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## **Fostering autonomous learning by using a workbook to improve reading and writing skills in students of basic level at ASE**

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**FOSTERING AUTONOMOUS LEARNING BY USING A WORKBOOK TO IMPROVE  
READING AND WRITING SKILLS IN STUDENTS OF BASIC LEVEL AT ASE.**

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**SALLE UNIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION SCIENCES**

**BACHELOR OF EDUCATION IN SPANISH, ENGLISH AND FRENCH**

**Bogotá, D.C., July, 2014**

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IMPROVE READING AND WRITING SKILLS**

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## Resumen

Se pensó en este proyecto de investigación con el fin de examinar el uso de un libro de trabajo (workbook) como recurso para mejorar las habilidades de escritura y lectura en el idioma inglés. Este proyecto se llevó a cabo en la Asociación de Educación Social (ASE), donde los participantes son de estrato social, 1,2 y 3.

Se escogió trabajar sobre el workbook, ya que este es un material que está al alcance de los estudiantes y tiene la facilidad de trabajarse dentro y fuera del aula de clase. Además, quisimos explorar si este libro de texto ayudó a aumentar en los estudiantes un aprendizaje autónomo. Para este estudio se emplearon instrumentos de recolección de datos, tales como cuestionarios, entrevistas y diarios de observación que nos permitieron tomar datos de análisis para lograr llegar a los resultados encontrados.

Estos demuestran que los estudiantes mejoraron sus habilidades de escritura y de lectura con el libro de texto. Por otra parte, los resultados mostraron que los estudiantes aumentaron un poco su autonomía y la motivación en el aprendizaje de inglés.

*Palabras claves:* libro de trabajo, motivación, habilidad lectora, habilidad de escritura, aula de clase.

## **Abstract**

This research project aims to examine the use of a workbook as a resource to improve English reading and writing skills. This project was carried out in Social Education Association (ASE) where the participants are from social stratum 1, 2, and 3.

We chose to work on the workbook as it is a material that is available to students and has the ability to be worked inside and outside the classroom. In addition, we wanted to explore whether the workbook helped to increase students' autonomous learning.

This study employed data collection instruments such as questionnaires, interviews and observation journal. The results demonstrated that the students improved their writing and reading skills by using the workbook. Moreover, the findings showed that the students increased a little their autonomy and motivation in English learning.

*Keywords:* workbook, motivation, reading skills, writing skills, classroom.

## Table of Contents

Chapter One .....	1
1. Introduction .....	2
1.1 Statement of the problem .....	3
1.2 Purpose of the study.....	4
1.3 Research question .....	4
1.4 Objectives .....	4
1.4.1 General objectives .....	<b>¡Error! Marcador no definido.</b>
1.4.2 Specific objectives .....	<b>¡Error! Marcador no definido.</b>
1.5 Justification.....	4
Chapter Two.....	6
2. Literature review .....	<b>¡Error! Marcador no definido.</b>
2.1 Theoretical Framework.....	6
2.1.1 Autonomous learning.....	6
2.2. Self-directed.....	11
2.3 Motivation .....	11
2.3.1 Motivation and Second Language Learning .....	11
2.4 Reading and Writing Skill.....	13
2.4.1 Reading skill .....	13
2.4.2 Writing skill .....	15
2.4.3 Writing Strategies .....	17
2.4.4 Reading Strategies.....	17
2.5 Workbook as a resource .....	19
Chapter three .....	232
3. Research Methodology.....	232
3.1 Research Approach.....	252
3.2 Action Research .....	2324

3.3 Setting.....	29
3.4 Population.....	300
3.5 Data Collection Instruments.....	310
3.5.1 Pre test and Post test .....	353
3.5.2 Pre survey and Post survey .....	32
3.5.3 Workbook .....	31
3.5.4 Observation journal	
3.5.5 Interview .....	36
Chapter Four.....	36
4. Data Analysis.....	36
4.1 Pre-Test and Post Test Results .....	36
4.1.1 Pre-test Results .....	36
4.1.2 Post-test Results.....	39
4.2 Pre-Survey and post survey Questionnaire Results .....	431
4.2.1 Pre-Survey Results.....	42
4.2.2 Post survey Results.....	44
4.3 Data Coding Scheme and Procedure.....	486
4.3.1 Data Codification .....	496
4.3.2 Levels of Coding.....	497
4.4 Observation journals and Interview results .....	52
Chapter Five .....	52
5. Findings and Conclusions.....	52
5.1 Conclusions .....	52
5.2 Pedagogical Implications .....	54
References .....	56

## List of figures

Figure # 1 The Writing Process .....	15
Figure # 2 The Reasons For Using Text Books.....	20
Figure # 3 Action Research Cyclical Process.....	22
Figure # 4 Mixed Methods Approach .....	25

## List of Graphics

Graphic # 1 Pre-test (Reading results) .....	36
Graphic # 2 Pre-test (Writing results) .....	37
Graphic # 3 Post-test (Reading results ) .....	39
Graphic # 4 Post-test (Writing results) .....	40
Graphic # 5 First Question Pre-Survey Analysis .....	42
Graphic # 6 Second Question Pre-Survey Analysis) .....	42
Graphic # 7 Third Question Pre-Survey Analysis .....	43
Graphic # 8 Fourth Question Pre-Survey Analysis .....	43
Graphic # 9 First Question Post-Survey Analysis .....	44
Graphic # 10 Second Question Post-Survey Analysis .....	45
Graphic # 11 Third Question Post-Survey Analysis .....	45

## List of tables

Table 3.2.1 Reading processes .....	14
Table 4.1.1 Categories and subcategories.....	37
Table 4.2 Use of a workbook.....	43

## List of Appendixes

Appendix 1 Consent Form.....	591
Appendix 1 Observation Journal .....	592
Appendix 3 Pre-survey .....	63
Appendix 4 Post-survey .....	64
Appendix 5 Pre-test .....	65
Appendix 6 Post-test.....	68
Appendix 7 Interview question .....	71
Appendix 8 Interview transcript.....	72
Appendix 9 Rubrics for writing test .....	73
Appendix 10 workbook description .....	74

## Chapter One

### 1. Introduction

“The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles,  
But to irrigate deserts”  
(-C.S.Lewis)

Nowadays, English is widely spoken as a second language in the world. It is learned and taught as a foreign language in Colombia. For this reason, we have seen the need to propose alternatives for English language learning. This project roots principally on analyzing the effects of the application of the workbook in a classroom to improve and to optimize the reading and the writing skills of the institution Alianza Social Educativa.

ASE is a non-profit institution that primarily provides low cost English classes to population stratum 1, 2 and 3. ASE, as a social justice institution, works toward the benefit of community.

This research took place at ASE, where students are classified and divided into different courses, based on their English levels. This institution offers the following course: basic level I and basic level II, intermediate, and advanced level and conversational level. These courses are given primarily to people from lower income backgrounds who have the motivation and desire to access these courses.

Taking into account that ASE students are of a lower socio-economic status, in this research we propose that using a workbook will help students produce their own compositions. This workbook would be used as a way to reinforce knowledge, as well as to

establish and develop information, ideas and arguments in logical sequence in accordance with the language level that in this case is basic level.

We hypothesize that the use of the workbook could be a good strategy for the acquisition of English language, reinforcement of knowledge, and an excellent tool for inside and outside of the classroom.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

This project started during practicum in the Jose Asuncion Silva School in Basic I and Basic II levels. People at ASE have only 3 hours per day to learn concepts in English and to practice what they have learned in these classes.

During the first class with students in ASE, we realized that did not have any kind of extra material to enhance learning in the English language, a lot less to reinforce reading and writing skills in the student. Students only had their personal notebook and their pencils. We considered that the existence of a supplementary material was necessary to strengthen writing and reading skills and improve those skills more effectively.

For that reason, we propose the implementation of a workbook in order to engage students to practice at home as well as to use the workbook as a tool to practice in class.

Because ASE is a non-profit institution that offers English and French programs at low cost, materials are not generally provided to the students. Thus, we brought in our own material to conduct the implementation and research.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify the manner we can improve ASE students' writing and reading skills and to increase the autonomous learning by using a workbook in order to follow the students' process throughout the English course. Another important point of the study is to incorporate topics of various levels based on the curriculum. We also aim to compile suitable materials according to the syllabus used inside and outside the class in order to fulfill the population's needs to reach the appropriate proficiency level in each course (based on the Common European Framework of Reference, A1 and A2).

## **1.3 Research question**

This study addresses the following questions:

1. How can the use of a workbook foster autonomous learning on English reading and writing skills of basic level students at ASE?

## **1.4 Research Objectives**

- To explore how the workbook can be used to foster the participants' autonomous learning.
- To examine in what way the workbook helps the participants to reinforce English reading and writing.
- To establish how this kind of materials can help in their learning process.
- To determine if this workbook streamlines the learning process.

## **1.4 Justification**

In ASE, the teachers have seen several problems and factors that interrupt the way of teaching of English as a foreign language. One of these problems is the lack of resources that

the institution has in order to work with the students; Teachers at ASE believe that access to materials will help in the teaching and learning of English in a better way.

Taking into account these factors, the principle reason is to provide materials that could help learners improve their language skills, specifically reading and writing by helping them reinforce what they have learned in class.

The idea is to apply other techniques of learning styles with a workbook about reading comprehension and writing skills. The materials also help to develop students' interest in the language, to increase engagement in such activities, and to allow the teachers admitted to keep track of the students' progress inside and outside the classroom.

## Chapter Two

### 2. Theoretical Framework

This research focuses on analyzing the use of a workbook in improving the reading and writing skills in order to encourage and better assist young students in learning English as a foreign language. In addition, this study explores whether the implementation of the workbook as a method increases the participant students' autonomous learning in ASE. In our research, the workbook is a method because it is a programmed procedure. We established it as part and resource of that class. A class can have more than one method (Clayton, 1963).

#### 2.1. Autonomous Learning

Autonomy is “the ability to take charge of one's learning” (Holec, 1981, Benson, and Voller, 1997 p. 217) on a general note. The term autonomy has at least five different ways (Benson and Voller, 1997):

1. For situations in which learners study entirely on their own.
2. For a set of skills that can be learned and applied in self-directed learning.
3. For an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education.
4. For the exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning.
5. For the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning.

Early pedagogical experiments related to autonomy were inspired by humanistic expectations aroused by the political turmoil and ‘counter-cultures’ of late 1960s in Europe (Holec, 1981 Gremmo and Riley 1995). According to Dickinson (1995), autonomous learning is the situation in which the learner is completely responsible for all of the

decisions that have a relation with the students' learning and the implementation of those decisions.

Little and Dam (1998) published a book on learner autonomy, which emphasizes the psychological attributes of autonomous learners and prioritized 'interdependence' over 'independence' in learning. According to Kelley (1983), interdependence is the manner in which people are interacting each other but at the same time act upon or influence one another's experiences, in reference to the fact, because the preferences, motives and behavior of the individual are relevant to those of the interaction partner. Interdependence is an elemental feature of social experience. According to Johnson (2007), there are two different kind of interdependence.

- Positive interdependence exists when individuals perceive that they can reach their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are cooperatively linked also reach their goals and, therefore, promote each other's efforts to achieve the goals.
- Negative interdependence exists when individuals perceive that they can obtain their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are competitively linked fail to obtain their goals and, therefore, obstruct each other's efforts to achieve the goals.

Independence results in a situation in which individuals perceive that they can reach their goal regardless of whether other individuals in the situation get or do not get their goals. (Johnson, 2007). In this book, the author argues that learner autonomy did not imply

any particular mode of practice, but was instead dependent upon the quality of the pedagogical dialogue' between teachers and learners. Dickinson said that the key in definitions of this kind is the idea that autonomy is an attribute of learners, rather than learning situations.

Hake (2000) states that learning situation is an effective learning experience that can only be a well-structured and skillfully executed learning situation. A learning situation is the condition or environment in which all the elements necessary for promoting learning are present. Extension teaching consists or arranging situations that promote desired learning. The essential role of extension worker is to create learning situations that stimulates and guide the learning activity. The effective extension worker is one who can create and manage learning situations in which learners have effective learning experience.

Effective learning situation consists of following five essential elements:

1. An effective Instructor or Leader.
2. Learners who want and need to learn.
3. Content or subject matter that is useful to learners.
4. Appropriate teaching material.
5. An appropriate environment

Holec (1981) discusses many different points of view. He identifies the characteristics of autonomous learners saying, " 'taking charge of one's own learning' emphasizes planning, the selection of materials, monitoring learning progress, and self-assessment; he focuses on the mechanics of day-to-day learning management "(p. 284).

We choose an extra material to follow the learner's process during the class. We monitored how students worked with exercises in the workbook. During the class, the students worked in groups without our help; the students asked each other about unknown words and the manner to fill in the blanks. Before we started the class, they prepared a lesson plan including workbook's exercises in order to use one of the many factors to involve qualities of autonomous learners.

Something that we considered important is the idea that "Autonomy in language learning depends on the development and exercise of a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action" (Little, 1995 p. 179). Another important point to take into account is the fact that "autonomous learners assume responsibility for determining the purpose, content, rhythm and methodology of their learning, monitoring its progress and evaluating its outcomes." (Holec, 1981, p. 3).

According to Little (1995), numerous authors had questioned the autonomy in language learning. For example, Nunan (1997) argued that there are different degrees of autonomy. He claimed that there are five levels of 'learner action' – 'awareness', 'involvement', 'intervention', 'creation' and 'transcendence' which could inform the sequencing of learner development activities in language textbooks. Macaro (2006) proposed a three-stage model that involves 'autonomy of language competence, autonomy of language learning competence and 'autonomy of choice and action.

With these cases in mind, we conducted their class in different ways. We always tried to create a friendly learning atmosphere in the classroom that students could feel

comfortable on their own and about their own knowledge. We used the classroom as a place for autonomous language acquisition that involves an ability to operate independently and to allow the learner to use the words and sentences from a foreign language to communicate personal opinions in real and unpredictable situations, too. This kind of autonomy has been called “autonomy as a communicator” (Benson, 2013, p. 233).

In the context of classroom organization, it involved learners’ ability to take responsibility for their own learning and to apply active, personally relevant strategies; in this case, the autonomy was called “autonomy as a learner”. By using a workbook, we implemented a strategy that allowed students to take the responsibility for their own learning, by using the workbook that contains all grammatical structures to form present and past tense. With the workbook, students can develop the exercises without teacher’s help inside the classroom.

According to Vygotsky (1978), for many years, people have used diaries and evaluation sheets to help students in a learning process. Learning is an internalized form of a formerly social activity, and a learner can realize his/her potential through the interaction to receive support from other persons such as parents, teachers, and peers.

By using a workbook, we helped the students to be autonomous by doing the activities and exercises in the workbook with their classmates, in pairs or in groups, or independently after, we had provided explanations and guidance.

According to Voller (1997), it may be the case that learner autonomy is best achieved when, among other things, the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning, a

counsellor, and as a resource. We acted as facilitators of learning to follow what Voller said. According to Clapper, T. C. (2009) Being a facilitator of learning means that strategies and activities are included that brings the learner to a state of understanding that lead to accomplishment of the objectives. That means teachers help to students to get their own goals by using tools as the workbook. People came into this world building our own meaning and explanation for occurrences, based on Clapper's findings, as well as through socializing with others. Therefore, including activities that allow the learner to construct their own meaning and then reflect their understanding off other learners goes a long way in creating understanding.

It is necessary to understand first that the concept of autonomous learning as one our objectives is to use the work to foster our learners' autonomy in English learning. According to Crome, Farrar and O'Conno (2011), autonomous learning includes "The ability to work autonomously; the overall management of one's own work within time limits; a flexible and adaptable mind able to face new situations; and the ability to think creatively, self-critically and independently" (p. 272).

## **2.2 Self-directed**

According to Brockett & Hiemstra (1994), self-directed learning happens when individual learners can become empowered to take increasingly more responsibility for various decisions associated with the learning. Self-direction does not necessarily mean all learning will take place in isolation from others and students appear able to transfer learning. Also They define the concept as an instructional process centering on such

activities as assessing needs, securing learning resources, implementing learning activities, and evaluating learning.

Self-directed studies can involve various activities and resources, such as self-guided reading, participation in study groups, internships, electronic dialogues, and reflective writing activities. Effective roles for teachers in self-directed learning are possible. They can hold a dialogue with learners, securing resources, evaluating outcomes, and promoting critical thinking. Some educational institutions are finding ways to support self-directed study through open-learning programs, individualized study options, non-traditional course offerings, and other innovative programs.

## **2.3 Motivation**

### **2.3.1 Motivation and Second Language Learning**

The term motivation in a second language learning context is seen according to Gardner (1985, p. 108) as “the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in the activity”. He further defines a motivated learner as “one who is willing or even eager to invest effort in learning activities and to progress”.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) have done pioneering work to explore the nature of motivation specific to language study. Gardner highlights two different types of motivation:

1. Instrumental motivation: the desire to learn a language because it would fulfill certain utilitarian goals, such as getting a job, passing an examination, etc.
2. Integrative motivation: the desire to learn a language in order to communicate with people from another culture that speak that language; the desire is also there to identify closely with the target language group.

Naiman (1978) stated that the most successful learners are not necessarily those to whom a language comes very easily; they are those who display certain typical characteristics that are clearly associated with motivation:

- ❖ Positive task orientation
- ❖ Ego involvement
- ❖ Need for achievement
- ❖ High aspirations
- ❖ Goal orientation
- ❖ Perseverance
- ❖ Tolerance of ambiguity

Relating to the previous three concepts, we clarify that the main objective of this project is to increase and foster autonomous learning on English reading and writing skills. In this way, we as teachers can say that autonomous learning does not only make the students question about their ways of learning but also the teachers in charge may do it. If the teacher uses a good methodology to explain or teach what the students need, they will be able to start a process of *self-directed* in which teacher has an important role because she

or he is who *motivates* students to get the class goals . That means, self-directed is the first student's step to become autonomous. The learner is completely responsible for all of the decisions.

## **2.4 Reading and Writing Skill**

First, it is necessary to understand how important reading and writing learning are when viewed as one element. According to Donovan (2005), reading and writing are two complementary activities, and if one really wants to improve in these two areas, it is necessary to practice reading and writing at the same time because those are complementary skills. Donovan says, "If you want to write well, you must read well" (p. 35).

### **2.4.1 Reading skill**

Nuttall (1996) gives important tips about how to develop students' readings skills, as she says that the first step towards improvement of reading skills is being aware that it is our job as instructors to help them develop the reading skills.

Urquhart & Weir (1988) define reading as the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the medium of print. Additionally, Anderson (1999) states reading is an active, fluent process which involves the reader and the reading materials in building meaning, which he says does not reside on the printed page, nor is it only in the reader. Reading is the receptive skill in the written mode. It can develop independently of listening and speaking skills, but often develops along with them,

especially in societies with a highly developed literary tradition. . Reading can help with pronunciation, grammar and in increasing vocabulary.

*Table #1 Reading processes adopted from Grabe and Stoller (2002)*

Lower-level processes	Higher-level processes
*Lexical access	*Text model of comprehension
*Syntactic parsing	*Situation model of reader interpretation
*Semantic proposition formation	*Background knowledge use and inferencing
*Working memory activation	*Executive control process

In the previous table, Grabe and Stoller (2002) state that the lower-level processes represent the more automatic linguistic processes and are typically viewed as more skill-orientated. The higher-level processes generally represent comprehension processes that make much more use of readers' background knowledge and differencing skills.

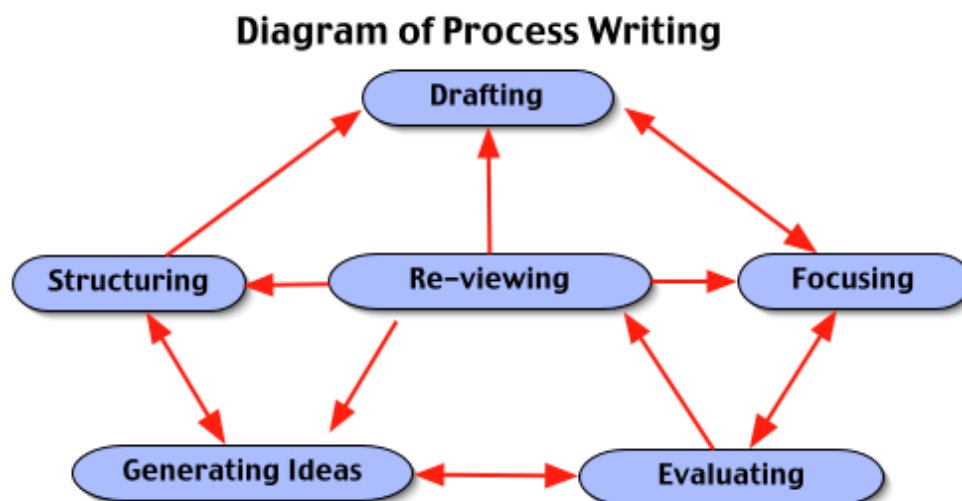
#### **2.4.2 Writing skill**

Writing is the productive skill in the written mode. It is more complicated than it seems, and often tends to be the hardest of the skills, even for native speakers of a language, since it involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way Flower, L., & Hayes, J. R. (1981).

According to research done by teachers, it is necessary for students to use the orthography correctly, including the script, and spelling and punctuation conventions. In

these cases the research focuses on the way learners are be able to improve writing skills. We make exercises that allow them put words together in the correct order and use the style appropriate to the genre and audience. For our research, we hope to develop autonomous writing skills in the students and to help them in making the main sentence constituents, such as subject, verb, and object, clear to the reader by using a workbook and tutorial classes.

Graham and Parin (2007) talk about strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high school. There are elements of current writing instruction found to be effective for helping adolescent students learn to write well and to use writing as a tool for learning. It is important to note that all of the elements follow rigorous research, but that even when used together, they do not constitute a full writing curriculum. Teachers-researches used some of the elements that include:



2.1 Figure # 1 the writing process writing by Ron White and Valerie Arndt, Longman, 1991.)

### 2.4.3 Writing Strategies

Writing strategies involve teaching students strategies for planning, revising, and editing their compositions. Using Graham & Parin's theory, we used writing strategies in order to prove their hypothesis, implementing these steps, at the beginning of classes. We explained to students how to review their own homework and their partners' homework, after that, the students were told to correct their mistakes, to edit their compositions, and to re-write them again. One important part of this process is the summarization, which involves explicitly and systematically teaching students how to summarize texts, it is necessary that the students apply the collaborative writing, which uses instructional arrangements in which adolescents work together to plan, draft, revise, and edit their compositions.

Another important element is what Graham & Parin call sentence combining, which involves teaching students to construct more complex, sophisticated sentences. We applied this methodology was applied by teachers-researchers, with the workbook's help, as we instructed students to make simple sentences by using present simple tense and vocabulary. Then, the students learned about the past simple, the present progressive, verb "to be" and more new vocabulary in order to make more complex sentences and practice during the class and at home by their own. A previous exercise we applied using the writing exercises was the prewriting, which engages students in activities designed to help them generate or organize ideas for their composition; the student had to create stories according to their own experiences but using the workbook stories and vocabulary.

Another important element is the study of Models, which provides students with opportunities to read, analyze, and emulate models of good writing, in the practicum, research students read short stories and they analyzed the most important information about them, in order to take new words off and make a glossary.

#### **2.4.4 Reading Strategies**

According to, Spratt, Pulverness, Williams (2005) the main strategies to read are reading for a specific information or scanning, reading for gist or skimming and reading for detail. In our research, we implemented all of them. When students scan, they do not read the whole text, they hurry over most of it until they find the information they are interested in. During the project, learners had to read a short story and scan the most interesting part for them. The principal idea was that the student should to get the whole information about it but they had to choose the most important part for them.

When students skim, they read quickly through a text to get a general idea of what it is about. For example in our practicum students had to choose a workbook's story, for that students skim to decide what was the best. Reading for detail is when students have to getting the meaning out every word of the text, in the class for example, they had to know and understand each word, for that was necessary the use of dictionary.

#### **2.5 Material for Language Education**

Materials are using to facilitate the learning of a language. These materials include course books, videos, graded readers, flash cards, games, websites, and mobile phone

interactions. Nonetheless, it is important to say that much of the literature focuses on printed materials (Tomlinson, 2012).

According to Tomlinson the material for language education can be informative. It means that those inform the learner about the target language. The author says that the material could be instructional too. In this case, the material guides the learner in practicing the language. Another important role of material for language education is experiential. The author says, “Providing the learner with experience of the language in use” (Tomlinson, p. 24, 2012). Material is then eliciting, by encouraging the learner to use the language, and exploratory, by helping the learner to make discoveries about the language.

## **2.6 Workbook as a Resource**

It is necessary to explain how teachers can connect reading and writing skills in the classroom, not only to improve these skills but also to increase the autonomous learning. Our research focuses on a workbook in which teachers and learners can work on writing and reading skills at the same time, without separating them from each other.

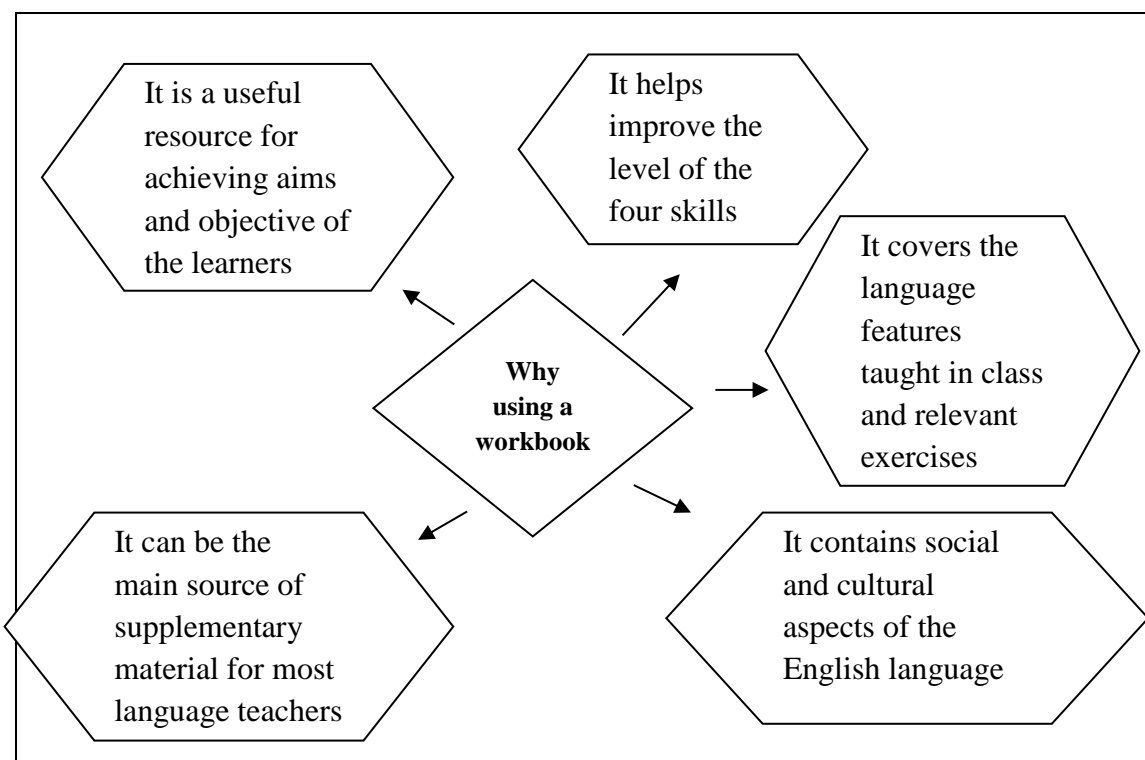
According to Kellough and Kellough (1999), the most important theme is to ensure curriculum coherence. The workbook, in particular, serves as an agenda for the teacher, a helpful aid for substitute teachers and a useful record to use in the future when teaching similar lessons and classes.

According to Barry and King’s (1997) research on the use of a workbook in the classroom. In teacher- research’s project the classroom was made up by a group of English beginners- teenagers from 16 to 19 years old. Following this idea, this type of material does

not meet the standard of achievement that the teacher has for the students. They say, “With the format of the workbook, it is difficult for teachers to make appropriate entries as suggested,” (p. 17). Some teachers indicate that they use the book only as a requirement, and not because of self-interest.

Using this information, we took into account the use of the workbook as a resource the students. The fact that teachers used the workbook as a guide, not a mandate according to the curriculum , at the beginning of process we explained to learners how the classes would be conducted and how they should develop the exercises with workbook’s help and guidance.

A relevant factor in this research is the possibility to work with the workbook in a freeway. The students were able to modify, change, eliminate, or add to the material in the workbook. During the extracted excerpts from the class, we supplemented the workbook with lots of extra readings, the students worked in pairs reading a specific text based on the main issue covered in the workbook. The following figure sums up the reasons to implement a workbook as an intervention during the practicum at ASE.



2.2 *Figure # 2* the reasons for using text books

### 2.6.1 Advantages of using a workbook.

According to Gutierrez, C., & Wang, J. (2001) there are many factors that demonstrate the usefulness of using a workbook in the language classroom:

- Workbooks provide organized units of work, it gives you all the plans and lessons you need to cover a topic in some details.
- A workbook series provides you with a balanced, chronological presentation of information.

- Workbooks are a detailed sequence of teaching procedures that tell you what to do and when to do it.
- Good workbooks are excellent teaching aids. They are a resource for both teachers and students.

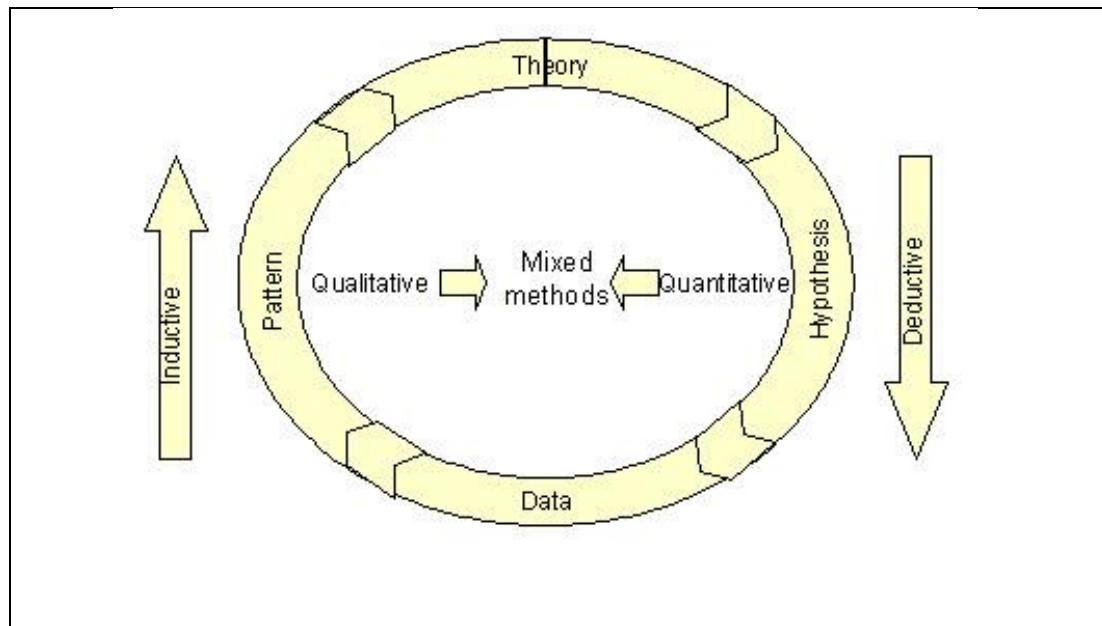
Considering these advantages, it is important to analyze how many possibilities there are to increase autonomy in students, According to Egbert, J. (2004) autonomy consists of becoming aware of, and identifying one's strategies, needs, and goals as a learner, and having the opportunity to reconsider and refashion approaches and procedures for optimal learning.

## Chapter three

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Research approach

We use mixed methods research in this study. Mixed methods use multiple ways to explore a problem. The following figure explains the steps that conform mixed method process. This process starts from a deductive method to an inductive method. Then, the research goes from the general aspects to particular ones. The research should have a theory to can establish a hypothesis and prove it by using instruments to collecting data and finally to get a patter in order to focus the research.



3.2 Figure # 4 Mixed Methods approach proposed by Creswell

“Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for

the purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration” Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007).

This idea of mixed methods can lead to a fuller and more inclusive research method that produces better and better-rounded research data. The ideal method uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. A mixed-method approach offers a range of perspectives on our program's processes and outcomes. This mixed-method has many benefits for example it increases the validity of teachers- research findings by allowing them to examine the same phenomenon in different ways. This process of looking at different data sources, sometimes called triangulation, this is the main advantage of the mixed-method approach. It can result in better data collection instruments.

Some strengths of mixed methods are:

- Can be easy to describe and to report.
- Can be useful when unexpected results arise from a prior study.
- Can help generalize, to a degree, qualitative data.
- Helpful in designing and validating an instrument.
- Can position research in a transformative framework.

According to Creswell (2003), mixed methods research involves both collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative speaking, the analysis consists of statistically analyzing scores collected on instruments, checklists, or public documents to answer research questions or to test hypotheses. In contrast, qualitative data consists of open-ended information that the researcher gathers through interviews with participants.

The general, open-ended questions asked during these interviews allow the participants to supply answers in their own words. Besides, qualitative data may be collected by observing participants or sites of research, gathering documents from a private (e.g., diary) or public (e.g., minutes of meetings) source, or collecting audiovisual materials such as videotapes.

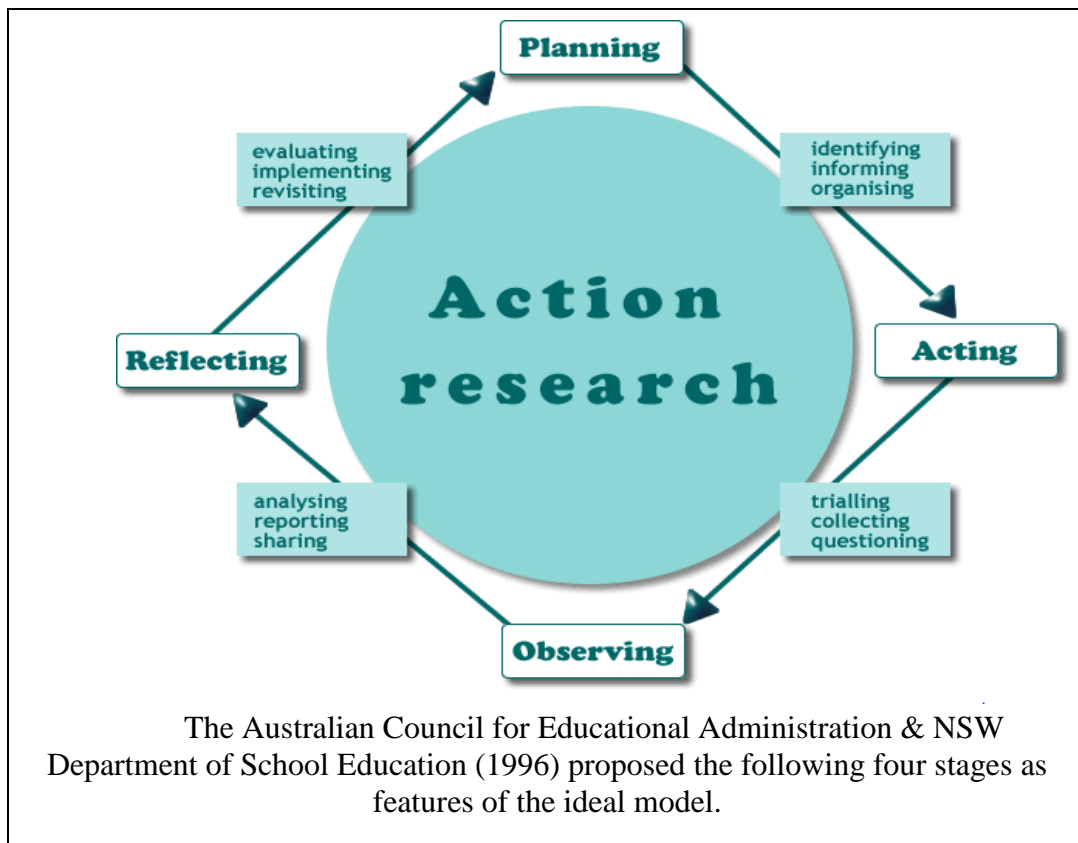
### **3.2 Action research**

This current study also employs action research. Participants systematically and carefully examine their own educational practice in a process. The central goal of action research is positive educational changes. Action research integrates teaching actions, as part of a teacher's normal daily practice at the same time is a reflective process that alternates between plan implementation and critical reflection; include flexible methods, data and interpretation. Those are refined in the light of the understanding gained during the research process. Therefore, action research activates a process designed to generate change in small steps, it is a cyclical and collaborative process because it involves a number of cycles with each clarifying issue leading to a deeper understanding and more outcomes that are meaningful.

In action research, teachers seek solutions to problems of classroom management, instructional strategies, use of materials, or student learning. We hypothesize that by using extra material, students will not only improve their reading and writing skills, but they will be autonomous in their knowledge process. With this research, we test this hypothesis. In an educational context, teachers have to be very responsible and should be reflective, because the aim of the research activity is to improve the social context. Some prominent researchers (Whitehead, 1999; Eliot, 1991; Kemmis, 1980) define the important

characteristics of action research as inclusive, collaborative and democratic. Moreover, it is a learning process and it is critical and transformative.

Indeed, action research promotes the development of teaching. Stenhouse (1975) advocated that, “Curriculum research and development ought to belong to the teacher, according with Stenhouse who was most adamant that ‘it is not enough that teachers’ work should be studied, they need to study it themselves” (p. 143).



*Figure # 3* Action Research a guide for associate lecturers

According to figure 3, we use not only the four principal concepts of action research, but also the concepts of self-management and personal skills, such as flexibility and self-appraisal. These ones allow us to adapt to different situations into the classroom

and to allow them to apply the reading and writing skills to different areas. Thus, we can interact with learners at different levels according to their age and the knowledge process.

The action research cycle includes planning, action, monitoring and reflection. By using an autonomous learning process, we start to develop learner's skills such as reading and writing. The students complete reading and writing exercises in the workbook. The idea is that learners resolve questions in written after reading. According to the results of these exercises, we anticipate problems, review or adjust plans. If it is necessary to change something according with the results. As we become more involved with the research, we can find hard to detach one element of the process from another, something call "knowing-in-action is use by researches and monitoring also will take place as action proceeds". (Schon 1983, p. 21). Following, we explained the action-research process we followed for our implementation:

- **Planning:** In this stage, researchers identify the issue to change after looking elsewhere for information. Similar projects may be useful, as might professional reading. In this stage, we also developed the questions and research methods to use, and a plan related to the specific environment. In the school setting, this could involve personnel, budgets and the use of outside agencies. At the beginning of our research, we identified the population, setting and some issues that did not allow students to improve their languages skills. We looked for similar projects in order to help us to drive our investigation according to the research question. We looked for the researches methods more appropriates for our research.

- **Acting:** This stage is for trialing the change following a plan, collecting and compiling evidence and questioning the process and making changes as required. After planning, we collected data and applied the workbook in the real context.
- **Observing:** This stage stands for analyzing the evidence and collating the findings, and then discussing the findings with co-researchers and /or colleagues for the interpretation. After that, it is necessary writing the report and sharing your findings with stakeholders and peers. We analyzed the evidence taken from used instruments such as; pre-test and posttest, pre survey and post survey, workbook, observation journals and interview.
- **Reflecting:** This process starts when the research evaluating the first cycle of the process, after it is necessary implementing the findings or new strategy and revisiting the process. We revisiting the process and making the conclusions.

In this process, we contemplate the students' past experiences to consider their consequences. In the classes, we start to ask learners about their feelings, about English class or their real life. It is very important to know about students' need or interests. We ask to students how much they like the subject (English), and what kind of things they prefer to do in class. We think it is very important engage the students and increase their interest in English learning.

According to action research, we realized that the students never practice what they have learned in class when the class has finished. Thus, we implement an extra material that ASE does not give them. One that has not already been answered is why the students are not be able to be autonomous without teachers' help , the teachers' idea is to focus on

that many people do not have the opportunity to use the technology to practice foreign language in order to improve language skills.

We first identified what the principal reasons for the students not to be autonomous were. We used different instruments to collect data before implementing specific strategies that allowed the students to improve reading and writing skills. Then, we designed a plan of action to develop and implement. The main idea is to implement an extra material, a workbook that the teachers could implement inside and outside of the classroom.

It is very important to collect data in order to define the best strategy for the students to be autonomous and improve reading and writing skills. We collect data by using a journal. Each class teacher writes the types of problems they can see during the class, what kind of questions students do and the principal problem against autonomy.

We corroborate data by using questionnaire, surveys and observation journal, and then we compare the results from the beginning of the semester, during the semester, and at the end. It is very important for us to get different perspectives from students, parents, and other staff.

We interview students in order to know what they think about English and the opportunity to learn it. We also inquire for the importance of reading and writing skills in a learning process for the students' life. Following the action research process, we organize and analyze the data, it is necessary to organize data to compare the results and to prove the hypothesis.

### **3.3 Setting**

The institution is located in the northeast of Bogota, in Quirigua neighborhood. There are two locations to serve English courses. The headquarter “A” where teens and adults are situated. The levels of the classes are basic, intermediate, advanced and conversational level. In headquarter “B”, children under 14 ages are, the levels are basic and intermediate.

The institution has different classrooms for English courses, each classroom has about 20 students, and they are divided according to the English level and their ages. Most classrooms have two teachers who teach English. The children courses have an extra teacher to support class activities.

### **3.4 Population**

Our practice focused on the basic level Teenagers. This classroom is composed of 30 students, we have 20 females, between 14 and 19 years old, and 10 males between 14 and 18 years old. Their English level is basic. Most of the students already have finished the school; some of them are working in office time and studying at night.

The investigation took place in Bogota – Colombia. The classroom was composed of people from different social – economic context; most of the learners lived near to the school and knew each other. The most of them studied in the same high school and lived in the same neighborhood. Some of the students almost finish the secondary process and they wanted to reinforce their English level in order to figure English process out and improve it. Learners were proficient to get vocabulary and improve English level even though they took the class only once per week.

### 3.5 Data collection instruments

We used both qualitative and quantitative methods to derive evidence of the hypothesis planted. How the workbook fostered autonomous learning on English reading and writing skills of basic level students at ASE. After we had identified the problem, we started to implement the strategies to help students to improve their English level. The important part of teachers-researches process was to collect and organize data, during the completely English level process.

For this study, we applied the following data collection instruments:

1. Pre-test and Post-test
2. Pre survey and Post survey
3. Workbook
4. Observation Journals
5. Interviews

#### 1. Pre and Post test

**Pre-test:** it is a preliminary test administered to determine a student's baseline knowledge or preparedness for an educational experience or course of study. In this study, we used this instrument to determine the knowledge level at the beginning of the English course. At the beginning of the English course, we applied a pretest. It is an exam in which the students answer questions, and read, complete, or fill texts according to readings. The pretest (See Appendix 5 ) was designed by the teacher- researches according to the Common European Framework - reference level A1 (Breakthrough or beginner). In this pre- test, the students should demonstrate that they can understand sentences and frequently

used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). The students can communicate in simple present tense and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters and they can describe his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

**Post-test:** It is a test following one or several interventions in order to evaluate level of capability or achievement of a life habit. This is a test given after a lesson or a period of instruction to determine what the students have learned. We applied the post- test and observed the students 'learning process, After that and before students finished the semester, we applied the post- test (See Appendix 6) in order to evaluate students process by comparing both pre and post test results. We then determined if the students have had any significant improvement since they started the course until the end of it.

## 2. Survey Questionnaire

Surveys are particularly useful to find small amounts of information from a wider selection of people in the hopes of making a general claim. Surveys can contain quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (written answers/descriptions) data. (Driscoll, 2011). Surveys are the main data collection instrument in this study to yield quantitative data. In our research, data is usually collected using questionnaires. The questionnaire may be self-administered, posted or presented in an interview format. A questionnaire may include checklists, attitude scales, projective techniques, rating scales and a variety of other research methods.

**Pre survey:** We applied a pre-survey (Appendix 4) to find out the first students 'perceptions towards the use of the workbook. We administered this instrument at the beginning of the practicum.

**Post-survey:** We applied a post-survey (Appendix 4) was applied to find out the students 'perceptions towards the use of the workbook. We applied this instrument at the end of the practicum in order to compare the first perceptions about the use of the workbook with the last ones.

Our pre and post survey questionnaire (See Appendix 3 & 4) take into account the factors such of impersonal questions and consistent response methods. Whenever possible, sequence questions from the general to the specific. In our collecting data, we employed close-ended questions; for this reason, we try to develop exhaustive and mutually exclusive response alternatives and make the questions as easy to answer as possible, using very clear definitions (Busha and Harter, 1980, p. 98).

There are two main types of questions, *open and closed*. Open questions are those that afford the respondent an opportunity to speak his mind. Open response may allow graphic examples, illustrative quotes, and generally provide some unanticipated data. Closed questions are easier to answer, process, and analyze. They are mostly 'yes' or 'no' answer but in our case, we implemented rating scale as never (0%), seldom (25%), sometimes (50%), usually (75%) and always (100%) for our students to answer, without provision for the respondent giving his explanation.

Teachers-researches implemented the questionnaire asking the learners closed-ended questions. Our questionnaire focuses on questions about the process of English language acquisition but focused on autonomous learning.

### **3. Workbook**

Barry and King (1997) explain that a workbook is an administrative requirement in a school. They say that head teachers or school directors are able to assess the work of the teacher as well as that of the students and suggest ways of reinforcing the strengths and weaknesses. We implemented a workbook as an instrument to observe how can the use of a workbook foster autonomous learning and to develop writing and reading skill during activities. In our classes, the use of the workbook let us deliver the classes in a better way. In all of language features that we explained to our students, we used the workbook and its explanations, most of them with images, examples, and activities about the specific language feature.

The workbook is composed by eleven units that conform the book plan. Each unity is divided in four items, the first one is grammar topic, the second is communicative function, the third reading and writing and the fourth item is vocabulary. The workbook is very colorful and has many graphics; it has exercises such as fill in the gaps, describing, short readings, and exercises to complete (See Appendix 10).

According to the layout of the workbook, we always explained the language feature based on the workbook. After, the students had to do the exercises in the workbook according to the explanations given by the teachers. We normally ended the class by

assigning task from the workbook for the students' self-directed work at home. The next class, we checked the homework and continued working with the workbook. If it was necessary, the teachers included more activities from the same unit to reinforce the language features and grammar.

#### **4. Class Observation Journals**

According to Driscoll (2011), observation journals include observing and measuring the world around, including observations of people and other measurable events. This method allows us to identify clearly the students' needs. If you are observing people, you can choose between two common ways to observe participant observation and unobtrusive observation. Participant observation is a common method within ethnographic research in sociology and anthropology. In this kind of observation, a researcher may interact with participants and become part of their community.

During the implementation, we kept observation journals that detailed how the workbook was used in class for as individual and group work as a supplementary material for them to practice the language features learned in class. We wrote four observation journals (See Appendix 2) throughout the observation stage. The notes describe students' behavior, and capture details such as nonverbal information, interactions among participants, interaction between teachers-students, and participation in class that can be useful in our research. In the research the observers are the same teachers, we can have direct contact and be immersed in the research environment.

## 5. Interview:

Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. The interviewer can pursue in -depth information around the topic. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, e.g., to further investigate their responses (Driscoll, 2011).

In our research, we decided to apply *structured interview* (See appendix 7) because it fits more to our research. Structured interviews are characterized because all the students are asked the same questions with the same wording and in the same sequence. Each respondent or student answered exactly the same set of questions in the interview. Another characteristic is that questions are usually very specific with a fixed range of answers. This type of question is defined as closed, closed ended, pre-coded, or fixed choice questions. (Bryman, 2001).

At the same time, the advantages of structured interviews are that the teacher can prepare a set of questions in advance to ask the participants, and without additional questions or interaction with the participants. Therefore, interviewers or teachers can have more control and organization over the interview, consequently, there is a common format, which makes it easier to analyze code and compare data. In addition, according to Bryman (2001), a detailed interview guide can permit inexperienced researchers to do a structured interview. Furthermore, the structured in our research is ideal for the following situations 1. The students are young learners and they are not very interactive, two. The participants lack knowledge, opinions and experiences in English learning. The above-mentioned characteristics match our learners in the practicum.

### **3.6 Ethical Concern**

According to the National Statement on Ethical conduct in human research, 2007 (updated may 2013) researchers are expected to obtain informed consent for people to participate in research and for use of the information collected. Wherever possible, the value of the data to the wider research community should be taken into account during the planning process and consent forms designed accordingly, as should data preservation and longer-term use. At a minimum, consent forms should not preclude data sharing, such as by promising to destroy data unnecessarily. Researchers should one. Inform participants how research data will be stored, preserved and used in the long-term. 2. Inform participants how confidentiality will be maintained, e.g. by anonymizing data 3. Obtain informed consent, either written or verbal, for data sharing

We administer an ethical consent form (See Appendix 1). ASE has a group of students, mostly minors, to conduct the research project. It was necessary that the students attend to English classes. During the project required taking some videos and photographs, and conducting surveys and questionnaires. The form gave students the option to do not participate in the process.

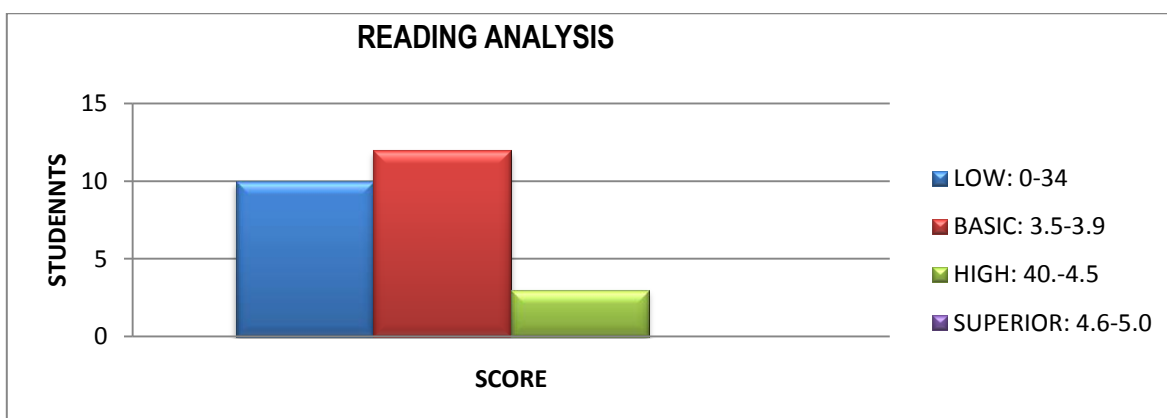
## Chapter Four

### 4. Data Analysis and Results

#### 4.1 Pre-test and Post test results

##### 4.1.1 Pre-test Results

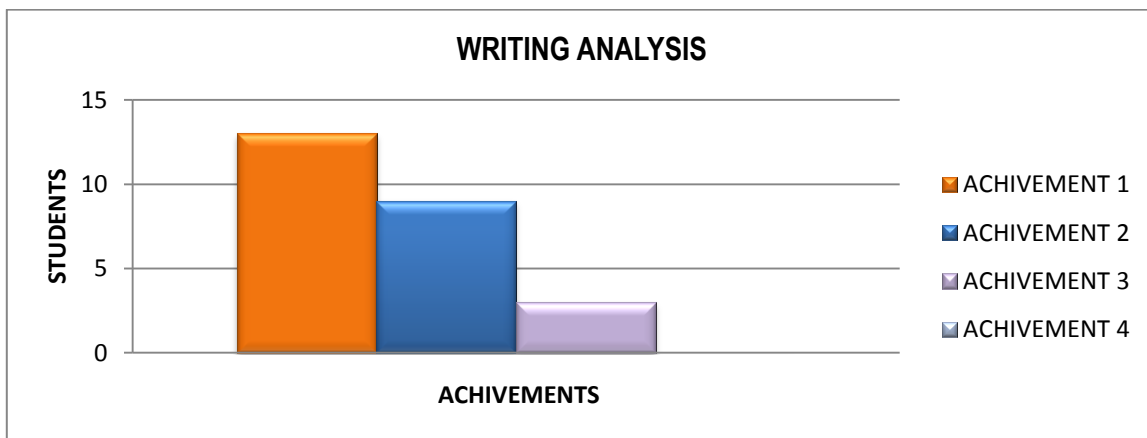
We applied the pre-test (See Appendix 5) in the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester, to 25 students who enrolled in the basic level 1. The purpose of this pre-test is to know the prior knowledge they had about English language on writing and reading skills. This pre-test consists of 2 main sections, the first section focused on reading comprehension, grammar, vocabulary knowledge, The second section focused on writing and constructing short sentences using the words given, taking into account the students' English level. First, we analyze reading section and as a second part, we analyzed writing section according to the criteria in the category. The following graphic shows the relation between students and their gotten scores. The right side the graphic shows the number of students that participate in the pretest and the down side shows the score from low to superior.



Graphic # 1 Pre-test (Reading results)

The reading comprehension result showed that students had some difficulties in vocabulary recognition to understand the meaning of the text. In the second part, most of the students had difficulty because they did not clearly understand how to use the verb to be with the appropriate subject, in the same way with the use of verbs in present tense with third person. (See appendix 5)

In reading section 10 students got low score, 12 students got basic score , 3 students got high score and 0 students got superior score, based on this results teachers can analyze that the most of student got low score in reading skill. The following graphic shows the students' achievements in pre-test writing according to the rubric (see Appendix 9). The right side the graphic shows the number of students and the down side shows the achievements from achievement 1 to achievement 4.



*Graphic # 2 Pre-test (Writing results)*

In the second section, approximately half of the students were still confused in how to express the age because they use “have” instead verb to be and they were not clear about the position of the adjectives in a sentence.

Example:

- "I have eyes brown"
- "I have 19 years old"

Over half of the students had difficulties on how to write a paragraph using verbs in third person in present time. It shows that students' compositions were not clear (see Appendix 5) Most of the students were not able to make sentences in a clear way the most of them use the tense in the wrong form.

About supporting sentences, the majority were not able to provide supporting facts correctly. The results on cohesion and coherence in the writing test showed that the majority of students had difficulties to organize details in a logical order.

Example:

- Me name is Paola
- I call Dayana
- I like color red

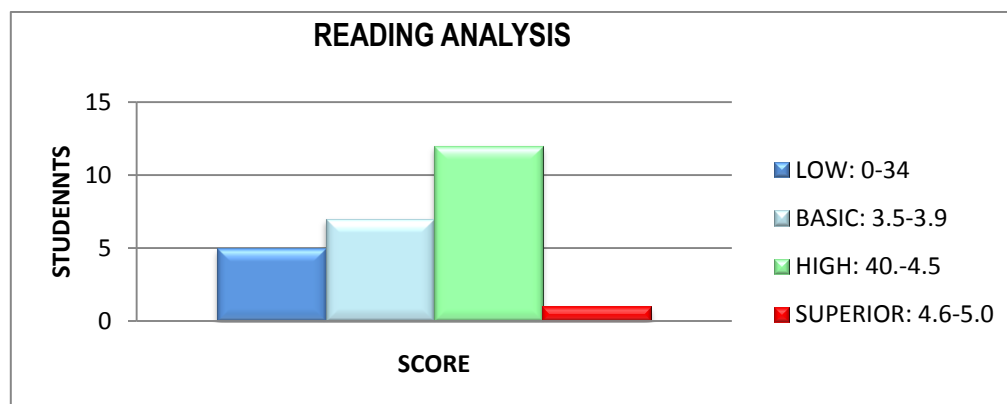
Finally, coherence results showed that the most of sentences that students created are not in a logical way, those difficult to understand the writing.

According to the criteria of the rubrics (see Appendix 9), 13 students met achievement 1. Nine students met the second achievement, 3 students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> achievement and zero students are located in fourth achievement. It shows us that the most of students have difficulties in writing skills.

### 4.1.2 Post-test Results

We applied the post-test (See Appendix 6) in the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. The test was applied to 25 same students who enrolled in the basic level 1 to analyze and determine the number of students had improved during the course and if the workbook, as a tool in class and at home allowed them to improve reading and writing skills .

This post-test consists of two main sections, the first section focuses on reading comprehension, grammar, vocabulary knowledge. The second section is about writing and constructing short sentences using the words given, taking into account the students' English level. First, we analyzed reading section. Later we analyzed writing section according to the criteria in the category. The following graphic shows the relation between students and their gotten scores. The right side the graphic shows the number of students that participate in the posttest and the down side shows the score from low to superior.

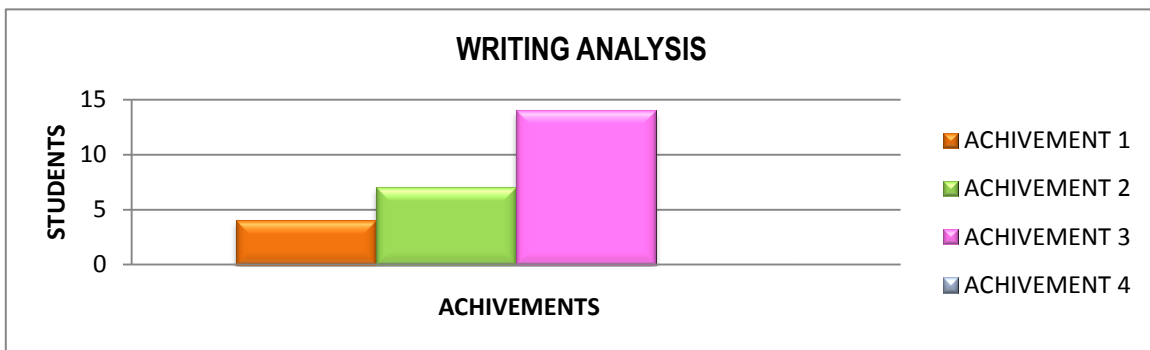


*Graphic # 3* Post-test (Reading results)

The reading comprehension result showed that students got better results in reading skill because they understood the meaning of the most of the vocabulary. They understood

in a better way the verb “to be” and how to use this verb with the appropriate subject and at the same time students improved in the use of verbs in present tense with third person. In this way, give a more complete sense of reading

In reading section, five students got low score, seven students got basic score, 12 students got high score and one students got superior score. We could realize the majority of students got a grade over four that means that the student improve in reading skill in contrast to pre-test results. The following graphic shows the students’ achievements in post-test writing according to the rubric (see Appendix 9). The right side the graphic shows the number of students and the down side shows the achievements from achievement 1 to achievement 4.



*Graphic # 4 Post-test (writing results)*

According to the rubrics that contain grading criteria, the students ‘compositions were clear .Most of the students were able to make sentences in a clear way the most of them use the tense in the correct form. About supporting sentences, the majority were able to provide supporting facts correctly. The results on cohesion and coherence in the writing test showed that the majority of students were able to organize details in a logical order.

Finally, results of coherence showed that the majority of students 'sentences sound natural and in a logical way, those are easy to understand, but other sentences are not clear enough.

According to the achievements stated on the rubrics, four students met the first achievement, seven students met the second achievement, 12 students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> achievement and zero students are in fourth achievement. It shows us that the most of students are located in the third achievement.

Based on pre-test and post-test results we can conclude that most of the students have improved their reading and writing skills. That means that the use of workbook allowed students to get more vocabulary, to clarify grammatical issues such as coherence, the correct use of the tense and reading comprehension. However, the results in the pre-test were not as good as that evidenced a lack of vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, coherence and cohesion that did not allow it to generate good results in reading and writing skills. However, in the post-test students showed better results, as they were able to write short sentences coherently and with cohesion, Moreover, they included a good use of vocabulary and grammar that allowed better understanding of the text when it is written or read.

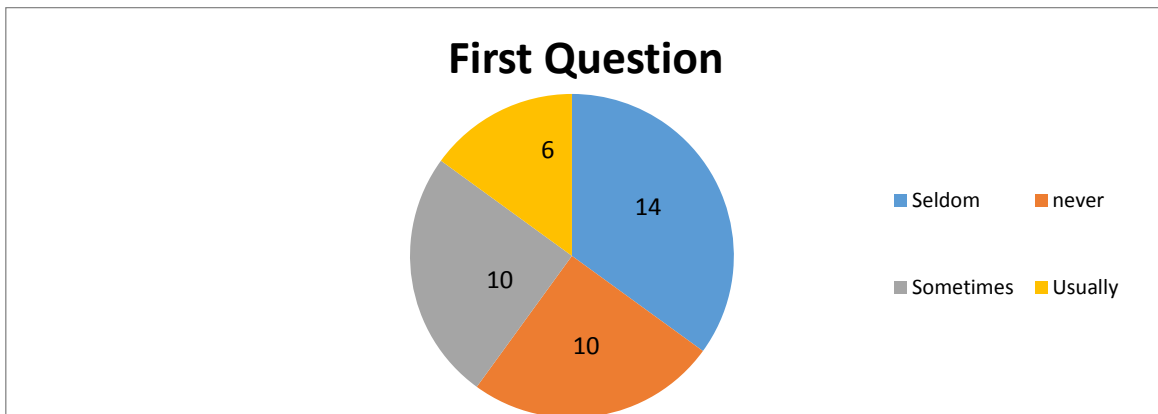
#### **4.2 Pre-Survey and Post survey Questionnaire Results**

Two questionnaires were applied before and after the implementation stage. We applied the pre-survey questionnaire (See Appendix 3) in the diagnostic stage as needs analysis. The purpose is to find out the students' attitudes, learning styles and study habits towards English learning. We applied the post survey-questionnaire (see Appendix 4) after the implementation stage to find out whether students' learning attitudes and habits have

changed because of the implementation of the workbook. Forty students answered the both survey questionnaires.

#### 4.2.1 Pre-survey Questionnaire Results

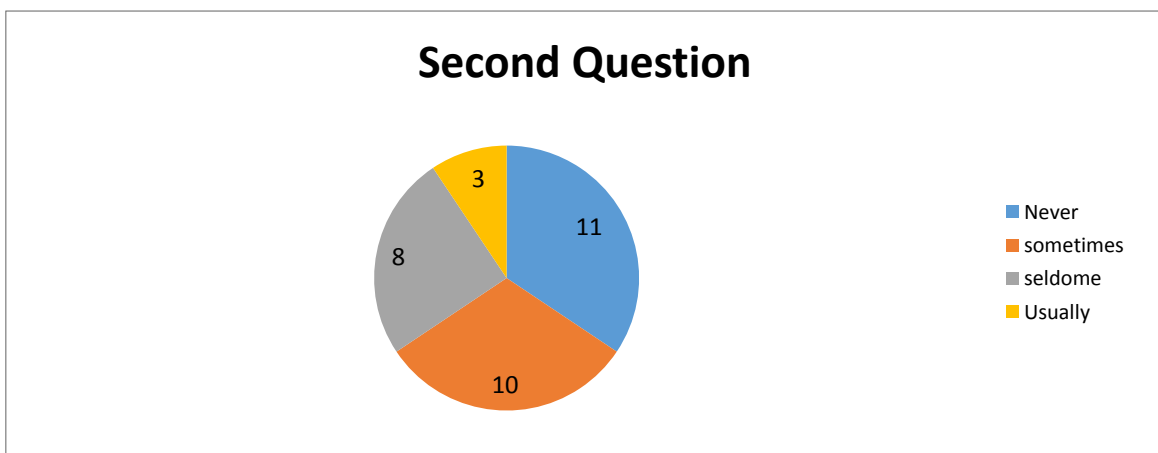
##### 1. Do you review at home what you learned in your English classes?



*Graphic # 5* First Question Pre-Survey Analysis

The results show that most students never really reviewed the class material at home. For this reason, we decided to use the workbook in class and as homework to engage the students to review the language features learned in class.

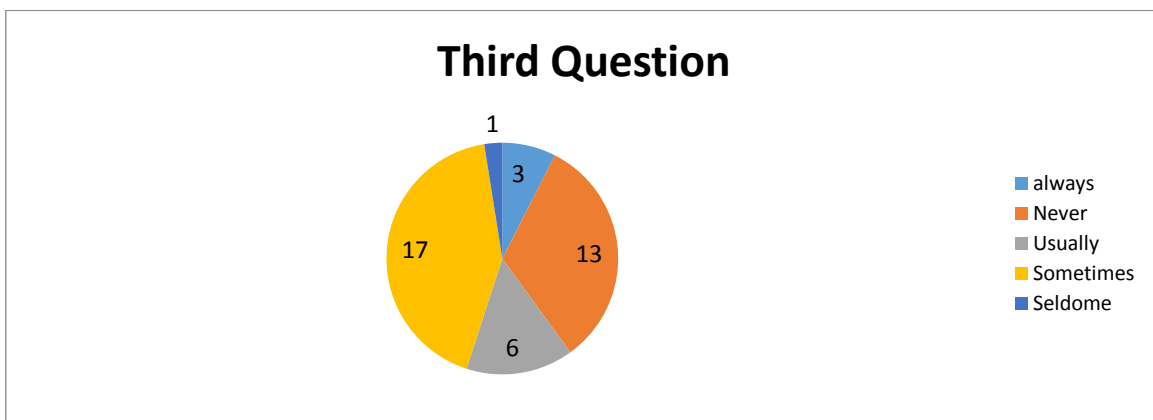
##### 2. Do you spend enough time studying English at Home?



*Graphic # 6. Second Question Pre-Survey Questionnaire Analysis*

The majority of students responded that they never spend enough time studying English at Home. This is another reason we decided to use the workbook to increase the time that students spend studying English at home.

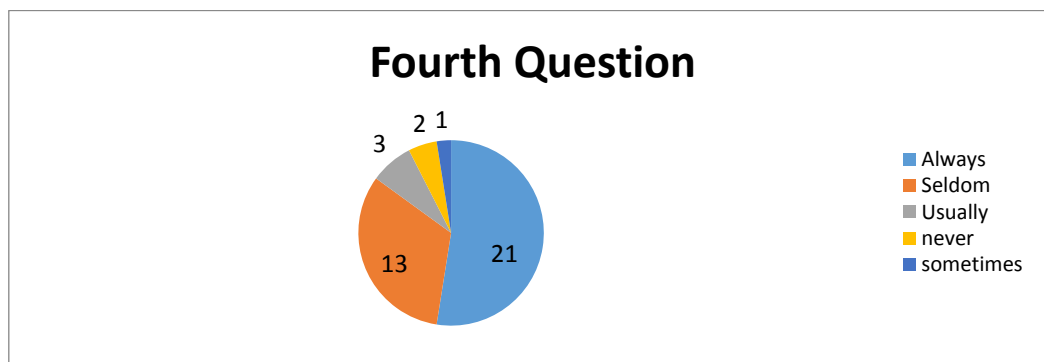
3. Do you do your English homework?



*Graphic # 7. Third Question Pre-Survey Questionnaire Analysis*

The graph show us that the majority of students responded that they sometimes do their homework. This pushed us to use the workbook in class and home, in order to engage the students to develop the exercises and do their homework.

4. Do you need help at home to do English homework?

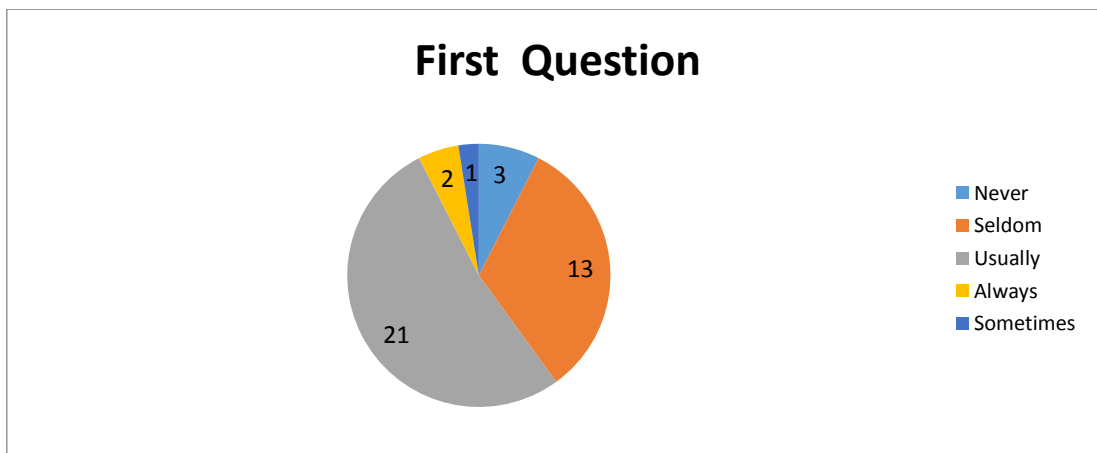


*Graphic # 8. Fourth Question Pre-Survey Questionnaire Analysis*

The majority of students responded that they always (21) needed help at home to do homework. Taking into account these results, we decided to use the workbook at home in order to help students to do their homework by their own. This tool could allow them to practice reading and writing exercises to contribute to do homework exercises.

#### 4.2.2 Post-survey Questionnaire results

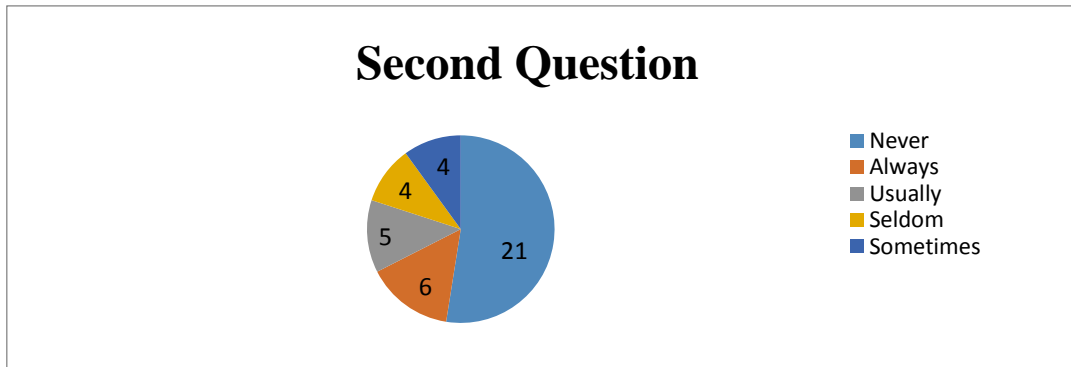
1. Do you do the workbook exercises independently as assigned by the teachers as homework?



*Graphic # 9. First Question Post-Survey Questionnaire Analysis*

The majority of students responded that they usually do the workbook exercises. We decided that a workbook could help with in-class activities to foster students' autonomy habits.

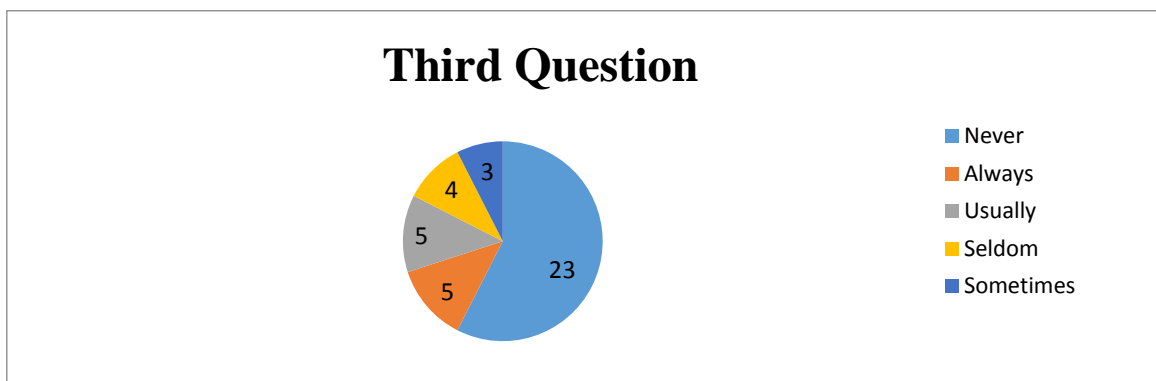
2. Do you revise the language features that you learned in class by doing the exercises in the workbook?



*Graphic # 10. Second Question Post-Survey Questionnaire Analysis*

The majority of students responded that they always revise the language features learned in class by doing the exercises in the workbook. Thus, we concluded that by using the workbook, the students could do the exercises as well as practice the language features that they had learned in class.

3. Do you do the reading and writing exercises in the workbook as instructed by the teachers?



*Graphic # 11* Third Question Post-Survey Questionnaire Analysis

The majority of students responded that they always do the reading and writing exercises in the workbook as instructed by the teachers. Based on this data, we inferred that by using the workbook and with our instructions, the students could do the reading and writing exercises.

#### **4.3 Data Coding Scheme**

According to Creswell (2011) and Miles & Huberman (1984), data analysis is an eclectic process, this process occurs simultaneously and iteratively with data collection, data interpretation and report writing. The coding procedure reduces information to themes and categories (Tesch, 1990). “A systematic way in which to condense extensive data sets into smaller analyzable units through the creation of categories and concepts derived from the data. The process by which verbal data are converted into variables and categories of variables using numbers, so that the data can be entered into computers for analysis.” (Tesch, 1990, p. 142-145). We applied this categorization to get the results from the interview, and observation journal.

### 4.3.1 Data Codification

According to Bourque (2004) when testing a hypothesis (deductive), categories and codes can be developed before data is collected. When generating a theory (inductive), categories and codes are generated after examining the collected data. Most of the instruments that we used during the process should be analyze in order to prove the hypothesis. In this project, we hold our own code before collecting data. Those codes were taken from the interview questions and observation journal most important aspects and the sub categories were taken from the students' answers. Those codes are dividing into two groups, categories and subcategories, those are:

*Table # 3 Categories and subcategories*

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORIES
<b>Independent learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ At home</li> <li>➤ In class</li> <li>➤ Both</li> </ul>
<b>Revising language features learnt in class</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Comprehensible instructions</li> <li>➤ Exercises not too difficult</li> <li>➤ Covers all the language features taught in class</li> </ul>
<b>Vocabulary acquisition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Learn more vocabulary words</li> <li>➤ Understand the meaning of new words</li> <li>➤ Put new words in use in exercise</li> </ul>
<b>Reading and writing skill</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Improving reading comprehension</li> <li>➤ Able to write correct sentences</li> </ul>

### 4.3.2 Levels of coding

According to Strauss, A. and J. Corbin (2004) it exist three steps or levels to code.

- Open: In this case, it is necessary that the research break down, compare, and categorize data.
- Axial : The research have to make connections between categories after open coding
- Selective: The final process is to select the core category, relate it to other categories, confirm, and explain those relationships.

In our research implemented these levels of coding. To apply the first step was necessary to read and check the interviews and observation journals in order to take out the categories. In the second step, we related the categories with our research question and finally we take the most common students' answer in order to create the sub categories and related each other. We gave a specific name as a code to each student's interview, in order to organize each one and get the information in an easier way. As an example, we named a student with her or his first name and included the literal answer in the categories box (See table # 2). After that process, we broke the information down, compare with other one and according to that; they located the information in each category.

The subcategories were an important part of the classification process; each sub category contained three different aspects about its independent one. Each student's answer was classified inside them. Another important part of the teacher- researchers coding process was to include the aims to evaluate students as subcategories too in order to determine the relationship between categories, subcategories and illustrations (see table # 2). In the following table, we can find four categories that were taken from the interview question and observation journals out. Each category contains two or three sub categories

that were taken from student's answers .There is another item called “ illustration” that contain real examples.

#### 4.4 Observation journals and interview results

Table # 2 *Use of a workbook*

<b>Categories</b>	autonomous learning	Revising language features learnt in class	Vocabulary acquisition	Reading & writing skill
<b>Subcategories</b>	At home (6)	comprehensible instructions (4)	Learn more vocabulary words ( 4)	Improving reading comprehension(4)
	In class (3)	Exercises not too difficult (3)	Understand the meanings of new words (2)	Able to write correct sentences (6)
	Both (1)	Covers all the language features taught in class (3)	Put new words in use in exercises (4)	
<b>Illustrations</b>	Student (Sofia) “ Un poco, aunque me siento insegura , el workbook me permitio repasar en clase y en mi casa”	Student (Mafe) Si, los temas que nosotros hemos aprendido en clase y los ejercicios del workbook son los mismos. yo considero que es una buena forma de repasar los temas	Student (Mari) “Sí, yo pienso que los ejercicios de lectura del workbook me ayudaron a entender las palabras que no entendía y obtener nuevo vocabulario”.	Student (Pipe) “El workbook me ayuda a mejorar un poquito las habilidades de escritura y lectura”

(The number in the brackets refers to the number of times the effect was mentioned)

We cross-examined the data gathered in observation journals as well as interview. Ten students participated in the interview. To facilitate both data analysis and the presentation of the results, we assigned each of the students an individual label based on the first letter of their first name. The categories demonstrated that the majority of students participated in the interview worked independently at home with teachers' researches guidance, but less than half only worked during the class and did not do the homework the most of the times. The results also showed that the students perceived the workbook to be helpful in helping them revise the languages features learnt in class due to the comprehensible instructions and the fact that the exercises in the workbook were not too difficult for the students to do; and it covers all the language features taught in class. The following excerpts are the students' responses in their own words.

Extract one (Student - Sofia, 18 Apr 2013): *“Un poco, aunque me siento insegura, el workbook me permitio repasar en clase y en mi casa.”*

Extract two (Student-Mafe, 18 Apr 2013): *“Si, los temas que nosotros hemos aprendido en clase y los ejercicios del workbook son los mismos. yo considero que es una buena forma de repasar los temas.”*

Furthermore, the students answered that they learned more vocabulary words during this process; they understood the meaning of new words and used them to complete the workbook exercises.

Extract three (Student-Mari, Apr 2013): *“Sí, yo pienso que los ejercicios de lectura del workbook me ayudaron a entender las palabras que no entendía y obtener nuevo vocabulario.”*

In terms of the last category -Reading and Writing skill, the students expressed that the workbook helped them improve reading comprehension and helped them write correct sentences in English. In the interview, student P reported:

Extract four (Pipe, Apr 18, 2013): *“El workbook me ayuda a mejorar un poquito las habilidades de escritura y lectura.”*

This was supported by the observation journals; the following is one example taken from the observation journal:

*“Researchers started to work with the workbook, students worked in page 10, and they developed four exercises... “ “...Teachers explained them how to use the verb to be to introduce themselves or to introduce somebody else, teachers explained the importance of verb to be and its correct use, teachers concluded that these language feature was clear”*

## Chapter Five

### 5. Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

#### 5.1 Conclusions

The experience in ASE institution allowed us to create objectives as a guide to develop our project and draw conclusion of our implementation. First, according to the results of the pre-test and post-test, the students began the English course with a very basic level. When the course ended, we noticed that, with the application of the post-test, the results reflected significant progress in reading and writing skills made during the course. We as a teachers attributed these results to the work with the workbook and by the teacher's encouragement to use the workbook inside and outside the classroom.

In addition, we analyzed the increase of the students' autonomous learning and found that the results of the interview reflected that the students did not work alone without the teacher's supervision in the classroom nor at home with an adult supervision. However, the students are self-directed learners, which is an important part of the process of autonomy. They got not completely autonomous about their own learning process but they were able to take own decisions associated with it. In our case, the students took the decision of doing or not the workbook exercises and working on them in class. According to Hiemstra, R. (1994), as a self-directed learner, the student worked in groups and improved their language level more than working alone. We can noticed that the majority of the students in the interview answers did not consider themselves as autonomous learners and accepted that they needed teachers, friends or relatives' help. Bakken (2002) mentions that this behavior happens because adolescents develop self-governance in some

situations but in some cases they do not feel able to do their own task without any power over them, this usually occurs only in academic aspects and home tasks.

Another important finding is that the workbook is an ideal tool to motivate and increase the students' interest in learning a foreign language. The results demonstrated that the students improved their reading and writing skills with the workbook., It helped them develop these skills, by doing the exercises such as filling the gaps, completing a story, describing, comparing and organize sentences which provided more practice (See appendix 5).

The purpose of the study was to identify how we could improve students' writing and reading skills and to increase their autonomous learning by using a workbook. During the process, we helped the students to be more conscious about their own learning process to become autonomous but through self-directed learning. The research results demonstrated the workbook had a positive effect over student's learning process. The students were more engaged when they had to work on their own. The students showed significant progress according to pretest and posttest results. As teacher- researchers, we noticed that the students felt more comfortable with a workbook as a class tool, according to students' answers in the interview. They felt that using the workbook as a tool supported them during the learning process allowing them to practice the language features at home and during the class.

Those instruments showed that the workbook exercises helped them to construct more complex sentences related to images, objects, and actions. Most of the students knew

some vocabulary in English before starting the process. With the help of the workbook, the students recognized vocabulary and used it in a simple sentence. We can also conclude that engagement plays an important role in the development of the exercises of the workbook. According to the observation journals, we invited the students to work on the exercises of the workbook and at the same time clarify their doubts. We observed that the students liked to do exercises in the workbook because they expressed that the workbook helped them practice and get their goals.

## **5.2 Pedagogical Implications**

The pedagogical implications from the research findings are important in helping create a deeper perspective about how some teaching and learning materials, such as a workbook, can help foster autonomous learning and improve language skills in the learning process of a foreign language. For many years, people have used diaries and evaluation sheets to help students in the learning process. Learning is an internalized form of a formerly social activity, and a learner can realize his/her potential through the interaction to receive support from other persons such as parents, teachers, and peers. (Vygotsky, 1978). During a pedagogical intervention, teachers should help themselves by using didactic tools; the findings of this project demonstrate that the workbook allowed students to practice and reinforce the language features learned in class.

This type of tool have many benefits to the teachers and at the same time to the students such us:

- Workbook will be beneficial for students to get the information that teacher is trying to explain
- Workbook can be used in any English level
- Workbook help to understand easily language feature.
- Teachers can work with the workbook following the curriculum at the same time.
- Workbook is didactic and easy to understand
- Workbook contain reading and writing exercises.
- Students can work in the workbook inside the class and at home.

It is important to keep in mind the population, the resources and the levels of the students when trying to implement this tool.

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**Appendix 1: Consent Form**

Bogotá, D.C. 9 de Febrero de 2013

Nivel: Básico I jóvenes  
 ASE. Alianza Social Educativa  
 La Ciudad.  
 Señores

Respetados Padres de Familia o Acudientes:

La Alianza Social Educativa ha firmado un convenio con la Universidad de la Salle para brindar apoyo a las clases de inglés en los jóvenes de la institución; por esta razón, y con el fin de mejorar el proceso de los estudiantes, los practicantes de la universidad de la Salle, realizarán un proyecto de investigación, por lo cual quisiéramos contar con su aprobación para que sus hijos e hijas participen en este proyecto y les permita a estos investigadores recolectar toda la información necesaria para este proyecto, por cuanto es necesario entrevistar, fotografiar o grabar las sesiones de clase de inglés de sus hijos e hijas. Esta información será exclusivamente usada para demostrar los resultados de la implementación.

Su aceptación inicial de la participación en el proyecto no implica permanencia, por lo que tanto su hijo o hija son libres de retirarse de él en cualquier momento. Además, cabe señalar que esto no tendrá ningún efecto negativo sobre sus notas.

Toda la información recolectada será tratada con la responsabilidad ética y profesional que garantice la protección de sus derechos. Por ello, los nombres, los rostros y todos los demás elementos serán anónimos, usados estrictamente con este fin y no serán dados a terceros.

Este proyecto de investigación cuenta con el aval de ASE, así que, en caso de que requiera información adicional, no dude en comunicarse con la Coordinación.

**POR FAVOR CONSERVE EL TEXTO COMPLETO Y DEVUELVA ESTE DESPREDIBLE FIRMADO.**

✂-----

Yo \_\_\_\_\_ padre, madre de familia o acudiente de la o el

Estudiante \_\_\_\_\_ AUTORIZO  NO AUTORIZO   
que mi hijo (a) participe en el proyecto de investigación.

**Appendix 2: Observation Journal**

DATE	ISSUES/ QUESTION	ACTION	REFLECTION
<p>The class was observed on Saturday, March 9<sup>TH</sup> , 2013</p>		<p>Teacher started the class asking to the students about the meaning of adjectives and most of them answer correctly in Spanish, then, students started to an activity in page 18 , first they had to recognized the physical appearance adjectives and after describe a classmate. The work with the students in this part was not complicate but the most common difficulty in writing part was the position of the adjective in a sentence, student example: <i>she has eyes black</i>. However, the topic was clear after the teacher's feedback. They correct their mistakes. Apart from physical appearance adjectives, students practiced feeling or qualities of a subject, page 19 of workbook and in this part the students had to describe themselves using the adjectives and they had some difficulties in redaction part and in the use of verb to be. We saw that when they write individually they have more redaction problems. At the end of the workday teachers did a dynamic activity with a ball outside the classroom to practice the adjectives seen in class. Finally teacher assigned a task to solve at home.</p>	<p>We as a teachers require that the students apply workbook supported by different forms of activities to improve students' writing and reading proficiency The work book is used as a supplementary materials for student to practice what they have learned take into account the time of the class.</p>

### Appendix 3

#### PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE-SURVEY

Marca con una x de acuerdo a tu propia experiencia.  
(Mark with (x) according to your own experience.)

1. ¿Repasa en casa lo aprendido en clase?  
(Do you review at home what you learned in class?)

Never (0%)	Seldom (25%)	Sometimes (50%)	Usually (75%)	Always (100%)
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2. ¿Dedica el tiempo suficiente para estudiar inglés en casa?  
(Do you spend enough time Studying English at home?)

Never (0%)	Seldom (25%)	Sometimes (50%)	Usually (75%)	Always (100%)
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3. ¿Hace usted sus tareas de Inglés?  
(Do you do your English homework?)

Never (0%)	Seldom (25%)	Sometimes (50%)	Usually (75%)	Always (100%)
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4. ¿Necesita ayuda en casa para hacer sus tareas de Inglés?  
(Do you need help at home to do English homework?)

Never (0%)	Seldom (25%)	Sometimes (50%)	Usually (75%)	Always (100%)
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## Appendix 4

### POST-QUESTIONNAIRE-SURVEY

**Marca con una x de acuerdo a tu propia experiencia.**

**(Mark with (x) according to your own experience.)**

1. ¿Hace los ejercicios del workbook de forma independiente que le son asignados por el profesor como tarea?

(Do you do the workbook exercises independently as assigned by the teachers as homework?)

Never (0%)	Seldom (25%)	Sometimes (50%)	Usually (75%)	Always (100%)

2. Repasa los temas aprendidos en clase haciendo los ejercicios del workbook?

(Do you revise the language features that you learned in class by doing the exercises in the workbook?)

Never (0%)	Seldom (25%)	Sometimes (50%)	Usually (75%)	Always (100%)

3. Hace usted los ejercicios de lectura y escritura del workbook como el maestro indica?

(Do you do the reading and writing exercises in the workbook as instructed by the teachers?)

Never (0%)	Seldom (25%)	Sometimes (50%)	Usually (75%)	Always (100%)





4. Look at the picture and describe it. Use the follow words.

Play sleep sing birds bone read mom book  
Dad juice plant sun girl boy dog drink



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## Appendix 6

### POST –TEST

STUDENT'S NAME : \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1. Organize the story coherently. Put the sentences in the correct order 1 - 4.

### “GOLDLOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS”



\_\_\_\_\_ Goldilocks saw three bowls on the table. She was hungry.

\_\_\_\_\_ One day Goldilocks was walking in the \_\_\_\_\_ forest. She saw a house and knocked on the door. She went inside. Nobody was there.

\_\_\_\_\_ "This porridge is too hot!" "This porridge is too cold!" "This porridge is just right!" Goldilocks ate all the porridge.

\_\_\_\_\_ Once upon a time there was a little girl. Her name was Goldilocks. She had golden hair.

Read and answer the questions:

### A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT



David wants to buy a Christmas present for a very special person, his mother. David's father gives him \$5.00 a week pocket money and David puts \$2.00 a week into his bank account. After three months David takes \$20.00 out of his bank account and goes to the shopping mall. He looks and looks for a perfect gift.

Suddenly he sees a beautiful brooch in the shape of his favourite pet. He says to himself, "My mother loves jewelry, and the brooch costs only \$17.00." He buys the brooch and takes it home. He wraps the present in Christmas paper and places it under the tree. He is very excited and he is looking forward to Christmas morning to see the joy on his mother's face. But when his mother opens the present she screams with fright because she sees a spider.

1. What does David want to buy his Mother?
  - A. a special birthday present
  - B. a Christmas present
  - C. a spider ring
2. Who does David get his money from?
  - A. his pet
  - B. his mother
  - C. his father
3. How much money does David take to the mall?
  - A. \$20.00
  - B. \$5.00
  - C. \$17.00
4. What does David buy his mother?
  - A. a ring
  - B. a brooch
  - C. a spider
5. What does David do with the present when he takes it home?
  - A. he gives it to his mother
  - B. he wraps it in Christmas paper
  - C. he is very excited
6. Why does David's mother scream?
  - A. because the present is beautiful
  - B. because she doesn't like Christmas presents
  - C. because she thinks she sees a real spider
7. Why does David buy a spider brooch?
  - A. spiders are his favourite pet
  - B. he loves Christmas
  - C. to scare his mother
8. Where does David put the present on Christmas Eve?
  - A. under his pillow
  - B. under a spider
  - C. under the Christmas tree

2. Write a paragraph about your daily routine.

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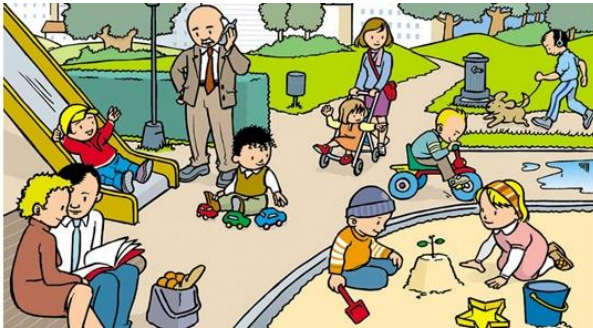
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3. Look at the picture and describe it.



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## Appendix 7

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. ¿Cuáles eran tus expectativas sobre el curso Básico 1 de Inglés?
2. ¿Consideras que se han cumplido tus expectativas respecto al curso? ( Si la respuesta es NO ) ¿ Que se debe mejorar?
3. ¿Te sientes más cómodo al escribir y al leer en inglés al final del semestre? ¿ Por qué?
4. ¿Sientes que tus habilidades de lecto-escritura en ingles han mejorado al final del curso?
5. ¿Consideras el workbook como una herramienta para mejorar tu lectura y escritura en inglés? ¿De qué forma?
6. ¿Sabes que es la autonomía o que representa? ¿Te consideras un estudiante autónomo? Explica.
7. ¿Desarrollar las actividades del workbook es fácil o difícil para ti ? ¿Porque?
8. ¿Piensas que el libro te motiva a leer y escribir en ingles dentro y fuera de clase?
9. ¿Te ha ayudado el libro a repasar los temas vistos en clase? ¿En que forma?

## Appendix 8

### INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

STUDENT?

1-¿Cuáles eran tus expectativas sobre el curso Básico 1 de Inglés?

**What were your expectations for English course Basic 1?**

2-¿Consideras que se han cumplido tus expectativas respecto al curso? ( Si la respuesta es NO ) ¿ Que se debe mejorar?

**Do you consider that your expectations for the English course have been achieved? (If the answer is No) What do you think can be improved?**

3-¿Te sientes más cómodo al escribir y al leer en inglés al final del semestre? ¿ Por qué?

**Do you feel more comfortable when you read and write in English in the end of this semester? Why?**

4. ¿Sientes que tus habilidades de lecto-escritura en ingles han mejorado al final del curso?

**Do you feel your English reading and writing skills have improved at the end of the course? Please elaborate on it.**

5. ¿Consideras el workbook como una herramienta para mejorar tu lectura y escritura en inglés? ¿De qué forma?

**Do you consider the work book as a useful tool to improve writing and Reading skills? In what way?**

6. ¿Sabes que es la autonomía o que representa? ¿Te consideras un estudiante autónomo? Explica.

**Do you know what autonomy means or represents? Do you consider yourself an autonomous learner? Please explain.**

7-¿Desarrollar las actividades del workbook es fácil o difícil para ti ? ¿Porque?

**Do you find the reading and writing exercises easy or difficult for you?. Why?**

8. ¿Piensas que el libro te motiva a leer y escribir en ingles dentro y fuera de clase?

**Do you think the workbook motivates you to read and write in English in class and at home? How?**

9. ¿Te ha ayudado el libro a repasar los temas vistos en clase? ¿En que forma?

**Has the workbook helped you review the language features learned in class? How ? In what way?**



STUDENT: Mari

**1. ¿Cuáles eran tus expectativas sobre el curso Básico 1 de Inglés?**

**What were your expectations for English course Basic 1?**

- ✓ Can learn English to communicate with others and understand what other people say me.

**2. ¿Consideras que se han cumplido tus expectativas respecto al curso? ( Si la respuesta es NO ) ¿ Que se debe mejorar?**

**Do you consider that your expectations for the English course have been achieved? (If the answer is No) What do you think can be improved?**

- ✓ Yes, my expectations have been achived because I have Reinforced my English and many things I did not learn in high school and were not clear.

**3. ¿Te sientes más cómodo al escribir y al leer en inglés al final del semestre? ¿ Por qué?**

**Do you feel more comfortable when you read and write in English in the end of this semester? Why?**

- ✓ I feel a little more comfortable but still is not enough, I think I have more confidence in myself when I read or write.

**4. ¿Sientes que tus habilidades de lecto-escritura en ingles han mejorado al final del curso?**

**Do you feel your English reading and writing skills have improved at the end of the course? Please elaborate on it.**

- ✓ Yes, a little **bit better in those skills** but when I write or read I still feel weaknesses.

**5. ¿Consideras el workbook como una herramienta para mejorar tu lectura y escritura en inglés? ¿De qué forma?**

**Do you consider the work book as a useful tool to improve writing and Reading skills? In what way?**

- ✓ Yes, I think it's a good material, teachers put us to read aloud and it helps us to **improve the pronunciation.** In the writing part I think that also we had used other materials apart from workbook.

6. **¿Sabes que es la autonomía o que representa? ¿Te consideras un estudiante autónomo? Explica.**

**Do you know what autonomy means or represents? Do you consider yourself an autonomous learner? Please explain.**

- ✓ I am not an autonomous student because I always **need help to teachers**, friends or parents.

7. **¿Desarrollar las actividades del workbook es fácil o difícil para ti ? ¿Porque?**

**Do you find the reading and writing exercises easy or difficult for you?. Why?**

- ✓ After explications the most of activities are easy but some of them are difficult too.

8. **¿Piensas que el libro te motiva a leer y escribir en ingles dentro y fuera de clase?**

**Do you think the workbook motivates you to read and write in English in class and at home? How?**

- ✓ I like to fill the work book in my home because some excersice are easy and I like to do the homework that the teacher send us. I don't read in my home because the most of exercises are to complete and not to read.

9. **¿Te ha ayudado el libro a repasar los temas vistos en clase? ¿En que forma?**

**Has the workbook helped you review the language themes learned in class? How ? In what way?**

- ✓ Yes , **the work book help us to review all thing learned in class**. Workbook has a lot of exercises and we can to study from them.

### Appendix 9

#### RUBRICS FOR WRITING TEST

Achievements	4	3	2	1
<b>Content</b>	The response is related to topic with appropriate details and information	Focused on topic main idea supported by some details	Focused on topic main idea supported by few details	The response is not related to the Topic.
<b>Organization</b>	Has beginning, middle and ending sentence.  Uses correct spacing	Has beginning and ending sentence  Spacing is inconsistent	Has beginning or ending sentence  Spacing is not evident	There's no clear order of events in the response
<b>Grammar</b>  -Tense formation.  -Subject-verb agreement.  -Pronouns usage/agreement.  -Word choice/meaning.	No errors in grammar	Few errors in grammar	Some errors in grammar	Many errors in grammar
<b>Sentence construction</b>	Writes a sentence(s) expressing a complete thought with details	Writes a sentence(s) Expressing a complete Thought	Writes sentence in Fragments	/writes random letters/ words in isolation
<b>Mechanics</b>  • Spelling  • Capitalization  • Punctuation	High frequency words spelled correctly  Uses capital letters for beginnings of sentences , names and the word "I"	Beginning and ending sounds are apparent in spelling  Some use of lowercase letters	Beginning sounds are apparent in spelling.  Spelling is random.  Uses all capital letters.	Punctuation not is correct.  Not uses capital letters for beginnings of sentences.

	Few errors in punctuation.	Some errors in punctuation	Numerous errors in Punctuation.	Have lot errors in punctuacion.
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Appendix 10

UNIT
six

There are principal prepositions of place as the drawings show:

LISTEN AND PRACTICE



John's house is **next to** Jane's house



Jane's house is **between** Bill and John's houses.



The gardener is **behind** the pumkins



Bill's house is **next to** Jane's house.



The ball is **in** the box



The ball is **on** the box



The ball is **under** the box

**EXERCISE**



Use prepositions of place to answer the following questions:

What is there on your bed?

On my bed there are some books

What is there under your bed?

Under my bed there is nothing

What is there in front of your house?

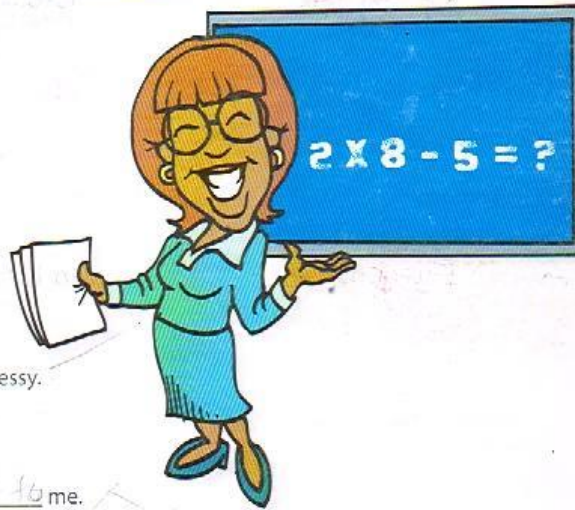
Carlo's house is in front of my house

What is there near your house?

A carwash is near my home

Fill in the blanks with the correct preposition of place:

- a. Do you live in Bogota?
- b. The teacher explains on the board.
- c. I am next Jenny and William.
- d. On my bed there are a lot of things. I am very messy.
- e. She keeps the clothes in the closet.
- f. near my house, there is a little store.
- g. I am in front of the building, so the building is next to me.



In the following text, underline the prepositions and change them for a proper one.

I live in a nice neighborhood. Below my house there is a park. There I love to be in a tree to rest and to take fresh air. I live between two families. On the right the Johnsons and on the left the Smiths. I love to be behind my house because I feel comfortable and safe.

