

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**



**“THE IMPACT OF OVERCROWDED PRACTICE TEACHING COURSES ON
THE LEARNING OF STUDENTS REGISTERED IN PRACTICE TEACHING II,
SEMESTER II - 2017 AT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR”**

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I. INTRODUCTION

This graduation paper is the result of a research study about how the overcrowded Practice Teaching courses impact on the learning of students register in Practice Teaching II, Semester II-2017 at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. This research identifies and measures some factors that affect the students' learning, which consequently brings the lack of knowledge that the students present at the time of developing the class as well as many other challenges that they face during their performance.

This report synthesizes the main findings of this research, including the report of the questionnaires administered to the students enrolled in the course, which are presented by graphics that explain the results gathered during the whole investigation. In the same way, the professor in charge of the subject were interview; they provided really useful insight that helped the research team to determine the main issues that students and teachers face due to this problem.

The researchers observed the classes of the students enrolled in Practice Teaching II in a period of 5 weeks. The reason for this observation was to gather information from the students and to see with naked eyes the behavior inside and overcrowded classroom as well as the challenges that they have to face in the class, the ones that reverberate on their learning and, consequently, their performance. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that there are some theories that back up the problem studies in this research. At the end, there are some conclusions that summarize the main findings. Finally, some recommendations are given to the corresponding authorities.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A. RESERACH QUESTION

What is the impact of overcrowded Practice Teaching courses on the learning of students registered in Practice Teaching II, semester II - 2017 at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador?

B. OBJECTIVES

- **General objective**

- ✓ To assess the impact of overcrowded Practice Teaching courses on the learning of students registered in Practice Teaching II, semester II - 2017 at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

- **Specific objectives**

- ✓ To study the in-class performance of Practice Teaching II students as student-teachers.
- ✓ To point out the disadvantages that Practice Teaching II students face when they are in overcrowded classes.
- ✓ To gather students' experiences when they are taught in overpopulated classes.

C. SUBSIDIARY QUESTIONS

- **General Subsidiary Question**

- ✓ How do overcrowded Practice Teaching courses impact on the learning of students registered in Practice Teaching II, semester II - 2017 at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador?

- **Specific Subsidiary Questions**

- ✓ How is the in-class performance of Practice Teaching II students as student-teachers viewed?
- ✓ What are the most salient disadvantages that Practice Teaching II students face when they are in overcrowded classes?
- ✓ What are the most noticeable students' experiences when they are taught in overpopulated classes?

D. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

The following project was divided into different sets; it was delimited and stated the research project in terms of scope, place, and time. The methodology of the study outlined the type of study, instruments, and population. Accordingly, the expected results were presented; as well as a brief description of the different types of resources, and finally a timeframe and sources investigated to develop the project were described.

E. JUSTIFICATION

The classroom is a place where the teacher and the student live in a close proximity; in fact, they live under the same umbrella of the teaching-learning process. Consequently, the more this umbrella provides facilities, the more genuine learning will take place since the classroom is the most important place where students get formal education to become professionals and to put into practice what they have learnt.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of overcrowded Practice Teaching courses on the learning of students registered in Practice Teaching II, Semester II - 2017 at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. The research project had the intention of demonstrating that it is quite better to work with small groups rather than with overcrowded groups so that, students can show better results and develop their teaching knowledge in a better way through real life as it is well known that practice makes perfect.

In addition, this study enumerated the cons of having large number of students in the groups of Practice Teaching II in order to bring a better understanding of the problem that students face in every semester due to the fact that just two groups are always opened for all students. Besides, the result could create a smart strategy to organize the amount of students enrolled per group, and these findings could be shared with the teachers and students from the Foreign Language Department.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Having a large amount of students in the classroom brings many difficulties not only for teachers, but also for students as it is very laborious to focus on the learning of each student or on the development of their teaching skills. Teaching Practice II is an important subject that guides the students to gather knowledge regarding teaching; as well as to make them be ready to teach in the real world. Unfortunately, just two groups are always opened to all the students who are ready to take this subject; consequently, the groups are crowded all the time. This study pointed out the cons of having overcrowded classrooms in order to understand the problem better.

CONS OF HAVING A LARGE AMOUNT OF STUDENTS INSIDE THE CLASSROOM.

A classroom is said to be overcrowded where the number of students exceed the optimum level so that it causes hindrance in the teaching- learning process. The classroom is the most important area within a school. The students spend most of their time, hopefully in an environment conducive to learning. The entire design of classroom reflects the priorities, goals, philosophy and personality (McGuffey, 1982).

Some cons that are shown in overcrowded classrooms are:

1. DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS IN LARGE CLASSES

Mustafa et al. (2014:178) points out that large numbers of learners in one classroom are an impediment to classroom management in general and classroom discipline specifically.

Larger classes are noisier and more prone to pushing, crowding and hitting, to the extent that this can impact negatively on classroom discipline. One teacher cannot cope with such situations in the classroom on his/her own. Teachers lose valuable lesson time in such circumstances because they spend most of the lesson time trying to control the learners. Little time is left for real teaching (Imtiaz, 2014:251).

Based on Nirashnee Muthusam`s article “Teachers Experiences with Overcrowded Classrooms in a Mainstream School” (09/15/2014) school and student indiscipline is a burning problem and an issue of great concern for teachers and policy makers due to aggression and indiscipline among students, and violence within student-teacher. Many behavioral disorders like stealing, abusive language, dishonesty, and lying can cause physical damage to school or home property; this also causes mental and emotional stress. (South African Democratic Teachers Union SABC, 2013)

Nirashnee Muthusam (09/15/2014) points out some important types of indiscipline in school:

- **Reaching the School late**

It is the most usual form of indiscipline in a school. There are a number of students who reach the school late in daily routine, and they don`t show punctuality. Some of them are found uninterested to attend in the evening rather than the morning assembly regularly. Mcdougall (2004) reconfirms “tardiness is not only rude; it can be distracting and disruptive to other students. If tardiness becomes a problem for members of your class, make sure they are disciplined; set rules about tardiness and penalties for breaking them.”

- **Talking in the Class**

Student misbehavior such as disruptive talking is ranging like the most common indiscipline action as it is a thorny issue in everyday classroom. Teachers usually reported that this disturbing behavior in the classroom is intolerable and stress-provoking, and they had to spend a great deal of time and energy to manage the classroom. Obviously, student disruptive talking retards the smoothness and effectiveness of teaching and also impedes the learning of the student and his/her classmates. (Rachel C.F. Sun and Daniel T. L. Shek, 08/2012)

Talking in the class included calling out, making remarks, and having disruptive conversation. All these referred to verbal disturbance in the lesson without teacher's permission. This conception is much wider than the narrow definition in Ding et al.'s study (2008) where "talking out of turn" was simply referred to calling out answers without raising hands and being called upon by teachers. As usual, "talking out of turn" was rated by teachers as the most common and disruptive to teaching and learning. It was due to the fact that the noises are disruptive and teachers need to spend time to manage; otherwise, such behaviors would escalate in term of frequency and intensity and would be contagious. Another reason is that when compared to "nonattentiveness /daydreaming/ idleness," irrelevant chatting is more than an off-task behavior that adversely affects students' own learning. It is also a distracting behavior hampering others' learning in the same classroom. . (Rachel C. F. Sun and Daniel T. L. Shek, 2012)

- **Neglected Homework**

It is commonly observed in educational institutions that students neglect the homework assignments. It is rather strong that they have enough time to write a kind sentence as punishment hundred times, but they are found uninterested to do the homework assignment daily.

The disruptive, counterproductive effect of overcrowding is explained as follows: “Teachers don’t have time to grade each paper. Instead, they just check off whether the student completed the task and overlook whether they did not work the right way” (KEZI 9 News, 2012). Such wrong ideas then remain in the learners’ minds, and are in all probability never corrected. This could be one explanation for poor matriculation results. Furthermore, in overcrowded classrooms, teachers cannot pay attention to all the learners and are unable to differentiate their attention amongst learners (Imtiaz, 2014). This is affirmed by Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009) and Sosibo and Nomlomo (2014), who argue that teachers cannot persuade or take all learners to task to participate and they tend to ignore those who are passive.

- **Disrespectful Behavior towards Teachers**

Disrespecting teachers embraces disobedience, which is refusing or failing to carry out instructions and rudeness; that is, talking back and arguing with teachers (Wheldall K. Merrett F. 1988). Sometimes, these behaviors would also be perceived as offensive to authority. Findings demonstrate that these values are still strongly held in teachers’

expectations, and thus behaviors that fail to comply were pinpointed as disrespectful and the students were judged as lacking proper values and attitudes. Problem behaviors include those breaking explicit rules as well as those infringing implicit norms or expectations. (Rachel C. F. Sun and Daniel T. L. Shek, 2012)

Young students show an ignoring and neglecting behavior as they do not understand the importance of education. Such uninterested and unmotivated students are a real challenge. This behavior of students not only disturbs the teacher and becomes one of the reasons for lack of motivation but also leads to disturbances in the class. (Teach Hub, Dec 10, 2010)

- **Stealing in the Classroom**

It is commonly observed that some students steal pencils, books, pens, copies and other articles from their classmates. It is a kind of form of Indiscipline that needs serious attention of teachers to solve it in time. Stealing is taking things that belong to others without their permission. (Leah Davies, M.Ed, 2010)

Students steal for a variety of reasons, some steal simply because they want an item and haven't developed the impulse control to curb their behavior. Others steal to express unhappiness or distress, or to get back at someone they believe has wronged them. Still others steal to gain status with their peers or to get attention from their teachers. Ding et al.'s study (2008)

Whatever the motivation for stealing, when responding to a theft, teacher has three goals: to return the item to its owner, to identify the guilty student, and to respond to him with a mixture of firmness and understanding. If there have been a number of incidents of

stealing in the classroom, teacher have to consider how to prevent their recurrence. Because these incidents can create conflict and distrust among students, teacher need to deal with the situation promptly and sensitively. (Dr. Ken Shore's)

- **Cheating**

Students need to know that cheating is wrong and will result in some type of disciplinary action. Schools usually have policies in place to deal with these offenses. The teacher should reinforce them in the classroom and implement them consistently. For example, if school policy dictates that students caught cheating will be referred to the administrator, the teacher should follow through instead of telling the student he can have another chance. This might make the teacher popular among students, but they might perceive that all offenses will be overlooked, which could result in more cheating. (Leah Davies, M.Ed, 2010)

"We sometimes forget the seriousness of not preventing and handling cheating in our classrooms. If students can cheat on a test, it sends the message that they do not have to pay attention, do the homework, or study the subject you are working so hard to teach," says classroom management expert Howard Seeman (2003). Besides, Seeman says, if cheaters get away with cheating and get higher grades because they cheat, that sends a demotivating message to the hard-working students in your classroom

2. TEACHING CHALLENGES IN OVERCROWDED CLASSROOMS

Teaching in overcrowded classrooms creates an enormous challenge in producing productive learning classroom environments where effective teaching and assessment

strategies are crucial. Teachers cannot practice a variety of methods, such as higher-order questioning and active learning approaches. (Opoku-asare et al., 2014)

Overcrowded classrooms pose many challenges for teachers. These challenges range from issues such as violence, discipline, management, emotional and psychological health. Therefore, schools need to look for the implementation of strategies that are aimed at improving the situation so that teachers are equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills that may allow them to cope better in an overcrowded classroom. In order for schools to improve the situation for teachers, effective improvement plans are essential. (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009)

Priyanka Gupta (2001) says that teachers are always working for their students preparing lesson plans, working on creating just the right assignments and notes, keeping parents informed and doing everything to help the students learn and grow in the best ways possible. However, even though they do their best all the time, they always face a bunch of challenges inside of the classroom, especially in overcrowded classrooms. Some of them are:

- **Students are bored, inattentive, or unmotivated.**

Sleep deprived and lethargic students are quite irritating for teachers. Such students find it difficult to concentrate on lecture and appear bored. Lethargy and exhaustion may be caused by many factors one of which is doing job in parallel to studies. (Miller and Fritz, 2003)

Overcrowded classrooms many times create boredom. The teacher has reached a point that after dealing with over 50 students per day the major topic on their mind is getting off work. Unfortunately, the teacher has spent all day and every day since the beginning of the school year hassling with students over various situations and less time dealing with learning or teaching questions. This has reached a point that all they want to do is give the required topics and send the students on the way. The students lose interest and become bored because all the teacher does is stand facing the board writing the exercises and explaining them to the whiteboard to avoid looking at the problems in the classroom. Many times, the teacher will repeat the exercise over and over so the student will capture the idea but in reality the students are not paying attention. (Teach Hub, Dec 10, 2010)

Learners do not pay attention or participate at the required level of intensity because classmates are noisy and restive (Mustafa et al., 2014); (Qasim & Arif, 2014), with the result that academic achievement is negatively affected. (Bayat, Louw & Rena, 2014) Furthermore, learners cannot rely on individual care from teachers (Mustafa et al., 2014), particularly in instances where learners need extra support.

The learning environment ought to support learners' motivation to participate in group or individual learning activities. When learners are placed in classes with small numbers, they are more involved and academic achievement increases. This is supported by Ikediaskhi and Amaechi (2012), who point out that lower teacher-learner ratios result in higher-quality education.

- **Technology**

The shift to the new millennium's styles of teaching and learning is one big challenge for the educators at present. Technology has become an essential part of education so classrooms today are equipped with computers. Computers are provided to students to get help and knowledge online and make assignments. Integration of technology does bring a lot of challenges to teachers. Teachers already feel naïve when it comes to technology and students in this age are digital natives. Benbow, Mizrachi, Oliver & Said-Moshiro, (2007) with the available technology students somehow find their way out to misuse the technology which is one big concern of educators. On the other hand, one of the toughest competitors of teachers in classroom is the cell phone. Vibration and ringing bells and students texting their peers cause distraction to the class; the overuse of social networks like Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Gmail, etc, gets students totally out of the class environment. (Parveen Khan et Al., (2012)

- **Time management**

Teaching in overcrowded classrooms takes a toll on the teacher's ability to manage time. According to Imtiaz (2014) and Mustafa et al. (2014), teachers who teach in overcrowded classrooms devote less time to instruction and integrated reading and writing tasks, because instruction time is often wasted by administrative tasks, such as checking attendance lists, and managing behavior, thus leaving less time for actual instruction.

As noted above, teachers are required to work more hours outside of the classroom in order to assess more classroom and homework assignments as well as tests and examination scripts.

- **Lack of knowledge from the students**

Not only do teachers have to ensure that each student in class is learning and engaged, they also have to make sure that the goals of the school are in line. Most of the time, that goals are the same: educate students so that when they enter the “real world,” they will be capable of making good choices. Sometimes, though, there are more things going on with the school than any one teacher knows about. As a teacher, it’s important to be flexible in rearranging plans and having backups for when school-wide activities might disrupt your normal routine. (Teach Hub, Dec 10, 2010)

Personalized teaching in the overcrowded classrooms is impossible as most of the time teachers are dealing with another situation that takes up much more time than actually teaching. When you have classroom sizes of 45 or more students, this may become a nightmare for those students who may fall back on a specific assignment. (Woolfolk, 2010)

It is important to have the most interaction with students on a one-on-one basis because this aids the student to ask questions about a topic that he didn’t fully understand and in a comfortable setting; however in a crowded setting he would probably be ashamed to do so because of the fear that his fellow peers would laugh at him or his question. (Miller and Fritz, 2003)

3. PHYSIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

In overcrowded classrooms, there is easy position to catch respiratory diseases, and other infectious illnesses. Over-crowded environment reduces the quality of air the individuals breathe by limiting the availability of oxygen, which adversely affects the health of

individuals. Temperature and light are also influential factors of the environment. Temperature tends to influence social behaviors such as aggression, while light, especially natural light, has been shown to enhance the performance of the students. Temperature, light, heat and air quality are very important for the students' achievement. (Earthman, 2004)

Imtiaz (2014) and Khumalo and Mji (2014) agreed that overcrowded classrooms are unsupportive learning environments, and may even affect the learners' physical health. They point out that overcrowded classrooms are unhygienic, because if one learner has a contagious infection, then others can be easily infected.

Contagious classrooms are very common in all schools especially those that are overcrowded with over 40 students. Most of these classrooms have little space between students and the ventilation is inadequate. Even with proper ventilation, in the winter time the window and doors are kept shut. An overcrowded classroom may cause stress, which in return drops the immune system, allowing children to get ill quicker than normal. (New York Times article from 2009)

4. LOW PERFORMANCE

As the teacher cannot catch everybody's attention, the student performance is low and poor. In small classes individual attention is paid and students are more actively involved in different activities (Charles.m Achilles, 1996).

A class is a group of pupils put together for the purpose of collective instruction. All the members of the class have common goals, interests, aptitudes and attainments. In a short way, it can be said that a class consists of homogeneous group of pupils, who will

work and progress together (Leah Davies, M.Ed, 2010). According to Lazear (2001), “class is a group of pupils put together for the purpose of collective instruction”.

Shah and Inamullah (2012) found from their studies that over-crowded classes could have a direct impact on students’ learning. They not only affected students’ performance but the teachers had to face different problems such as discipline, behavioral problems, poor health and poor performance of students, put stress on teachers and increased in drop-out rate of students. Carlson (2000) reported that quality learning was not possible when large numbers of students were packed into small classrooms. Ijaiya (1999) found a weak positive correlation between the opinion of teachers and students as well as crowdedness diminished the quality of teaching and learning with serious implications for attainment of educational goals, and to complement, additional buildings and furniture should be given priority in educational planning at all levels.

Nemrah (2006) cited that teachers have to deal with different groups of students in the classroom, some students suffer from the slowdown, faltering and failure in learning and they need more time than their colleagues to accomplish any learning task. Such students are characterized by a number of characteristics, including problems of language, oral expression and unable to pay attention, memory problems and the dispersal of attention. Unfortunately due to the large number of students in class, the teachers are not able to give extra attention to the weak students.

Gallen, Karlenzig and Tamney (1995) linked workload and stress to overcrowded classrooms. They describe teaching as a multi-track activity where teachers fill numerous roles under time pressure. It is evident that overcrowded classrooms or large classrooms

impact enormously on teachers, and affect their ability to teach and also impact on their social wellbeing, leading to stress and burnout. It has also resulted in teachers abandoning the teaching profession as a result of their negative experiences. Teachers are comfortable in teaching smaller classes as this benefits them more as opposed to a large or overcrowded classroom.

Based on the article, “Class Size and Student Achievement” by Ronald G. Ehrenberg, Dominic J. Brewer, Adam Gamoran, and J Douglas Willms from Cornell Higher Education Research Institute at Cornell University, there are a number of disadvantages of large class size: first, it can reduce the amount of time students can actively engage with each other; second, it can increase the disruptive behavior in the classroom; third, it can reduce the amount of time the teacher can spend working with each individual student; fourth, it can reduce the material the teacher can cover; fifth, it can eliminate many methods of assessing students i.e. open-ended assessments and writing assignments; and sixth, it can reduce the learning by reducing the kind of teaching methods that the teacher can employ in the classroom. Besides the ideas that are stated in the article above, the Coleman report suggests that students from lower-social economic groups, at-risk students and English Language Learners (E.L.L.) benefit the most from smaller class sizes.

Correa (1993) posits a theoretical explanation for the importance of class size in the education production function that focuses on the role of individual faculty-student interaction. His model describes teachers that must weigh efforts directed to the whole class versus individual student attention. In this way, individual student learning and outcomes

decline as class size increases. His model illustrates the importance of separating class size effects from total student responsibilities effects. Lazear (2001) outlines a theoretical model where class size itself is important due to the role that class size plays in setting the classroom environment. Large classes (more students) may allow students to be more disruptive, allow them to “hide” from participation, engagement, or even attendance, while small classes may more easily lend themselves to pedagogical activities that improve learning, such as hands on activities and student-faculty classroom interaction.

Adeyemi (2008) defined class size as an educational tool that can be described as an average number of students per class in a school, while Hoffman (1980) described it as the number of students per teacher in a class. Kedney (1989) described it as a tool that can be used to measure performance of the education system. A lot of argument has gone on the impact of class size on performance, some fingering over-bloated class size as the main factor responsible for falling standard of education. Class size is an important factor with respect to academic performance of students. There is a consensus among researchers and educational scholars that, student’s achievement decreases as class size increases. The effect of class- size on cognitive achievement has been debated and researched for many years; this has been inconclusive. Class size refers to educational tools that can be used to describe the average number of students per class in a school.

5. TEACHER’S STRESS

Teaching has been identified as particularly stressful occupation, (Cacha, 1981), (faber & Miller, 1981), (Landsmand, 1978), (Paine, 1981). Negative aspects of the job such as disciplinary problems, overcrowded classroom, excessive paperwork or inadequate salaries

are among the stressors that confronts teachers. As a result of these stressful aspects of teaching, teachers suffer illnesses such as physical (headache, backache, ulcers etc.), psychological (depression or anger) and behavioral (deterioration in work performance or absenteeism).

Stress is the body's natural defense against predators and danger. It flushes the body with hormones to prepare systems to evade or confront danger. This is known as the "fight-or-flight" mechanism. When we are faced with a challenge, part of our response is physical. The body activates resources to protect us by preparing us either to stay and fight or to get away as fast as possible. The body produces larger quantities of the chemicals cortisol, adrenaline, and noradrenaline. These trigger an increased heart rate, heightened muscle preparedness, sweating, and alertness. All these factors improve the ability to respond to a hazardous or challenging situation. Factors of the environment that trigger this reaction are called stressors. Examples include noises, aggressive behavior, a speeding car, scary moments in movies, or even going out on a first date. The more stressors we experience, the more stressed we tend to feel. (Christian Nordqvist, 2017)

Motshekga, (2012) confirms that there are two main types of stress: emotional and physical. Both affect health in a very hard manner.

A. Emotional Stress

As stated by Kovess-Masféty, et. al. (2006), one of the most common complaints teachers make is that they are stressed out. Juggling administrators' demands, paperwork, data-keeping, meetings, implementing student interventions, and not to mention actually preparing lessons and teaching, takes a toll on teachers' bodies. Stress can cause a number

of physical and emotional symptoms, included, but definitely not limited to lethargy, depression, exhaustion, and headaches. According to EducationWorld.com high-blood pressure is also one of the more common health conditions teachers face. Students and co-workers both suffer when teachers have short fuses and are irritable. Managing stress effectively is essential to mitigating and preventing unnecessary physiological problems.

B. Physical Stress

In addition to stress, teachers also have a higher incidence of certain physical ailments. For instance, teachers often lose their voices, and this makes it difficult, or even impossible to teach. Teachers may have to miss work if they cannot speak. In addition, an article entitled “Do Teachers Have More Health Problems? Results from a French Cross-Sectional Survey” by Kovess-Masfety et. al. (2006) indicates that male teachers are at higher risk for anxiety disorders than people in other occupations; and there is more “conjunctivitis and lower urinary tract infection in male teachers and. . .Bronchitis, eczema/dermatitis and varicose veins in female teachers.”

Another form of physical stress is due to the work demand – a teacher is on her feet half the working day, and spends the rest carrying heavy bags around, hunching over desks marking assignments and planning lessons after school hours and on weekends – subjecting yourself to such a routine will definitely take a toll on your body, especially if you’re also not leading a healthy lifestyle. Bad backs, swollen ankles, neck pain and sore feet are what many teachers have taken in their stride as “job hazards”.

We all know that teaching has become a job involving many stresses and it comes of no surprise that levels of teacher stress have increased both nationally and

internationally as of late (McIntyre, 2015). Teachers have reported increased occurrence of psychological distress, physiological illness, and job dissatisfaction (Kyriacou, 1987). Stress can affect teacher capacity to fulfill duties effectively. It incorporates considerable cost in absenteeism, reduced quality of teaching, and has the propensity to negatively impact student learning. Three central themes emerged – student, assessment, and time. (McIntyre, 2015).

1) Student behavior, motivation, attitude and work ethic are the greatest influences on personal stress, as well as the unpredictability of having to deal with disruptive students. Unmotivated and/or disruptive students are difficult issues for teachers to control as this can impact upon learning and student achievement. Teachers were also concerned for the welfare of their students, as one respondent identified in the following observation: Not enough time to prepare students for assessment.

2) On the theme of 'assessment', the rollout of the curriculum generated negative statements such as: 'The school-based assessment system ... is particularly stressful as it relies so heavily on teachers, and the curriculum and assessment are too difficult to introduce with such limited resources, and too many demands on me from too many people, too many deadlines, not enough resources (human and other), trying to juggle competing agendas.

3) The third theme, 'time', generated mostly negative comments, for example: 'Lots of pressure from administration, constant expectations of immediate results/responses to requests for information/behavior reports etc – without any follow-up

or acknowledgement ever.' Teachers appeared to be overwhelmed with ever increasing administrative task demands.

Gallen, Karlenzig and Tamney (1995) linked workload and stress to overcrowded classrooms. They describe teaching as a multi-track activity where teachers fill numerous roles under time pressure.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. RESEARCH APPROACH

The present study was a non-experimental descriptive research. The data was collected through different instruments, which included classroom observations, interviews and questionnaires; those instruments helped to enrich the investigation of the research project. The methodological procedures selected presented the corresponding strengths and weakness of the project as well; however, at the end, once the instruments were combined, they enhanced the validity of the last findings.

B. TYPE OF STUDY

The approach that was used by the research team was based on the quantitative and qualitative research. It means that the researchers collected some information in a numerical way, where statistical calculations were used to prove the impact of overcrowded Practice Teaching courses on the learning of students registered in Practice Teaching II, Semester II - 2017 at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

The researchers wanted to expose how important it is to be prepared to develop the teaching skills in a good way in the real teaching world; moreover, at the time of applying for a job, students can show a competitive and outstanding knowledge, which helps them to get a good and well paid teaching position.

The data collected was analyzed using statistical procedures. At the end, the researchers had enough information to verify the impact that overcrowded Teaching Practice courses cause in the learning of students enrolled in Practice Teaching II group.

C. RESEARCH DESIGN

The researchers decided to use the exploratory and mixed method. Both methods represented a relevant importance to this research. By using a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, the data was evaluated in a better way by ensuring that the limitations of one type of data are balanced by the strengths of another. This guaranteed that understanding was improved by the integration of different types of knowledge. All the evaluations that will be applied to the population will collect both quantitative data (numbers), and qualitative data (text, images).

D. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

• POPULATION

The researchers selected as the population of the project the students from Practice Teaching II, Semester II 2017 in the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. The researcher selected this population because of the fact that the investigation is focused on the impact of overcrowded Teaching Practice courses on the learning of students registered in Practice Teaching II; unfortunately, this is one of the groups in the Foreign Language Department who always face this problem.

- **SAMPLE**

The researchers agreed to use the non- random sampling in order to select the participants; the process of selecting the students to administer the questionnaire was the following: the researchers had the attendance list of the Practice Teaching II classes beforehand, and based on the amount of students in the classroom, the researchers administrated the questionnaire so that the students could fill it out. The number of students who took the questionnaire was 71 out of 105.

E. RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

The researchers decided to use the parallel data gathering because of the fact that a combination of the two approaches, quantitative and qualitative, was applied in this research; in this way, the team collected numerical data as well as more complex information regarding the problem.

1. INTERVIEW

An interview is “a procedure designed to obtain information from a person’s oral response to oral inquires, (Gary Desser Jul 4th).”

Based on the focus of this research, the researchers decided to create an interview and administer it to the two teachers in charge of the subject because they can talk about the difficulties that they face with large groups every semester. Also, teachers can express what they have observed in their students and their progress during the course, and at the same time, they can give some specific information about the topic. Teachers are the best

choice for interviewing since they know their students' behavior during the class. They observe the students' performances and can provide an impartial point of view according to what they have seen in the classroom.

2. QUESTIONNAIRE

“The questionnaire is a list of questions with spaces for answers, is usually given out to a number of people so that they can reply it to later be analyzed for usable information (Merriam-Webster-dictionary)”.

The researchers agreed to use a questionnaire instead of using a test or something similar because it was more comfortable for the students since they did not feel pressured. Besides that, the questions were proper and clear so that students could give accurate answers. The questionnaire was administered to all the students of Practice Teaching II, Semester II at the Foreign Language Department who were presented in the classroom and it consisted on closed- ended and partially open- ended questions.

- **CLOSED- ENDED QUESTIONS**

The researchers choose this kind of questions because they were necessary to get general information about the students. Besides that, closed- ended questions are easy to answer and be analyzed since they have a limited number of possible answers.

- **PARTIALLY OPEN- ENDED QUESTIONS**

This kind of questions is the same as closed- ended ones, except for one thing. Students are given several options to answer a question. Then, they have to support their answer by mentioning the reason why they chose that answer. This is what makes a closed –ended question become a partially open – ended one. This kind of questions provided general and specific information about the students who took the questionnaire.

- **CLASS OBSERVATIONS**

Observation has been derived from two Latin words “ob” meaning before and serve which means keeping. Combining both we get observe which gives the meaning to a process through which a thing or situation is kept before to see and watch carefully (studylecturenotes.com). But base on Goode and Halt (2010) observation is “The careful and systematic watching of facts occurring in nature having cause and effect relation.”

Based on the definition above the research team agreed to apply this technique to the study in order to get a better result and sustainable information. The research team carried out an ethnographic observation which is a qualitative orientation based on an emphasized and detailed observation of people in natural occurring settings (Shankman 2000). The research team attended to some classes with the main purpose of seeing with a naked eye how crowded classroom’s students behaved in their natural environment.

V. EXPECTED RESULTS

This research was aimed at revealing and determining the main difficulties that Practice Teaching II students face regarding their learning during the development of their classes in an overcrowded environment. For this, the researchers expected to obtain necessary and reliable information in order to achieve the main objective and to provide the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador with some insights on the matter. Moreover, the researchers expected as well that the information gathered through the instruments could provide important data to enhance students' teaching strategies in order to obtain outstanding accomplishments.

VI. RESOURCES

The resources used in order to do this research project are presented below.

A) Human Resources

- Researcher
- Advisor
- Two teachers of Practice Teaching II
- Students of Practice Teaching II, Semester II 2017
- FLD Graduation Process Coordinator

B) Material Resources

- Cellphone

- Furniture

- Pencils

- Photocopies and Prints

C. Technical Resources

- Guides

- Programs/ Syllabuses

- Books

- Websites and Articles

D. Financial Resources

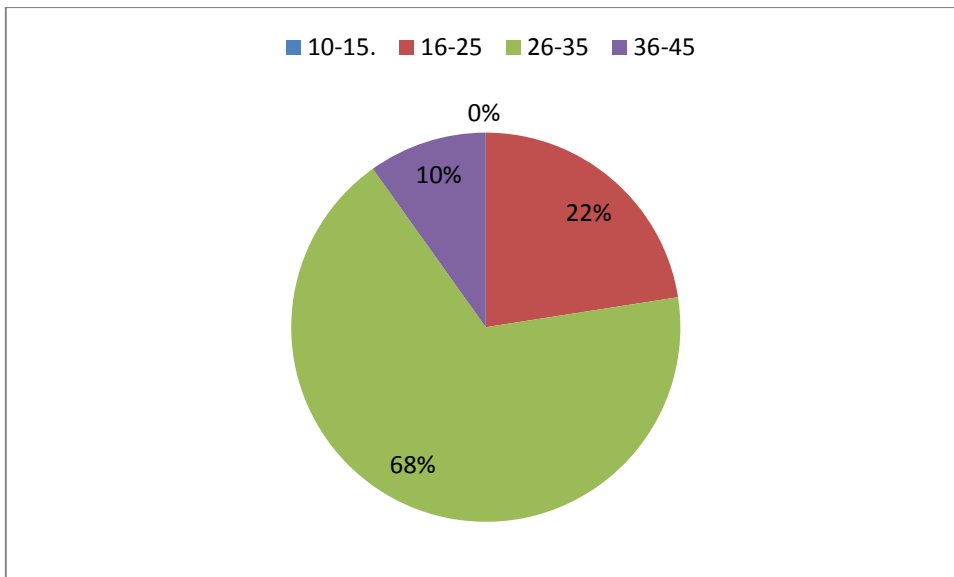
Description	Cost
Photocopies and prints	\$40.00
Pens	\$5.00
Stationary	\$10.00
Transportation	\$80.00
USB memory	\$10.00
Prepaid Internet	\$70.00
Food	\$100.00
Total	\$315.00

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

- QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

1. How many classmates do you have in the Practice Teaching II course?

options	Frequency	percent
10-15	0	0%
16-25	16	22%
26-35	48	68%
36-45	7	10%
total	71	100%

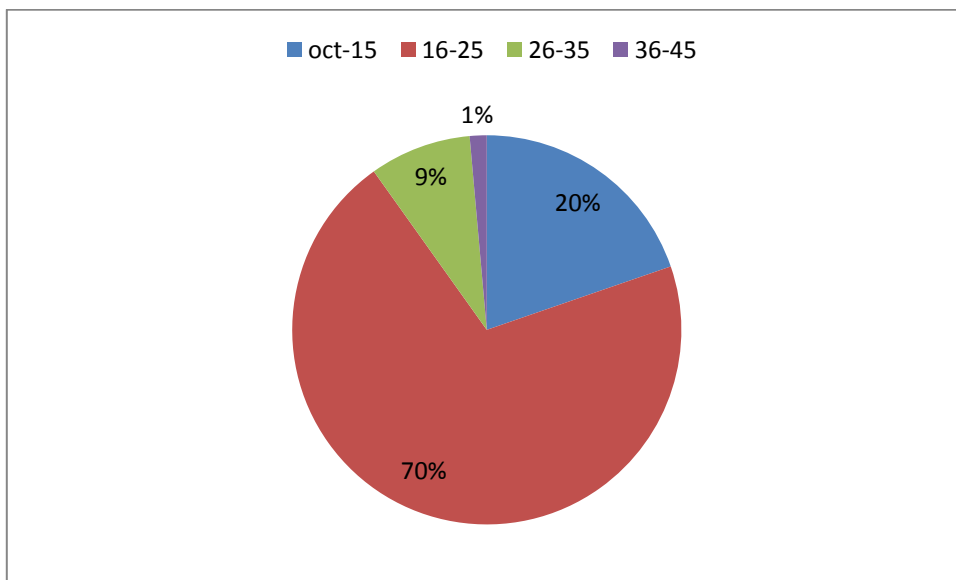


Source: Questionnaire administered to Practice Teaching II students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés
Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2017

Based on the students' answers, 68% of the students affirmed that there are up to 35 students per classroom; followed by 22% which represents up to 25 students and concluding with a 10% which represents up to 45. It is obvious that there is no classroom with a number of 15 or less students, which is represented with a 0% in the graph above.

2. Based on your teaching experience, what is the ideal amount of students per classroom?

options	Frequency	percent
10-15	14	20%
16-25	50	70%
26-35	6	9%
36-45	1	1%
total	71	100%

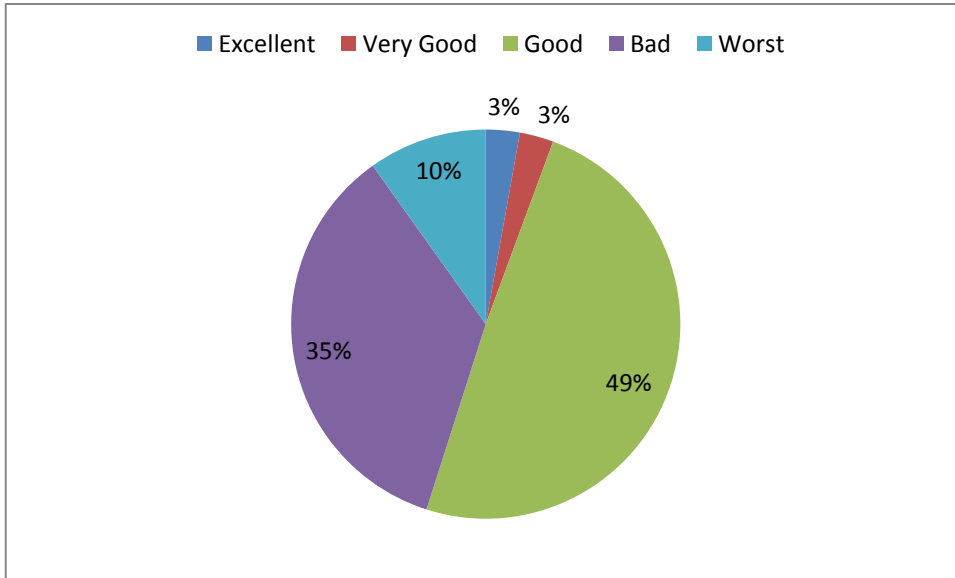


Source: Questionnaire administered to Practice Teaching II students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2017

Supported by 70% of the answers provided by the students, the ideal number of students inside the classroom is between 16 to 25; 20% of them said that 10 to 15 is good, just 9% confirmed that 26 to 36 is the ideal number, and to conclude, the ideal number to work with is 36 to 45 students with only 1%.

3. How do you evaluate the infrastructure of the classroom where you receive your Practice Teaching II classes?

Options	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	2	3%
Very Good	2	3%
Good	35	49%
Bad	25	35%
Worst	7	10%
Total	71	100%

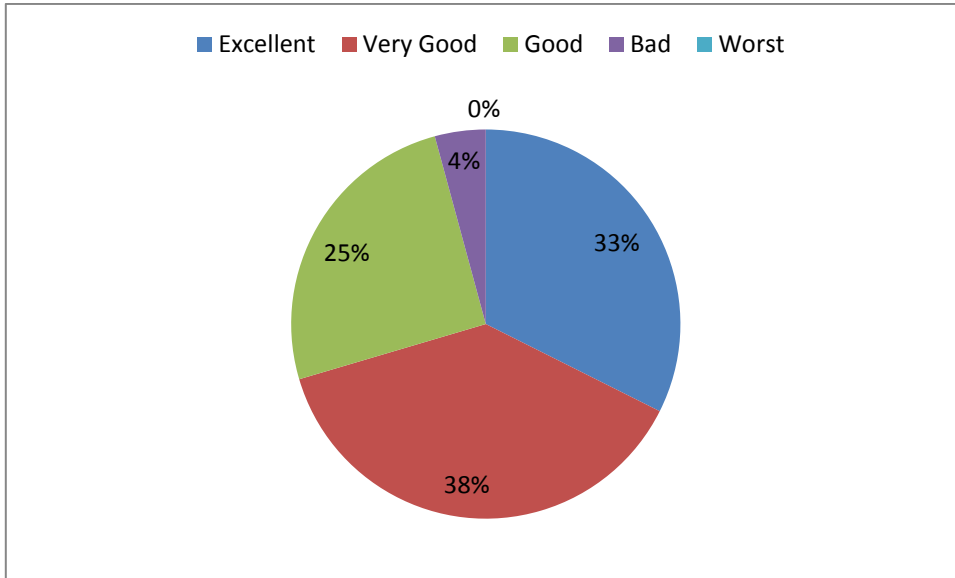


Source: Questionnaire administered to Practice Teaching II students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2017

The infrastructure of the classroom plays an important role on learning; 49% percent of the students said that it is good, 3% of them said that it is very good and another 3% said that it is excellent; on the other hand, 35% said they are not in agreement affirming that it is bad, followed by another 10% of students who said that it is not good at all.

4. How do you evaluate the quality of the Practice Teaching II classes?

Options	Frequency	percent
Excellent	23	33%
Very Good	27	38%
Good	18	25%
Bad	3	4%
Worst	0	0%
Total	71	100%

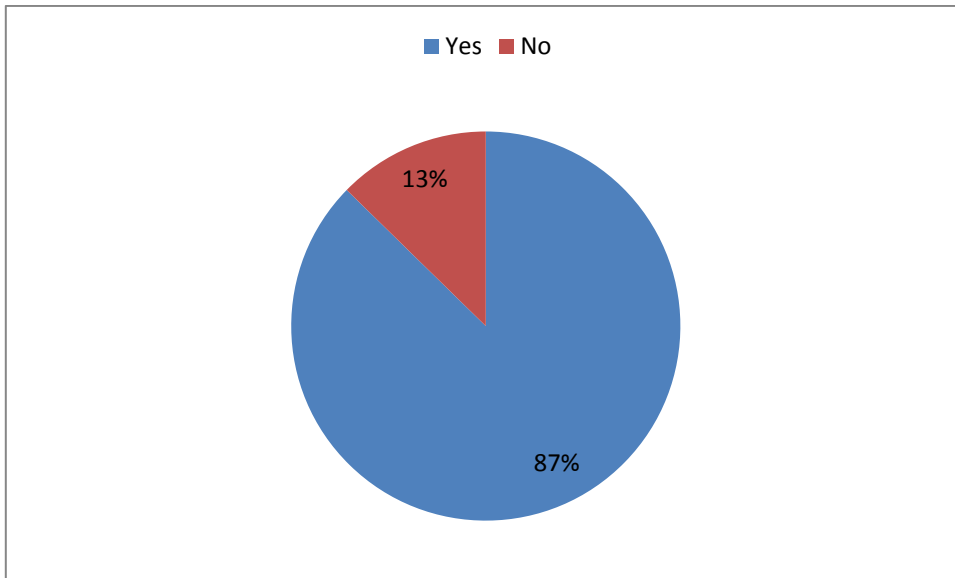


Source: Questionnaire administered to Practice Teaching II students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2017

The quality of the class as expressed by the students is very good, represented by 38% of the students; 33% of them assured that it is excellent, while 25% agreed that it is good; however 4% did not like the class that much saying that it is bad and none of them thought it is worst as it is represented by 0%.

5. Do you think that overcrowded classrooms affect your learning process?

options	Frequency	percent
Yes	62	87%
No	9	13%
total	71	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Practice Teaching II students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2017

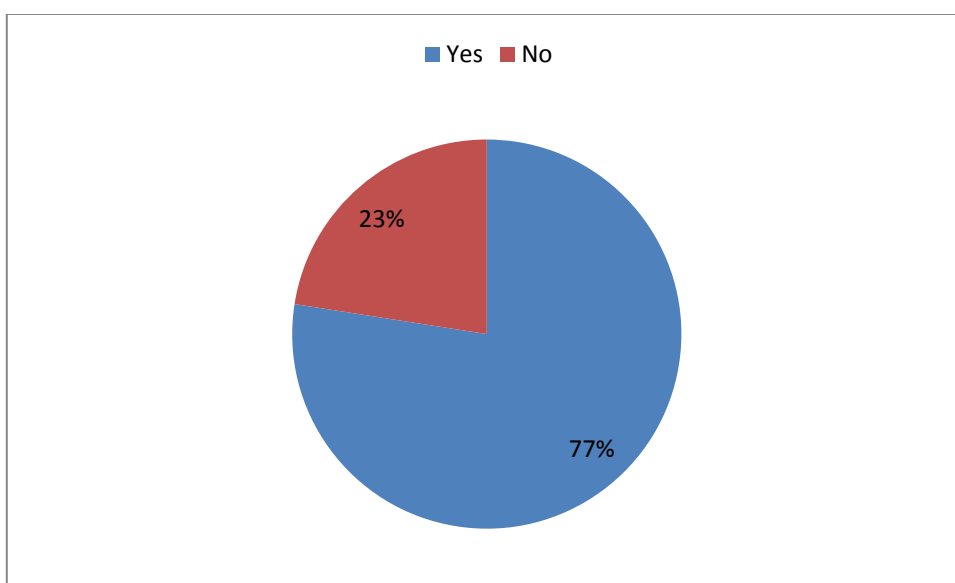
In this graph, it can be noticed that students feel that their learning has been affected due to the overcrowded classrooms represented by 87% of positive answers; meanwhile, 13% of them assured that it is the opposite.

Students were asked why they feel that this fact affected their learning and some of the common answers were:

- Lack of chance to share ideas and to participate in the class.
- Teachers do not have enough time to pay attention to everybody's needs.
- Classrooms are noisier and it is difficult for them to hear the instructions given by the teacher.
- Due to the enormous number of students, evaluations are not accurate.
- The classroom is uncomfortable and it gets hot easily during the summer days.
- They easily get distracted.

6. Do you feel prepared to teach English at the university level?

options	Frequency	percent
Yes	55	77%
No	16	23%
total	71	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Practice Teaching II students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2017

Based on 77% of the students, it is so remarkable that they are fully prepared to teach at a high level like the university; unfortunately, 23% of them do not feel they are prepared.

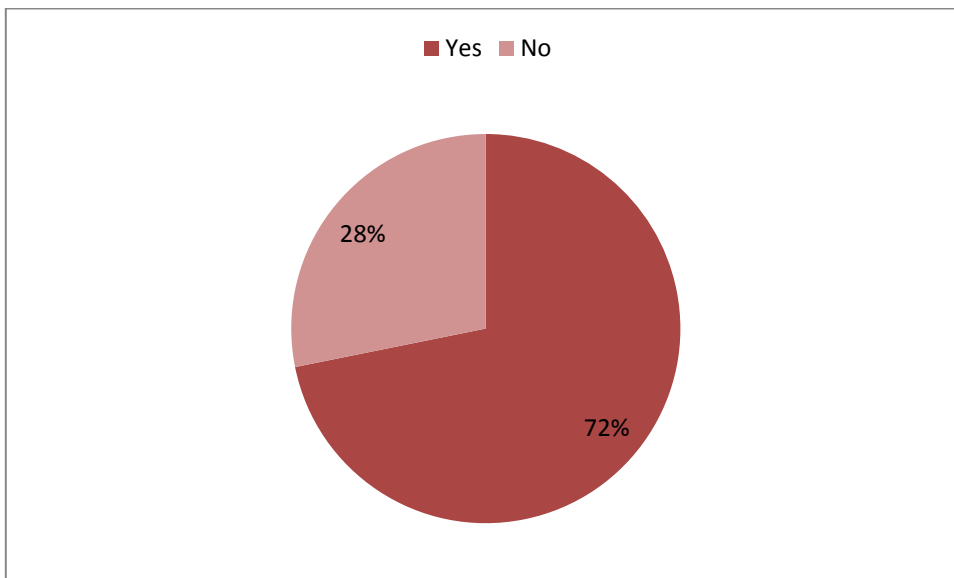
They were asked why they do not feel prepared and some common answers were:

- Lack of vocabulary
- Lack of practice
- Lack of experience

- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of preparation

7. Do you think that overcrowded classrooms hinder your teaching skill development and, consequently, your achievements?

Options	Frequency	percent
Yes	51	72%
No	20	28%
Total	71	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Practice Teaching II students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2017

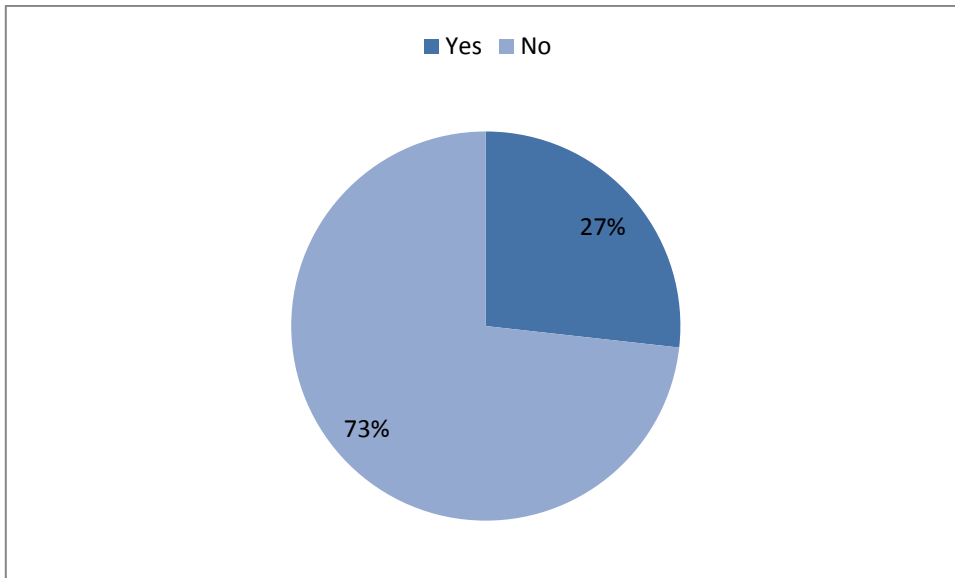
According to the data gathered in this graph, overcrowded classrooms truly affect the student-teachers skills development, represented by 72% of positive answers; just 28% of them do not feel affected by this fact.

They were asked how it affected them and the common answers were:

- Classroom management becomes difficult
- They face too many interruptions
- It is difficult to hear and understand
- There is not enough time for presentations and preparations
- There is not enough space to make activities
- Class is less personalized

8. Have you ever caught any viral illness from your classmates inside the classroom?

options	Frequency	percent
Yes	19	27%
No	52	73%
total	71	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Practice Teaching II students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2017

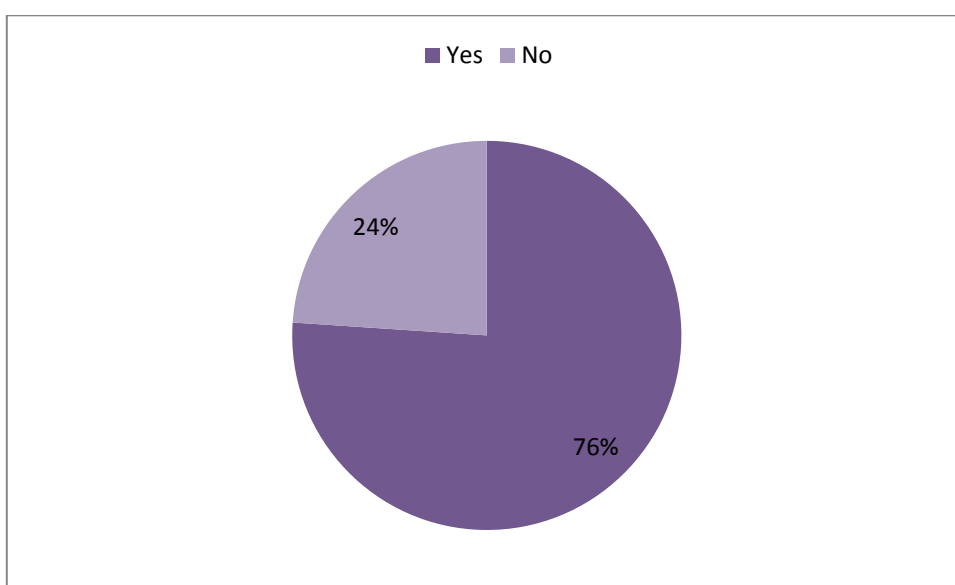
The classroom is a place where students easily catch viral illnesses; fortunately 73% of them confirmed that they have never caught one before in this place, but 27% affirmed that they have gotten sick with a viral infection being the classroom the common place where they got infected.

They were asked which illnesses are commonly transmitted and the common answers were:

- The flu
- Cough
- Allergies
- Chinkunguya
- H3N2

9. Do you consider that overcrowded classrooms affect teachers' health?

options	Frequency	percent
Yes	54	76%
No	17	24%
total	71	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Practice Teaching II students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2017

It is clearly seen that teachers are affected as well as students due to this issue; 76% of the positive answers given revealed that teachers can easily get sick when they work with large numbers of students; just 24% negated that.

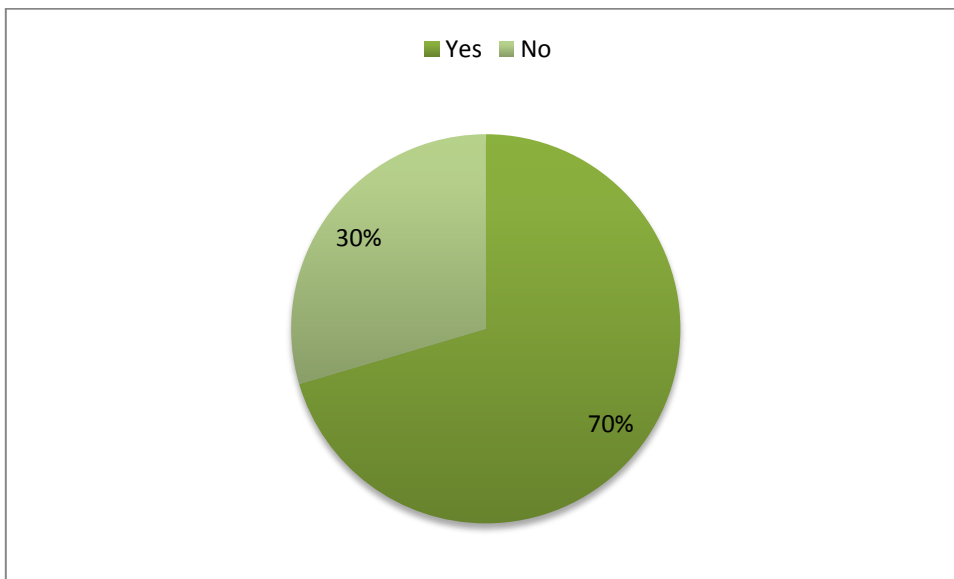
They were asked why they affirmed so and they gave the answers below:

- Teachers have to speak louder to make the class audible to everybody; due to this, they have to make extra effort on their vocal cords and the throat.

- They can get viral illnesses.
- They suffer stress due to paperwork overload.
- They have to make double effort and take work home.

10. Do you consider that overcrowded classrooms affect teachers' academic performance?

options	Frequency	percent
Yes	50	70%
No	21	30%
total	71	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Practice Teaching II students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2017

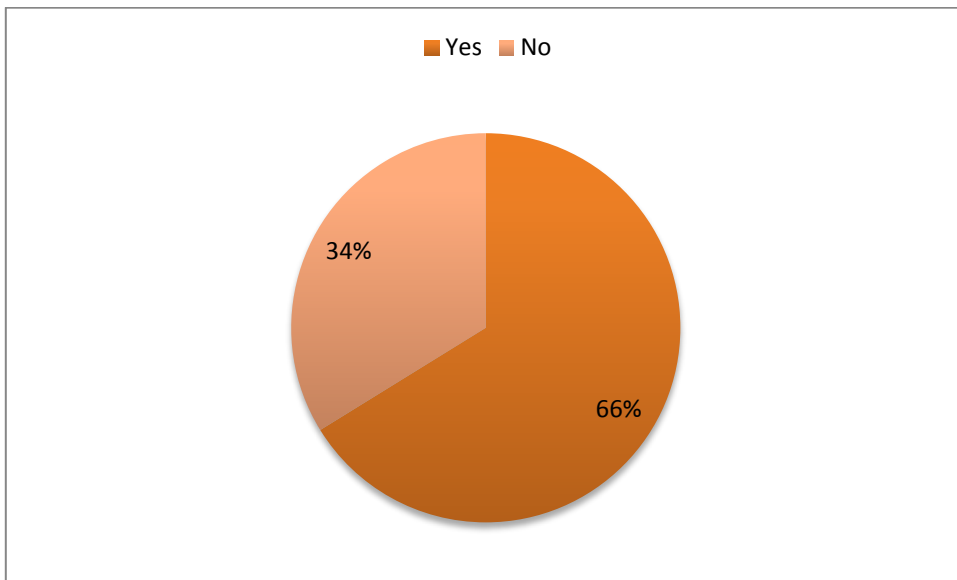
According to the findings, 70% of the students sustained that the teachers' academic performance is definitely affected, only 30% vouched a negative answer.

There were asked why they said that, and the common answers were:

- Teachers cannot move that much inside the classroom.
- Teachers do not have time to develop funny activities.
- Teachers do not finish the required topics along the semester.
- Teachers make extra effort to manage all the students.
- Teachers have fewer opportunities to listen to the students' opinions.

11. Do you consider that overcrowded classrooms affect teachers' emotions?

options	Frequency	percent
Yes	47	66%
No	24	34%
total	71	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Practice Teaching II students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2017

The “Yes” value has the highest percent of students, representing 66% of students that assured that the teachers’ emotions are influenced; meanwhile 34% are in disagreement.

Students were asked why the teachers’ emotions are influenced, and the provided answers were:

- Teachers cannot develop their class the way they like the most.
- Teachers do not have enough support from the authorities.
- Teachers suffer many types of stress.
- Teachers get frustrated.
- Teachers get overwhelmed due to extra work and many other problems they have to face.

12- What do you recommend to avoid having overcrowded classrooms?

Students expressed many recommendations in order to avoid this common problem in the university campus; within the most usual recommendations, the following can be mentioned:

- Create more groups
- Build more classrooms
- Hire more teachers
- The Foreign Language Department has to be more organized
- Renovate the rooms
- Not to allow more than 20 students per class
- Extend the schedules

- **OBSERVATION ANALYSIS**

BEHAVIOR DURING THE ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATION
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Some students arrived late (10:24 am) and interrupted the class.2. The teacher asked students to arrive on time; consequently, the class was interrupted.3. The teacher had temporary hearing problems.4. Some students were eating inside of the classroom.5. Some students were talking while the teacher was giving instructions.6. There were not enough desks for everybody; students had to pick up the desks from a different classroom.7. The teacher could not move that much because there was not enough space in the classroom.8. The teacher was making a discussion and not all the students could participate.9. The classroom was kind of hot; there was a fan inside, but it was not enough for all the students.10. There were many grammar mistakes when students were expressing their ideas.11. Environment outside the classroom was too noisy making inaudible what students were discussing in the class.12. Many students were using their cellphones; even one of them was making a phone call hiding herself behind her bag.13. The teacher expressed that he had a lot of work to do; consequently, he had not prepared the next class due to the lack of time and extra paperwork.14. Some students were in class but having their heads in the clouds.

15. During the puzzle presentation, students were paying attention, taking notes and participating; summing up, that class was very dynamic.
16. The teacher together with the students was replanting activities due to the lack of classrooms.
17. The teacher informed the students that at the time of resolving the test, they would be separated due to the lack of space in order to avoid cheating.
18. The students were divided into groups with the purpose of preparing presentations of an assigned topic.
19. Based on the attendance list, there were many students missing.

Class Observation conclusion

During the ethnographic observation administered to the students registered in Practice Teaching II, Semester II - 2017 at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, the research team observed several misbehaviors during the class time such as talking without permission, eating, arriving late, using technological devices especially cellphones, not paying attention to what the teacher was saying or just having their heads in the clouds, among others. Those are the types of misbehaviors that, together with the overcrowded classroom and the lack of resources in the university campus, hindered a proper learning of the student-teachers of Practice Teaching II. It is evident that teachers in charge of the subject give the best effort trying to cover all the required topics along the semester and to polish students in order for them to become great teachers at the end of the course, or at least to make them lose the fear of being in front of a group of pupils and teach

a class. Unfortunately there are many factors that make this process more unachievable not only for the teachers but also for the students as at the end of the course most of them feel unprepared to take cover a class; consequently, they show nervousness, fear, and lack of knowledge when they develop a real class.

- **INTERVIEW ANALYSIS**

1- How long have you taught Practice Teaching II in the Foreign Language Department?

Teachers A and B have over 10 years working with Practice Teaching II courses.

2- What are the main topics developed during the Practice Teaching II course?

Both teachers affirmed that visual aids, classroom management, resources for using in the class, ethics, and techniques to manage disruptive behavior are the main topics developed during the course; in the same way, extra activities are assigned like preparations of videos, presentations of topics and techniques to have great classes, and teaching a specific assigned group.

3- How many students do you currently have enrolled in the Practice Teaching II group?

Both teachers concluded on having up to 35 students per class, ending up with around 105 students enrolled in total in the course.

4- What is the maximum amount of students that you have had enrolled?

Based on what the teachers said, this year 3 groups have been opened, two during the schedule from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 n. and one in the afternoon, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. However, in previous years, it was not the case as both teachers had to deal with large groups of around 70 students per group as just two groups were always opened.

5- Do you consider that Practice Teaching II is one of the main subjects of the major? Why?

Both teachers agreed that it is one of the main subjects of the major; they agreed on it because Practice Teaching II allows students to face their fears and to learn many techniques in order to apply them in classes later on. Teachers added that the practice that students perform during the course helps them to face the real teaching world; unfortunately, they have just few hours to practice, and many of them do not have any experience before they take the course.

6- Do you consider that large groups of students affect the students' proficiency and consequently their achievements?

Both teachers agreed on the ideal number of students per class, which is 20 students or even less than that because the class would be more personalized, and they would have the opportunity to work with each student in order to guide them and help them to improve. If the groups are large, students' achievements are affected due to the lack of practice and guidance. Students enrolled in Practice Teaching II have tutors in the groups to which they are assigned; those tutors do not focus on a constructive and positive feedback; instead, the tutors sometimes do not allow student-teachers to teach. "I think students need more supervision, so definitely this subject is different from others because it is based on practice." (Teacher B). At the end, that emptiness of practice, knowledge, and an appropriate feedback is filled out with low quality proficiency and maybe a disappointed mood from the student-teachers.

7- What do you expect from the students at the end of the semester?

Both teachers revealed that their expectations are basically that the students become proficient in teaching so that they can be able to manage a group of students; they can put into practice the theory learnt in class in real teaching, recognize what the pupils need to

improve on, work in different categories of learners and levels, and most importantly, become self-sufficient teachers to bring new and brilliant ideas to the class.

8- How do you see the students' proficiency based on the rubrics you use to evaluate?

Teachers pointed out that they have different rubrics for each section of student-teachers' performance during the class; such as lesson planning, visual aids, applied activities, and performance in general. Those rubrics are presented to the tutors that are assigned to the student-teachers; subsequently, tutors are responsible to grade the student's proficiency in the class. In the answer to this question, the teachers did not mention exactly how they see student's proficiency,

9- Do you have any recommendations to the corresponding authorities in order to avoid having large amounts of students inside the classroom?

Teacher A provided good recommendations to the corresponding authorities such as to hire new professors and provide them with a good working environment and employment benefits, open more space availability or maybe build new and well-equipped buildings, and reduce the number of students per class in order to work in their individual needs. On the other hand, teacher B came with an impressive idea of creating a student-teacher school,

in which they have the chance to practice with different levels and learners throughout the year; also teacher B reinforced the idea of having less students per class.

GENERAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ANALYSIS

Based on the interviews administered to the teachers in charge of the Practice Teaching II subject at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, overcrowded classrooms bring many difficulties to both students and teachers. To teachers because they face many limitations at the time of teaching such as classroom management, mobility inside the classrooms, lack of students' attention, bad grades, too many interruptions, noisy classrooms, etc. And all this together brings with it many hard consequences to the teachers' health, affecting them not only physically, but mentally and emotionally; consequently, affecting their performance and work absenteeism. Teachers can probably have many ideas to improve the quality of the classes as they mentioned during the interview, like creating an experimental school to develop the student-teachers' skills in a better way and to give them more chance to practice and to get experience, but sadly, they express that it is just a dream as the corresponding authorities do not support their ideas. On the other hand, the students are affected due to the fact that teachers do not have enough time for each of them to polish their areas of opportunities at the time of teaching, having at the end, lack of quality in many areas.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

After having carried out this investigation, the members of the research team present the following conclusions:

- Carrying out of this research has been a very useful experience for the researchers' professional development as future English teachers because of the direct observation of the different problems in the classroom. This is stated since the researches had the opportunity to interact with different types of students, and their different learning styles. This interaction made the members of the research team realize that the students do want to learn and put into practice all the theory, games, and strategies at the time of teaching.
- This research work motivated the researchers to go deeper and learn more about the difficulties that students face in the classroom and how to improve the environment and conditions to better help the students. The researchers were also able to confirm the importance of paying attention to the sensitive reception of the learning process, a dimension that sometimes teachers neglect due to lack of time or many other obstacles that overcrowded classrooms bring.
- The number of students inside the classroom is really important for the learning of the students. Based on the findings along this research, 68% of the students affirmed that there are up to 35 students per classroom; that means that all the Practice Teaching II groups are overpopulated. A classroom is said to be overcrowded the

where number of students exceeds the optimum level so that it causes hindrance in the teaching- learning process. (McGuffey, 1982). As McGuffey affirms, overcrowded classrooms do hinder the teaching-learning process because the students are in the preparations phase to become professionals and future teachers; surely they have many doubts on how to develop a great class. However, the teacher in charge of the subject does not have enough time for each student ending up with those questions without response.

- The space in the classroom is really important at the time of developing a class as it allows teachers to practice games or group activities, to move easily from one student to the other, to arrange the desks in the best and most useful way possible, etc. To find the balance between the space of the classroom and the number of students that receive the class in that place would be ideal. Supported by 70% of the answers provided by the students of Practice Teaching II, the ideal number of students inside the classroom is between 16 to 25; however, the current number in those classrooms exceeds 35 students.
- The teachers' health is affected due to overpopulated classrooms and the extra paperwork assigned. This affects their physical, emotional, and mental health. Affirmed by the answers of the students, 76% think that the teachers' health is at risk. On the other hand, we can see that this fact affects students learning as well because if teachers get sick, that class has to be postponed, bringing lack of knowledge in the students' side as a consequence.

- The quality of the classes is low since students do not have time to reinforce a difficult topic, to ask questions, or just to have extra practice. At the end, they have many areas of opportunity that are not polished; as a consequence, the students have to face that in real teaching. Additionally, the voice of the teacher is not totally audible for everybody and the instructions are not clearly received. 72% of the students assured that overcrowded classrooms hinder their teaching skill development and consequently their achievements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the findings gotten in this investigation, the research team discovered that overcrowded classrooms represent a big problem for both teachers and students; the worst part is that this is an issue that the selected population in this study faces every single semester, bringing as a result a hindrance to their learning and the development of their teaching skills. Thus, the research team agreed on providing some recommendations to the appropriate authorities in order to create an attack plan to eradicate this issue or at least to minimize it.

The corresponding authorities should:

- Build new and well equipped classrooms with new desks, air conditioners, computers, projectors, and many other devices or didactic materials that the teachers in charge of the subject consider appropriate. Those classrooms should be designed

in order to facilitate the students learning and the development of their teaching skills.

- Hire more human resources and provide them with a stable position that permits them to receive a competitive salary every month as well as all the employment benefits that they deserve. At the same time, teachers should not be assigned extra paperwork that could affect their physical and mental health.
- Set a limit of students enrolled per classroom. Based on the findings, the ideal number of students is up to 20 per room; it will make learning easier and more effective. In the same way, it will benefit teachers as they will be able to find out the students' main areas of opportunity and they will definitely work on those.
- Redesign the current curricula of the students of Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza and include some extra subjects related to Practice Teaching so that the students can get the necessary knowledge and enough experience to face the real teaching world.
- Work on the idea provided by the teachers in charge of the subject which is to implement an experimental teaching school where the students who are taking the Practice Teaching subject can work during a period of one year with different types of students such as kids, teenagers, and adults as well as with different levels such as basic, intermediate, and advanced.

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XII.

ANNEXES

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT



TEACHERS' INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Objective: To gather information related to the impact of overcrowded Practice Teaching courses on the learning of students registered in Practice Teaching II, Semester II - 2017 at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

Directions: Answer the questions below to the best of your knowledge or experience.

The interview will be recorded.

- 1- How long have you taught Practice Teaching II in the Foreign Language Department?
- 2- What are the main topics developed during the Practice Teaching II course?
- 3- How many students do you currently have enrolled in the Practice Teaching II group?
- 4- What is the maximum amount of students that you have had enrolled?
- 5- Do you consider that Practice Teaching II is one of the main subjects of the major?
Why?

6- Do you consider that large groups of students affect the students' proficiency and consequently their achievements?

7- What do you expect from the students at the end of the semester?

8- How do you see the students' proficiency based on the rubrics you use to evaluate?

9- Do you have any recommendations to the corresponding authorities in order to avoid having large amounts of students inside the classroom?

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT



STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRES

Objective: To gather information related to the impact of overcrowded Practice Teaching courses on the learning of students registered in Practice Teaching II, Semester II - 2017 at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

Instruction: Please complete the following questions to reflect your opinions as accurately as possible. It should take around 10 mins, and your responses are completely confidential.

Date: _____

Group: _____

1- How many classmates do you have in the Practice Teaching II course?

10-15 16-25 26-35 36-45

2- Based on your teaching experience, what is the ideal amount of students per classroom?

10-15 16-25 26-35 36-45

3- How do you evaluate the infrastructure of the classroom where you receive your Practice Teaching II classes?

Excellent ____ Very Good ____ Good ____ Bad ____ Worst ____

4- How do you evaluate the quality of the Practice Teaching II classes?

Excellent ____ Very Good _____ Good _____ Bad _____ Worst _____

5- Do you think that overcrowded classrooms affect your learning process?

Yes No How _____

6- Do you feel prepared to teach English at the university level?

Yes No Why _____

7- Do you think that overcrowded classrooms hindrance your teaching skill development and consequently your achievements?

Yes No How _____

8- Have you ever caught any viral illness form your classmates inside the classroom?

Yes No Which _____

9-Do you consider that overcrowded classrooms affect teachers' health?

Yes No Why _____

10- Do you consider that overcrowded classrooms affect teachers' academic performance?

Yes No Why _____

11- Do you consider that overcrowded classrooms affect teachers' emotions?

Yes No Why _____

12- What do you recommend to avoid having overcrowded classrooms?

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT



OBSERVATION FINDINGS

Objective: To gather information through the direct observation of students registered in Practice Teaching II, Semester II - 2017 at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador in order to see their behavior inside the classroom and the impact of overcrowded classrooms regarding their learning.

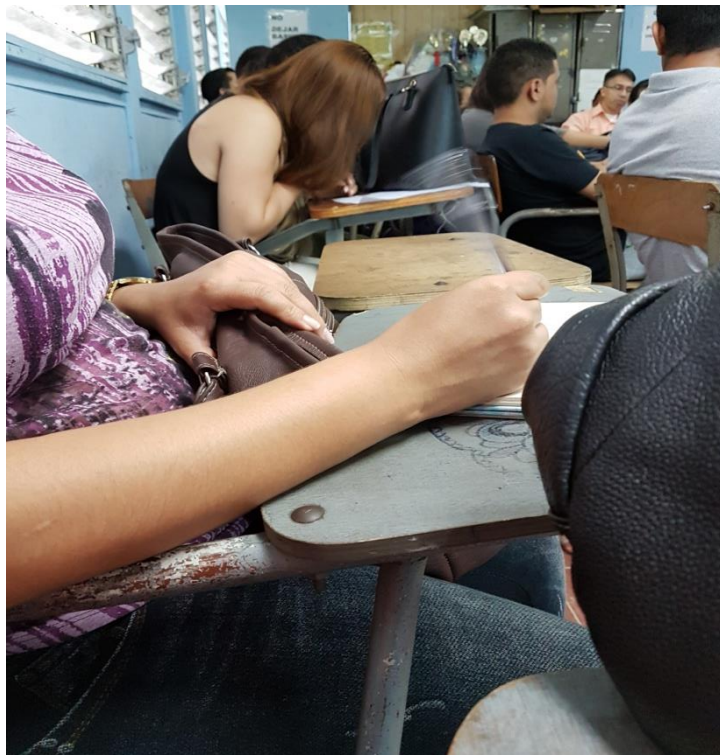
BEHAVIOR DURING THE ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATION
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Some students arrived late (10:24 am) and interrupted the class.2. The teacher asked students to arrive on time; consequently, the class was interrupted.3. The teacher had temporary hearing problems.4. Some students were eating inside of the classroom.5. Some students were talking while the teacher was giving instructions.6. There were not enough desks for everybody; students had to pick up the desks from a different classroom.7. The teacher could not move that much because there was not enough space in the classroom.8. The teacher was making a discussion and not all the students could participate.9. The classroom was kind of hot; there was a fan inside, but it was not enough for all the students.10. There were many grammar mistakes when students were expressing their ideas.

11. Environment outside the classroom was too noisy making inaudible what students were discussing in the class.
12. Many students were using their cellphones; even one of them was making a phone call hiding herself behind her bag.
13. The teacher expressed that he had a lot of work to do; consequently, he had not prepared the next class due to the lack of time and extra paperwork.
14. Some students were in class but having their heads in the clouds.
15. During the puzzle presentation, students were paying attention, taking notes and participating; summing up, that class was very dynamic.
16. The teacher together with the students was replanting activities due to the lack of classrooms.
17. The teacher informed the students that at the time of resolving the test, they would be separated due to the lack of space in order to avoid cheating.
18. The students were divided into groups with the purpose of preparing presentations of an assigned topic.
19. Based on the attendance list, there were many students missing.

PICTURES TAKEN IN THE CLASS OBSERVATIONS







TEACHERS' INTERVIEW

1-How long have you taught Practice Teaching II at the Foreign Language Department?

Teacher A: “I have to tell you the truth, I cannot remember the exact amount of years, but I remember I’ve been teaching the subject for a long time, let’s say 10 to 15 years”.

Teacher B: “As I mentioned before at the beginning, I have the experience working in the area of teaching practice but first just with the students that were at the Profesorado and I was working around 10 years probably, and then since 2008 the director of the Foreign Department assigned me to work with the Teaching Practice I and II of Licenciatura because at that moment he considered that it was not well organized. It was kind of disorder and he thought that it definitely needed to be improved and his words were like “Grace, I want you to organize the Teaching Practice process here in Licenciatura because it is a mess.” I said “ok” and I tried to do my best because at the beginning there were no specific guidelines or appropriate instruments to evaluate student-teachers’ performance and now I think that we have improved the process and of course every year there is something that must be improved or revised. We try to improve those things in order to have a better product.”

2- What are the main topics developed during the Practice Teaching II course?

Teacher A: “We have different topics for example we develop some topics related to visual aids the first part the semester, and then we develop topics related to classroom

management; that's basically the main idea. For example with visual aids, we have different subtopics, students present a video because we don't have enough time in the room nor space availability in order to develop their presentations, so they present a video in which they give us information about the use of one specific technique in the classroom, some of them about flipcharts, wallpapers and different topics."

Teacher B: "This course is mainly focused on resources, the appropriate use of resources. We work with visual AIDs and also with those resources that we use to support a specific topic or structures that we teach in some courses because we have the specific textbook that we use when we teach in a course teaching English, but also we work with other resources that we can use, work with different types of material that we can apply in order to have a variety of activities in the classroom. This is one of the topics that were considered in Teaching Practice II, but also we talk about classroom management. We discuss about those aspects related to classroom management like seating arrangement, the appropriate use of voice and gestures, body language when we teach and also we talk about giving feedback to students, seating arrangement and also the ones that are related on how to maintain discipline, also we study some specific cases of disruptive behavior that we can face in the classroom and well at least to analyze some strategies that we can apply in order to minimize this situation that we can face there. Also we talk about the ethics that is one of the contents we developed in the Teaching Practice course and we analyze some specific situations and then we reflect based on reality of real classroom areas where they are teaching now. Classroom management, ethics that are related to teaching issues and making use of resources are the topics that we mainly discuss in this course because in the previous one we were mainly focused on lesson planning."

3- How many students do you currently have enrolled in the Practice Teaching II group?

Teacher A: “Well in the paper I have like 35 students”.

Teacher B: “Now I’m in charge of two groups: one in the morning, in which there are 31 students and in the afternoon there are 42 students; 70 students in total.”

4- What is the maximum amount of students that you have had enrolled?

Teacher A: “Well that’s a good question because this is the first really semester that we don’t have any large rooms. We have 2 groups assigned for the same schedule, I’m talking about groups from 10 to 12, so at the beginning I was going to have about 70 students in the morning and; then, we talked to the head of the department and we explained the situation to him, and he understood the situation and he decided to split the group; that’s why this semester, we have only 35 students, buy usually we had from 60 to 70 students. I remember that one year and a half ago; I had 70 students; that’s the number that I usually used to have in the classroom.”

Teacher B: “I remember one year I had a group of 52 students.”

5- Do you consider that Practice Teaching II is one of the main subjects of the major? Why?

Teacher A: “All of them complement; of course we are not saying it is the most important subject, but it is one of the most important because we are dealing with students’ practice in the real life, and because that is still a practice for me. Well I’ve been teaching for so many

years, but I'm still learning because I still have to face unexpected situations and I still have to make decisions on different topics or different issues. So that is really a part of my everyday life, so for the students, it is what they are going to face in the real life, they may probably know about different topics related to the theory, if in practice they don't know what to do or how to implement the theory in the practice inside the classroom; that is a big issue, maybe they are not going to be hired or probably the institution they are going to work for is not going to be like the best. There are many institutions outside that are demanding for qualified teachers; that's why we are here to help them to become qualified teachers. ”

Teacher B: “It is important because it is the opportunity that students have to go to real practice. They are working with real groups and they have to face all their fears that are related to this because there are many of them that have no experience of teaching. There are very few of them that have started working on a school, teaching kids or some private lessons but in most of the cases, they have never taught a class just the microteaching that they have during the development of the English Didactics courses, so for most of them it is the first experience they have and I think that having this experience during the two semesters helps them a lot. Some of them at the end of these courses come to me saying “Definitely, I'm not good at teaching, I don't really like it” But there are many cases in which they said “Now I have discovered that I really like teaching.” That's why I think it is very important. Now that we are on a process of redesigning the curriculum, this is one of the main or the most important finding. It is that students that have already graduated and that are not working, students said that they consider that practice was very little and they need more hours before starting working in a real institution as teachers. And they said, we

definitely need more hours for having some practice before graduating, they said. When they are taking this subject, they consider that 10 or 20 hours they said, too many hours teaching. But later they are aware that those hours were very few.”

6- Do you consider that large groups of students affect the students’ proficiency and consequently their achievements?

Teacher A: “Yes, we have talked about this for a while with my colleague Licenciada Grace Lopez, and I think that the ideal number to deal with will be maybe 20 students, if possible less than 20 because that way would be personalized the advisory; nowadays, it is like more difficult for us. It gets like complicated sometimes. We have to rely on the tutor, and we don’t really have enough time to work on specific problems that some students have like one by one. It becomes very difficult and that affects their development in the class, and the quality of the work.”

Teacher B: “Yes, well in this way. I think so because there are only two people, Mr. Cabrera and I, the ones who are in charge of this, and I think students need more supervision, so definitely this subject, it is different from others because it is based on practice, and if they are practicing something, they need to have a lot of feedback and for giving them appropriate feedback, we need to supervise that but definitely we don’t have enough time to supervise their work; that’s why the role of the tutors is really important but unfortunately, not all the tutors develop their role as tutors as we want them to do it. There are some of them that are very responsible, that give appropriate feedback in the moment the students need that, so they have the chance and the opportunity to improve. They know what they have to improve; they know in which areas they have to improve but definitely we, as coordinators of this process, have to be closer in order to check and help them with

this, but with this number of students, it is almost impossible. Fortunately, we have been working with some, let's call them assistants, some students that are developing their social hours, and they help us to have some control, but they are not observing classes; they are just visiting tutors with some questionnaires and then we have that information and this helps us a lot to give some feedback, but sometimes in general in the classroom but I think and we have discussed about it with Mr. Cabrera that something good will be if we have the time to talk individually with every student-teacher so we can say, well, here we have the checklist; your tutor says you are very responsible, very punctual, and you are really committed to what you are doing. There are some problems like they're missing classes very frequently so you have to avoid doing this. Definitely, this is something we have to do individually because everybody has different abilities. Everybody has different attitudes and you know when you speak about these aspects in the classroom in a general way, students are not paying attention or they don't consider that you are talking to them. So, definitely we'd have better results if we have less students in each group, let's say."

7- What do you expect from the students at the end of the semester?

Teacher A: "Well, there are some ideas of course, but we probably require students to become proficient in teaching and to be able to deal with the basics on the application of the theory in the classroom. Let's say we are talking about classroom management for example. They can be able to manage the group and of course at the end, we expect to help students to get on their way for learning to be useful in the classroom, to guide the students because they are like the directors of an orchestra, so we expect them to do that, to help the students learn and achieve their objectives they have for the classroom through the different classes."

Teacher B: “Well, after a year working with a group, I expect having them develop their teaching skills. In the first course we assigned them to work with a specific group of learners, let’s say with kids and then in the second one, we change them and make them work with adults or with teenagers, so that they can have different experiences and learn from reality, from their own experiences those differences of teaching those different types of learners. As it is not the same work here at the Language Department teaching a basic course than teaching a basic course at CENIUES for example, it is different. So they have, or what we expect from them is to develop those teaching skills, and they can feel more confident at the end, and they learn from the tutors. But unfortunately they learn things, when they come here and talk about some things that the tutors don’t do correctly, and I say well, learn about the things that you don’t have to do, everything is learning. So this is what I expect from them.

8- How do you see the students’ proficiency based on the rubrics you use to evaluate?

Teacher A: “We have rubrics for evaluating for example the class plans, the didactic material, and students’ performance during the class, so those are the main rubrics that we have. We evaluate the student’s class plan, and that is because of what I explained to you earlier, that we don’t have the time to evaluate them like individual lesson plan. We are talking about lesson plan. So the tutors take it as their role, to evaluate them as they are assigned to different classes. So the tutors’ role is to evaluate lesson plans, didactic material and evaluate also the students’ performance in the class, the general performance in the class. So in that sense, we suppose that students are going to make progress because in different moments students are being evaluated by the tutor, and they are supposed to get some feedback on their job. So once they teach a class, they are observed in the class, and

then they have like several opportunities to teach throughout the semester. They have to report 10 different classes on the first report, and then report other 10 in the second report, so in total, they have 20 opportunities. Those opportunities are considered to me like a step for them to grow and to improve their proficiency in the classroom with the help of the tutor and our help as coordinators, of course.”

Teacher B: “Talking about the rubrics that are related to their performance in classes for example, some of them as I said before, it depends on the role of the tutor because we can trust on them because they are good tutors, they really worry about trying to help their assistants or students teacher, and they give appropriate feedback, they ask them to do a different task in the classroom in order to have experience in different things like assigning or how to evaluate oral presentations, they have their students-teachers involved in different processes, but there are some others that don’t really involve their students-teachers, so the experiences at every scene student-teachers have during the process is different; unfortunately not all the tutors take that role seriously. That’s why there are some of them that really develop their skills and they learn a lot, but there are some others that at the end of the semester come and express that they really learned a lot from their tutor, and now they know how to work with groups of kids, or how to work with large classes and things like that, but there are some others that even though they have 9 or 10 in the results of the evaluations, but they are really honest and they say “teacher I know that I got a good grade from my tutor, but I didn’t learn, but I didn’t learn anything because I just taught 4 or 5 classes.” Tutors sometimes don’t allow them to teach the hours they need, and they just assigned 10 and 10 and 10 and everything good, and they don’t express anything, so when I see those results in the rubric and I see that student-teacher has 10, 10, 10 but there are no

comments about this, I say “I don’t really trust in those results” because there are some other tutors that if the student-teachers are doing a good job, they say that, then I can see 10, 10 10 and everything and they express that right they say “he is really good at creating didactic materials, he is very organized, his classes really have a sequence, and he is really interesting in students learning” and things like that. There is something to say about that student-teacher that is really good on the papers right, but there are some others as I said before that the grades they obtain from those rubrics; they are not really honest because some tutors say “well you were here every Saturday, you attended every class, so you got a 10”, so that’s why I think that is the problem that there are many students, so you cannot control those situations. That is the problem that we face.

9- Do you have any recommendations to the corresponding authorities in order to avoid having large amounts of students inside the classroom?

Teacher A: “Yes, sometimes we criticize, but somehow I understand the head of the department because he has his own problems. We have lack of space availability, we don’t have enough space here, we need more spaces, and we need appropriate buildings, extra buildings and more human resources. So I would probably criticize not the head of the department, but I will send these comments to the authorities in other levels, in higher, levels because they have to hire new resources for the department. We need more people, we need more professors, and more spaces, so that we can have more human resources, more space availability; that means that we are going to have more groups and the quality of service that we are going to offer to our students will be the best or at least better than the previous service right. So the criticism will probably go to other levels of authority because he depends not on himself, he is not the owner or the one who distributes, the one

who hires people right. We are talking about the directive, so probably my criticism will go for them in order to open more spaces and to hire more employees, more professionals for our department and to give them stability right because right now we only have like a lot of people working as per hour, and that is not stability as they don't get paid like every month; they get paid at the end of the semester, and that is not offering the best conditions and probably the quality for the selection book, the standards go down, you cannot demand quality if you are not offering the best conditions, so in this case, the criticism will go to the other people not to the head of the department.”

Teacher B: “Definitely it will be better if we have fewer students in each group right, and the problem is that our responsibilities are more than just attending a group of class, that is one of the responsibilities, but we have many things to do, so we have no time for doing the activities as we have to do it. Just some minutes ago, we were talking about that with Mr. Cabrera because we have received lot of complaints from the student-teachers regarding their tutors because they don't want them to be there in the classroom specifically at the CENIUES program. And we said “What is happening?” Some of them are treating some student-teachers in an appropriate way, sometimes they are humiliating them, and they are telling them things that are not correct in the way they do it. So if you are going to give some feedback, you have to be aware that they are learning; that's why they are there right. But I think that sometimes we forget that once we were in that situation, and we were talking if it would be a good idea and even he said “Why don't we work in a project to have like an experimental school here at the language department, in which we can have the student-teachers practicing during the whole year in different levels and things like that because it is really difficult to work with some tutors and having too many students is very

difficult, but that means that the ones in charge of this have a big responsibility, and if they are doing just that, it will be possible to control all the student-teachers performance, but I think it is like a dream because let`s say that we organize and we work in a project like that, but what about the rooms. There are not enough rooms for having an experimental school. I think this will be a great idea for the university because if we could have an experimental school, we could include even people from other disciplines like Psychology, for example. They will have the chance to attend the school in that area or the ones from Physical Education or something like that. So it would be great, but that means having enough resources, and that is a problem here at the university. But I will say that if it is possible to have less student teachers, that will be better at least something to do in order to minimize this problem, and in order to try to do things better. We can have the intention, we can have some ideas, but our real situation is different. There are no resources and that`s why. But I think that if we are interested, probably we can do it and we will work on this. But now this is the situation that we are facing that tutors are not doing their job and the way they treat our student-teachers, I think, it is not fair the way because they are trying to do their best. We know that we have different types of students too right, but I don`t think it is the way we have to treat them and I think that most of the cases they don`t see the student-teacher as someone that will help me but someone that is going to be there criticizing my job probably, and that`s why they don`t like them having someone else in the classroom, but I think it is the way it worked. If you are organized in what you do, you can take advantage of that situation. So teachers, what we need is more time, more free time to prepare material, to plan our classes, to look for extra material we can bring to class and things like that. And if I have to take advantage of that, but they don`t really do it. So, that is a situation we are facing. Something... also... probably in the future because as I told you...

I am in charge of working with this process of redesigning the curriculum and something... another finding and something that has been discussed is that we have to talk to private institutions in order to have our students develop some hours there to work with real private institutions and they will have a better idea of how to work because there are some specific rules that it is not the same to work with a public school than work in a private academy or private institution or private company so students need that experience. So probably in that way we'll have some more opportunities or some more places where we can locate our students to develop this process. But currently working with private institutions is like a big sin, the university working together with private institutions. It's like we are giving them the opportunity to obtain more money or profits in a free way, but definitely our students need that experience because when they go outside and they start working, they don't know how private institutions work. Probably that would be another recommendation to start this process in which we will have more chances in which our students are going to be developing this process not only here at CENIUES.