, it could be noticed that students became aware of the attitudes that were not very favorable for collaborative dynamics. Despite this fact, it is imperative to clarify that the relationships among classmates were not perfect at all, but by means of the setting proposed by this study, class atmosphere improved in favor of the successful achievement of tasks.

Now, considering the second effect of the meaningful classroom environment on students' self-regulation attitudes, it was examined the achievements of children regarding the learning outcomes of each lesson plan. On this point, data showed that it occurred mainly by means of three different actions that students performed along the fulfillment of class tasks. On the one hand, through their opinions on the success of a learning outcome, it could be determined that their views were mainly influenced just by the grade they obtained. Once they started to fix their own personal outcomes, they were able to tell which things they could do or could not do yet with what they learnt, by reporting how their skills improved. On the other hand, the second action they took, was to perform autonomous actions directed to improve the reaching of learning outcomes. On this event, data allowed to conclude that, kids were able to enhance the actions they took to develop activities on their own. Once their self-confidence increased, they were able to use the closest resources they had on their hands to try to overcome their

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difficulties. Thanks to this fact, it was possible to perceive, i.e. that students' questions were more complex, which by some means was a sign of how their learning was enriched.

Finally, to consider the third action, gathered data permitted to determine that students began to set plans for boosting their learning outside the classroom. Then, they suggested it was possible to listen the videos and songs they practiced in the classroom at home, in order to improve skills such as listening and speaking. But, they also proposed to check their notes in their free time to boost their knowledge, and pay more attention to the way they developed their home assignments. Therefore, the plans identified before allows to conclude that it was possible to spread the impact of the meaningful classroom environment to further places outside school.

As a whole, it is possible to affirm that through the application of this pedagogical intervention, fifth graders had the opportunity to improve their *existential competences*, once they were able to adopt some attitudes that benefited the dynamics of collaborative work, and self-regulation attitudes such as: to develop learning habits, set plans to improve their performance as members of a group and as individuals capable of leading their learning process, and use their abilities to accomplish tasks the best way they could.

Implications

Along the development of this section, the implications that were determined from the findings of this research project are stated. First, those who have an impact for the

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educational field, the institution where the study took place, the students who participated in the activities proposed by the pedagogical intervention, and finally, the ones that enriched researcher's views and practice as teacher.

With regards to the educational field, to follow the dynamics of collaborative work to design a meaningful environment that provides students enough input in the foreign language by means of a self-regulation process is an approach that mainly focus on developing study skills in children to help them become long-life learners. This perspective proposes a change in educational standards for English teaching, because it does not force students to address the study of English just appealing to the importance of being bilingual if someone wants to have a successful future, but on the contrary, it helps students to develop their own motivations and considers each individual ability within the framework of existential competences, with the main objective of booster individuals' communicative competence. It becomes a pivotal issue when talking about the population's needs, taking into account that they just began their learning process of English at the same moment this research study began.

On the other hand, regarding the implications for institution, it is important to mention that the process encouraged students to find different alternatives to create their own resources through the elaboration of aid materials that could help them to support their learning, even if institution cannot offer them. Then, it is relevant to state that in a near future, those materials can be used by other kids to boost their learning as well. In this way, by means of the elaboration of these products under the guidelines of the research, participants contributed to enrich the micro-curriculum level of their school.

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Likewise, in the same way this study directed students to contribute to their school curriculum, it also arose implications for themselves. First, when strengthening their existential competences to follow the procedures of self-regulation, the pedagogical intervention of this research motivated students to become more autonomous learners. It means that, the process fostered kids' study skills, helped to increase their self-confidence and improved the relationships among them. This could lead into a better attitude, not just for learning a foreign language but also, for accomplishing tasks in other subjects. Second, students had the opportunity of receiving and starting to produce meaningful input in favor of the accurate acquisition of a communicative competence, thanks to the environment that they created. And finally, some children realized that they had the possibility of transforming their context when they decide to use what they have on hand, even when not all resources are available.

Finally, it is necessary to mention that for the researcher to perform the role of guide along the process, provided her a wide view on how boosting students' attitudes in regard to their learning process can be a valuable tool in the classroom. Therefore, she was able to elucidate how her practice as a teacher could improve. She realized that it is important to give clear directions that kids can understand easily, taking into account that sometimes they will not be used to attend lessons in English. For that reason, she concluded that to speak slowly modulating her tone voice, and use her body gestures to support what she wants to communicate is an effective way to help children to understand directions. Second, she realized the importance of constantly monitoring kids' performance, if one wants to assure that kids, who have difficulties to accomplish a task,

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are not being left behind. Finally, she perceived that sometimes collaborative activities are too challenging if students are not used to work together, and if the classroom is too small. To counteract this problem, she thinks that a good solution is to introduce the dynamics of teamwork by forming small groups that progressively might increase.

Limitations of the study

Although the experience obtained along the pedagogical intervention was rewarding, there were some limitations to fulfill the lessons as they were designed, regarding the time disposed for sessions, the unexpected events that kids should attend and the recurring absence of some participants.

Concerning the lack of time, it is necessary to consider that it was possible to carry out intervention sessions just two hours a week, and even though lesson plans were designed to be fulfilled along this time, sometimes kids could not finish their tasks, mostly in the collaborative work stages of the pedagogical intervention, because circumstances such as indiscipline caused an atmosphere of distress, and to get back children's attention again took too much time. Then, lesson plans took more of the time than it was planned. Likewise, institution carried out activities such as special ceremonies and catastrophe drills that interrupted lessons abruptly. As final point, the recurrent absence of some students delayed the normal course of lessons, because it was necessary to go back for helping them to understand the new topics, or due to the fact that absent students had some pieces of materials that were pivotal for their work teams.

Further research

Considering the insights that this research provided regarding the role of collaborative activities in the setting of a meaningful classroom environment to improve self-regulation attitudes, it would be significant if other researchers on the one hand, delve into the specific roles that members of work teams perform along the collaborative process and, how their cognitive learning styles influence these roles.

On the other hand, it would be relevant to examine how this process could spread its impact, if it is carried out by the kids that elaborated the materials by working as guides and monitors of children of lower grades. Finally, other research projects that would like to include the improvement of existential competences within their instructional design, could evaluate more deeply students' oral and written productions within the dynamics of collaborative activities that follow the guidelines of a self-regulation process.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Field notes sample

Day 6 16-03-15

Kids were practicing pronunciation through listening and repeat a dialogue that made an emphasis in learning vocabulary related to the formal way of meeting, greet and call someone. (Mr., Mrs., Ms.)

They participate actively and repeat what they listen. However, there are some of them that still being maybe afraid or shy. They respond well to be encouraged.

Then, teacher made a *Listening Exercise*. Kids were supposed to write each line of the dialogue as soon it was listened to.

I was in charge of leading the activity so, each time a line was heard, I asked them what they have listened to. Then I picked a volunteer and he or she had to write the line on the board. I realized that almost all of them wrote the lines just the way they heard and pronounced them, as a transliteration.

On the other hand, teacher told me that in spite of the fact that syllabus did not contain lots of topics to be developed; during the first term not everything had been developed.

Conclusions:

- Kids are quite competent to listen and understand ordinary situations If they have been exposed to them but, they have some trouble to transcribe them accurately.

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APPENDIX B: Teacher's log sample

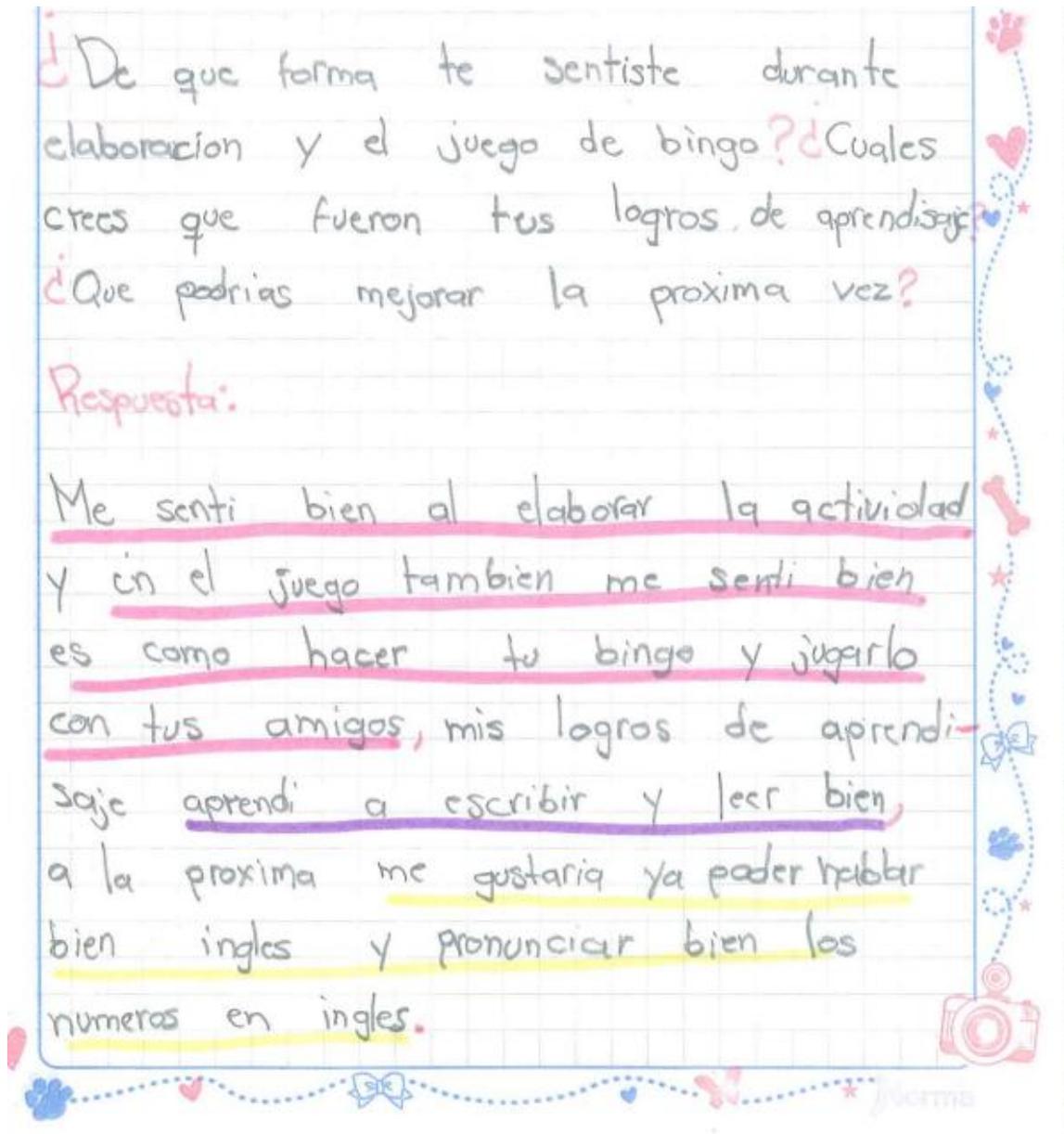
Date: September 7 th , 2015 Time: 10:15 – 11:45 Grade: 4 th A	
Students' performance in terms of:	Comments
Collaborative work	<p>At the moment they were asked if they had doubts, some kids were able to answer their peer's questions.</p> <p>Kids used the tools they had (their lists of numbers and supplies) to find the correct answers along the development of the pair-s work and then the team work.</p> <p>It was possible to see some teams working and solving doubts together. However, some teams kept dividing the tasks into participants to work individually.</p> <p>It was observed that those teams which divided tasks had more difficulties to follow directions and finish the work.</p>
Self-regulated attitudes	<p>When receiving the results of the last class exercise, almost all kids were glad to obtain better results. However those who did not improve their grades were very disappointed (teacher invited them to ask any question or express their doubts).</p> <p>Along the development of the contest by teams, kids were very enthusiastic; anytime someone had a doubt they asked teacher. However, some teams tried to solve their own doubts and then, asked teacher to check their work.</p> <p>It was observed that the pair's work was a good feedback before the teams' work. Almost all kids were able to work faster and take their own risks.</p>
Achievement of lesson goals	<p>Along the development of the class, kids were able to improve the pronunciation of those numbers that were difficult for them.</p> <p>However, it is important to help them to differentiate the pronunciation of numbers such as fifteen and fifty.</p> <p>Kids are starting to use numbers for communicative purposes by solving maths operations and answering simple questions regarding past topics.</p>

APPENDIX C: Learning diary sample

¿De que forma te sentiste durante elaboracion y el juego de bingo? ¿Cuales crees que fueron tus logros de aprendizaje? ¿Que podrias mejorar la proxima vez?

Respuesta:

Me senti bien al elaborar la actividad
y en el juego tambien me senti bien
es como hacer tu bingo y jugarlo
con tus amigos, mis logros de aprendi-
saje aprendi a escribir y leer bien,
a la proxima me gustaria ya poder hablar
bien ingles y pronunciar bien los
numeros en ingles.

A handwritten learning diary sample on lined paper. The text is written in black ink with some words in red. The page is decorated with a blue dotted border featuring various colorful icons: a paw print, a heart, a bone, a camera, a butterfly, and a flower. The text is organized into a question and an answer section.

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APPENDIX D: Semi-structured questionnaire sample

Evaluación de desempeño

Nombres de los integrantes del equipo:

Jose Alejandro Zapata

Isabella Rizzo Perez

Laura Sofia RuizMaya Perez

Respondan las siguientes preguntas en equipo, teniendo en cuenta la forma en que trabajaron:

1. ¿Podimos terminar exitosamente la actividad? Sí No
 - Porque nosotros trabajamos en equipo y así podemos lograr todo
2. ¿Todos aportamos algo a la realización de la actividad? Sí No
 - Porque por cada uno da su opinión y da como la idea y ellos también algunos de ellos escriben y así
3. Cuando alguien tuvo dificultades en nuestro equipo ¿Le ayudamos a resolver su duda y a mejorar? Sí No
 - Porque el día que no explicaba como leer los números por no venir entonces yo sabía como se leía pero nosotros le ayudamos y entendió

A continuación, escriban dos aspectos positivos y dos aspectos por mejorar como equipo:

Aspectos positivos:

Ahora si alguien necesita ayuda nosotros los ayudamos como

Primeros

Aspectos por mejorar

✓ En una hoja aparte cada uno escriba de qué forma se sintió durante la realización de la actividad, cuáles cree que fueron sus logros de aprendizaje en inglés y qué cosas quisiera mejorar en una próxima ocasión.

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APPENDIX E: Consentment letter sample



Universidad Pedagógica Nacional
Proyecto de Investigación en el Aula
2015-I

Consentimiento Informado Para Padres de Familia

Bogotá DC, Febrero 19 de 2016

Señores,
Padres de Familia del Colegio Anibal Fernández de Soto (Grado 5ºA)

Reciban un cordial saludo.

El propósito de esta ficha de consentimiento es solicitar a ustedes autorización para hacer partícipe a su hijo(a) de una investigación que durante este semestre académico, yo, María de los Ángeles Páez Niño, en calidad de estudiante de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, registrada en el programa de Español y Lenguas Extranjeras llevaré acabo durante el presente semestre académico y que tiene como propósito aplicar y evaluar estrategias educativas que potencien el aprendizaje de inglés como Lengua Extranjera en el aula.

Para tal fin, es necesario contar con la valiosa participación de su hijo(a) en diversas actividades tales como cuestionarios y actividades académicas. El tiempo durante el cual, estas actividades se llevarán a cabo, será el espacio brindado por la asignatura.

Durante las sesiones de trabajo, las respuestas de los niños serán registradas de forma escrita. Es importante aclarar que la participación de su hijo(a) es estrictamente voluntaria y que en el momento en que usted(es) lo deseen, su hijo(a) podrá retirarse del estudio. Sus respuestas a los cuestionarios y actividades serán codificadas de tal manera que sean anónimas. Una vez tabulados los resultados, el material utilizado para la realización de los cuestionarios, encuestas y actividades será destruido. Cabe resaltar que la participación de su hijo en este proyecto no tiene incidencia en los resultados de la evaluación final de la asignatura.

Si durante el transcurso de este semestre tiene alguna duda con respecto a la participación de su hijo(a) en este proyecto, puede hacer preguntas en cualquier momento a través de los canales dispuestos por la institución académica o enviando un correo electrónico a la dirección: dle_mpaez249@pedagogica.edu.co

De antemano, agradezco su amable colaboración.

Acepto que mi hijo(a) _____ participe de las actividades durante el curso de la investigación que la estudiante María de los Ángeles Páez Niño de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional lleva en curso durante este semestre académico.

Reconozco que la información que mi hijo(a) provea en el curso de esta investigación es estrictamente confidencial y no será usada para ningún otro propósito fuera de los de este estudio sin mi consentimiento. He sido informado de que puedo hacer preguntas sobre el proyecto en cualquier momento y que puedo retirar a mi hijo(a) del mismo cuando así lo decida, sin que esto acarree perjuicio alguno. De tener preguntas sobre la participación de mi hijo(a) en este estudio, puedo contactar a **María de los Ángeles Páez Niño** al teléfono **3118639062** o al correo electrónico: **dle_mpaez249@pedagogica.edu.co**.

Entiendo que una copia de esta ficha de consentimiento me será entregada, y que puedo pedir información sobre los resultados de este estudio cuando éste haya concluido. Para esto, puedo contactar a María de los Ángeles Páez Niño al teléfono anteriormente mencionado.

Nombre del Participante

Firma de un padre de Familia o Acudiente

Fecha

(En letras de imprenta)

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Acepto que mi hijo(a) Juan Diego Ortiz Garcia participe de las actividades durante el curso de la investigación que la estudiante María de los Angeles Páez Niño de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional lleva en curso durante este semestre académico.

Reconozco que la información que mi hijo(a) provea en el curso de esta investigación es estrictamente confidencial y no será usada para ningún otro propósito fuera de los de este estudio sin mi consentimiento. He sido informado de que puedo hacer preguntas sobre el proyecto en cualquier momento y que puedo retirar a mi hijo(a) del mismo cuando así lo decida, sin que esto acarree perjuicio alguno. De tener preguntas sobre la participación de mi hijo(a) en este estudio, puedo contactar a **María de los Angeles Páez Niño** al teléfono **3118639062** o al correo electrónico: **dle_mpaez249@pedagogica.edu.co**.

Entiendo que una copia de esta ficha de consentimiento me será entregada, y que puedo pedir información sobre los resultados de este estudio cuando éste haya concluido. Para esto, puedo contactar a María de los Angeles Páez Niño al teléfono anteriormente mencionado.

Juan Diego Ortiz
Nombre del Participante
(En letras de imprenta)

Yvelyn García
Firma de un padre de Familia o Acudiente

20-02-16
Fecha

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APPENDIX F: Lesson plan sample

TOPIC: • Numbers from 0-100 (Boosting)	Grouping: • 4 ^o A	Date and Time: 14/09/2015
Main Aims (Collaborative work stage):		
<p>-Develop materials by collaborative teams to boost learning. -Monitor kids' attitudes of collaborative work.</p>		
Learning Outcomes:		
<p>Students will:</p> <p>-Write results to maths questions in numbers. -Employ English to give results to maths operations</p>		
Personal Aims:		
<p>-Solve kids' doubts properly along the development of materials by groups. -Keep an atmosphere of productive work.</p>		
Opening :		
<p>Teacher will organize ten teams of three to four students. She will ask them to pay attention to directions before leaving the classroom to the playground.</p> <p>She will give each team a sample of board with math operations and another one in which they must write the results to each operation in numbers.</p> <p>She will show each sample to the students and will explain them how to design those on their cartoon boards.</p>	<p>Kids will form teams, pay attention to directions and will remember classroom rules.</p> <p>If they have any doubt they are free to ask before leaving the classroom.</p> <p>They will take their materials and leave classroom orderly.</p>	10 minutes
Pre-activities:		
<p>Teacher will ask teams to organize in the playground by teams.</p> <p>She will ask them to solve the maths operations on the given sample boards and will demand to check</p>	<p>Kids will solve maths operations on the sample boards by writing their results in numbers and letters and</p>	20 minutes

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<p>their results by helping each other and working as a team, to make sure they are doing it correctly.</p> <p>She will monitor each group constantly.</p>	<p>they can use the lists on their notebooks.</p> <p>They will ask teacher if they have doubts.</p>	
<p>Post-activities:</p>		
<p>Once each team finishes to solve their samples, teacher will check answers and help them to correct mistakes.</p> <p>Teacher will ask students to design the samples on their cartoon boards by using their colors, markers and pens.</p>	<p>Kids will design their maths games on the cartoon boards, after having checked their samples are correct.</p>	<p>40 minutes</p>
<p>Closure</p>		
<p>Teacher will ask kids to give her their game boards and she will ask them to put away their supplies.</p>	<p>Kids will give teacher their cartoon boards and will put away their supplies.</p>	<p>20 minutes</p>
<p>Resources</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board's game samples. • White cartoon boards. • Colors and markers. • Rulers. 		