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Strategies and techniques that teachers of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador use to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management in the Intermediate English I courses, semester II-2010

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Strategies and techniques that teachers of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador use to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management in the Intermediate English I courses, semester II-2010.

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INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this Project was to investigate the different strategies and techniques that teachers of the Foreign Language Department (FLD) use in large classes to cope with student`s oral participation and classroom management in Intermediate English I courses, semester II-2010.

The present research project was possible, in the way that the research team worked coordinately with the advisor in this investigation, Licda. Claudia Vides de Guzman, and Intermediate English I students who were observed and surveyed about the Strategies and the techniques that teachers use to cope with student`s oral participation and classroom management in large classes.

This research is focused on the investigation “Strategies and techniques that teachers of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador use to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management in the Intermediate English I courses”.

Education in the English language in the context of accelerating globalization has been approached from different perspectives because of the value of English; given that it is the most commonly used for global, political, cultural, and economic exchanges Gupta (2001). Since the University of El Salvador is the only public University in El Salvador the demand of students is increasing every year so that, the government proposed some programs such as: COMPITE, PLAN 2021 to try to adapt English as a second language. As a result, at the beginning of every year the Foreign Language Department admits a large number of students specifically in the Teaching of English and Modern Language careers which make this department become one of the most crowded of the School of Arts and Sciences, provoking a considerably increasing number of students per class causing large groups of classes, so that teachers have to use different strategies to cope with this kind of situations. That number of students according to the

Information provided by the head of the Foreign Language Department, Mtl. Edgar Nicolas Ayala is affecting the teacher's methodology. For that reason teachers have to use new strategies and techniques that increase the participation of the students in large groups to develop the four macro skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening; but the research was emphasized in the speaking skill of English as a foreign language. On the other hand, the research includes strategies and techniques about classroom management that is how the classroom space is organized. Finally, it was necessary to investigate what strategies and techniques teachers use to cope with large classes in order to give some solutions to teachers who face this problem and at the same time help the students in their teaching-learning process.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Due to the necessity that many people have to learn English, the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador has experimented an increase in the number of students in each class so it becomes necessary to investigate the following:

What are the strategies and techniques that teachers of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador use to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management in the Intermediate English I courses, semester II-2010?

Most teachers agree that teaching a small group of students is easier, more enjoyable, and less time consuming than teaching a large group. According to Xu Qian (1999) an English teacher from China who works with a large class, due to budgets, space, or lack of teachers, having a small group of students is almost impossible. The FLD has the problem of large classes and if it does not have enough space, teachers, and sources such as; technology(projector and computers), budget to face this problem, the classes may look more like a university lecture hall, the job is not to lecture it is to learn a new language. Teaching and learning a new language cannot be treated the same as teaching any other content area because when teaching English as a Foreign Language the purpose is to teach the four macro skills (speaking, reading, listening, writing) in order to learn a new language in contrast to teach another content area which has another purpose that is to cover the area that is needed.

Furthermore, in order to improve the strategies and techniques that teachers use to cope with large classes, it becomes necessary to study the type of strategies teachers at the FLD are applying in large classes. Teachers can establish and at the same time provide additional strategies and techniques that previous studies have shown to work well in large classes concerning oral participation and classroom management.

1. DELIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM

- **Social Delimitation:** The research was carried out at the University of El Salvador; in the Foreign Language Department (FLD), Intermediate English I courses, semester II-2010. For the sample students and teachers were included. Among the students, there were 35 males and 35 females aged between 18 and 35. On the other hand, the teachers' sample was 3 males and 2 females. (The total of teachers in charge of Intermediate English I Courses was 9, but 4 of them were not able to help with the research). All of the students interviewed as well as teachers were active students and teachers of the University of El Salvador.
- **Space Delimitation:** The research took place in 8 groups from a total of 9 groups, 2 of them were observed, 6 groups answered a questionnaire, 5 teachers from Intermediate English I were interviewed, at the University of El Salvador, in San Salvador, El Salvador.
- **Time Delimitation:** The investigation was carried out in a period of 18 months from May 2010 to August 2011. During this period the samples were established, the contacts with the teachers in charge of Intermediate Intensive English I Courses were made, the instruments to collect the data were elaborated and passed to students, the analysis of the data gathered was made, a final report was presented so that the conclusions and recommendations were stated.

2. JUSTIFICATION

Through the time, to learn a new language has become an important aspect for human in the globalization period not only for the educational area but also for labor issues especially English as a foreign language.

This fieldwork was focused on strategies and techniques that teachers of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador use to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management in the Intermediate English I courses, semester II-2010 to improve the students learning process in spite of the lack of resources the department faces every year. Moreover, one of the most important reasons to study this topic is the necessity to establish the strategies and techniques used by teachers every year at the Foreign Language Department so they can be documented as part of the methodology the teachers are using.

Furthermore, the students who were taken as a sample to this project were from the Intermediate English I courses at the FLD. In addition, there were some teachers in charge of Intermediate English I courses who were observed and interviewed in order to gather enough information required for this fieldwork.

The topic was studied since there was plenty of data which was useful to make a complete research and generate new information since this project is one of the first about strategies and techniques that teachers of the FLD at the University of El Salvador use to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management. So that, in this way tried to

contribute for both teachers and students in the process of teaching and learning a new language in this case English as a foreign language in the Foreign Language Department at University of El Salvador.

In order to find out the strategies and techniques that teachers use to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management, this research had as a main objective to identify the strategies and techniques that teachers are using currently and the ones that the investigation proposes.

The results of this investigation will help teachers to improve the strategies and techniques that they are already using to reach their goals in their teaching process as well as decide what can be done to improve the conditions to develop oral participation and classroom management in the students with the use of the proposal from the investigation.

3. OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ To identify the different strategies and techniques the teachers of the Foreign Language Department use to cope with their large classes in regard to oral participation and classroom management in the Intermediate Intensive English I courses, semester II-2010.
- ✓ To find out the effects of the strategies and techniques being used by the Foreign Language Department teachers in charge of Intermediate Intensive English I, semester II-2010 in the students learning process.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ To establish the Strategies and techniques used by teachers of Foreign Language Department in regard to classroom management and oral participation.
- ✓ To describe how classroom management and oral participation strategies and techniques help to the students' learning process in the Foreign Language Department.
- ✓ To enquire the different Strategies and techniques that are being used in language teaching that can be applied in the Foreign Language Department to cope with large classes dealing with classroom management and oral participation.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWOK

Topic: Strategies and techniques that teachers of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador use to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management in the Intermediate English I courses, semester II-2010

4. BACKGROUND

Learning English has become popular in many countries; throughout the years many people have faced the necessity of learning this language. The topic “Strategies and techniques that teachers of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador use to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management in the Intermediate English I courses, semester II-2010”, is the result of the concern of how the FLD is being affected by this issue and what is being done to overcome this situation. According to Krashen (1981), “learning a new language is a conscious process; when we are learning, we know that”. Also, learned knowledge is represented consciously in the brain’s process of human beings. That means everyone has a natural order to learn a language. Based on the necessity of learning a language many places are teaching it as part of this natural process and the necessities that the globalization process brings too. The University of El Salvador has become one of the most appropriate places to learn it. With the necessity to deal with the large number of newcomers, the FLD teachers are using some strategies to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management. It is important to know some questions about learning such as: How do large classes affect the teaching learning process? Also, can techniques and strategies be used to overcome the different issues that working with large classes bring? In every place it is

necessary to have a strategy to deal with any new challenge. This issue has become necessary in the Foreign Language Department to face the number of students that is increasing every year. The study of this investigation is clearly defined to describe the strategies and techniques that teachers are using to deal with the large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management. It means that large classes can affect the quality of education and it does not allow personal interactions with students Ban (1989), and he reveals that the ideal number of students in an English class must be from thirteen to seventeen students per class, due to the fact that it produces better student achievement. But in some cases, large classes may consist of up to fifty or more students. On the other hand, most teachers agree that teaching a small group of students is easier, more enjoyable, and less time consuming than teaching a large group Xu Qian (1999). Unfortunately, due to budgets, space, or lack of teachers, many public schools and public universities as the University of El Salvador and other public institutions only have large classes because of the problems previously mentioned. If the university does not have enough space, teachers, and sources such as technology, budget, students are not going to have good results in their learning process. This project proposes some useful strategies that teachers used at FLD in the Intermediate English I courses at the University of El Salvador to come up with engaging activities that keep all of the students interested and participating with the goal of improving their communication skills. While there are numerous challenges when it comes to teaching large classes, there are many coping strategies to use into the classroom which are used in some other countries and are recommended by teachers that have used them. The study proposes some of them that could be taken into account by the FLD like the ones proposed by Xu Qian (1999) from China.

- **DEFINITIONS OF KEY WORDS.**

In this work, it becomes necessary to define some concepts that are important to have a better understanding of this investigation:

LEARNING

The ability to learn is one of the most outstanding human characteristics. Learning occurs continuously throughout the lifetime of a person. To define learning, it is necessary to analyze what happens to the individual. For example, an individual way of perceiving, thinking, feeling, and doing may change as a result of a learning experience. Thus, *learning* can be defined as a change in behavior as a result of experience. This can be physical and overt, or it may involve complex intellectual or attitudinal changes which affect behavior in more subtle ways. In spite of numerous theories and contrasting views, psychologists generally agree on many common characteristics of learning process. Over the years, many theories have attempted to explain how people learn. Even though psychologists and educators are not in complete agreement, most do agree that learning may be explained by a combination of two basic approaches: behaviorism and the cognitive theories.

G. Lucas. (2002-2003).

LEARNING STYLES

The characteristics of learning and learning styles are related, there are distinctions between the two. Learning style is a concept that can play an important role in improving instruction and student success. It is concerned with student preferences and orientation at several levels. For

example, a student's information processing technique, personality, social interaction tendencies and the instructional methods used are all significant factors which apply to how individual students learn. In addition, today's culturally diverse society, including international students, must be considered.

The key point is that all students are different, and training programs should be sensitive to the differences. Some students are fast learners and others have difficulties; and, as already mentioned, motivation, experience, and previous training affect learning style. Any number of adjectives may be used to describe learning styles. Some common examples include: right/left brain, holistic/serialist, dependent/independent, reflective /impulsive G. Lucas. (2002-2003).

STRATEGY

- A mental and communicative procedure learners use in order to learn and use the language.
- The techniques that students can use to make themselves more successful learners. They include ideas for practicing conversation; learn vocabulary, suggestions for reading English, techniques for listening to English and more Brown (2002).

TECHNIQUE

The strategies for implementing the methodological plan, the systematic procedure by which a complex or scientific task is accomplished.

LARGE CLASS

The definition of a large class is variable. Some believe that twenty plus students in a group makes a large class, but in English is also thought to say forty five students at a time and sometimes more than a hundred is a large class J. Harmer. (2007).

There is no global definition of what constitutes a large class. The literature, for example, shows large classes as ranging between 25-30 learners in the United Kingdom Smith and Warburton, (1997), more than 35 learners in the US O'Sullivan, (2006), and 60 or more learners in developing countries Valérien, (1991); Michaelowa, (2001). On the other hand, research has also found that smaller classes are more effective not simply because they are smaller, but because they often offer an educational setting in which it is easier and more feasible for active learning to take place. Simply reducing the number of students in a class does not alone improve the quality of instruction, neither does increasing class size lead to poor education (Johnson 1998; Lockheed and Verspoor, (1991); Maged (1997); Nakabugo (2003). Indeed there is a body of knowledge arguing that it is not the class size that has the greatest influence on teaching and learning. What matters most is the quality of the teacher and his/her approach to teaching, specifically the capacity to create a culture for organising large classes in such a manner that learning can be successfully mediated.

Teachers around the world face many obstacles when attempting to teach in large classes. Used interchangeably, large classes are those where the pupil-teacher ratios. Such classroom conditions are particularly acute in the developing world where class sizes often swell up and beyond 100 students. There are differing opinions about the causes of large classes in the developing world: reduction, elimination of school fees and/or rapid population growth. The reality, however, is that each of these factors have worked to increase class size, and thus affect

the quality of education Hanushek, (1995), Michaelowa, (2001)

ORAL PARTICIPATION

The sociocultural approaches to second language acquisition (SLA), participation in communicative practices in the target language is the goal of language learning and a fundamental part of the acquisition process. One role of language instruction is to provide scaffolding that enables language learners to participate in communicative practices while their competence is still developing Voke (2002).

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:

Classroom management is being able to handle a range of variables. These include how the classroom space is organized, whether the students are working on their own or in groups and how the classroom time is organized, and the like. (Joyful Fluency,) Lynn Freeman Dorothy and Jenson (1998).

It is typically for classroom to be set up in rows, or lately, in groups of 3-4 tables (which allow for easier cooperative learning). However, there are fundamental problems for each:

In rows, studies have shown that the further back you go, the more discipline problems there are.

The visual, aural and physical stimulation from the teacher is increasingly diminished as you move further back. This allows boredom to set in, and as a result, potential disruption.

There are some other classroom management strategies such as: position (walking around the class), voice modulation (modulate your voice), board usage (using the board appropriately), timing (timing in the language class) Voke (2002).

- HOW TO TEACH LARGE CLASSES

Because of the limited number of English teachers and classrooms, the English classes in the universities are very large, with usually more than 100 students in each class. The difficulties that large classes create for teachers are: first, the level of the students' English varies widely, so that it is difficult to adopt teaching strategies that are appropriate to the needs of all the students. Second, the classroom is necessarily big, so it is not easy to communicate with individual students. Third, students have comparatively few chances to speak English or answer questions. Fourth, it is impossible to have all the students hand in written assignments once a week, since there is not enough time to go over all of them. According to Xu Qian, (1999) there are some experimental solutions:

Experimented solutions

In order to overcome these problems to some extent, teachers have taken measures that have proved to be very effective.

- ✓ The major difficulty is the combination of students' uneven levels of English and the teaching schedule. The first thing teachers do is acquaint them with each student level before they begin teaching. That means that they usually do an examination before the course starts that is in the first period of the course (the scores are referring to the university recruitment) they can determine the level of the class as a whole, as well as each individual's proficiency. This information helps to be better equipped to decide a

teaching plan and adopt a method suitable to the level of the majority of the students.

- ✓ According to the average of scores in two exams teachers divide their students roughly into three groups: good students, average students, and poor students. Then comes the arrangements of the seats, they decide to sit a poor student next to good student, in this way the good students help the poor students. That means that a poor student can work and learn a bit from the good one.
- ✓ With regard to the teaching pace directed with the majority of students, some good students feel that they are not part of that easy learning. On the other hand, poor students feel the study load is too heavy, but try to combine the ends to bring along to the middle. Teachers let good students answer difficult questions and try to comprehend the difficult points before teacher's explanations. For the poor students, teachers normally choose easy questions. Teachers also set aside one hour every week to teach them English grammar as systematically as possible.

In this work there are two types of variables and they are the following: Oral participation and classroom management.

- **1. ORAL PARTICIPATION:**

Oral Presentation: Oral presentations are a common requirement in many courses. They may be short or long, include slides or other visual aids, and be done individually or in a group. The more practice students have at these, the easier it gets. Planning and structuring an oral presentation is similar to the process of writing an essay, except students need to be conscious of a live audience and use spoken language instead of written. However, the final preparation and presentation differ significantly from editing and polishing an essay. The major steps in oral presentations are planning, structuring, preparing and presenting J. Harmer. (2007)

Pair work: It is a classroom activity in which the whole class is divided into pairs. The point of pair work is to get students speaking and listening, the content of a pair work session should be mainly oral. It is difficult to give instructions once a pair-work session is underway, so the activity should be well planned and carefully explained. Otherwise it is likely to be unproductive. The idea of pair work is to improve listening and speaking skills by requiring students to exchange information with each other. Pair work should always be accompanied by some sort of ‘test’ to ascertain whether or not information really has been exchanged. In some kinds of pair work, split dictations for example, the test is built in to the activity itself. In other cases, it will be a follow-up activity of some sort.

Pair work has two important advantages: it offers intensive, realistic practice in speaking and listening; and it promotes a friendly classroom ambiance that is conducive to learning. But

beyond that, pair work has another important advantage that activities done with larger groups do not have.

Group work: Group work refers to any classroom activity in which the whole class is divided up into pairs or larger groups. The concern is with the advantages and difficulties of working with groups of any size. Group work has a well-established place in the theory and practice of language teaching. Still, many teachers and many students seem to be unenthusiastic about it. Teachers often have misgivings because working with groups means to lose control of the students. This is not an easy thing for a teacher to do: There is a natural tendency at all times and in every place for teachers to feel they must always be clearly in command of their class. And there is a connected tendency for teachers to fear the consequences of giving up even a small part of their authority. Students, on the other hand, often find group work unappealing because it puts them under pressure to act. As long as the classroom is teacher centered, students can remain passive. In groups, they are expected to speak, to understand, and to think. They are also expected to be amiable and cooperative. It is extremely unfortunate, because of these natural misgivings; teachers and students miss out on the benefits of group work.

The primary benefit of group work is that it provides practice in speaking and listening. These skills will never develop fully without a large amount of practice in and outside the classroom, most EFL students even those studying in English-speaking countries get very little.

Debates: This is a discussion in which people or groups state different opinions about a subject. It engages students in a variety of cognitive and linguistic ways. The purpose is to elaborate upon

this point by providing a step-by-step guide that will give teachers everything they need to know for conducting debate in an English class.

Plays: This is to have a particular part in a play or movie. The ESL plays not only motivate students to learn in the classroom. Teaching ESL through role-plays allows every student to be equally and actively involved. Every single role is essential for the play to be a success. It is comparable to group sports, since it takes the whole team playing together to be effective.

Dialogue: The dialogues help students to develop their conversation skills. It is a common practice in most English classes. One of the main advantages in using dialogues is that students are given a rubric as a basis on which they can then build. Once they have become comfortable using a dialogue, students can then go on to have related conversations building on their familiarity with the dialogue and the vocabulary specific to the situation.

- **2. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:**

Uneven levels of English and the teaching schedule: The first thing teachers have to do is acquaint the level of students before they begin teaching. In the FLD this strategy has been used by some teachers to measure the level of students and to give feedback if it is required. That means that teachers usually do a diagnostic before the course starts that is in the first period of the course (the scores refer to the university recruitment); it can determine the level of the class as a whole, as well as each individual's proficiency. The information helps teachers to be better equipped to decide a teaching plan and adopt a method suitable to the level of the majority of the students.

Divide students roughly into three groups: It consists on dividing good students, average students and poor students: this is a very successful strategy used in some other countries like China Xu Qian (1999). To begin, teachers start with the arrangements of the seats, decide to sit a poor student next to a good student, in this way the good students help the poor students. That means that a poor student can work and learn a bit from the good one.

Spread out: This refers to finding a spare classroom in buildings or lobbies that students can spread out into when they are preparing a project or performance. Also, taking students outside if there is no indoor space available is applied too; of course the FLD must take into account that the spaces are really important and try to look for it. In the investigation it is clearly obvious that

foreign teachers find helpful strategies when the class has the space to use for energetic whole group activities.

Create a participation grade: it is a well-designed strategy to have a control of the large groups of students. It is not applied literally in FLD; but it is being used successfully in other countries because teachers can clearly notice there are some students which are the ones who participate all the time. In some other countries, it consists on making homework and attendance count by doing regular checks and making it part of their final grade. Also giving a daily exam tip also encourages attendance.

Encourage competition: It establishes a fun and competitive atmosphere within the class, by dividing the class into teams. The teachers change the teams once in a while or leave them the same throughout a semester, this strategy was used before in the FLD in Readings and Conversations class (Yvette Henriquez), Semester II, year 2008. It consists on teams winning points for certain accomplishments, the class was divided in 2 groups and every day during the semester the teacher gave points to the group who finished every activity first or answered questions first (If noise and behavior is a problem, students can lose points too). And it was a motivation for all the students.

Relaxing: It is finding ways to relax before class so that teachers do not feel anxious. Teachers should always have a bottle of water handy, always have an extra activity at hand in case something does not go as expected, teachers must always have an extra activity to solve the problems if the class finishes before or after the activities. This means that teachers are always

prepared to solve everything in the classroom and one way to get students relax is using warm-ups before starting the class because it motivates students during the whole class.

Establishing trust: It means learning unique ways to remember names and do the best to get to know something about each student. Creating a seating chart on the first day and asking students to stick with it for a while is one way. Teachers should tell students at least one or two things about them beyond their role of teaching in order to establish the trust. This strategy is not so common in the FLD; but works in other countries like in China and Ghana Xu Qian, (1999).

Managing the noise: It is very difficult to deal with the noise in the FLD since students are teenagers and adults. It becomes a problem because some classrooms are near to yards, so that teachers have to establish a special code or signal, it is required in each class depending of the space and the number of the students. It means students have to stop what they are doing and listen to the teachers; this code must be done at the beginning of the semester for that reason teachers establish the rules, so that students become accustomed to it right away. But teachers are careful with the gestures that would offend anyone. This is also another strategy that is not common in the FLD, but this strategy is being used in some other countries.

Monitoring students: Teachers may find it difficult to keep students on task as they monitor pair and group work. Teachers must use this strategy during the whole class in order to have better results in the students learning process.

Enforce a late policy: Teachers notify students of the late policy on the first day and students have to respect it. For example, teachers do not let students enter their classroom after a warm-up has ended especially if the door is in front. If students miss class, they have to get the responsibility of catching up; sometimes, in the FLD this strategy is not followed by students especially when they give many excuses for been late.

Regard to the teaching pace directed with the majority of students: This strategy is very important and if teachers use it they must pay attention because sometimes good students feel that they are not part of that easy learning; on the other hand, poor students feel the study load is too heavy, but teachers try to combine the ends to bring along to the middle; to let good students to answer difficult questions and try to comprehend the difficult points before teachers' explanations. Poor students normally answer easy questions. It is really important that teachers do not embarrass students in front of the class. Teachers in the FLD sometimes do not realize that students are afraid to answer in front of 40 students and teachers just ask to students and it decreases the motivation of the students to participate. Also teachers have to set aside one hour every week to teach students grammar, vocabulary, and the like as systematically as possible.

- **ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF LARGE CLASSES**

Since there are many problems in a large class it is necessary to mention some beneficial advantages that these have. Large classes are an issue of much debate in the education world. Some argue that a small class size is more beneficial for education, while others cite the benefits of large class sizes. There are certainly advantages and disadvantages to both approaches. The advantages of dealing with large classes will be addressed.

Freedom

One argument in favor of larger class size is that it allows students to take control of their own education. Students can make an effort to get to know their teacher and pursue themselves to education outside of class. This will give a much more personal experience to the motivated students. However, it is also argued that this can also lead to disciplinary problems in students who choose not to be motivated, or suffer from learning disabilities.

Cost Benefit Analysis

Unfortunately, a discussion of cost is integral to deciding which class size is better. Small class sizes require more classrooms, which is ultimately lead to expensive construction and renovation. More teachers will have to be hired for universities, and additional learning facilities may have to be built to support new class loads. Some researchers have suggested that it is more cost-effective to focus on class reform, rather than class reduction, as a way of improving education.

There are some other advantages to take into account:

- When there are many students in a class they can share many different ideas and interesting life experiences. This stimulates the students to discuss.
- During project work, students can learn to share responsibility and help each other. This also brings variety and speeds up the work.
- High Energy: Classes with many students may be noisy, but they are also fun and exciting.
- Timing: Classes go by quickly in a large class, and students and teachers rarely catch themselves looking at the clock.
- Participation: There is always someone who is willing to answer questions even if they are just guessing. It is meaningful to get answers from a variety of students.
- Fillers: Teachers have less need for fillers since core activities and lessons take longer to complete.

It is important to have clear what the advantages and challenges that large classes have to find out the way to cope with this issue. Moreover there are disadvantages of a large class to take into account.

Quality vs. Quantity

Large classes often lack the quality and quantity of interaction with teachers. In larger classes, teachers are typically unavailable to students. There is often no time after class for a quick question and office times are difficult to obtain when competing with so many students. There is also less discussion in larger classes. With smaller classes, students can become engaged in the

topic. Classes become discussion oriented rather than lecture oriented. This may be better suited to their learning style to be considered.

Grading considerations

In large classes, students are less likely to be graded on discussion and papers. There is simply not enough time for a teacher to read and grade papers of students. Therefore, students' grade is typically based on multiple choice exams with perhaps a few short essay questions. This leads to a lot of regurgitation (repeating facts without understanding them) learning, which may not be beneficial to the student retaining the information for a long period of time.

While both large and small class sizes have their advantages and disadvantages, what will work best for students will depend greatly on the way teachers handle the situation.

The number of students in a class is not the last determinant of success in EFL teaching. Most of the classes are left for teachers to take advantages of large class in EFL teaching to get a better result. Among all the notions and strategies and techniques mentioned above, love and understanding of each student, diversities of classroom strategies for different individuals to catch and maintain their attention, and effective organization and monitor of the students classroom behavior are the three most important factors that need teacher's special efforts.

Finally, the effort will depend on the teachers and students of the FLD to take into account the strategies and techniques given by some previous findings in other countries.

- **CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN A LARGE CLASS.**

Teaching large classes it is a great responsibility. Due to this, there are some challenges of teaching this type of classes to take into account Xu Qian, (1999). A challenge is defined as a difficulty that stimulates the person who faces it. A large classroom is more difficult to define; this could be from six to sixteen students or even more. The challenges to be faced in any EFL or ESL classroom are many; however they should serve as a stimulus to the teacher in an ongoing effort to become a better informant and educator. Some of the most common challenges faced are those involving classroom discipline, differing proficiency levels and lack of clear objectives.

Controlling the behavior of students in the classroom is probably the first task that any teacher should take into consideration. A good start is for the teacher not to be on a first name basis with the students. In many cultures there is a formal way of treating teachers that does not necessarily stand out in English. This can be overcome by asking the students to address the teacher by a title such as Mr. or Miss. and the teacher's last name. This marks a distance between the expert (the teacher) and the learner.

Students need to be aware of the rules of the game in the classroom and will need to be reminded of these rules consistently. A list of simple rules should be highlighted, perhaps even posted on the wall.

When English is taught as a foreign language, it is supposed to convey the characteristics of English language as a very fun learning language which is why it has a large acceptability. Furthermore, English language is all about learning new vocabulary with its usage in the correct grammatical tenses. More often teachers spend a whole lot of time correcting grammatical errors

observed as students speak English in the class. This can be very challenging especially because the size of the class will not permit for direct corrections. Sometimes these corrections are deliberately overlooked and this will adversely affect the knowledge of the students.

There are some other challenges that might be encountered in teaching English as a foreign language:

- Insufficient knowledge of local's interest, norms and lifestyles; since English language should be taught with interest, the knowledge of locals interest will help arouse their craving.
- Inability to take full charge of the class especially in rowdy situations.
- Intimacy: Remembering student's names can take a while.
- Anxiety: Some teachers feel anxious being so outnumbered by the students. In addition, some students are afraid to ask questions or participate in a large class.
- Student needs: Meeting individual needs can be difficult or impossible when class is very large.
- Distractions: There are more distractions for teachers in large classes, such as latecomers and people chatting while the teacher is teaching.
- Noise level: Large classes can become out of hand when students are working in pairs or groups. At times students may feel more like a disciplinarian than a teacher.
- Space: There is limited space in a classroom for energetic activities such as role-playing.

George K, Maria A, Joseph G.A(2002)

5. HYPOTHESIS

Different strategies and techniques are used to cope with student's oral participation and classroom management in large classes by the teachers of the Foreign Language Department.

6. VARIABLES

- ✓ The strategies and techniques being used by the teachers in large classes allow the students to participate more in oral activities

- ✓ Classroom management and oral participation strategies used by the teachers of Intermediate Intensive English I courses contribute to the learning process.

III.METHODOLOGY

7. TYPE OF RESEARCH

This was a qualitative and descriptive research since it was conceptualized as an ethnographic case study, focusing on the interpretations of meanings, cultural significance of some behavior events, the human's actions and social life Grinnell (1997). It consisted on demonstrating the topic "Strategies and techniques that teachers of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador use to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management in the Intermediate English I Courses, semester II-2010" which had not been studied deeply before, since some years ago large classes were not evident as now due to the demand of the teaching major; for that reason, there was not much information about the issue. There is also data available in books, articles, magazines, works published that can be useful to reinforce students learning process through strategies and techniques teachers use to cope with large classes at the Foreign Language Department, and the strategies and techniques teachers are using nowadays to cope with this problematic situation. There are books, magazines and other sources that present this topic as a globalized reality containing information about the strategies that have been used before to cope with the problem. However, it was essential to create a new parameter that has a good and clear description of the strategies and techniques that teachers of the Foreign Language Department are using and how they are applying them in the teaching context.

The research described the strategies and techniques that teachers of the Foreign Language

Department at the University of El Salvador use to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management in Intermediate English I courses and how teachers apply them in the teaching process. The research used a questionnaire to students, interview to teachers and direct classroom observations as instruments to collect the necessary data.

The table below shows the specific information about the sample groups:

Group	Teacher`s name	Schedule	No. students	SAMPLE		
				O	Q	I
01	Miguel Mata	7:00am-9:00am	38	✓	✓	✓
02		7:00am-9:00am	35	x	x	x
03	Rolando Guzman	9:00am-11:00am	45	✓	✓	x
04	Alex Landaverde	9:00am-11:00am	40	x	✓	✓
05	Alex Bruno	1:00pm-3:00pm	39	x	✓	✓
06	Carolina Ramos	1:00pm-3:00pm	38	x	x	✓
07	Claudia Vides	3:00pm-5:00pm	48	x	✓	x
08	Esmeralda	3:00pm-5:00pm	36	x	✓	✓
09	Edson Martinez	5:00pm-7:00pm	30	x	✓	✓

METHOD

✓ Qualitative.

The method that was used in this project was qualitative. This method required the use of the non-standardized measures to discover the research questions in the process of the interpretation. The qualitative research used the interpretative perspective that is based on the human beings actions Grinnell (1997).

The data collection consisted on bringing together the points of view, emotions, experiences and other subjective aspects from the participants. The qualitative method permitted the gathering of reliable data from the application of different instruments such as class observation, interviews and questionnaires. The data collection started not by using established instruments; but the researchers began to learn through observations and descriptions of the participants.

SAMPLE SELECTION

This research was carried out at the Department of Foreign Languages, of the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of El Salvador. From where the sample students was taken of the Major in English Teaching and Modern Languages who were studying Intermediate English I Courses in the term II-2010 and teachers in charge of those courses, 8 teachers from Intermediate English I courses at the Foreign Language Department were selected to carry out this study. The teachers of these courses were dealing with large classes and they were expected to use strategies and techniques to cope with large classes in regard to oral participation and classroom management. The teachers in these Intermediate English courses had the responsibility to learn and then apply strategies and techniques properly to deal with these classes. There were 9 groups of Intermediate English I courses, 2 of them were observed, 6 groups answered a questionnaire, 5 teachers were interviewed and 1 group was not part of the research at all, so it was important to know the points of view of students and teachers that these groups had.

Intermediate English I courses were chosen as a sample because they were almost in the middle in regard to the skills development area. Moreover, these groups were the most populated classes in the skills development areas, also they were able to detect what kind of strategies and techniques their teachers were using and if large classes affected their learning process since they

were facing large classes. It was important to gather information from all the students involved.

INSTRUMENT OF THE RESEARCH

A questionnaire administered to a sample of 70 Intermediate English I Students.

A personal interview administered to Intermediate English I teachers.

Observations carried out in the Intermediate English I courses.

QUESTIONNAIRE

This instrument was used in the research with a sample of 10 students registered in each of the Intermediate English I courses in term II-2010 in the Foreign Languages Department with the goal of investigating if large classes affect students learning process. The decision to take this sample was because it is important to know the points of view from all Intermediate English I students in order to obtain reliable data.

INTERVIEW

The interview was supposed to address all the teachers who were in charge of the Intermediate English I courses in the Foreign Languages Department, but 4 of them were not able to help with this research. The interview was made only to 5 teachers. The objective of the interview was for the teachers to provide specific information about the kind of strategies and techniques teachers use to cope with large classes, and if these strategies and techniques were helping them to facilitate the teaching learning process.

OBSERVATIONS

In this study, data was gathered by observing Intermediate English I teachers when they taught large classes. Since one class was not enough to get the necessary information to reach a fair and accurate conclusion, 2 teachers were observed in their classroom for one complete month (4 weeks). The information gathered in this observation helped to reassure that the strategies and techniques mentioned by the teachers were actually being used.

DATA COLLECTION

In this step, in order to collect the data a detailed procedure was presented to give answers to the objectives of this research.

Questionnaires:

These were administered to a sample of 10 students of each Intermediate English I course in the FLD. The objective of this questionnaire was to list the strategies and techniques teachers use in the classroom to cope with large classes at the FLD from the student's point of view. To facilitate the students' comprehension of the different strategies and techniques, the researchers translated the questionnaire to Spanish so it could be filled out by students. The tool mentioned before was designed in order for the students to understand and visualize the main objective of this questionnaire.

A personal interview:

It was addressed to teachers in charge of Intermediate English I Courses in the Foreign Languages Department. The objective of this interview was to identify the kind of strategies and techniques that teachers of the FLD use to cope with large classes.

Observations:

These were carried out in the Intermediate English I courses in the FLD. The objective of this observation was to observe the strategies and techniques teachers use to cope with large classes, also to confirm the answers that were gathered from the teachers' interviews and the answers of students collected in the questionnaires.

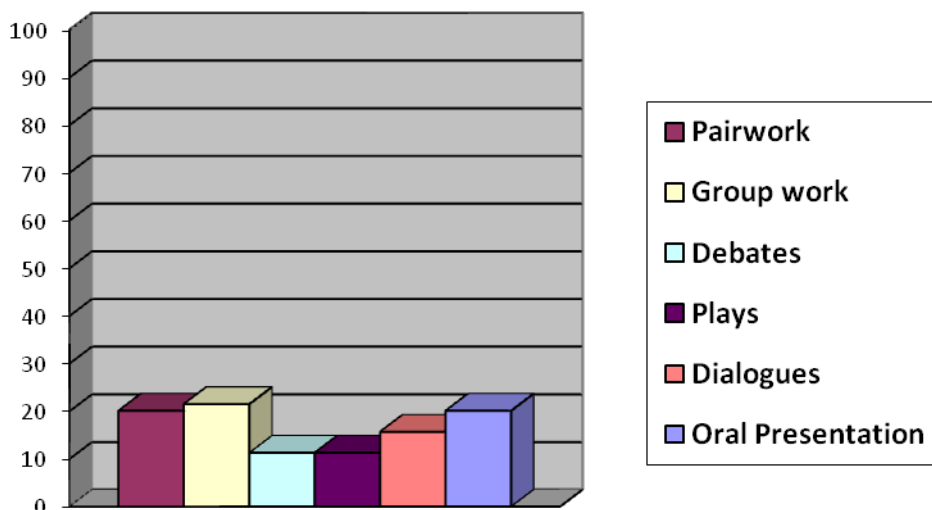
IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA.

1. Which of the following strategies and techniques teacher use in the classroom?
(This question was divided in two parts ; oral participation and classroom management)

Part I

Oral participation	Strategies teachers Use in Classrooms
Oral presentation	20.1
Pairwork	20.1
Group work	21.5
Debates	11.3
Plays	11.3
Dialogues	15.7

Strategies Teachers Use in Classrooms



Regarding the first question, which of the following strategies and techniques teacher use in the classroom? (Oral participation); 21.5% of the students say that group work is the strategy

teachers use the most in the classroom. In order to familiarize students to group work, Passigna (1997) suggests they should be assigned to small groups from 5-7 students on a regular basis. Within these groupings, all students should be given opportunities to lead the group, thereby ensuring that there will be any numbers of students that can help the teacher lead group-based exercises.

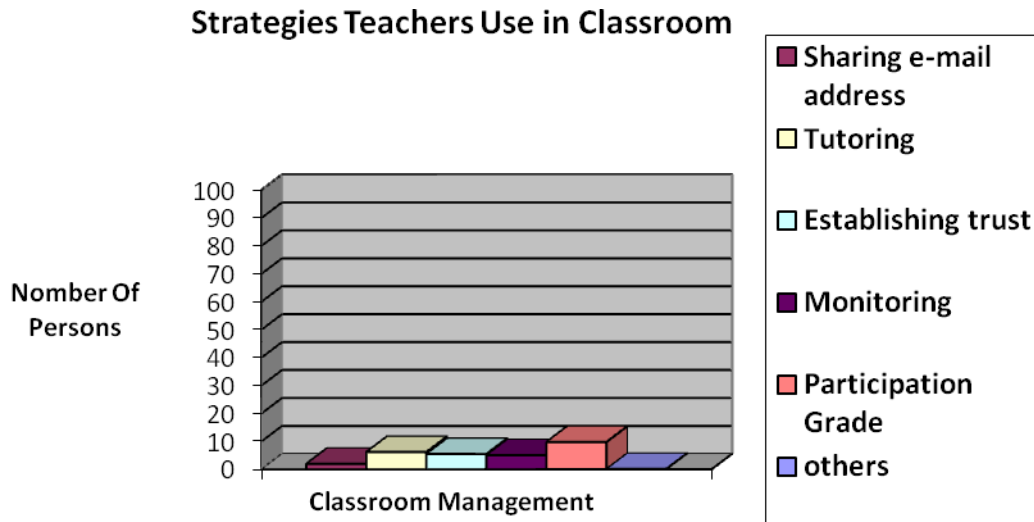
The following by the 20.1% of the students say that oral presentations and pair work are the other ones used commonly. Pair work has two important advantages: it offers intensive, realistic practice in speaking and listening; and it promotes a friendly classroom ambiance that is conducive to learning. But beyond that, pair work has another important advantage that activities done with larger groups do not have Xu Qian (1999).

Following by dialogues with 15.7%; finally debates and plays with 11.3% of the responses which are the less common strategies that teachers use in the classrooms. In general most of the students interviewed consider that group work is the strategy most used in the classroom related to oral participation and oral presentations and pair work as well.

In this question the students who were interviewed, they could choose more than one option.

Part II

Classroom Management	Strategies teachers use in classrooms
Participation grade	9.8
Sharing e-mail address	2
Tutoring	6.2
Establishing trust	5.5
Monitoring	5.1
Others	0.2

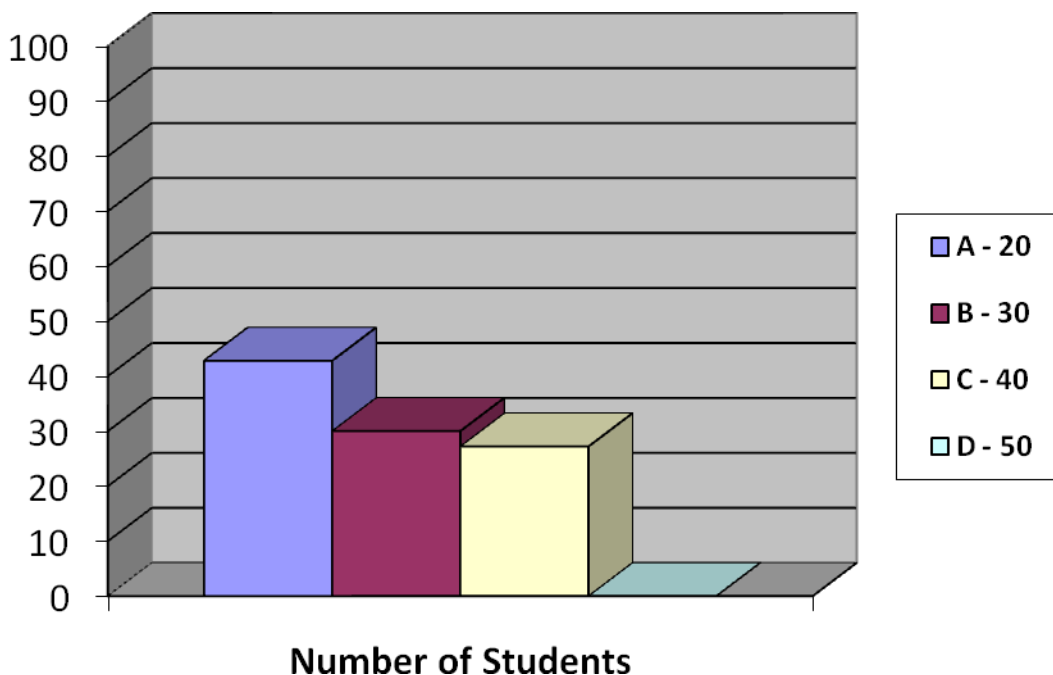


This table shows the student's responses about the question which of the following strategies teacher use in the classroom? (Classroom management) the 9.8% of the students consider that participation grade is the strategy used the most in the classroom, To support that Xu Qian (1999) said that is successfully used because teachers can clearly notice there are some students which are the same ones who participate all the time. In some other countries it consists on making homework and attendance counting by doing regular checks and making it part of their final grade. Also giving a daily exam tip encourages attendance.

Following by the 6.2% of the students who consider that tutoring is another strategy used inside the classroom. While the 5.5% of the students choose establishing the trust because it is important to have good confidence between the teacher and the student. In contrast to this, the 5.1% consider monitoring, when teachers monitor student, they may find it difficult to keep students on task as they monitor pair and group work. Finally, the option other strategies with 0.2% responses. Most of the students interviewed agreed that the strategy that teachers use the most in the classroom is participation grade related to classroom management on the other hand others consider tutoring as the most used.

2. According to your opinion, Mark with a check the appropriate number of students in an English course?

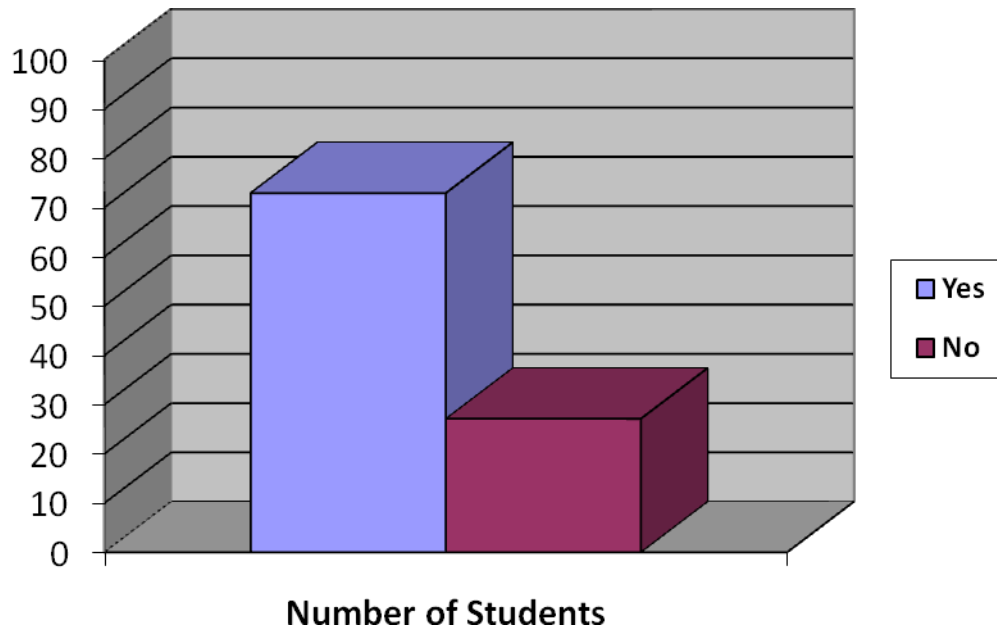
Options	Number of Students
A - 20	42.8
B - 30	30
C - 40	27.2
D - 50	0



This table shows the responses of question 2, According to your opinion, Mark with a check the appropriate number of students in an English course? 42.8% of the students consider that the appropriate number of the students in an English class should be 20 students. To support this idea Ban (1989) reveals that the ideal number of students in an English class must be 13- 17. Whereas the 30% consider that 30 students are the appropriate number in each English class, and the 27.2% believe that 40 is the appropriate number of students in an English class. In conclusion most of the students interviewed consider that the appropriate number of students in a communicative English class is 20, meanwhile some consider 30 students is a good number for an English Communicative class.

3. Do you consider a group of 30 or more students as a large class?

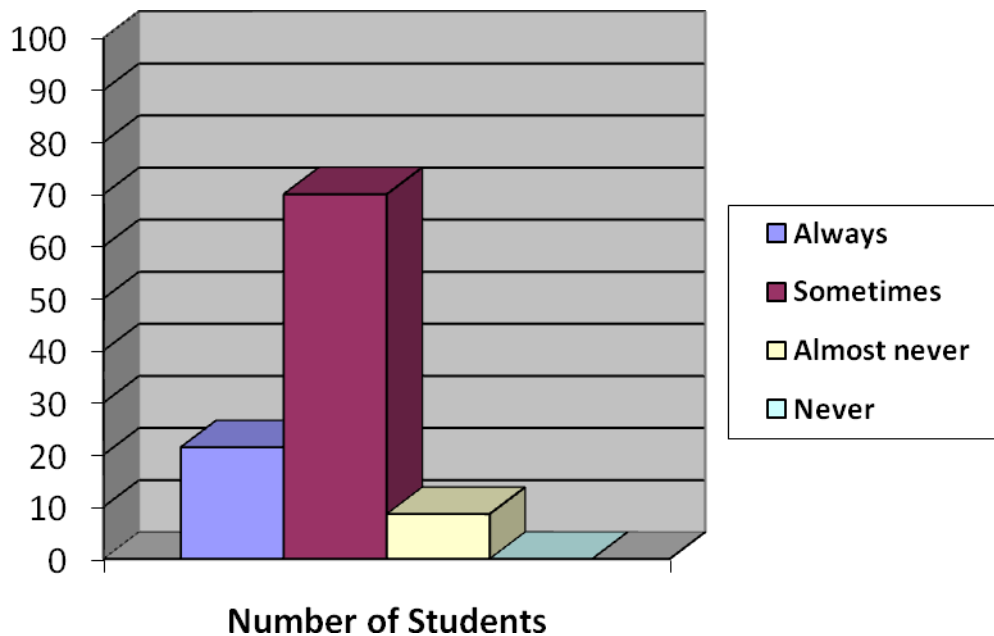
Options	Number of Students
Yes	72.9
No	27.1



This table shows the responses of question 3, do you consider a group of 30 or more students as a large class?, And they answered in this way. 72.9% of the students consider that a group of 30 students in an English class is a large class, meanwhile the 27.1% consider that 30 students is not a large class but in some schools, large classes may consist of up to 50 or more students supported by Bran (1989); Michaelowa (2001) concluded that there was a relationship between class size and learning outcomes. That is, as class sizes increase, students learning decreases. Finally the majority of the students interviewed considered that 30 students in a classroom is a large class.

4. How often do you participate in a class?

Options	Number of Students
Always	21.4
Sometimes	70
Almost never	8.6
Never	0

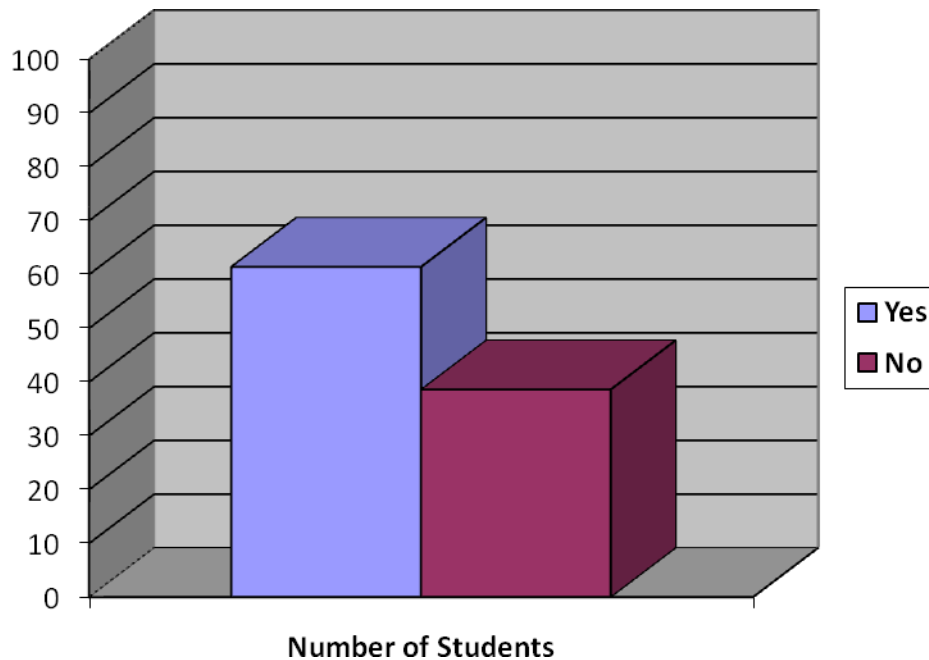


This table shows the responses of question 4, how often do you participate in a class?

70% considered they sometimes participate in the class because they think it is important to participate in all the activities in the class in order to achieve the objectives of the class. There are some ways in which students can participate more in a large class and; some of them are oral presentations, pair work, group work, dialogues, and plays. In contrast 21.4% said they always participate and the teachers from the Foreign Language Department they are already using some strategies in order the students participate in class. Students think there are some benefits of participating in the class and some of them are: it increases self-esteem, their attentiveness and the ability to focus on the material being presented. And the last result was 8.6% of responses said that they almost never participate because the limited time they have for participating during the class.

5. Do you consider your oral participation decreases in a group with more than 30 students?

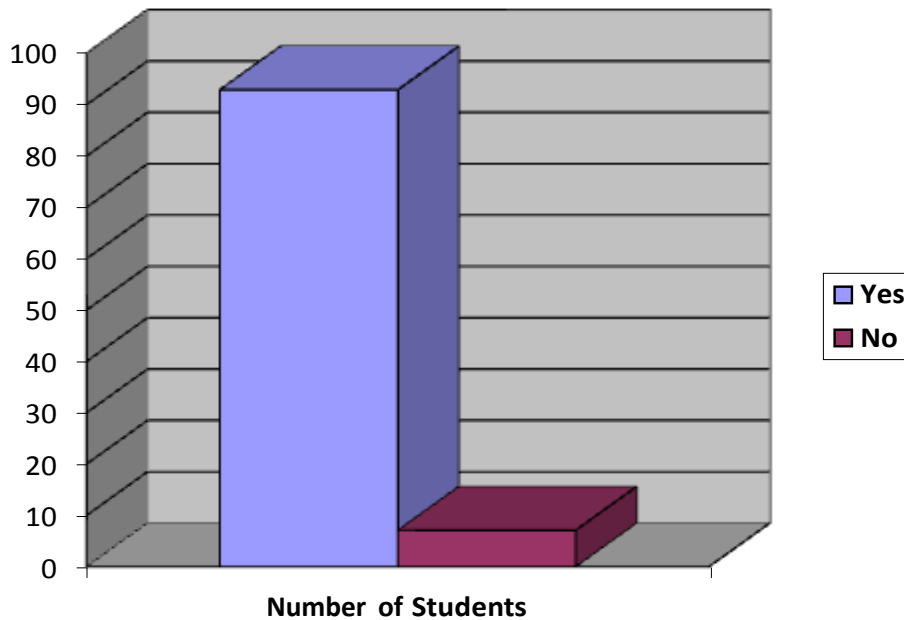
Options	Number of Students
Yes	61.4
No	38.6



This table shows the responses of question 5, do you consider your oral participation decreases in a group with more than 30 students? The 61.4% answered their oral participation decreases because when they are part of a large class, there are many effects in their behavior such as they feel afraid to participate in front of 40 students and they do not have the confidence to get involve in the class. In contrast with a smaller number of students in a class, teachers are able to pay attention to all the students, thereby holding them accountable for participation rather than ignoring those that are passive, Blatchford and Mortimore (1994), Harder (1990). While 38.6% said that oral participation does not decrease because they think the participation is not necessary to learn a new language.

6. According to your opinion, does the teacher give equal opportunities to participate orally in the class?

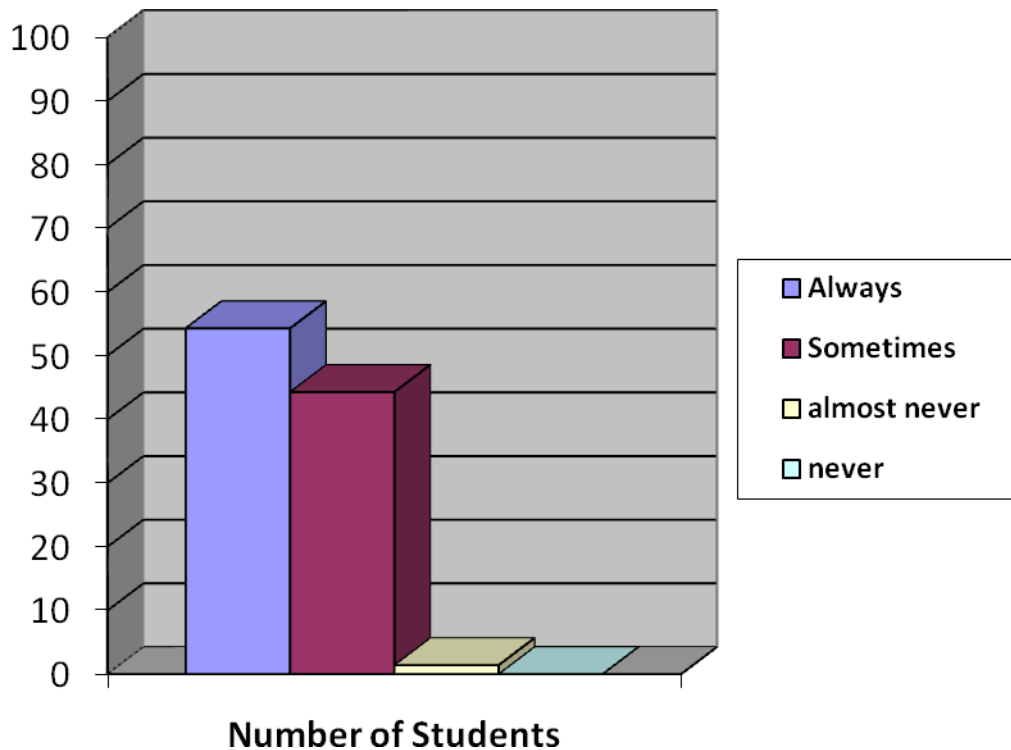
Options	Number of Students
Yes	92.9
No	7.1



This table shows the responses of question 6, According to your opinion does the teacher give equal opportunities to participate orally in the class? The 92.9% of the students, answered they have the equal opportunities to participate in the class at least one in each class. According to the answers gave by the students in a question number four, where they answered that they participate in class. Passigna suggests that students must be assigned to small groups (e.g, from 5-7 students) on regular basis. Within these grouping, all students should be given opportunities to lead the group into practice. In contracts 7.1% of students think they do not have the opportunity to participate orally, they said only few students want to participate all the time. Supportive by Xu Qian (1999), who says that teachers sometimes they do not realize that students are afraid to answer in front of 40 students. Teachers just push students to answer it gives students low motivation to participate.

7. How often do teachers use the previous classroom management and oral participation strategies in the class?

Options	Number of Students
Always	54.3
Sometimes	44.3
almost never	1.4
never	0

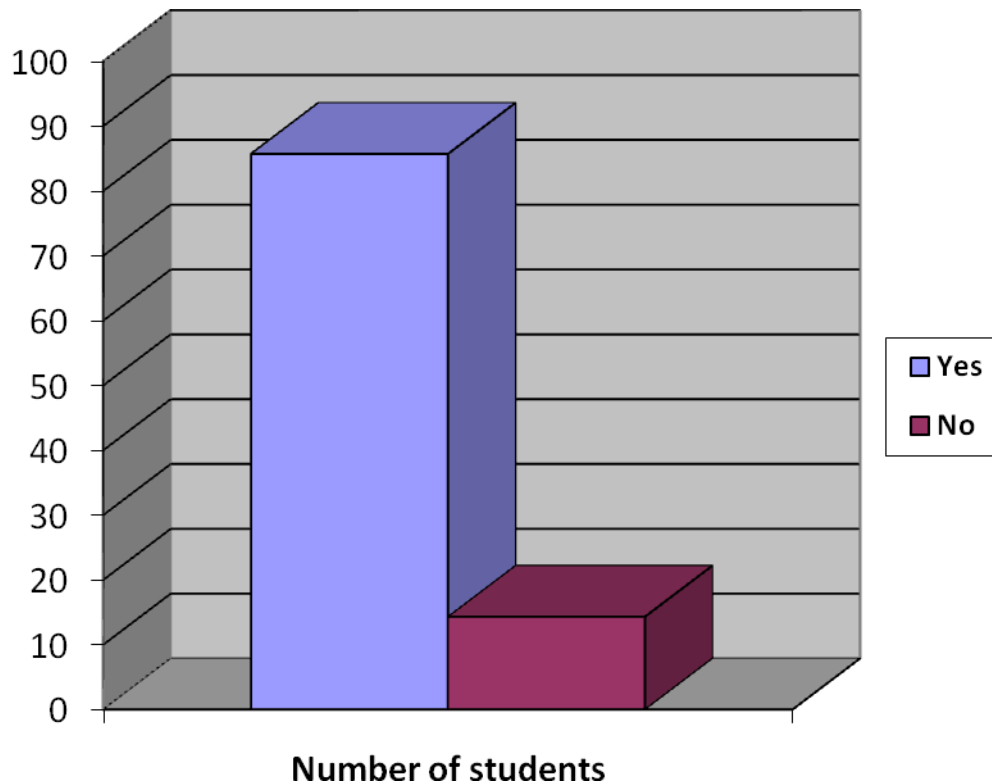


This table shows the responses of question 7, how often do teachers use the previous classroom management and oral participation strategies in the class? 54.3% answered that teachers always use the previous strategies and techniques because students think teachers do not have the opportunity to change to other ones they do not have space, time and other factors (material, participation time, motivation, debates time, group work, plays and dialogues). These are the strategies mentioned in question number 1 and 2. To support this Wilson (2006) believes that if the class were small there will be more variety of strategies so teachers would be able to practice and would not repeat the same patterns. Also teaching in large classes, however, tends not to be a topic covered in most teachers' education coursework. The result is that students get bored with the same monotony.

Meanwhile 44.3% answered the teachers sometimes use the previous strategies. Finally 1.4% answered they almost never use the previous classroom management and oral participation strategies in the class. In general most of the students agreed that teachers always repeat the same things instead of coming up with engaging activities that keep all the students interests and participating with the goal of improving their communication skills. While there are numerous challenges when it comes to teaching large classes, Heather (2002).

8. Do you consider the strategies that teachers use in class are having good results?

Options	Number of students
Yes	85.7
No	14.3



This table shows the responses of question 8, do you consider the strategies that teachers use in class are having good results? 85.7% said that the strategies teachers use are having good results because students think they really learn with this kind of activities and they feel comfortable using them. The classroom is the heart of any educational system and most of the strategies teachers use has a great importance in the development of the students learning process. In contrast the 14.3% of the students said that the strategies teachers use are not having good results because they feel bored and they think this strategies are not the appropriate ones to learn English as a second language.

9. Mark the reasons you consider limits your oral participation during an English class?

Options	Number of students
Number of Students	29
Lack of motivation	24.4
Classroom management	6.9
Participation time	16.8
Misunderstanding the content	22.9

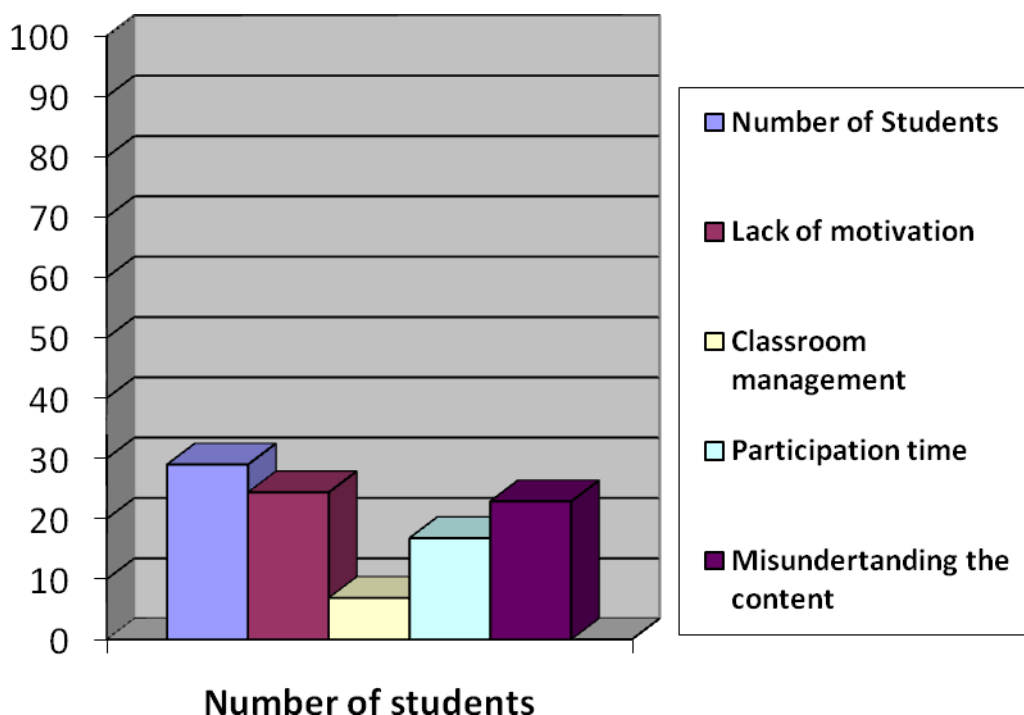


Table 9 shows the answers of the question, Mark the reasons you consider limits your oral participation during an English class? 29% of the students think that the number of students is the most important reason that limits their participation. Large classes often lack the quality and quantity of interaction with professors. In larger classes, professors are typically unavailable to students. The 24.4% think the lack of motivation is the one that limits their participation. While both large and small class sizes have their advantages and disadvantages, what will work best for students will depend greatly on students learning style? While the 22.9% think that misunderstanding the contents is what limits their participation; when students do not understand the contents they feel desperate and it limits their participation. In

contrast the 16.8% say that participation time limits their participation the most. Because sometimes when they want to get involved in the class the time is not enough and it affects their learning process. Finally 6.9% of the students say that classroom management is the reason that limits their participation the most. Classroom management represents a sizable obstacle to many teachers. To those who teach in classes with 50 -100 students, managing the learning process can become quite difficult. Passigna (1997) suggests several methods to effectively manage a large class. Her first suggestion is to establish simple rules for acceptable group behavior. Such behavior include: how to speak softly; how to take turns; how to work together and the like.

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

This analysis was based on the information gathered from the Teacher's interview which main objective was to know the strategies and techniques that teachers of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador use to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management in the intermediate English I courses in term II-2010. The study also tended to find out if the strategies and techniques used by the teachers were useful in the students' learning process. The analysis of the data collected led the researchers to the following results.

According to teachers' answers about the factors that have contributed to the increase of the number of students in the FLD, most of the interviewed said that it is due to several reasons which were: working factors, companies' requirement, teaching languages is a new career, customer services, and international enterprises. In addition, they mentioned that many students have more chances to get a job before finishing the career. According to Xu Qian (1999), the increase in the number of students in a class is due to low budgets, lack of space, or lack of teachers. Many educational institutions, as the University of El Salvador, have large classes because of these problems previously mentioned. If the university does not have enough space, teachers, and sources such as technology, a fair budget the result will be overpopulated classrooms and this will lead the poor results in the students' learning process.

In regard to the teachers' responses of what they believe is the ideal number of students in a communicative English class, their answers were the following: teachers considered that the more students in a class, the less control they have over them. They believe that English needs to be controlled; teachers need to be keeping a very close control of the students' pronunciation and whether they participate in the class activities. Teachers consider that if there are fewer students

in a class there would be more chances for those students to develop their oral fluency in English so that students become more proficient in the language. Based on Ban's point of view, large classes can affect the quality of education and it does not allow personal interactions with students. He also argues that the ideal number of students in an English class must be from 13 to 17, due to the fact that it produces better student achievement (1989).

But, there is a body of knowledge arguing that it is not the class size that has the greatest influence on teaching and learning. What matters most is the quality of the teacher and his/her approach to teaching, specifically the capacity to create a culture for organizing large classes in such a manner that learning can be successfully mediated (Johnson 1998; Lockheed and Verspoor, (1991); Maged (1997); Nakabugo (2003).

In relation to the question whether they consider that the students' learning process has been affected by the number of students in each class, the teachers' answer for this question was a definite yes. They emphasized that the students' learning process is affected owed to many reasons such as; students do not pay attention in the development of the class activities and it is almost impossible to control all them. They also mentioned that little time is given for students to participate. If the amount of students is high, there is less time to teach new structures, less time to carry out different tasks, and less time to participate. If there are few students in a class, more personal instruction could be given to them, and it would be easier to monitor their work during class. For the analyst G. Lucas (2002-2003), the key point for a successful learning process is to take into consideration that all the students are different, and teachers should be sensitive to the differences among the students. Some students are fast learners and others have other difficulties; for these reasons it is very important to have small groups for teachers to pay close attention to

those students that need more help, and to those that have specific and individual needs, something that could not be done in large classes.

For teachers, the difficulties they found when dealing with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management were the following;

In regard to oral participation, they said that students that sat in the back did not participate and if they did, they only participated once in a single class and there was impossible to control all them so that there was not enough time to deal with language feedback.

The difficulties that teachers had when dealing with a large class in relation to classroom management strategies they mentioned that the space of the classroom is not the ideal one to work in semicircles. Tasks carried out in pairs and in groups of three or more students were difficult to arrange due to the lack of space in the classroom. They also said that the students who usually sit in the back hardly ever participate in the activities.

Some teachers did many things to deal with classroom management in large classes as assign group work, cluster their class, monitor each activity, monitor students all the time, and take advantage of the additional help that the teacher assistants could provide to the students. And also have students practice cooperative learning. Most teachers mentioned that they implemented different strategies to cope with classroom management in a large class, like: classroom movements arrange the chairs in a circle or semicircle, and the like.

Moreover, teachers were asked if students have an equal oral participation in a large class. Most of them agreed that students who attend a large class do not have equal oral participation. They mentioned that the most skillful students are the ones that participate the most leaving the least skillful students in disadvantage. Teachers also mentioned that students who are very shy do not participate in oral activities developed in the class.

The teachers pointed out some strategies they used to cope with oral participation like: role plays, workbook exercises, presentations, class debates, group discussions, feedbacks, warm ups, and giving reinforcement.

The teachers were also asked if they thought that students that attended a large class developed the same competence and got good grades as those who attended a small group. They expressed that the factors that did not allow the students in a large class to develop the same proficiency as those attending a small group are related to the poor participation the students have in the class. The different learning style that each student has is another factor they mentioned. It was also stated that lower achievers would not get the same results as high achievers. Some teachers also consider that lower achievers would improve their grades if they were in a small class. Previous research has also found that smaller classes are more effective not simply because they are smaller, but because they often offer an educational setting in which it is easier and more feasible for active learning to take place. It is argued that by simply reducing the number of students in a class does not alone improve the quality of instruction, neither does increasing class size lead to poor education (Johnson 1998; Lockheed and Verspoor, (1991); Maged (1997); Nakabugo (2003).

In relation to the question: Do you consider strategies you use with students' oral participation and classroom management in large class are having good results? Some of the interviewed teachers answered that they do and explained that even though the strategies were not enough, the results were in a way pleasing. Though, they argued that sometimes students were suggested to do self-study activities like watching news, search the internet and to do some practices by their own they did not do it. If students would follow the teacher's recommendations, the results would be more gratifying.

Finally, teachers were asked to which extent were the objectives of the course in a large class achieved? They stated that most of the objectives were achieved only with some students because teachers did not have homogeneous classes; they mentioned that it is important to develop new skills in the students. They argued that practicing self-evaluation would develop more awareness in the students.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the strategies and techniques that teachers of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador use to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management in the Intermediate English I courses, semester II-2010.

The findings show that teachers are applying different strategies and techniques in order to improve oral participation and classroom management in large classes. It means that teachers are aware of how the teaching-learning process is affected when working with a large class. Nevertheless, they also know that if different strategies and techniques are used to deal with this situation, the teaching-learning process can be reinforced with the application of the above mentioned. The findings reveal that the strategies and techniques that teachers from the FLD used to cope with their large class to improve the students oral participation were the following: Concerning the strategies and techniques in relation to classroom management were: participation grade, sharing e-mail address, tutoring, and monitoring and establishing trust. For oral participation were: oral presentation, pair work, group work, debates, plays, dialogue. Findings show that most of the students expressed their favorable attitude towards the strategies and techniques that teachers are using in their classrooms. However some students think that teachers should implement new strategies and techniques that would allow students to have more oral participation and improve classroom management.

Moreover, most of the students and teachers agreed that the ideal number of students in a communicative English class should be twenty students in each class. Though teachers are applying some of the strategies proposed by previous research in this area, the majority of the students consider that a large number of students in a class limit their participation time; as a

result, this leads to their poor performance in their speaking ability. At the same time, the findings show that teachers try to give equal opportunities to participate orally in the class, but students are afraid to participate in front of too many classmates.

On the other hand, students consider that teachers at the FLD are using strategies and techniques to deal with classroom management. According to the findings, the strategies and techniques that teachers use in large classes are having good results because for the most part the objectives of the course are achieved. But, very often, due to the large amount of students, little time is devoted to those students who need special attention and whose skills in the language are very weak. Teachers emphasized that students who are high achievers and participate the most tend to have better results at the end of the course than those who are low achievers and almost never participate in class. Indeed, the learning process of the students that are part of a large class will be affected negatively, even though teachers are trying to use strategies and techniques to reduce the effects.

In brief, these findings show that teachers are already using some strategies and techniques, but they are conscious they can apply others that this research suggests which are being used by teachers from other countries.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers in charge of large groups should encourage their students to take responsibility over their own learning in that way their performance in their English class will be improved.
- The sources are important for the quality of education, for this reason, the FLD should provide better sources such as: computer labs, big libraries, visual aids and the like.
- Although teachers are already using some strategies and techniques this study proposes some other strategies and techniques that should be applied in large classrooms based on previous research in this area.
- The Foreign Language Department should open more groups so that the number of students per class is reduced to have better individual results.
- The FLD should hire more teachers in order to improve the quality of education in this department.
- The University of El Salvador should take into account the number of students in the Foreign Language Department because it affects the students' process, so FLD should become a school not just a department.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1

LIST OF STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES

1. ORAL PARTICIPATION:

- Oral Presentation
- Pair work
- Group work
- Debates
- Plays
- Dialogue

2. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:

- Participation grade
- Sharing e-mail address
- Tutoring
- Establishing trust
- Monitoring students

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

Thesis: "Strategies and techniques that teachers of the FLD at the University of El Salvador use to cope with large classes regarding oral participation and classroom management in the intermediate English I courses, semester II- 2010

STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Objective: To know the students' points of view about the strategies teachers use to cope with students' oral participation and classroom management in large classes at the Foreign Languages Department.

I. Generalities:

Gender M _____ F _____ Age _____

Major: _____ Modern Languages _____ English Language Teaching

Group #: _____ Schedule: _____

II. Answer the following questions.

1- Which of the following strategies teacher use in the classroom. Mark them with a check (✓).

Oral participation

- a. Oral presentations
- b. Pair work
- c. Group work
- d. Debates
(A discussion with different opinion)
- e. Plays
(A piece of writing performed by an actor)
- f. Dialogues
(A process in which two people have a discussion)

Classroom management

- g. Create a participation grade
(Make homework and attendance count by doing regular checks and making it part of their final grade)
- h. Share your e-mail address
(Encourage students to e-mail you with questions, and answer them on your own time.)
- i. Tutoring
- j. Establish trust
(Tell your students at least one or two things about yourself beyond your role of teaching.)
- k. Monitoring
- Others: _____

2- According to your opinion, Mark with a check (✓) the appropriate number of students in an English course?

a- 20 b- 30 c- 40 d- 50

other _____

3- Do you consider a group of 30 or more students as a large class?

Yes _____ no _____

Why? _____

4- How often do you participate in a class?

a- Always b- sometimes c- almost never d- never

5- Do you consider your oral participation decreases in a group with more than 30 students?

a- Yes _____ b- No _____

Why? _____

6- According to your opinion does the teacher give equal opportunities to participate orally in the class?

Yes _____ no _____

Explain _____

7- Number the following strategies from 1-11 based on your preference. (Or based on how often the teacher uses the?)

Oral participation

Classroom management

- a. Oral presentations
- b. Pair work
- c. Group work
- d. Debates
- e. Plays
- f. Dialogues

- g. Create a participation grade
- h. Share your e-mail address
- i. Tutoring
- j. Establish trust
- k. Monitoring

8- How often teacher use the previous classroom management and oral participation strategies in the class?

a- Always b- sometimes c- almost never d- never

9- Do you consider the strategies that teachers use in class are having good result?

Yes _____ No _____

Explain _____

10- Mark the reasons you consider limits your oral participation during an English class?

- a- Number of students _____
- b- Lack of motivation _____
- c- Classroom management _____
- d- Participation time _____
- e- Misunderstanding of the contents _____

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CLASS OBSERVATION

Teacher's name: _____

Group: _____ No students _____ date _____

Objective: To know the strategies that teachers use to cope with students' oral participation and classroom management in large classes at the Foreign Languages Department.

1- Which of the following strategies teacher use in the classroom. Mark them with a check (✓).

Oral participation

Classroom management

- a. Oral presentations
- b. Pair work
- c. Group work
- d. Debates
- e. Plays
- f. Dialogues

- g. Create a participation grade
- h. Share your e-mail address
- i. Tutoring
- j. Establish trust
- k. Monitoring

10- How often teacher use the previous classroom management and oral participation strategies in the class?

- b- Always
- b- sometimes
- c- almost never
- d- never

11- Do you consider the strategies that teachers use in class are having good result?

Yes _____ No _____

Explain _____

12- Mark the reasons you consider limits your oral participation during an English class?

- a- Number of students _____
- b- Lack of motivation _____
- c- Classroom management _____
- d- Participation time _____
- e- Misunderstanding of the contents _____

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TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

Objectives: To know what kind of strategies teachers use to cope with students' oral participation and classroom management in large classes at the Foreign Language Department and if they are being useful in students' learning process.

- 1- According to your opinion what factors have contributed to the increase of the number of the students in the foreign languages department?
- 2- Based on your experience, what is the ideal number of students in a communicative English class? Why?
- 3- Do you consider that student's learning process have affected by the number of students in each class? How?
- 4- If you deal with a large class what are the difficulties you and your students face regarding students' oral participation and classroom management?
- 5- What do you do to deal with classroom management in a large class?
- 6- In your opinion, do students have an equal oral participation in a large class?

7- Can you mention the strategies you use to cope with classroom management in a large class?

8- Can you mention the strategies you use to cope with students' oral participation in a large class?

9- Do you think students that attend large classes develop the same competence and get good grades as those who attend a small class?

10- Do you consider the strategies you use with students oral participation and classroom management in large classes are having good result in the teaching learning process?

Yes _____ No _____ explain_____

11- To which extend are the objectives of the course in a large group achieved?