Public and Private School Students’ Beliefs about Effective Instruction

Arminda Barradas Sánchez
Advisor: Oscar Manuel Narváez Trejo

Xalapa – Enríquez; Ver. Junio del 2013
Table of contents

Abstract

Introduction

1. Context and Focus

2. Literature review

2.1 Overview of studies about teachers’ perceptions

2.2 Overview of studies about learners’ perceptions

3. Methodology

3.1 The study

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 Informal Interview

3.2.2 Observation

3.2.3 Questionnaire

4. Findings

4.1 Data Analysis

4.2 Categories emerging from the data

5. Discussion and Reflections

6. Conclusions and Implications

References

Appendix
Abstract

This study was carried out to discover students’ perceptions about effective instruction in two different contexts (a public and a private preparatory school) and to what extent these perceptions are the same or different. The information was gathered by means of observations, informal interviews and two questionnaires in which students ranked the characteristics of effective education and observation notes.

The participants emphasized that the teacher is the one who plays the main role in the learning process. Students pointed out that in order to receive effective instruction it is necessary to have respectful and committed teachers. Having teachers who bring extra material to facilitate learning, and address the students in a polite form will help students not only to enjoy what they are learning but also to promote students’ engagement to study the L2. However, the results also showed that students from different backgrounds have some beliefs about the target language that are opposite and influence their engagement. Students’ beliefs differed when it came to the importance of learning a foreign language. For some of them, it was extremely important while for the others it was unnecessary as their learning context would not allow them to make use of the target language. Moreover, the results also provided insights into students’ opinions about the characteristics of “good” teachers and they brought into question the importance of having knowledgeable teachers against teachers’ abilities to transmit knowledge.

This study can be used by English teachers from public and private educational systems to get insight in students’ beliefs and change and/or modify these expectations that can have a negative effect in the L2 classroom.
Introduction

Nowadays learning English is considered as an important subject and some authors have called it the window of the world and the door to success (Mishra, 2009). Because of this increasing interest in learning English, it is not surprising to find institutions and schools that offer English teaching from kindergarten to university level. Most of them argue that they offer the best learning environment as well as knowledgeable teachers. However, are students only interested in having knowledgeable teachers? What are students’ beliefs towards effective language teaching?

The present study aimed at identifying and understanding students’ beliefs about effective instruction within both public and private school contexts because, beliefs are usually shaped by the social learning environment. The importance of investigating students’ beliefs has been emphasized by Barnes and Lock (2013). They established the benefit of this type of research by saying:

Investigation into students perceptions of effective EFL teachers are necessary, so that teachers in training and practitioners can understood how to approach and improve their practice (p. 19)

In addition to this, being aware of students’ beliefs will help the teacher to meet and understand what happens inside the classroom. On some occasions, teachers may encounter uncooperative or uninterested classes even when they think they are doing their best and that could be the case where students’ expectations are not been reached. Therefore, it is going to be necessary to “voice students” and know their opinions and concerns (Barnes and Lock, 2013)

Taking this into account, it is advisable to know what students regard as effective because such beliefs will influence learners’ motivation to learn, their expectations about learning and the learning strategies that promote or facilitate learning (Richards, 1995). Sometimes students may have idealistic beliefs regarding the instruction of the L2; by knowing them, teachers will be able to reinforce the expectations that will result in
effective engagement and modify the ones that will produce a negative effect in the EFL classroom.

This study is divided into five chapters which are: Context and Focus, Literature review, Methodology, Findings, and finally Discussion and Reflections.

The first chapter gives an overview of the participants, the context where they are studying and the objective of this research. In the Literature Review chapter, previous research done in the field of students’ and teachers’ beliefs is presented. Considering the objective of this study, theories about students´ beliefs are explained in depth. Later, in the Methodology chapter the research instruments used for gathering information are explained, as well as the importance of voiced-research. In the Findings section, the data analysis technique used and the categories that emerged from the information provided by the participants are outlined. Finally, in the conclusions, relationships are established between the emerging categories and the previous studies.
Context & Focus

The purpose of this research is to identify students’ perceptions about effective instruction in two different contexts: the private and public school system. In order to gather information about students’ beliefs, a group from each context was chosen.

The first group of participants came from a public school in Naolinco, Ver. All of them studied in public schools. They were taught English for about four years but their previous English lessons were taught in Spanish; consequently, they had had little chance to speak in English. They had English lessons three times a week in the afternoons from 5.30 to 6.20. The participants were a group of 45 multilevel students. The main objective of the English subject in public schools is to develop students’ four skills of the language as well as giving students the elements they will need to establish a real-life conversation. The course book that they used was the one given by the DGBEV (Dirección General de Bachillerato del Estado de Veracruz) which did not include extra material such as CD or exercise book. All students were around fifteen and sixteen years old, and none of them have had the opportunity to visit an English speaking country and they had not taken English lessons apart from the ones offered during their classes at secondary school. Students in this school came from different towns near Naolinco, which meant that some of them commuted every day.

The second group of participants was from a private school in Xalapa, Ver. In this institution, students were classified by their English level into intermediate and advanced students. For this research, a group of seven intermediate students participated. Students had been taught English using the target language all the time. They had English sessions three times a week in the morning from 12.10 to 13.00. All of them had studied in private institutions; as a result, they had been learning English for more than eleven years. In this school, the objective of the English course was to provide students with general knowledge about the English language to use it in a communicative and natural manner, as well as to develop the speaking, writing, reading and listening abilities in English. Another goal of the course was to give students the elements and practice they needed if
they decided to take a Cambridge Certification exam. In this institution, students change book every year, following the school policy, in order to have an updated version of the course book which includes CD’s, DVD’s and a workbook for students to have more practice. This time, the student’s book is Got it! from Oxford University Press. The participants were around sixteen years old and most of them had visited an English speaking country at least once, some of them had even taken summer courses in places such as Québec, Canada. All the participants lived in Xalapa.

The reason why it is important to know the context in which education takes place is because it is commonly mentioned that students do not make progress in English because they do not like the foreign language or they do not have the abilities to do it, but is this generalization true? Maybe students like English but they do not like the way in which it is taught, or the way in which they have been in contact with the language has not helped them to fulfill their needs or interests. This situation is also explained by Richards (1995) who expresses the influence of students’ beliefs on their engagement in the following way:

Learners, bring to learning their own beliefs, goals, attitudes, and decisions, which in turn influence how they approach to learning (p. 52)

High school students were chosen for this research, because at this stage they have been in contact with the target language for at least three years, apart from having been taught by different teachers using different approaches. Therefore, they may have some ideas of what effective teaching is. Richards (2001) explains high school students’ beliefs by saying:

By the time a student completes secondary school, he or she has been exposed to thousands of hours of teaching...as a result the learner may have formed very definite views about what constitutes effective or ineffective teaching. (p. 54)

Apart from this, students’ beliefs and expectations determine what students consider useful or not. In addition, these beliefs shape the learning environment. The influence of students’ beliefs on the learning process is emphasized by Narvaez (2007) who mentions:
beliefs impact powerfully on the way in which students learn and use English in a given context. At the same time, they provide a basis for the quality of the interactions that takes place in a learning environment (p.1)

Through this research one of the objectives was to discover to what extent the students’ perceptions about effective instruction in English as a foreign language differ from context to context. Abraham (2006 in Russel: 2009) mentions the relationship between context and beliefs by saying that:

...the learning context which will affect students' perceptions and, in turn, their approaches to learning (p. 4)

Considering this, there are two main reasons for being aware of students’ perceptions. The first one is that those beliefs will help the teacher to determine the strategies, techniques and roles he has to take in order to fulfill students’ needs. The second one is because students may have idealistic perceptions about learning the language, by knowing these expectations teacher will be able to modify them and reduce students’ anxiety. This research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What do students expect from the English course?

2. What aspects do students identify as positive characteristics in their English teacher?

3. Do students from different contexts have the same beliefs about effective teaching practices?
Literature Review

Teaching is a demanding and challenging practice, especially for one important reason: it is directly linked to human beings. It implies working with people full of emotions, interests, likes, dislikes and perceptions about what learning a language should be. In this chapter, concepts such as beliefs, the influence of the learning environment, expectations about effective teaching and teacher characteristics will be mentioned.

Overview of studies about teacher’s perceptions

Over the years, researchers such as Chávez (2006), Eslami and Fatahi (2008), Absalom (2003) and Umbach (2005) have analyzed teachers’ perceptions about effective teaching strategies and techniques, considering that teacher’s conceptions determine the way in which second language education takes place. All the previously mentioned were aimed at identifying the type of practices on the part of the teachers that are important to obtain a desired result (Williams and Burden, 1997).

The main objective of the study by Chávez (2006) was to identify teachers’ beliefs and perceptions about the teaching-learning process in a Nicaraguan EFL classroom. Information was collected by means of interviews, surveys, questionnaires and observation. The results showed that teachers’ beliefs are influenced by their previous experiences about what worked or did not and by their tendency to follow what is regarded as an appropriate performance in the classroom. The author concluded that in their specific context, it was necessary to improve the EFL teaching process by providing teachers with the necessary tools for teaching English effectively.

Absalom (2003) carried out a project aimed at identifying the conceptions about language of eight teachers. He analyzed how their beliefs related to the perceptions of learning a language. In his study, he collected information using a questionnaire to get details about teachers’ backgrounds. Then he recorded some lessons and asked teachers to identify a moment in their practices that illustrated a personal conception of learning. He found that
teacher’s expectations about teaching a language were based on teachers’ previous experiences and practices.

The study developed by Umbach (2005), focused on exploring the role that faculty practices have on students’ engagement as well as identifying the ones that promote learning. In order to gather information about it, he used a national data set called National Survey of Students Engagement (NSSE). He identified that course-related interactions lead to a major commitment on behalf of the students.

**Overview of studies about students’ perceptions**

L2 education is not only defined by teachers’ expectations but also by students’ backgrounds and beliefs about what effective teaching is. Muñoz et al (2012) express what a belief is, by saying that:

> A belief is a mental representation of reality which contains meanings, preferences and attitudes that allows the rationalization of complex and different categories of experience. (p. 144)

Taking into account this definition, it can be said that students’ beliefs shape their expectations about how teaching and learning a foreign language occur as well as their engagement in learning a foreign language.

It has been argued that the first person who carried out an investigation about students’ beliefs was Horwitz (1988). He explored the beliefs of 241 students about learning a foreign language. In order to gather information from the participants, he developed an inventory known as BALLI (Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory). In this study, Horwitz classified students’ beliefs in five categories which were: difficulty, aptitude and nature of the language; teaching and communicative strategies and motivation and expectations. The findings revealed that students believed in the ability of children to learn a language in comparison with older students as well as the importance of practicing and having a good pronunciation.
Another example of a study about the effects of students’ beliefs in learning a foreign language is the one carried out by Biggs (1989 in Lizzio et al., 2002). He mentions that the learning process is the result of the interaction of three factors which are: the learning environment and student characteristics; students’ approach to learning, and learning outcomes. He also points out that the above mentioned elements lead students to develop certain perceptions about the learning environment and the learning outcomes. This means that what students expect to accomplish when studying a foreign language is influenced by how they regard language learning as well as the context in which education is taking place.

Being aware of the students’ perceptions about effective teaching plays an important role as they will help teachers to adapt their teaching practice with the aim of meeting and/or modifying students’ beliefs. This idea is also expressed by Vibulphol (1992), who says that:

Second language teachers can help enhance learners’ success in language learning two ways: by promoting their students’ beliefs that are facilitative to language learning and by refining those that are debilitative. (p. 2)

Vibulphol (1992) conducted a qualitative study based on beliefs about language learning and teaching in Thailand. In his work, he devoted a section to talk about the origins of learners’ beliefs. In this part, he mentions that being aware of learners’ beliefs may help teachers to promote the use of effective language learning strategies and at the same time enhance learners’ motivation and attempts in learning.

This finding by Vibulphol could explain why teachers may sometimes find their students reluctant to learn or participate and may think that their students are not willing to acquire the language. However, it is possible that students are interested in learning but the problem is that they have not been taught in a way that theyu consider effective. For example, a teacher can believe that students learn better by doing role-plays while students expect to be taught by means of grammatical rules. This situation is emphasized by Brindley (1984 in Russel: 2009) who points this out by saying:
When learners and teachers meet for the first time, they may bring with them different expectations concerning not only the learning process in general, but also concerning what will be learned in a particular course and how it will be learned. (p. 95)

When there is a mismatch of expectations between the teachers and the students, it is possible that there will be a lack of interest and effort on the part of students. Authors such as Dörnyei (2001), Horwitz (1987, in Barnes: 2013) agree on this situation by saying:

When a teacher and his or her students have opposing views about what should occur in the classroom, the students may lack of confidence in the teacher’s ability. Without this confidence, motivation and effective learning are unlikely. (p. 19)

Considering this, it can be said that recognizing students’ beliefs is a paramount issue as by knowing what students expect, teachers are able to understand what and how students wish to be taught. Knowing students’ preferences, teachers will be able to re-adapt their teaching practice or try to make improvements in the views of their students. (Barnes, 2013)

As it was mentioned before, student’s perceptions about effective instruction play an important role due to the fact that students have a wide range of characteristics and expectations about teaching and learning English. This was also mentioned by Mora Pablo (2009) who summarizes this in the following way:

Students’ expectations, preconceived ideas and perceptions are projected in the language classroom...these can influence not only language learning but teaching as well. (p. 172)

In addition, as beliefs are conceived in the early stages of learning a language it is not easy to modify them, because they tend to be “culturally bound” (Weinstein, 1989 in Williams and Burden, 1997).
While the research carried out by Biggs focuses on the impact of students’ beliefs on learning, researchers such as Narváez (2007, 2009), Barnes and Lock (2013), and Mora Pablo (2009), have been interested in finding out the impact of students’ perceptions of effective instruction. These studies about the characteristics students consider to be effective have been carried out in different contexts and based on their results classifications about the characteristics of effective instruction have been developed. An example of such classifications is the one offered by Faranda and Clark (2004, in Barnes, 2013) who set five categories of teachers’ characteristics which are: rapport, delivery, fairness, knowledge and credibility, and organization and preparation.

In the Mexican context, there have also been some researchers interested in finding out students’ perceptions. One investigation about this topic in the Mexican context is the one carried out by Reyes, Murrieta and Hernandez in 2009. The subjects for their study were 175 students studying to become English teachers. The data collected in this research was obtained by means of a questionnaire. The outcomes were classified into four categories: beliefs about language learning, beliefs about the good characteristics of a teacher, practices used to learn the language and finally the reasons why they decided to study the English B.A. The researchers discovered that students’ answers were at times incongruent. For example, students wanted knowledgeable teachers but at the same time some students said that they wanted their teachers to make mistakes and give practical lessons. They support this by saying:

The participants believe that teachers should be active, emphatic, patient, but at the same time, they should be demanding, expert and critic. Those beliefs are ambiguous and contradictory “ (Reyes et al, 2009, p. 275).

Students also reported that they want their teachers to be respectful when it comes to the emotional side of learning a language and students’ interaction. Reyes et al. (2009), consider that this last point plays an important role as they mention:

in effective learning those beliefs are important as the affective side of the students plays an important role. Recognizing and understanding
them shows teachers’ awareness of the emotions in the process of 
teaching and learning a language. (p. 274).

The relevance of Reyes, Murrieta and Hernandez’ work is that it gave support to the 
findings from previous investigations (Narváez, 2009; Reyes y Reyes, 2009; Rojas y Reyes, 
2009). In all of them, the researchers found out that students want a teacher with full 
command of the target language.

Another researcher who has been investigating about students’ perceptions is Narváez 
(2009, 2012). Narváez conducted a qualitative study into student’s perceptions of school 
practices and the relationship of such beliefs because as he mentions:

The way students perceived their school and their relationship with it 
influenced largely their attitudes towards it. (Narváez: 2009, p. 135)

Information was gathered by means of informal conversations and students’ diaries. The 
findings showed that students differentiate between a good and a bad teacher. They 
mentioned that they liked teachers who are committed with their work and brought extra 
material to make learning easier. The participants also pointed out that they liked lessons 
that are given in an active manner. As a general conclusion, it was established that 
students’ expectations of teachers should be taken into account in order to create a 
better learning environment.

Narváez (2012) explored university students’ beliefs about their language teachers. The 
findings from this research were collected through analyzing students´ descriptions of 
their teachers. In this study, the participants talked about some categories of a good and 
a bad teacher. In the case of the characteristics of a good teacher, they mentioned the 
existence of cool and demanding teachers and those characteristics were regarded as 
positive since teachers show students their commitment to their job by working hard, 
preparing lessons and so on. In the case of the bad teachers, they mentioned the teachers 
that believe that they know everything but fail to transmit that knowledge to the students 
as well as the authoritarian, ‘incompetent’ and ‘too cool’ teachers. What could be pointed 
out from this research was the fact that students prefer demanding teachers above any
other type because those teachers keep them working and as a result they learn something.

The findings obtained from different researchers suggest that the recurring expectation of the students is the desire to have knowledgeable and “dynamic” teachers. Through this research, it is my objective to identify if students’ beliefs about learning a language are the same within the public and private systems or to what extent they differ from context to context.
Methodology

As teachers, we should always pay close attention to everything and anything that occurs in the classroom. This involves what we do, how we do it, what our students do, how they do it and most importantly how students see what we do for and/or with them as well as their needs. It is a rather human position to believe that we do things in the best possible way and rarely do we ask others’ point of view towards what we do. In the English classroom this is not a very recommendable way of conducting ourselves due to the crucial fact that we are working with other people with different backgrounds, different ways of thinking and of course different needs. The latter is the reason why this study focused on students’ perceptions about the elements that integrate effective instruction.

Studies into student perceptions of effective FL teachers are necessary, so that teachers in training and practitioners can understand how to approach and improve their practice. When a teacher and his or her students have opposing views about what should occur in the classroom, the students may lack confidence in the teacher’s ability. Without this confidence, motivation and effective learning are unlikely (Dörnyei, 2001; Horwitz, 1987). Apart from the above authors, Richards (1998) have pointed out the negative effect that a mismatch of expectations can produce:

Mismatch between students expectations and administrative expectations revolve around students engaging in inappropriate classroom behavior. (p.120)

Moreover, Block (1992), found out that while teachers’ perceptions were in accordance with what was expressed in teaching manuals, students had their own perceptions about how teaching should take place. This situation resulted in negative effects in the teaching-learning process.

Barnes and Lock (2013), proved the importance of such matter by conducting a study about students’ perceptions, about which they say that:

Investigations into student perceptions of effective FL teachers are necessary, so that teachers in training and
practitioners can understand how to approach and improve their practice. When a teacher and his or her students have opposing views about what should occur in the classroom, the students may lack confidence in the teacher’s ability. (p. 19)

As Barnes and Lock (2013) suggest, investigating the areas of discord between what teachers and students think about what happens in the classroom is essential to obtain better results for both parties. However, this is not always a simple thing to do due to several factors; one of them is students’ willingness to express their feelings or ideas freely.

Unfortunately, students are not always willing or able to communicate their opinions to their teachers. This sometimes creates situations where teachers remain oblivious to the fact that some of their teaching behaviors or practices are not favored by their students. In some situations, teachers may face unresponsive or uncooperative classes without knowing the reasons why. Therefore, platforms for the anonymous voicing of student concerns and opinions are necessary. An anonymous student evaluation is now an accepted way to obtain specific course based feedback from students (Barnes and Lock, 2013). Taking into account this, it is remarkably important to be able to find a way in which teachers and students can communicate in order to find solutions to existing problems in the classroom.

In the field of English Language teaching, a way of analyzing and improving the context in which education takes place is through action research. Action research (AR) has been defined by several researchers such as Rapoport (1970), Kemmis (1983) and Ebut (1985, in Hopkins, 2002) among others, but all of them have pointed out a characteristic of this type of research: it is systematic and its objective is the improvement of a situation.

Kemmis (1983, in Hopkins 2002) gives an interesting definition of what action research is by saying:

Action research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social practices. In education, action
research has been employed in school-based curriculum
development, school improvement programs, and system planning
and policy development. (p. 43)

One of the main aims of action research is to find a solution to existing teaching and
learning problems by means of practical actions and reflection upon those actions (Ebbutt,
1985 in Hopkins, 2002).

Different researchers have established the process in which action research takes place
but all of them agree that AR consists in planning, acting, observing and reflecting.
Richards (2003) establishes that even though action research is not a lineal process, it
should start with reflection in order to understand the situation that the researcher wants
to study. Examples of models of action research are presented by Hopkins (2008). He
presents the ones proposed by Elliot (1991), Kemmis and McTaggar (1988) and Ebbutt
(1985). All that researchers have argued how action research should be carried out taking
into consideration Lewin (in Hopkins, 2008) who says that:

Action research consists in analysis, fact-finding, conceptualization,
planning execution, more fact-finding or evaluation; and then a
repetition of this whole circle of activities; indeed a spiral of such
circles. (p. 44)

In my experience as an EFL teacher, I had the opportunity to improve students’ oral skill
by means of carrying out an action research project Barradas (2012). After observing
students’ behavior and examining that students had the needed knowledge to
communicate in the target language, I concluded that students did not speak in English
because of their lack of motivation to do so. In order to increase students’ motivation,
some games (such as snakes and ladders), and activities (for example, find someone
who...?) were implemented. The findings proved that by doing those tasks, students’
engagement in using the foreign language arose.

Nonetheless, in order to know the reasons why some of the teaching strategies suggested
in teaching manuals and books do not work properly in my context, I considered that it
was necessary to find out the root of such learning problems. One way of doing so is by
means of qualitative studies because as it is widely known, through this researchers are able to understand students’ perceptions and interpretations of a particular issue (Woods, 2006)

Considering that the purpose of this research was to identify students’ perceptions, Voiced Research (VR) was used. The decision of using this approach was taken after reading the research carried out by Nárvaez (2006) in which he mentions the advantages of VR by saying:

Social and educational research deals with the lives of actual people. VR attempts to capture the lived experience of people that cannot be achieved and communicated through conventional means of research. (p. 132)

In this kind of research the researcher and the participants have to work simultaneously. The participants must be given the opportunity to express what is real for them and it is going to be the researcher’s role to identify any emerging category from the data generated (Nárvaez, 2006).

The study

With this study it was my objective to obtain information about students’ expectations when it comes to learning a language. This was because student’s beliefs, previous experiences and their understanding of their context shapes the way in which they conceive learning a foreign language.

Participants

This research took place in two senior high schools from two different cities and educational systems: public and private. All the participants were members of the second semester of senior high school and most of them were fifteen. In both institutions, students took English lessons three times a week. In the case of students from the private school, the majority had had the opportunity to study English since primary school or travel to an English speaking country, and example of this is Pedro who has had the
opportunity to travel to England and the USA. On the other hand, students from the public institution had only been exposed to the L2 in secondary school. Students from senior high school were chosen because at this stage most of them had been learning English at least during their secondary school study; which means all of them had some conceptions about what teaching and learning a language was about.

Instruments

In this study the chosen instruments were informal interviews, observation and two questionnaires. The three of them were suggested by the director of this work as they are instruments for data collection in qualitative research. They were implemented in the order they were mentioned. These tools appeared easy as well as useful in the context mentioned in prior paragraphs and due to time, which was an important factor, the simplicity of the instruments made them perfect for this research. In the following paragraphs each of the instruments will be explained in detail.

Informal Interview

Following the process of VR the first step was to design a set of questions which will help me to guide the information I wanted to get from the participants. All the guiding questions had the aim of knowing how students perceive the instruction of the foreign language, what aspects they consider significant when learning the target language, the impact of the context in their progress as well as how all those aspects shaped or modified their attitude towards learning English.

In spite of the fact that an interview is usually a time-consuming instrument for investigation, this was not the case. Each conversation lasted around five or seven minutes. This instrument was particularly useful and rewarding.
Among the authors who have devoted their entire careers to research on voice research, the following states that:

Voice... captures the lived experience of people that otherwise could not be achieved and communicated through conventional means of research... Voice is a term used increasingly in qualitative research and critical theorising as a way of reminding us that social research deals with the lives of actual people. (Narváez, 2006, p. 71,72)

As Narváez (2006) suggests, voiced research may provide us with more realistic or, as he calls it, lived experience of students. In my opinion, as students were interviewed individually and in a face-to-face position, they were feeling relaxed, without the pressure of being heard (or even criticised) by more than one person which allowed them to answer in a freer fashion. Additionally, they were provided with the opportunity to decide whether to answer in English or in Spanish (their mother tongue). It was done in such way that they were able to express whatever they were actually thinking, without much hesitation. According to Gillham (2004, p.63) the benefit of all the mentioned characteristics is that “because they are not formally interviewed they may give particularly revealing answers” which was beneficial for the purposes of this research.

The interview consisted of four questions:

1. How long have you been learning English?
2. How do you feel about your English class?
3. What do you expect from the English teacher?
4. What do you expect from the English course?

I interviewed seven participants from each context and they were randomly chosen.
OBSERVATION

Observation, says Gillham (2004, p. 45), has three main elements: “watching what people do, listening to what they say, sometimes asking them clarifying questions”. He also states that there are two types of observation: participant and detached which are totally different, but from which, when doing research, we are not to choose only one or the other, but mix them if necessary.

In this research I took the role of participant observer as the one observed was one of the groups I am currently in charge of. This is the reason why observation notes were not written simultaneously during class time, but after the lesson finished. It can also enable the one doing the research to describe situations in a more extended way so as to obtain what some authors call “written photograph”.

In the present study, the informants were observed for a one-month period in which twelve sessions took place. The previous was due to the fact that I worked with those students on a basis of three sessions per week. Some of the lessons were for students to work on some activities individually, in pairs, trios or teams rather than actual lessons with the traditional PPP structure, consisting of presentation stage, followed by practice and production.

QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires, says Finch (2001), can be a very user-friendly means of investigating the classroom, providing data which is easily quantifiable. Also, a questionnaire may give insights as to what changes to consider for further research or even other aspects to be investigated about it.
Therefore, a questionnaire could provide information about students’ opinions, expectations, desires, likes, dislikes, among others. In the first questionnaire students were asked to rank from one to five (1 - strongly agree; 5 - strongly disagree) forty-two English teachers details. This questionnaire was taken from a study conducted by Barnes and Lock in 2013 regarding the same issue as in this research. For that reason it was not modified and/or adapted in any way.

The second questionnaire, which students answered in their mother tongue, they were asked directly about the teaching practices they considered effective in English teachers. It was not based on any other questionnaire but developed following the purpose of my research. It consisted of three questions:

1. What are the characteristics of a good English teacher?

2. Why are those characteristics important?

3. Rank these characteristics from 1 (most important) to 5 (less important)

The questionnaire was administered in Spanish in order to get more reliable answers from students. By allowing the participants to answer in their mother tongue, they may feel more confident to give their answers as they may lack the vocabulary to express their ideas and/or opinions.
Data Analysis Procedure

As previously mentioned, data was collected by means of interviews, observations and questionnaire. Once all the information had been gathered the next step was to analyze it. For the purpose of this research a Grounded Theory approach of data analysis was used (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). To a certain extent this method of data analysis is similar to others in qualitative research, in the sense that the sources of information tend to be: interviews, observation, diaries, letters and other materials. However, this theory differs in the way in which theory is developed. This approach suggests that theory will emerge from the data obtained (Glaser and Strauss, 1970). In order to build theory from the data, general procedures have been established. These include concept-related questions, coding, and conceptual integration. In this process of data analysis, Strauss points out that discovery is a paramount issue as the researchers enter the field open to obtain new meaning through cycles of data gathering and analysis. He also emphasizes that past experiences as well as literature can help the researcher to be aware of possible theories or categories emerging from the data.

In this research, the grounded theory method helped me to analyze the data collected from the three instruments and based on the information gathered, different categories emerged.

In order to analyze the data the following steps were followed:

1. Interviewing and recording students´ voices
2. Transcribing students´ interviews
3. Highlighting key words
4. Setting categories
In the case of the observation and the two questionnaires, they were also analyzed using grounded theory. In order to do that, all information collected in both instruments was typed and key words were highlighted with the aim of identifying consistencies.

Findings

In this section, students’ perceptions about what constitutes effective teaching will be presented. From the data, five different categories emerged. The information obtained was classified in: Teacher’s characteristics, lesson characteristics, teacher-students relationship, usefulness of the language and learning environment.

Teachers’ characteristics

Students from the public school revealed that an important characteristic teachers need to possess is knowledge. Students believed that effective instruction can occur only if they have a teacher who is prepared and knows “everything” about the subject. An example of this is expressed by Ross who says that:

“a good teacher for me is...someone who..knows a lot about the subject he/she is teaching, so that if you have any question, it can be answered”

In addition to that, in the questionnaires administered nine out of fifteen students mentioned that is was having knowledgeable teachers is the characteristic number one of “good” teachers.

On the other hand, participants from the private institution conceived a good teacher as one who does not only have knowledge of the topic but also one who is committed and plans his/her classes. This opinion was expressed by Ann who says:

“good teachers back up what they say, they prepare material and we are able to see when they are prepared for what they are teaching or when they are not”
This finding was also supported with information gathered in some observations because in the lessons where students were asked to work independently without teacher’s guidance they did not seem to be either absent-minded or not enjoying the class as they were not sure about what they were about to accomplish.

It seems that for participants having knowledgeable and committed teachers are complementary elements of a good teacher. It can be said that these elements play a key role as they will determine not only students’ confidence to learn but also the way in which the course will be carried out. A participant from the Delaney study (2010) also gave support to the relationship between knowledge and confidence by expressing that:

“If a student finds that their teachers do not completely understand the material, there is doubt, loss of respect, and disinterest” (p.4)

From this comment as well as from the points of view of the participants in this research, it can be concluded that if teachers seem either insecure about the topic which is being explained, students will immediately realized it and they would think they would learn anything.

Another characteristic that students mentioned was that of having approachable and friendly teachers. Students expressed they liked to be taught by teachers who are always there to help them and give them support. Pedro expresses the importance of approachable teachers by saying:

“For me, good teachers are the ones who make you feel free of asking them any question without feeling embarrassed or like a fool, what is more, good teachers are the ones who help you if you have a question and if they do not know the answer, they try to look for information about it and explain you later.”

From Pedros’ view emerged another characteristic of a good teacher and that was the relevance of being honest. It seems that students understand that teachers are not “walking dictionaries or books” and it is likely they do not know or remember some aspects. Students appreciate it when teachers honestly admit that they are not sure about a topic and promise to give them an answer as soon as possible.
Apart from that, in the question number three of the questionnaire I designed, most of the students emphasized approachableness as the second most important characteristic of good teachers.

**Class characteristics**

Participants from the two school systems were clear about the way in which they like the class to be conducted. In the three instruments used for collecting data, students pointed out that they prefer those classes that are not boring, which allow them to learn not only “theory” but also to put that knowledge into practice by means of extra material and/or fun activities.

Pedro, a student from the private school, summarizes those characteristics in the following part of his interview:

> “a good class is one that is not boring, one when the teacher is not speaking almost all the time but going beyond...mmm... with an objective and in a entertaining form”

Data gathered from the questionnaire developed by Barnes and Lock (2013), also proved that students like those teachers who use a variety of methods instead of those ones who teach stuck to the syllabus.

The aim of having appealing lessons was also mentioned by students from the public school. Andrea, a participant from this type of school supported Pedro’s comment by saying:

> “I think that a good English class is the one where the teacher gives us lots of practice, because that way we can learn easily...also if the teacher brings material like CD with the songs we like... and also I consider it is important that the teacher uses Spanish when we don’t understand something”

From Andreas’ opinion other interesting characteristics of good teachers emerged. According to her, good teachers are facilitators and they do so by means of bringing extra and appealing material. This informant considered that if the teacher develops lessons
with songs she can learn faster and more easily than only with the book. She also mentioned that there is nothing wrong if teachers make use of their mother tongue. On the other hand, if students do not understand certain information, teachers should explain that in Spanish in order to avoid misunderstandings.

Another characteristic of a good class that the participants classified as relevant was the fact of having classes with a clear objective. In this case, they mentioned that they like to know not only what the lesson is going to be about, but also the usefulness of that specific class in their lives. Laura pointed this out:

“It is important to learn not only grammar and vocabulary, but also how to use them if we want to have a conversation with an English-speaker”

**Teacher-students relationship**

In every situation of our lives, it is important to have a good relationship with the people who are around us. Having a good relationship with students is a touchy aspect as some teachers prefer to be distant from students in order to keep a “respectful” relationship. This is because teachers sometimes believe that if they socialize, get to know students deeper and become “friends”, this relationship can be misunderstood and later students will ignore them. However, according to students’ voices they want their teachers to be friendly as they regard this attitude as a way to increase their confidence.

This idea was also mentioned by Danna a student from the private systems emphasizes the importance of this:

“Teachers should be friendly, so that if we have a doubt, we can approach to them without feeling afraid of a bad receiving a negative response. There are some teachers who seem to be angry almost all the time, that situation makes me feel nervous and without the freedom to even participate in class”
Danna’s comment not only remarks the negative effect that unfriendly teachers may have on their students, but also how this situation can lead to a lack of involvement in the class.

Students from both contexts also pointed out that friendship is understood like a form of increasing their trust in their teachers. Miriam a student from the public system expressed that situation in the following way:

“the relationship among teachers and students is essential because it facilitates learning...there are some teachers who are so demanding and then, we don’t like to ask questions....I mean it is not the same to respect a teacher than to be afraid of a teacher...so I think that if the teachers are friendly, they will give us the confidence to ask and as a consequence we will learn better”

Students also wrote in the questionnaire that they regard friendship as a positive characteristic of good teacher as this behavior fosters their engagement and confidence. One student wrote the following:

“It is important to have friendly teachers because when they are like that, you feel free to ask them any question without feeling embarrassed”

Moreover in some of the observations I wrote down how students had a better performance when they were working in a friendly environment, when I asked them in a friendly and polite form if they had any suggestion for studying in a specific way.

From these extracts it may be established that the words teacher demand, confidence, commitment and learning are closely linked. For students, demanding teachers ask them to work hard and bring extra material to support students’ progress. By doing so, students realize that their teachers are committed to their work as they care about their students; this leads to students’ confidence in their teachers and willingness to learn and participate. However, teachers who are demanding should not feel superior or authoritarian, or students will not respect them and they will have little or no confidence to get involved in the lesson or ask questions.
Usefulness of the language

Another category that emerged from the data was the way in which students regard the learning of the foreign language in terms of its utility in their lives. It was in this section where the participants had opposite points of view.

Students from the public institution considered that learning English is not as important as studying any other subject. They considered that English is not relevant because it is unlikely that they will use it outside the classroom unless they decide to go to the USA in search of a job. Alex, gave his opinion about this and expressed:

“I don’t think English is important...mmm, I can’t see the point of studying it, because at the end, we will use it only if we emigrate to the USA looking for a job”

Miriam also expressed that the L2 is not important because: “in Mexico everybody speaks Spanish”.

On the other hand, for the participants from the private institution learning English helps them to improve, to have a better CV, and as a result, it gives them the possibility to get more opportunities to work and study. Pedro gave information about this, and he expressed the role of English as follows:

“Nowadays English is very important because it is the language used for business and education, in addition to that, being able to communicate in English opens doors to working opportunities”

Danna shared Pedro’s point of view and she mentioned the usefulness of the target language by saying:

“English is the language spoken by lots of people and it is also the language some institutions like schools or enterprisers will ask you for if you want to apply for a job or a scholarship to study a M.A.”

This was the first section where the participants showed opposite ideas about learning English. Moreover in the observations I also wrote down how students from the public
system did not appear to show interest for learning and practicing the language. They seemed to be interested in getting as good grade.

These points of view showed how students’ beliefs about the usefulness of the language can impact the way they approach the language. For instance, students who regard English as a language necessary to make progress in the academic and professional field are likely to consider it as an effective subject. In contrast to it, if students find English a useless subject, they will lack motivation to learn it. Taking this into account, teachers may find it easier to work with those students who considered English as an important language than working with students who are not aware of the advantages of learning English. Then, it is going to be the teachers’ role to increase students’ consciousness of the benefits they will get from learning the foreign language.

Learning environment

The last emerging theme was the one that deals with the learning atmosphere and its relation with the learning process. In this case, students from both contexts had different perceptions.

Participants from the public system showed indifference towards their learning environment; they revealed that they did not care about what happened around them as long as they were interested in achieving something. According to Miriam the learning environment is not important, she said:

“The place where you are studying does not determine if you learn or not... all depends on you, if you want to learn or not”

Andrea reinforced Miriam’s comment by saying that:

“It doesn’t matter the place where you are learning, if it is a small town or a big city...what influences learning is without question the teacher, if they have the level of knowledge, you will learn”
However, while for public students this situation is not important, for private students it is totally the opposite. For them, everything that takes place around them will have an impact on their progress. They emphasized the kind of rules of the institution and their classmates’ behavior, Danna said that:

“The environment affects your learning...a lot!!...for example, if you are in a place where everybody does whatever they please, you will become just like them, but...if you are in a school where everybody is worried about their learning and the teachers promote this willingness to learn, you will get interested in improving”.

Some of the informants from the private system referred to the learning environment by expressing that it shaped them and helped them to become who they are in terms of commitment and responsibility. This perception could have its origins in the fact that private institutions usually argue that they have stricter or more demanding policies than public institutions. For example, in some private institutions students need to get a seven in order to be promoted, while in public institutions students are promoted with a six. Consequently, students from the private system can assume that they are more responsible than public students because they do not conform to the system. Obviously, this situation cannot be generalized because some public schools are as demanding as private ones.

So far, the findings have been described; in the following section, the implications of those classifications in the process of teaching and learning will be discussed.

Discussion and Reflections

This study examined students’ beliefs about effective instruction. Fourteen transcripts from informal interviews, fourteen questionnaires as well as the observation notes made by the teacher were analyzed to identify the elements that students attribute to good English language teaching. The categories that emerged from the data collected for this study confirmed some of the characteristics previously mentioned by researchers such as Barnes and Lock (2013), Narváez (2009) and Delaney (2010). These authors found that
knowledge, confidence and commitment are characteristics of good teachers. They also mentioned the role of appealing classes in order to engage students in the learning process.

In what follows I will first discuss the beliefs that participants from both contexts had in common and secondly the ones in which the participants showed opposite points of view.

The findings showed that there are some aspects or characteristics that students from different contexts and backgrounds will expect from their teachers in order to receive effective instruction. Some of the factors that students mentioned are closely linked. This is the case of respect and interesting lessons. These two factors play a crucial role in the process of learning a foreign language, as they help to increase students’ motivation and engagement. If students are given plenty of exercises, appealing activities but they are not treated in a polite manner, their desire to learn and participate will diminish. On the other hand, if teachers show respect for students but do not use extra and catching material, students may find the class boring and as a result their motivation to study will decrease.

In the case of respect, participants from both contexts expressed their eagerness to be respected. An example of this is the comment by Ross:

“I agree that they (teachers) have studied a lot, and they know much more than I do, but that does not mean that they have to treat us as if we were fools. If teachers respect us, we will respect them, they cannot ask for something they are not giving us.”

Danna gave support to this in the following way:

“In every relation, we are like a mirror, we will receive what we give. If teachers respect us, we will respect them, if they do not do it, we neither”

In addition to it, this same finding was also expressed in a study conducted by Delaney et al (2010), in which they included a comment from a student who said that:

“Students appreciate those teachers who word their criticism in a constructive manner. They want instructors who think before speaking” (p. 28)
Respect is everywhere a touchy subject and when it comes to a learning environment, both teachers and students have to remind themselves that respect is a two-way road. As a consequence, if teachers want to be respected, they should respect students first and the other way round. This may not be easy, especially because as human beings, there may be occasions when it is difficult to hide or control our emotions when a student is misbehaving but we have to be able to not to show our anger in order to keep a respectful atmosphere.

However, respect will not only modify the teacher–student relationship, but also the way in which the class is conducted and the engagement that students can have in a course because as it is expressed by Delaney (2010): “A respectful environment will make students enjoy coming to class and learning” (p. 3).

It is common to hear students saying: “I like English, but I don’t like the teacher who teaches it” or what is more, some students may drop out of school just because they do not like the way their teachers treat them. In some cases, this situation occurs because there are some teachers who want to be strict all the time with the aim of having control over the group, they can start shouting at them, then, students’ desire to go to classes will be reduced. An example of this is shown in Narváez (2009, 2012). He found that some students skipped those lessons where teachers behaved as superior human beings and treated students as if they were not worthy students. This situation lead to a bad relationship and students’ lack of motivation attend to school.

Another issue that was mentioned by participants from both educational systems was the desire to have interesting classes. Students emphasized that they prefer those classes that are not boring, those that made use of extra material such as CD’s, DVD’s among other resources apart from the course book. This finding implies that students consider that a good instruction occurs when teachers are prepared and bring extra material that suits their needs and interests, not only when they are taught by means of a book. Students considered that the teachers who give extra material are the ones who care about their learning process. In a study carried out by Narváez (2009) it was established
that students appreciate and admire those teachers who are able to teach tedious classes in an interesting way. Moreover, the study developed by Delaney (2010) also pointed out that students believe that effective instructors are the ones who have the ability to teach by means of using different and engaging methods. However, sometimes it may be difficult to get rid of the course book as there are some teachers who believe that if they do not use the book they do not have any support for what they are teaching. In addition to this, there are some institutions where the course book will represent the only strategy for learning in an effective manner. In this situation, it is advisable to have a balance in the use of the teaching material and try to implement methods and/or strategies that help students to achieve a specific goal.

These two beliefs expressed by the participants have a positive effect on the process of teaching and learning a language as they can help teachers to improve their teaching practices and get students involved in the class.

So far, the aspects where students showed the same kind of beliefs have been presented, in the following paragraphs I will discuss the aspects where students expressed differences regarding the elements of effective teaching.

The first aspect where students showed discrepancies was the fact of having knowledgeable and committed teachers. For students from the private institution it is better to have committed teachers. They identified that teachers can show their commitment by always being on time for the class, planning beforehand the topic they want their students to learn and by showing enthusiasm for the subject they are teaching. Thanasoulas (1999) expresses the role of planning in effective teaching in the following way:

The teacher should also make decisions on the materials to be used, as well as the activities and games which will best accord with the learners’ needs and abilities (p. 50).

However, bringing extra material is not enough if teachers do not show enthusiasm for their job. Teachers can give students the most appealing material but if they do not enjoy
working with it, that feeling will be transmitted to the students. Harden (2000) points out the impact of teachers’ pleasure in teaching on the learner by saying:

Students learn not just from what teachers say but from what they do and the knowledge, skills and attitudes they exhibit (p. 334).

On the other hand, in the case of the participants from the public institution they remarked their preference towards knowledgeable teachers while in the private system, students expressed they liked committed teachers. After talking with the participants, I came to the conclusion that this situation happens due to the fact that in the public system, students have been taught by teachers who are not specialized in the field of teaching English. Some students mentioned that they had had teachers who were not even able to use the target language to conduct the class, and in some circumstances if students had a question, their teachers were not able to give them an answer or explanation. Students from this study, as well as the students who took part in Delany’s research (2010), identified that having broad knowledge of the subject matter is a characteristic of effective instruction.

Considering these different points of view, an unavoidable question is: what is it best? To have teachers who know everything or to have teachers who have the pedagogical elements to transmit that knowledge to the students?

There is a popular belief among people who think the role of the teacher is one of transmitting knowledge as Harden (2000) says:

The traditional responsibility of the teacher is to pass on to students the information, knowledge and understanding (p. 334).

It can be assumed that students want knowledgeable teachers, because it will help them to build a sense of confidence and trust in what they are learning, but the work of a teacher goes beyond that conception. Teachers have more responsibilities, roles and functions. Having knowledgeable teachers will not be enough if they are not able to share all what they know with their pupils; consequently, teaching is not going to be effective.
The last point where students did not share the same idea was about the usefulness of the target language. Although it was not the aim of this study to discover factors that influence students’ engagement to learn, the data revealed that students relate effective instruction with usefulness for their real life. I asked them if they considered that learning English was important and the opinions from the participants were totally different. For public students, English is not useful as there is no place for them to practice it but only if they want to go to the USA to work. In contrast to this, for students from the private sector English is the key that will help them to achieve some of their goals such as studying a degree and knowing people among others. In this case, students showed different opinions because of their backgrounds. The influence of students’ backgrounds has been mentioned by Richards (1995) who establishes:

Since learners’ beliefs are influenced by the social context of second language learning, there are often cultural differences between the belief systems of learners from different cultural backgrounds (p. 56).

Students from the public sector are not likely to travel abroad. As a result they are not interested in learning English. The effect that these students’ beliefs have on teaching and learning are negative, as students cannot see the advantage of studying English. Then, it is going to be the teachers’ role to promote students’ awareness about the importance of learning the foreign language.

**Conclusions and Implications**

This qualitative inquiry has provided information about what students from two different contexts regard as effective instruction. Although there have been several investigations dealing with teachers’ beliefs system it is also important to take into account students’ beliefs as they will give teachers the opportunity to know the types of practices or
behavior that is considered as productive. Richards (1995) mentions the importance of learners’ beliefs in the development of the learning environment by saying:

“Just as teachers’ belief systems influence how they go about teaching, so learners’ belief system influence how they conceptualize learning and the way they interpret learning within the classroom context” (p. 58)

This means that learners’ beliefs will always determine the kind of instruction they consider obstructive or supportive (Delaney, 2010).

The findings showed that even though there are differences among students from different contexts, their beliefs about effective instruction are not different from those suggested by authors such as Barnes and Lock (2013), Narváez (2007, 2009) and Delaney (2010). The only difference is the relevance that students from one context can give to a specific characteristic, which means that what for some participants is essential for effective teaching, for some others, is not very important.

From this study, it can be concluded that in spite of different opinions regarding the usefulness of the L2, there are four main factors that determine successful instruction in any public and private institutions. These are: knowledge, commitment, respect and appealing classes. These four aspects are interrelated because knowledgeable and committed teachers will be able to answer students’ queries and implement material that facilitates learning; as a result teachers will have appealing and interesting classes which will boost students´ motivation and engagement. Furthermore, if students realize that their teachers have the knowledge of what they are teaching and that they care about their learning by bringing supportive material, students will respect their teachers.

The findings imply that teaching, learning and beliefs are linked and cannot be separated. Consciously or unconsciously, each one modifies the other. It will depend on teachers and their working context the way in which those beliefs benefit and change their work. The relationship between the three aspects is due to the fact that teachers and students are not machines in charge of transmitting and receiving knowledge; they are human beings with ideals, expectations, queries and feelings and in some cases, learners bring to the
classroom specific assumptions about how teachers should teach and the roles and functions they should play (Richards: 1995).

Beliefs are modified according to the place where education is occurring, and what is considered to be a good or effective instruction may be regarded as incorrect for some people or institutions, depending on the culture and previous teaching-learning experience of the students. Taking this into account, it is important to be aware of students’ beliefs and look for ways to get to know and understand what students identify as good or bad instruction in order to improve the teaching and learning process, because as SooHoo (in Delaney 2010) expresses:

Students perceptions are valuable to our practice because they are authentic sources, they personally experience our classroom at first hand...As teachers, we need to find ways to continually seek out these silent voices because they can teach us so much about learning and learners (p. 1).

References


Appendixes

App. 1 Informal Interview

1. How long have you been learning English?

2. How do you feel about your English class?

3. What do you expect from the English teacher?

4. What do you expect from the English course?

App. 2 Observation form

Date: ___________________________  Group: ___________  School: ___________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Students performance</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

App 3  Barnes and Lock (2013) Questionnaire

ABOUT ENGLISH TEACHERS – DETAILS

For each item, please check one box which best matches your feelings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective English teachers:</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>No feelings</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are friendly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Develop good relationships with students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Share personal experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Care about students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Are patient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Listen to students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Have a positive attitude in general</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Have charisma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Understand student’s English education background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Understand the different student levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Have a sense of humour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Are enthusiastic about EFL teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Give clear explanations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Use good examples</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Use a variety of teaching methods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Correct writing errors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Correct speaking errors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Teach grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Use group work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Encourage student participation in class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Encourage participation of students with low confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Talk slowly in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Use easy words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Muy de acuerdo</td>
<td>De acuerdo</td>
<td>Ligeramente de acuerdo</td>
<td>No me identifico</td>
<td>Ligeramente en desacuerdo</td>
<td>En desacuerdo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Ask questions frequently</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Ask questions then wait for volunteers to answer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Ask individual students to answer questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Los buenos maestros de Inglés:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Give students plenty of time to answer questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Treat all students fairly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Prepare students well for exams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Give students clear grading guidelines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Require students to work hard during class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Require students to do homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Are well qualified for EFL teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Have a good knowledge of grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Have a good knowledge of vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Are well prepared every lesson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Provide a syllabus detailing weekly course content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
38. Explain the instructional methods to the class

39. Tell students the lesson objectives each lesson

40. Stick to the syllabus

41. Make their own supplemental material

### PART 2: ABOUT ENGLISH TEACHERS – BROAD VIEW

Rank the following general factors of effective English teachers from the most important (1) to least important. If you feel one or more are of equal importance, then just give them the same value.

- Relationship with students (personality, care, understanding)
- Communication skill and teaching method
- Fairness (regarding general treatment of students and assessment)
- Knowledge of English
- Organization and preparation

### PART 3 – ABOUT YOU

1. Check the name of the college you are enrolled in.

- Pharmacy / Health Science
- Business Administration / Law
- Education
- Arts
- Engineering
- Natural Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Liberal Arts
2. Compared to the other students in your class, how would you rate your English ability?

- Below average
- Average
- Above average

3. Before coming to university, the English instruction I experienced at school and at private institutes generally included:

(check only one answer)

- Memorization and grammar Always
- Memorization and grammar Mostly
- Some Memorization and grammar and some communicative activities (involving games and pair and group tasks)
- Communicative activities Mostly (involving games and pair and group tasks)
- Communicative activities Always (involving games and pair and group tasks)

4. In general, in all areas of study (not just English), my learning style tends to be:

(check only one answer)

- Passive
- About half passive and half active
- Active

Now that you have completed the survey, just place it in the box at the front of the room.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH !!!!
App. 4

Questionnaire

1. What are the characteristics of a good English teacher?

2. Why are those characteristics important?

3. Rank from 1 (most important) to 5 (less important) those characteristics.