Dirección General de la Unidad de Estudios de Posgrado
Área Académica de Humanidades
Centro de Idiomas- Veracruz

Reporte del Proyecto Terminal de Aplicación
Innovadora del Conocimiento

THE IMPACT OF FEEDBACK IN AN ONLINE TEFL UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT

Que para obtener el grado de
MAESTRA EN ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

Presenta
María Gabriela Salazar Ochoa

DIRECTORA
Luz Edith Herrera Díaz

ASESORA
María de los Ángeles Morales Sosa

Realizado de manera colegiada por integrantes del Cuerpo Académico:
Lenguas Extranjeras: Enseñanza, Aprendizaje y Comunicación

LGAC: Políticas educativas-lingüísticas y diseño curricular en lenguas extranjeras en México

Boca del Río Veracruz, a 26 de septiembre del 2018.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my daughters, Andrea and Cecilia, for being patient during all those hours that I could not be with them in their everyday activities. Their love and tenderness are my motivation.

I would also like to thank Dra. Luz Edith Herrera Díaz for all her support, encouragement and professionalism when directing this project. Her guidance and advice were fundamental for its consolidation and success.

And finally, I would like to thank LIFE for all the opportunities I have been given. This project represents a dream come true.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. 5

Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 6

1. CONTEXT AND FOCUS ..................................................................................................... 8
   1.1 General context. ................................................................................................................. 8
   1.2 Focus ................................................................................................................................... 8
   1.3 Aims ...................................................................................................................................... 9
   1.4 Research questions ............................................................................................................ 9
   1.5 Rationale .......................................................................................................................... 9

2. LITERATURE REVIEW ....................................................................................................... 12
   2.1 Online environment .......................................................................................................... 12
   2.2 Community of Inquiry ...................................................................................................... 13
   2.3 Feedback .......................................................................................................................... 15

3. METHODOLOGY ................................................................................................................. 20
   3.1 Design ............................................................................................................................. 20
   3.2 Study’s Particular Context ............................................................................................... 22
   3.3 Description of the implementation .................................................................................. 23
   3.4 Description of the data collection and instruments employed ........................................ 27
   3.5 Description of data analysis processes ............................................................................. 30

Chapter 4. Findings ................................................................................................................ 32
   4.1 Teaching presence and students’ engagement................................................................. 32
      4.1.1 Impressions and concerns before the online experience. ............................................ 32
      4.1.2 Perceptions about feedback provided ....................................................................... 33
      4.1.3 Usefulness of feedback ............................................................................................... 35
      4.1.4 Types of feedback ...................................................................................................... 37
      4.1.5 Second Versions of the assignments ........................................................................... 40
Abstract

The purpose of this Action Research project was to look into the implementation of extensive feedback as an educational tool and to evaluate its impact on the students’ perceptions, and on their general performance and outcomes. Inherently, I, as the teacher of the course, aimed to promote the improvement of students’ learning in an English 1 online course at Universidad Veracruzana, by emphasizing the teaching presence (Community of Inquiry model) through this kind of feedback. To gather data about students’ perceptions and learning experiences, two data collection methods were implemented: questionnaires and documentary evidence. As part of the results obtained, it was observed that in this learning context feedback was perceived as an effective tool, which emphasized the teaching presence and promoted students’ engagement. Regarding learning consolidation, mixed results were obtained, which may account for the complexity that underlies the learning of a second language.
Introduction

“Higher education will inevitably be forced to recognize the revolutionary nature of learning technologies and e-learning will be at the forefront. The strong influence of technology will change our ideas and approaches to cognition and pedagogy”

Garrison, D. R.

English learners in the 21st century have different characteristics and needs from previous learners due to the influence of technology in everyday life. In Underwood and Farrington’s words,

Learners are now engaged with an increasingly complex, problem-orientated and intellectually challenging digital world and these experiences are promoting a new subset of skills. For some, new technologies have been such a defining feature in the lives of our younger generation that they predict a fundamental change in the way in which young people communicate, socialize, create and learn. (2015, p. p. 151-152)

Computer mediated language learning in its different forms (blended, online, virtual, distance education) is gaining presence and prevalence in higher education environments. This has posed new teaching circumstances and challenges which require the implementation of innovative approaches to integrate and take advantage of technological advances (Stodel, Thomson and MacDonald, 2006).” Along with the surge in online learning has come a realization by many faculty that they need to focus
on techniques to increase participation and collaborative learning” (Pallof and Keith, 2003, p. xiii).

The use of technology by itself does not automatically imply an improvement of the learning process, since it is pedagogy where the enhancement of learning needs to come from. In the past, educators have adapted their pedagogy to technological advances, with poor results in terms of the pedagogical experience; it is technology which should be used to engage and intellectually motivate students (Garrison, 2011).

Online learning does not aim at becoming a pale imitation of face-to-face instruction, since it offers students the opportunity to obtain information, reflect about it and provide a response, which may transform their experience about what is being learned (Pallof and Keith, 2003). Bearing this in mind, the aim of the Action Research (AR) reported in this document was to implement extensive feedback as an educational tool to evaluate its impact on students’ learning process by emphasizing the teaching presence (Community of Enquiry model) in an EFL on-line learning environment at the Universidad Veracruzana.

The purpose of using these feedback strategies was to implement a tool which, if found successful, could be implemented by other facilitators in charge of English on-line courses at the UV, since teachers are not able to modify the courses they are assigned. It must be mentioned that feedback is a teaching tool that teachers may implement at any moment, while more complex or extensive modifications are harder to implement or need UV authorities’ approval to be applied, in the long-term.

Based on Garrison’s assertion that “The virtual nature of an e-learning experience only enhances the need for teaching presence. Students need feedback and direction for cognitive reasons or because of time constraints and the need to expedite the educational process” (2011, p.97), the present study aimed at investigating the impact of implementing feedback on both, the learning process and the students’ perception about the teaching presence.
1. CONTEXT AND FOCUS

1.1 General context.

The present research took place at an online course, which is part of the educational programs of the Universidad Veracruzana (UV), institution located in the state of Veracruz, México.

For students at UV obtaining the credits for the knowledge of English at a basic level is a requirement to obtain their degree and they have four options to choose from: face-to-face, blended, self-access and online learning. Among these options online learning is usually chosen by students who cannot attend face-to-face lessons or who are automatically assigned to it as a last opportunity, which may influence students’ attitudes and motivations when participating in the course.

The English 1 online course, where this intervention was carried out, is offered to students registered at the campus in Veracruz-Boca del Río and even though all the activities are online, students are required to take their mid-term and final exams in face-to-face sessions at the university facilities. The course is hosted at the UV virtual platform called EMINUS. This platform is used by all members of the community for most of their subjects and for online and blended English courses.

For the present study the researcher-facilitator worked with an English 1 online group where 8 students were actively participating in the course.

1.2 Focus

The objectives of this research were to identify the impact of different kinds of feedback provided along the course in the students’ cognitive processes (integration and resolution phases), and to enhance and promote the teacher presence (Garrison, Anderson, and Archer, 1999) in this on-line learning environment.
1.3 Aims

The aim of this investigation was to determine to what extent the feedback provided had an impact on the students’ achievement of the integration and resolution phases in their learning process, and on their engagement and motivation.

As part of the intervention’s objectives, the facilitator aimed at improving students’ learning process and engagement in the activities, promoting participation and motivation and taking advantage of the tools and resources available in the platform, considering that an important limitation to overcome was a pre-determined course structure, which could not be modified.

1.4 Research questions

The following questions lead the action research:

What is the impact of feedback in the integration-resolution phases of the students’ cognitive process when learning English 1 on the EMINUS online learning environment?

What is the impact of different forms of feedback in promoting the teacher’s presence in this online learning environment?

What is the impact of different kinds of feedback in the engagement and motivation of students in this online course?

1.5 Rationale

In recent years technology has increased its presence and influence in learning pedagogies and environments all around the world. It is undeniable that technology has changed and will continue to change the way students learn English as a foreign language, and this, of course, has an impact in the way teachers approach their job and objectives (Garrison, D. R, 2011).
Since the incorporation of technology is just at its early stages in some educational environments in Mexico, as it is the case at the UV in Veracruz, many questions and concerns arise when both teachers and students have to face situations that are new to them, especially when the learning process needs to take place completely on-line, without (or very limited) interpersonal face-to-face interaction. To begin with, it is evident that even if the latest technologies were used, the lack of up-to-date pedagogies could direct the use of these technologies to traditional methods and approaches which do not benefit student’s on-line learning. As well, the lack of teacher-student face-to-face interaction is among the most relevant reasons of concern for both teachers and students (Stodel, Thomson & MacDonald, 2006).

Related literature and some research projects (González Miy & Herrera, 2015; Palloff and Keith, 2003) have found that some of the aspects that have an important impact in on-line learning are: the motivation and attitude of the learners towards the use of technology, their technological abilities and skills, and, most importantly, the level of communication with their teacher and all the participants in the learning environment (Teaching and Social presences).

In this scenario, it seems that finding effective ways to engage students in the cognitive process by promoting teaching and social presences is among the most important objectives in virtual education. Integrating new technologies into the teaching practice does not automatically imply an improvement and transformation of the learning process because “learners need to be engaged with the learning process to recognize the potential gains that can be provided” (Underwood and Farrington-Flint, 2015, p. 20. The use of an appropriate pedagogical approach, which aims at understanding and wording with the variables at stake is the key.

In EMINUS, one of the factors that may contribute to lack of engagement and motivation from students is the fact that courses are already structured, with fixed and defined activities, so, the facilitator cannot modify any of the contents or add new ones. The activities of the facilitator in these courses are then limited to correction,
evaluation and monitoring of students' progress, with the main objective of just providing a final grade. Furthermore, the syllabus and structure of the course are mostly Grammar based and there is an absence of activities to practice listening and speaking skills, which limits, even more, the kind of interactions between student-teacher and student-student.

Considering these issues, the present research proposes the use of feedback (in different forms: written, oral, direct, indirect, task oriented, process oriented (Hattie and Timperley, 2011) as the main tool of intervention for the facilitator to promote cognitive consolidation, teaching presence and motivation, with the final aim to improve the whole learning process.

It is also desirable that this action research findings may be of some help to facilitators who have to handle pre-structured online courses which they cannot modify.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Online environment

In the last decades technology has increased its influence and presence in everyday life and education is not an exception. New options to communicate and handle information have changed the way people interact with the world, as well as the way they learn and acquire new abilities. Technology has proven to be an advantage in language acquisition and practice: “Learners are now engaged with an increasingly complex, problem-oriented and intellectually challenging digital world and these experiences are promoting a new subset of skills” (Underwood and Farrington-Flint, 2014, p.151).

Language learning mediated by technology has evolved from distance education, where students accessed self-study courses in isolation, to on-line interconnected learning experiences. Therefore, new factors need to be considered in order to understand how learning takes place, the role of the teacher and how to optimize the strategies for language acquisition.

On-line learning experiences are designed as social information spaces that use different forms of expression and interaction, including text, graphics, media and graphical representations. Students are not only active, but they are also actors because “Engaging in collaborative learning and the reflective practice involved in transformative learning differentiate the online learning community” (Palloff and Keith, 2003) and the learning environments are not restricted to distance education, they can be used in combination with face-to-face instruction and integrate multiple tools (Dillenbourg, 2000).

In virtual learning environments there is more than just the completion of tasks to be delivered electronically, because interconnectivity and interaction between the facilitator and the learner and among the learners themselves bring new elements to the scene.
2.2 Community of Inquiry

To study how online environments are structured and how they work, the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework proposed by Garrison and Anderson (2000) has proven to be effective: “The CoI is a coherent and descriptive framework that describes a collaborative and constructive approach to thinking and learning” (Garrison, 2016, p.58). This framework serves as tool to understand thinking and learning collaboratively and describing the elements found in educational environments where participants construct meaning and share the knowledge acquired, that is, where both reflection and discourse play an important role. In the CoI framework three general presences are identified: Cognitive, Social and Teaching presences. A presence is defined as “… a sense of being or identity created through interpersonal communication” (Garrison, 2011, p. 22). These presences are not exercised by fixed agents, but rather roles which can be interchanged throughout the learning experience, since the aim is that students gain more teaching presence by becoming active participants who also provide knowledge, promote reflection and get socially involved.

In the CoI framework, the Cognitive presence is “… the extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse…” (Garrison, 2001, p. 11, as cited in Garrison 2011). It is a condition of higher-order thinking and learning which has four stages: a triggering event (sense of puzzlement), exploration (information exchange), integration (connecting ideas) and a resolution phase (applying new ideas). (Garrison, 2011).

Evidence has shown that the cognitive presence is greatly influenced by the teaching presence, because the integration and resolution phases are more demanding and more reflection is required. Learners need more directed assignments and the role of the instructor is a major factor (Garrison, 2010).

Thus, “teaching presence is the third element and the key to a community of inquiry. A purposeful learning transaction requires leadership. Teaching presence provides the essential leadership dimension that keeps a learning community functioning effectively
and efficiently” (Garrison, 2016, p. 61). The Teaching presence comprehends the design and organization of the course, facilitation of discourse and direct instruction. It is defined as “...the design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes” (Garrison, 2011, p. 24). Teaching presence is important because “cognitive presence requires guidance, support, nurturing; it does not just happen” (Stodel, Thomson and MacDonald, 2006, p. 16). In order for the learning community to function effectively there is the need of a leader, facilitator, designer, motivator and organizer to keep the learning process alive, so that students achieve the last two stages of the cognitive phase, integration and resolution.

The Social presence “… is the ability of participants to identify with a group, communicate purposefully in a trusting environment and develop personal and affective relationships progressively by way of projecting their individual personalities” (Garrison, 2009). It has to do with personal/affective, open communication and group cohesion aspects.

Regarding Teaching Presence, “the goal is always to have students assume more teaching presence and become increasingly self-directed” (Garrison, 2011, p. 27), which can be achieved by gaining more cognitive and metacognitive abilities and responsibilities, in a social learning environment of trust, cohesion and communication.

The virtual learning environment offers the benefit of asynchronous text-based communication, which allows for more reflective, precise, insightful and crafted participations: the advantage of meta-cognitively reflecting on their thoughts and formulations (Garrison, 2016). In order to promote metacognitive reflection through a constructive learning experience, an important tool that can be used by the agents participating in the virtual learning environment is constructive formative feedback. This type of feedback offers the learner “ideas to consider ways to improve discourse, motivational encouragement and awareness of progression to intended outcomes”
(Garrison, 2016, p. 97); that is to say, it is useful to promote students’ awareness of their own learning process.

2.3 Feedback

The concept of feedback was originated in the cybernetics environment (Wiener, 1954) and it was defined as the “output of a system that is fed back to the controller of the system as an input signal to regulate the system with regard to a reference value” (as cited by Narciss, 2008, p. 126). It was also considered as “post response information that is provided to learners to inform them of their actual state of learning or performance (instructional context)” (Ibid).

Feedback, in its widest definition can be understood as “information provided by an agent (e.g. teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one’s performance or understanding. Feedback thus is a “consequence” of performance” (Hattie and Timperley, 2011).

Feedback is also considered as part of formative assessment, that is, as part of the process of learning and not just as a final evaluation of the product delivered: “Assessment feedback therefore includes all feedback exchanges generated within assessment design, occurring within and beyond the immediate learning context, being overt or covert (actively and or passively sought and/or received and (....) drawing from a range of sources” (Evans, 2013, p. 71). From this perspective, the aim of feedback is to diminish the gap between the actual level of performance and the desired learning goal to be achieved (Lizzio and Wilson, 2008, as cited by Evans, 2013).

Feedback is a way to facilitate student’s development as independent learners who can evaluate, monitor and regulate their learning and it has three dimensions: a) Motivational (influence willingness to participate), b) Reinforcement (reward or punish specific outcomes) and c) Information (to modify performance) (Nelson and Schun, 2009, as cited by Evans, 2013, p. 72).
According to Narciss (2008), Informative Tutoring Feedback plays an important role in computer-based learning environments by providing elaborated information to guide learners towards successful task completion without supplying the correct response immediately, supporting an efficient learning process. Elaborated feedback, described by Narciss (2002), includes all types of feedback consisting of more information than the correct answer: explanations, information about location of error, type of errors, hints about useful sources of information, procedural skills and problem-solving strategies (Narciss and Huth, 2002, p. 3). As it can be observed, this type of feedback provides information that can be used to self-assess their learning.

Hattie and Timperley (2011) classify feedback into Task Feedback (related to results); Processing Feedback (strategies for error detection); Self-regulation Feedback (internal feedback and cognitive routines), and Self as a person Feedback (praise).

Considering its “pole” feedback can be classified into Positive and Negative/Corrective Feedback. Positive feedback is aimed at letting “…students know they have performed correctly and to increase motivation through praise” (Ellis, 2013, p, 145). Negative or Corrective Feedback is “information following an error produced by the language learner” (Gitsaki and Athobaiti, 2010, p. 2), “responses to learner utterances that contain error” (Penning de Vries, n/d, p. 2) and information that “triggers learners to recognize the gap between their IL (inter language) and the target norm” which “… in turn leads to subsequent grammatical restructuring” (Kim, n.d., p. 3). This is feedback that signals the gap between students’ performance and the desired level of performance and that “seeks either correct the inaccurate usage or provide information about where the error has occurred and/or about the cause of the error and how it may be corrected” (Bitchener and Storch, p. 126).

According to Bitchener and Storch (2016, p. 474), written corrective feedback (CF) can be classified into Direct CF, which provides an explicit correction, Indirect CF, which highlights that an error exists but does not provide a correction and Metalinguistic CF,
which informs the learner with an explanation about the causes of the error, including examples of correct versions.

Thus, Corrective Feedback can be explicit (overt error correction) or implicit (marking the error indirectly through confirmation checks, repetition, recasts, clarification requests, silence or even facial expressions) (Petchprasert, 2012).


For Ellis (2009), corrective feedback strategies include Direct Corrective Feedback, Implicit or Indirect Corrective Feedback, metalinguistic feedback, focused feedback, unfocused feedback, electronic and reformulations feedback.

Corrective Feedback plays a role in the learning process because language awareness through noticing error is essential for language acquisition and for input to occur. This is explained because if input is noticed, intake can lead to language acquisition. If students notice the gap between their inter-language forms and their target language, their inter-language may develop further (Rohollahzadeh, Mohd Saad and Abedalazr, n.d.).

Regarding input, El Tatawy (n.d.) points out that,

According to the noticing hypothesis, in order for input to become intake for L2 learning, some degree of noticing must occur and that is corrective feedback that triggers that learners’ noticing of gaps between the target norms and their inter-language and thus leads to subsequent grammatical restructuring. (p. 3)

Through this awareness, language acquisition may be enhanced because input information is noticed, processed in short-term memory and then internalized as input in the learner’s inter-language system (Ibid).
The noticing factor of Corrective Feedback is also highlighted in the Computational framework proposed by Gass (1997), considered as the “fullest and clearest statement of the roles played by input and interaction in L2 acquisition currently available…” (Bitchener and Storch, 2016, p. 517).

The stages in cognitive processing of input described in this framework are:

- Noticing consciously with awareness.
- Comprehended input.
- Intake or analysis and re-analysis in the working memory.
- Integrating and accepting the new hypothesis.
- Output and overt manifestation (Ibid).

Even though the effect of gap awareness may not be shown immediately in uptake, it may have an impact at a later point in time, since awareness triggers a modification of the existing L2 knowledge.

Noticing is associated with the notion of conscious raising or input enhancement where language acquisition is conceived

“as a developmental process in which input data is noticed and processed in short-term memory and then it will be encoded in long-term memory and stored permanently in the learner’s language system order to produce target like language”. (Hassanzadeh, 2012, p. 163)

To sum-up, feedback, and particularly Corrective Feedback, has the potential of informing about and eliminating error, as well as regulating, strengthening and sustaining knowledge by triggering the noticing, input and intake processes, which contribute to learning consolidation. Learning consolidation implies a deeper, less controlled, more rapid and automatized processing (Bitchener and Storch, 2016).

Nevertheless, Corrective Feedback is a two-way interdependent process, which involves the giver and the receiver; learners play an active role in feedback effectiveness and there are cognitive, motivational and external factors that may
impact the effect of the feedback provided. This is explained because “In addition to
cognitive requirements (e.g. prior knowledge, strategic knowledge), individual
motivation factors, such as self-efficacy and perceived task values, and individual
metacognitive factors, such as monitoring competencies and strategies, play a role”
(Narciss, Körndle, Reimann and Müller, p. 139). Context and institutional guidelines
may also influence the acceptance and use of the feedback provided.

Regarding previous studies which have implemented the use of feedback, it should be
noted that most of them just evaluate the effects of immediate feedback, on a short-
term basis, and have produced contradicting conclusions. For instance, Tomasello and
Herron (1988, 1989) and Lightbrown and Spada (1990) have reported a positive effect
of feedback on students’ development of skills and generation of learning hypothesis
to improve their learning. However, other researchers like Chandler (2003), Polio et al
(1990), Kpener (1991) and Semke (1984) have reported inconclusive results.

There is also a lack of agreement as to which kind of feedback is more beneficial, since
some studies report that indirect feedback is useful to improve accuracy (Lalande,
1982), while direct feedback is considered to have better results when revising
students’ production (Chandler, 2003, van Beuningan et al. 2008, 2012; Bitchener &
Knoch 2010a, 2010b, Ferris et al. 2013). Other authors, like Frantech and Rob (1986)
affirm that both kinds of feedback are equally effective.

Thus, feedback is a powerful and complex tool which is worthwhile using and
investigating when working as an educator, especially to find out its effect and
usefulness in on-line environments. This AR aims at discovering some of the possible
uses and advantages of extensive feedback, particularly in the UV setting.
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design

The present study was carried out as an AR in order to evaluate the impact of different forms of feedback, provided by the teacher-researcher during an on-line course, on the students’ learning process.

There are many terms to refer to AR: “.... participating research, collaborative inquiry, emancipatory research, action learning and contextual research...” (Nugent, Malik & Holingsworht, 2012, p. 4), but the authors revised coincide in the basic principles and ideas that sustain its practice.

For Burns (2010), “Action Research involves taking a self-reflective, critical and systematic approach to exploring your own teaching contexts” (p. 2). In this way, the teacher is not an external investigator, but also a participant of the situation under study. She also points out that one of the main objectives of AR is to identify a problematic situation or one which needs improvement, in order to take specific actions where the improvements obtained are sustained on specific information or “data”, collected systematically by the action researcher (Burns, 2010).

As major authors in the field, Kemmis and McTAggart (1988) describe four phases in a cycle of AR: Planning, Action, Observation and Reflection (cited in Burns, 2010). In AR there is usually a spiral: “The first cycle may become a continuing or iterative spiral of cycles which recur until the action researcher has achieved a satisfactory outcome and feels it is time to stop” (Burns, 2010, p. 7).

In the Planning Phase an issue in a specific area is identified, then an Action Plan over a limited period of time is determined. While the Action Plan is carried out, a systematic and documented observation and recollection of specific events, facts, opinions and perceptions is done. This is called the Data Collection phase (Burns, 2010). Once the intervention is completed a Reflection Phase takes place, that is, you need “To reflect on, evaluate and describe the effects of the action in order to make sense of what has
happened and to understand the issue you have explored more clearly” (Burns, 2010, p. 8).

Since AR is based on self-reflection and has the aim to make continuous improvements in teaching practice, it is focused in a specific small-scale context and promotes participation and inclusion of those involved, and it is sustained on information collected and analyzed systematically. AR is thus based on democratic principles: “… it invests the ownership of changes in curriculum practice in the teachers and learners who conduct the research and is therefore empowering.” (Burns, 2010, p. 10).

Regarding the difference between AR and experimental or qualitative research methods, Stringer (2014) points out that:

> Action Research is a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives. Unlike experimental or qualitative research that looks for generalizable explanations related to a small number of variables, action research seeks to engage the complex dynamics involved in any social context. (p.1)

AR’s objective is to generate new knowledge and promote innovation in teachers’ everyday practice, through a collaborative approach that is applied at a small, contextualized scale. These monitored, reasoned and well-based changes in teachers’ performance help them assume educational leadership in their personal development and organization (Donato, 2003).

Generalized methods, solutions and procedures in teaching cannot be applied identically in every context because each particular situation requires specific solutions and plans to be effective. It is through inquiry that teachers can find adequate strategies and approaches that work and provide results for each group in a particular situation. This makes AR an important tool for teachers to evaluate their own personal contexts of work and practice (Stringer, 2014).
Thus, AR can transform teachers from mechanical technicians into creative facilitators and leaders who have an active role in their teaching: “… teachers can assume leadership roles to support their programs, contribute to the knowledge base on the teaching and learning of foreign languages in their school and school district, and promote well-informed changes in practice.” (Donato, 2003, p. 1)

The role of the teacher as an active participant is also highlighted by Nugent, Malik and Hollingsworth (2012) when they affirm that AR “… is largely about encouraging teachers to be continuous learners and proactive “actors” in their own classroom” (p. 1). When professionals apply research in their own activities they learn through self-reflection about the results of their own actions; this promotes collaborative dialogue, which helps improve teachers’ performance. (Ibid, p. 4-5).

Nugent, Malik and Hollingsworth (2012) refer to five phases in the AR cycle:

- Identify a problem and gather data to find out why it is occurring.
- Based on this diagnosis, a solution or several solutions are suggested and an action plan is designed.
- The action plan is enacted and data is collected during the implementation.
- A study and reflection about the findings are elaborated.
- The results are reported to those interested and if at this point the problem was not solved, it is reassessed and another AR cycle begins.


3.2 Study’s Particular Context

This Action Research was carried out in an on-line English 1 group at the Universidad Veracruzana, Campus Boca-del Río Veracruz. Nineteen students were registered, but only eight students participated actively and only seven agreed to participate in the investigation.
The students, 4 girls and 3 boys, were aged between 19 and 21 years old. Four of them were registered at the Medicine School, two at the Odontology School and one at the Music School.

The on-line environment where the course was hosted is called EMINUS, an on-line platform with contents and activities organized and presented in different “tools”, as shown in Fig. 1: Contents, Events, Messages, Activities, Evaluations, Forums, Participants, Classroom and Collaborative Space (a detailed description of each of them can be found at https://eminus.uv.mx/eminus/Manuales.aspx).

The contents, dates, activities and evaluations of the course have a fixed structure when they are assigned both to the teacher and the students, thus, the activities cannot be modified or altered in any way. The role of the teacher is to monitor that students deliver activities, homework and evaluations on time, but only the activities in the “Evaluations” module have academic value and the teacher must revise and grade them (Appendix A).

3.3 Description of the implementation

As it has been mentioned before, the activities and structure of the English 1 on line course in EMINUS cannot be modified, therefore, the strategy followed was reviewing the different activities and participations required from the students in the Contents of the course; then, deciding which ones were more suitable to provide feedback in different forms (written, recorded, direct, indirect, etc.) and evaluate the impact of the feedback provided on students´ further performance.

The criteria to choose these activities was using only those which had some value (credits) for their scores (grades) in the platform and not the activities for practice only. The reason for this was that most of the activities for practice include an answer key for the students to self-correct. On the other hand, in the evaluative activities, improving the quality of the work they delivered in order to obtain a better score was
an important motivator for students to notice, revise and use the feedback provided, to deliver a second, improved version of their work. Feedback on second, final, versions was provided, too. Furthermore, extensive feedback was offered to students for all the activities included in the platform, so that they felt free to ask for feedback whenever they needed or wanted it, independently of the kind of activity or assignment.

The criteria to decide the kind of feedback to implement depended on the content of the activities: those that were in English and those in Spanish (the first language). Most of the activities in the FORUMS required expressing opinions and discussing learning strategies, tips and concepts, all in Spanish. For these activities, teacher-student and student-student feedback was considered. For the activities where, only English was used and practiced, just teacher-student feedback was implemented, because of the level of the students (beginners).

To determine which activities would be included for written feedback only, and those that could be used for both audio or video and written feedback, the following criteria was used: activities for the first two units (out of ten) were used for written feedback only. The purpose here was to start familiarizing students with the dynamics of working on line and getting feedback, since receiving so specific and specialized feedback is not a common institutionalized way to proceed in the general guidelines of the online English courses in Eminus.

For the following units (Units 3 to 10), more complete and varied kinds of feedback, both in audio and written format, were implemented, with the objective of using video and on-line face to face feedback activities by the end of the course.

The criteria to decide which activities would include audio and video versions was based on the content and length of the texts demanded from students. Fill-in the gaps activities and mechanical activities were considered for text feedback only; longer expositive texts and dialogues were considered for video or audio versions.

The feedback provided by the facilitator followed the same format as the activity revised. That is to say, if the activity was on a text format, the facilitator gave text
feedback, if the activity required text and audio and/or video format, the feedback was
given on text and audio/video format. Direct feedback implied providing the correct
form of language content where an error was detected; indirect feedback included
marking the error and using a code (implemented by the teacher) to comment on the
kind of error found, so that students could revise the syllabus contents and try to find
the correction by themselves. Audio feedback consisted of a voice recording where the
teacher provided the correct pronunciation for language contents where pronunciation
difficulties were detected. Other forms of feedback included hints on how to improve
students’ learning strategies, useful on-line language resources and general comments
on their performance. For the final project, where an extensive text and video were
required, feedback in video format was implemented too, with general comments
about students’ performance, in addition to the text-based feedback (see Appendix B).

In general, the feedback strategies during the implementation were:

**UNITS 1 and 2:** Written Teacher-Students feedback.

**UNITS 3 and 4:** Written and Oral Teacher-Students feedback

**UNIT 5:** Written and Oral Teacher-Student feedback. On-line face-to-face session via
virtual room or Skype (Teacher-Student), in order to practice and provide personalized
face-to-face feedback.

**UNITS 6 and 7:** Teacher-Student Written and Oral feedback

**UNITS 8 and 9:** Teacher-Student Written and Oral feedback. Student-student Written
feedback (FORUMS in Spanish).

**UNIT 10:** Teacher-Student Written and Oral feedback. Student-student written
feedback (FORUMS in Spanish).

Additionally, as mentioned above, a final project/presentation in video format was
required.
To motivate students to notice and make use of the feedback provided, a second-version delivery option was offered to them; the facilitator would revise the first delivery, provide feedback, and the students could make corrections according to the feedback and send a second improved version to get a better grade. Students could also choose to send text versions only, but they were encouraged to provide audio versions to practice their oral skills.

For the text versions of the assignments different kinds of feedback were provided (refer to Literature Review section, pages 12-15 in this document):

- Feedback in its widest definition.
- Assessment feedback.
- Informative tutoring feedback.
- Elaborated feedback.
- Effort feedback.
- Positive feedback.
- Negative or Corrective Feedback (implicit and/or explicit, focused and unfocused, as well as task, processing, self-regulation and self as a person Corrective Feedback).

It must be mentioned that for audio and video versions, only direct feedback about pronunciation or intonation was provided. During on-line face to face sessions all the different forms of feedback described above were provided. The implementation also included offering feedback and guidance through external means of communication outside the online EMINUS platform: What’s app, Facebook and Skype.
3.4 Description of the data collection and instruments employed

Due to the nature of the environment where this action research took place (online learning), the data collection methods employed were Survey Data Collection and Documentary Evidence Revision, since “collecting data in AR is always mixed in with the strategies or actions you put in place to change or improve the situation you have decided to focus on” (Burns, 2010, p. 5)

The data, which is the information, observation and evidences obtained during an intervention (Burns, 2010) needs to be collected in a systematic way in order to be useful and reliable for research purposes. Thus, during this intervention the first and most important source of data belongs to Documentary Evidence.

The analysis of documentary evidence is derived from historical methods which are essentially concerned with the problems of selection and evaluation of evidence. “Document is a general term for an impression left on a physical object by a human being” (Duffy, 2005, p. 125). Documents can be classified into primary sources (those produced during the research) and secondary sources (interpretations based on primary sources) (Ibid). For the purposes of this AR, primary sources were obtained and analyzed.

In a classroom, a whole variety of documents can be found: syllabus, guidelines, lesson plans, textbooks, readers, students’ written texts, exercises, illustrations, maps, dictionaries, etc. “Any of these can become a means for collecting data and identifying key issues –or even being confronted with some surprising feedback... “(Burns, 2010, p. 91.)

For the purposes of this intervention, which was implemented on a virtual learning environment, documents consisted of all the activities, homework and assignments uploaded by the students on the platform (Eminus) during the course. These include: participations in Forums, texts sent in word format, audio recordings, video recordings, comments or questions attached to the activities sent, and questions and comments sent by e-mail. For all these documents, a first and a second modified or corrected
version were considered in most cases, when students decided to re-elaborate their assignments after receiving the teacher’s feedback.

During the implementation, another type of Documentary Evidence was used: a Research Journal was kept by the facilitator to track the progress of the research. According to Burns (2010),

“Journal writing is something of a “classic” tool in AR as it allows you to record the events and happenings in your location, your reflections, beliefs and teaching philosophies, your ideas and insights about your practice and your personal histories as a teacher researcher” (p. 89).

For Bailey and Oschner (as cited by Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, 2001, p. 51), a Diary Study is “an account of a second language experience as recorded in a first-person journal”. In this Research Journal the facilitator registered, every day, the activities in the platform, as well as personal comments, observations and emotions or worries experienced by her as a teacher and researcher.

Finally, regarding the Documentary Evidence, a mid-term and a final written institutional exam were considered. These exams are compulsory and part of the students’ evaluation in the middle and at the end of the on-line course and must be taken by the students in a face to face modality at the facilities of the Self Access Center (SAC), in the UV. These mid-term and final exams are grounded in the competences approach (including reading, writing, listening and speaking sections) and they test the grammar contents of the course (particularly the writing section), aspect on which this study focused.

The second data collection source used was the questionnaire, which is “… a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents. In a questionnaire, respondents read the questions, interpret what is expected and then write down the answers” (Kumar, 2011, p. 138). Through these questions the researchers gather information about opinions, attitudes or preferences of the respondents (Singh, 2006). Through questionnaires three kinds of information can be obtained: factual
(interviewee’s identity and experiences), behavioral (activities in the past or at present) and attitudinal (values, beliefs, interests, opinions) information. (Burns, 2010).

The questionnaire format was chosen because it allows the researcher to organize and present questions,

“... without actually having to talk to every respondent...” It “… is easy and convenient for respondents…” and “There is also no personal influence of the researcher, and embarrassing questions can be asked with a fair chance of getting a true reply” (Walliman, 2011, p. 97)

During the intervention three questionnaires were provided: at the beginning of the course (during a face to face induction session at the CADI in the UV facilities), after the mid-term written exam and at the end of the course after the final written exam, in the UV facilities too.

The questionnaires included close-ended questions about concrete facts, which required yes/no answers or with a ranged scale; open-ended items, which asked for a personal, more extensive and free-form of written response and open items to prompt topics the participants were asked to comment about (Burns, 2010). The purpose of these different kinds of questions was to know students’ opinions, experience, ideas and feelings regarding the feedback provided, the impact it had in their performance, motivation, learning process, and their impression of the teaching presence.

Thus, different data collection techniques were used, in order to triangulate the information to obtain a clearer and more complete appreciation of the results obtained through the intervention, since “triangulation is the process of collecting multiple types of data to increase confidence in the findings. Triangulation helps to ensure balanced data collection and compensates for any weakness or inaccuracy in any one of the data sources” (Nugent, Malik, Hollingsworth, 2012, p.37).
3.5 Description of data analysis processes

The first stage of the analysis of the data collected followed a quantitative approach to process the information obtained through the close questions included in the three questionnaires given to the participants throughout the course. The responses to these close questions were counted and grouped according to themes, which were compared from one questionnaire to the other, particularly between the second and third questionnaires. The quantitative approach was chosen because it “... typically explores specific and clearly defined questions that examine the relationship between two events, or occurrences, where the second event is a consequence of the first event” (Save the Children, n.d., p. 9).

The first questionnaire intended to identify perceptions, concerns and expectations regarding the online course, especially since it was the first experience in online education for this group of students. The second and third questionnaires were aimed at gathering information about students’ perceptions regarding the different kinds of feedback they had received, the delivery of second versions, and the teaching presence. For this data, proportions and percentages were calculated considering the total population who participated in the project, with the objective of obtaining a clear picture of students’ perceptions and opinions about the feedback provided.

The second stage of analysis of the data collected followed a qualitative approach, which was used to code and process the information obtained through the open questions included in the three questionnaires. These asked about students’ opinions, perceptions, concerns and preferences related to the online course and the feedback provided. To process the information and transform it into quantitative parameters, an open coding strategy (Cohen, 2011) was used by considering a coding down perspective, determined by the categories already established in the questionnaires (see Appendix C).

For the third stage of the data analysis, regarding students’ performance and learning outcomes (consolidation), a quantitative approach was also used, guided by a concept-
coding procedure, in which “the categories or concepts the codes represent come from the research literature, previous studies, topics in the interview schedule…. “(Gibbs, 2007, p. 44). In this case, the categories were defined by the course syllabus. The syllabus contents chosen were those which were specifically evaluated in the mid-term and final exams, as well as in the final project. The purpose of these codes was to contrast the students’ use of the language structures (included in the syllabus) in the activities delivered with the same contents in the exams and final project.

The objective was, as mentioned in the questions that guided this AR project, to recognize the effectiveness that the feedback provided had on students’ learning consolidation. We considered that the second versions delivered were only used as an evidence of their noticing the gap between their production and the appropriate structures and use of the target language. The percentage of students’ achievement (correct use of the syllabus grammar contents) was obtained through a recount of errors and number of times each specific syllabus grammar content was used throughout all the activities delivered, and by coding each assignment. Following the same coding down procedure (see Appendix E and Appendix F), a percentage of achievement was also determined for both exams and final project, that is, a recount of errors and the number of times a specific language content was used and tested. Finally, to establish if there had been an improvement in the students’ use of the syllabus grammar contents after the implementation of feedback, the global percentages obtained for the activities and for the exams and final project were compared.
Chapter 4. Findings

4.1 Teaching presence and students’ engagement.

Regarding the AR questions related to students’ perception of the teaching presence through the extensive feedback provided, as well as their engagement in the course, the data collected through the three questionnaires administered was considered. The results obtained after processing the data from the close questions included in those three questionnaires are here presented through the following graphs and charts separated according to the corresponding emergent themes:

4.1.1 Impressions and concerns before the online experience.

In Figures 1 and 2, students’ preconceived ideas and concerns expressed in the first questionnaire are shown.

![Figure 1. Negative ideas about online learning (1st questionnaire).](image)

This figure shows different kinds of negative ideas expressed by students about online learning in general. Almost 50% of the students thought online courses implied comprehension difficulties.
Regarding their concerns about the online course they were about to take, their perceptions are expressed in Figure 2.

![Figure 2](image)

Figure 2. Concerns about the online English 1 course (1st questionnaire).

Figure 2 shows that the most relevant concerns and negative ideas about online learning before the intervention were mainly related to difficulties in understanding the contents of the course, being able to manage the learning experience by themselves in an unfamiliar context and not receiving the necessary help to solve them, which can be understood as a lack of teaching presence to solve doubts and questions.

### 4.1.2 Perceptions about feedback provided

In Figures 3 and 4, the comparison between the students’ opinions about whom they preferred to get feedback from at the beginning and in the middle of the course is displayed.
As it can be observed in Figure 3, before the online course, all students expressed they preferred to receive feedback just from the teacher.

The following Figure 4 illustrates how students’ opinions had changed regarding their preferred source of feedback when a second questionnaire was applied in the middle of the course.

Figure 3. Preferred source of feedback (1st questionnaire).

Figure 4. Preferred source of feedback for next units (2nd questionnaire).
Figure 4 shows that students’ preference for feedback from their classmates had increased when a second questionnaire was applied in the middle of the course.

This could be explained because students probably started to feel more comfortable with peer feedback as the intervention advanced, since they were more familiarized with the work dynamics implemented.

### 4.1.3 Usefulness of feedback

In the second and third questionnaires, students were asked to share their opinion of the feedback they had been getting throughout the course.

In Figure 5 the students’ global perception about the extensive feedback provided in the middle of the course is illustrated.

![Figure 5. Global perception about the extensive feedback provided (2nd questionnaire)](image)

According to Figure 5 above, 72% of the students perceived the extensive feedback provided as useful, as well as good for error correction. Only 14% thought it was difficult.
In Figure 6 we can appreciate students’ global perception by the end of the course regarding the extensive feedback provided.

As shown in Figure 6, students’ perception about the usefulness of the feedback provided had remained, while other positive perceptions had emerged (efficient, valuable) and none of the students perceived it as difficult anymore.

By the end of the course, 100% of the students perceived extensive feedback as very useful, as illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 6. Global perception about the extensive feedback provided (3rd questionnaire).
From the information presented in the graphs above, it could be inferred that, as students were more familiarized with the use of feedback, they perceived its usefulness and value, although they sometimes thought it was demanding and difficult to handle.

4.1.4 Types of feedback

The students’ opinions about the different types of feedback (indirect, direct) they received along the course are shown below.

Regarding students’ perception about indirect feedback after working with the first half of the activities in the course the following opinions were obtained.
As illustrated by Figure 8, after the first half of the course, 71% of the students perceived indirect feedback as useful, while 29% thought it was confusing.

The variations in students’ perceptions about indirect feedback at the end of the course are shown below.

![Pie chart showing perceptions about written indirect feedback (3rd questionnaire)](image)

Figure 9. Perception about written indirect feedback (3rd questionnaire).

As explained in Figure 9, when it comes to indirect feedback (in which only clues are provided for the students to find the correction by themselves) students’ perception of its usefulness seems to have increased, although for a small percentage its difficulty remained as a salient characteristic.

On the side of direct feedback, the following perceptions from students were detected throughout the course (Fig. 10)
As illustrated in Figure 10, students seemed to show a significant preference for direct written feedback, although that preference could be influenced by the content and kind of error.

By the end of the course, students’ perception about direct feedback seemed to have remained, as shown in Figure 11.
Throughout the intervention students seemed to have perceived direct feedback as a very useful tool, preferred above indirect feedback. That is, students might feel more comfortable with a direct explanation about the errors to be corrected, perhaps because there is still a predominance of teacher-centered practices in EFL in their learning context. It seems that students tend to opt for depending on the teacher’s explanations, instead of looking for information by themselves.

4.1.5 Second Versions of the assignments

When questioned about how they perceived the opportunity to deliver a second version of the activities the teacher had already revised and commented, students expressed what is observed in the following figures.

Students’ perception about second versions in the first half of the course are shown in Fig. 12 below.

![Figure 12. Perception about second versions (2nd questionnaire)](image)

As illustrated by Figure 12, 86% of the students expressed that second versions were useful for their learning process and only 14% of them thought they were just an option to improve their grades.

Their perception about second versions by the end of the course are illustrated in Figure 13 below.
Delivery of second versions of their corrected work, based on the feedback provided by the facilitator, was mostly perceived by students as a useful and helpful tool for their learning experience, including their understanding of the course contents and grading improvements.

**4.1.6 Teaching presence**

Regarding the Teaching Presence, the students agreed on the facilitator’s being available for them at all times, as shown in Figure 14.
Once students had experienced extensive feedback throughout the intervention, they seem to have perceived a permanent teaching presence through feedback, which they considered as very useful for their learning experience.

When asked to evaluate the facilitator’s positive features, students used the following adjectives listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Perceived positive characteristics in facilitator (3rd questionnaire)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Number of times expressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowed error correction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always provided feedback</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheerful</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generous</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 1, teaching presence was emphasized mainly through students’ perception of “availability” of the facilitator, among other less representative, but significant, characteristics related to her positive support, kindness, enthusiasm and dedication during their learning experience.

However, and as in most cases, any teaching act can be improved, thus, there are some aspects, that in the students’ opinion, the facilitator could enhance, such as the ones depicted in Figure 15.
The Teaching presence was mostly perceived positively in terms of performance, although for one student a more directive approach seemed to be more desirable (perhaps reflecting the preference for direct error correction); and only for a small percentage of students, the workload represented by second versions seemed to be an issue to be taken care of.

It is worth mentioning that there was no students’ desertion, that is to say, 100 % of the students participating in this study completed the course, which may account for students’ engagement to the pedagogical experience proposed in this intervention.

**4.2 Impact on learning outcomes (consolidation of learning)**

Regarding the AR question related to the effect of feedback on students’ learning outcomes, consolidation according to the Col model (integration and resolution phases), all the activities, as well as the exams and final project were processed and analyzed. A percentage of the activities and second versions delivered by each student was also determined in relation to the total amount of activities required from students for the whole online course.
After coding the activities, the exams and the final project (based on the contents of the syllabus which were actually tested), the number of occurrences of each language structure was counted. Therefore, considering all the activities delivered in their first version, the number of times these contents were correctly and incorrectly used was obtained too, in order to establish a global percentage of achievement for each grammar content (used in the exams and final project). The same procedure was used to analyze the evaluations and final project (see Appendix E and Appendix F).

The final results obtained, in terms of students’ learning consolidation, after being exposed to the extensive feedback provided are here presented:

First, a percentage of first versions delivered by students was established to determine their level of participation and completion of the course requirements. Secondly, a percentage of second corrected versions produced was calculated, to have elements to determine to what extent students could have noticed the gap between the language they produced (1st version) and the appropriate target language (2nd corrected version delivered), after checking the feedback provided by the teacher.

A comparison between the percentage of first versions delivered by each student versus a percentage of the second versions delivered after feedback is established in Figure 16.
For instance, as shown in Figure 16, student A completed all the activities required in a first version (100%), while student C only completed less than 20% of the work required in some cases, students were not required to deliver a second version, if minor errors were found (e.g. student G). In other cases, for instance student E, students decided not to deliver a second versions, even though it was recommended to improve their use of the language as well as their grade. As a supplementary option, students could read aloud and record their work to practice speaking and receive feedback on their pronunciation, but some students seemed to find this supplementary second version as an extra burden (see Figure 15 above).

When comparing students’ achievement, in terms of knowledge and correct use of the syllabus grammar contents (only those tested in the midterm exam, final exam and project), a comparison between the percentage of achievement in the activities throughout the course and the exams and final project was established. The results obtained from this comparison are here presented in Figure 17.
In Figure 17, it can be appreciated that, in terms of global percentages of achievement, only two students (C and E) improved in their use of the grammar contents, in a very small percentage. The rest of the students showed different degrees of decrement in their achievement in the evaluations (exams and final project). This could be interpreted as an indicator that the extensive feedback provided did not have a favorable impact on their learning consolidation of the syllabus grammar contents. It must be noted that student C completed only 16% of the activities and student E 67% and only 21% of second corrected versions. Their improvement in the final outcome may be accounted by their previous knowledge as “false beginners”, which does not seem to have been modified by the feedback strategy implemented.

Finally, a comparison between the percentages of achievement between activities and exams for each student was calculated.
As shown in Figure 18, for two students, D and F, there was a marked decrement in terms of achievement. This may be explained by the fact that activities are produced at home and students may have external help, use translators and have all the syllabus contents at hand, and even though they delivered a significant percentage of second versions, it seems that the noticing of these errors and their immediate correction did not have a long-term effect. As for the rest of the students, only two had a small improvement, which may be explained by previous knowledge of the language or more ability to produce correct language in the exam format, as opposed to text writing. The remaining four students had a slight decrement in their achievement, which could be interpreted as almost no impact from the feedback given by the facilitator/teacher.

To conclude this learning outcomes (consolidation) analysis, a global percentage of the impact of feedback on students’ achievement is shown in Figure 19 (samples of one student who achieved it and one who did not are shown in Appendix F).
Global percentages obtained after comparing achievement in course activities vs exams and final project (grammar syllabus contents tested) are presented in Figure 19. Even though 29% of students showed some degree of improvement in their use of language, it cannot be concluded that such improvement was only due to the feedback implemented, because of individual variables (not under consideration/control).
Chapter 5. Discussion and Reflections

From the data obtained and analyzed, the research questions that guided this AR project and which contemplated two main aspects; that of students’ perception (opinion), for examples see Appendix D and that of students’ learning consolidation (achievement and general performance when dealing with the course syllabus, see Appendix E and Appendix F), were answered.

As for the research questions related to perceptions: What is the impact of different forms of feedback in promoting the teacher’s presence in this online learning environment? What is the impact of different kinds of feedback in the engagement and motivation of students in this online course? the results show that, in general, students still seem to have different concerns about online learning, since most of them are unfamiliar with this study modality. It may be because in our learning contexts in México, online learning is still considered a relatively new modality.

Working in online environments requires specific abilities, not only technical, but also certain personality traits: “access, openness, communication skills, commitment, collaboration, reflection and flexibility” (Pallof & Keith, 2003, p. 13). This may account for students’ concerns regarding the difficulty in understanding the course contents due to the fact that the teacher is not physically present to take care of these issues. It seems students in general still seem to need to develop more autonomy and take more responsibility of their learning experience (Herrera, 2010), in order to feel more confident and develop the abilities required to manage online learning activities.

In the results it was also evidenced that the teaching presence plays a key role, since it helps counteract the lack of face-to-face contact which has been reported to be one of the elements “missing” in online learning (Stodel, Thomson and MacDonald, 2006). According to Garrison (2011), the teaching presence is an element which links salient aspects of the learning experience: the organization and administration of the course advances, the management of course interactions, so that the learning experience functions dynamically and effectively and, last but not least, the delivery of information
regarding students’ performance throughout the course. The interaction of all these aspects of the teaching presence make it a fundamental element in every online experience.

Contrary to what might be thought, online learning experiences do not mean students’ working in isolation or without the guidance of a facilitator. As expressed by Garrison (2011), “for a purposeful educational experience there is an inherent need for an architect and leader to design, facilitate and inform the transaction” (p. 24). That is to say, “...teaching presence brings all the elements of a community of inquiry together in a balanced and functional relationship congruent with the intended outcomes and the needs and capabilities of the learners” (Garrison, 2011, p.25). Then, feedback as a main tool to materialize this teaching presence, may reveal itself as a very useful element to positively influence students’ engagement and motivation, to assume the academic workload with an active, dynamic and more confident attitude.

Interestingly, as was revealed in the answers gathered through the questionnaires, it seems that, as students got more familiarized with the pedagogical approach proposed, they developed more interest in their peers’ feedback, as they might have realized they could retrieve valuable information from other participants in the course (see Figures 3 and 4 above).

Thus, the teaching presence, as a presence and not as a person, may have started to be assumed, in some degree, by participants through the forums, which represents one of the goals in a Community of Inquiry (Garrison, 2011).

When it comes to the kind of feedback preferred by students, as can be seen in Figures 8 and 9, on the one hand, indirect feedback seems to be perceived as difficult and confusing, perhaps because students are still in the process of developing the necessary knowledge and learning strategies to attempt self-correction with more confidence. On the other hand, as shown in Figure 10, there seems to be a preference towards direct feedback, which was mostly perceived as useful and very useful, perhaps due to the fact that most participants still need to assume more responsibility and autonomy.
in their learning processes. This, added to the fact that the online learning experience was new for them, may account to the fact that they prefer a directive, guiding approach from their facilitators. However, it was also evidenced that a certain percentage of participants started to realize that indirect feedback may be more appropriate in certain circumstances, probably due to the fact that, as the course advanced, they began to develop more personal strategies and knowledge for self-correction (Figure 10).

Broadly speaking, the delivery of second corrected versions was perceived as useful for learning and understanding, perhaps because, differently from the usual dynamics of these kind of online courses, these second versions did not have the purpose of evaluating students, but of helping them in their learning process. In other words, even though the students’ final goal was to improve their grades, the purposes of second deliveries were; firstly, to have students notice the gap between their production and the appropriate target language (an important aspect to be discussed later in this paper). Secondly, it was important to enhance the teaching presence through the feedback provided and, thirdly, to change the focus of the learning experience from summative assessment to formative assessment. These factors are to contribute to learners´ joy and appreciation of the learning experience of the second language, both known as key elements in any pedagogical approach which aims at being a successful one. However, as expressed by a certain percentage of students (Figure 15), second versions were also perceived as an additional workload, which was not justified when the amount of errors did not seem significant, an issue to be considered by the facilitator when deciding which activities merit a second corrected version and which do not.

Regarding student’s learning outcomes and the research question related to learning consolidation (What is the impact of feedback in the integration-resolution phases of the students’ cognitive process when learning English 1 on the EMINUS online learning environment?), the results obtained were not favorable, despite the fact that some students delivered almost 100% of the activities and the second corrected versions
required. As shown in chapter 5, Figure 18, only two students showed a slight improvement, but it must be noted that they were among the ones who delivered fewer activities and second corrected versions. The rest of the students varied from a marked decrement to practically keeping the same level of achievement (in terms of the use of the syllabus grammar contents and the errors traced).

Considering that “… the learning of the language is a multifaceted endeavor” (Gass, 2008, p. 479), we could declare that such results are related to the interaction of several factors which influence the final output a student may produce; factors that were neither considered nor controlled.

One important factor to be considered is the fact that the course contents are presented in a rigid, unchangeable format and the amount of input provided to the students is very limited and mostly grammar based. As Krashen (2009) sustains,

> With a grammatical syllabus, each structure is presented only once. If a student misses it, is absent, is not paying attention, or if there simple has not been enough practice (input), the student may have to wait until next year…. (p. 25)

That is to say, the amount of input required by each student in order to assimilate a new structure or syllabus content may vary, depending, among other factors, on the previous knowledge a student has to relate it to the new language which is presented and practiced. Therefore, feedback by itself did not seem to be enough to achieve learning consolidation, if other aspects involved in the learning process are not promoted too. This might be explained by the model proposed by Gass (2008) (see Appendix G), in which there are five stages involved in the learning process: “(a) apperceived input, (b) comprehended input, (c) intake, (d) integration, and (e) output” (p.479).

For the present Action Research, even though the syllabus contents constitute the input, and feedback and second corrected versions had the purpose of promoting noticing, awareness and comprehension, it seems that most learners may not have
achieved real comprehension and intake. Consequently, this did not lead to integration or to modified and improved output.

Among the factors that might have influenced the probable lack of comprehension and intake, we can mention the possibility that participants are still “Monitor under-users”, students who do not use what they have learned or who are not influenced by error correction (Krashen, 2009). Another possibility could be that the input and feedback were put into storage, as suggested by Gass (2008): “…perhaps because some level of understanding has taken place, yet it is not clear how integration into a learner’s grammar can or should take place” (p. 488). This could be an explanation of why even though most students produced a significant percentage of second corrected versions, the correct (grammar) form was only used in a unique opportunity and not integrated for long-term use.

However, in favor of the use of extensive feedback, it should be said that acquisition is conceptualized as a gradual process, which needs time to consolidate and which implies extensive exposure to negative and positive input. As Gass (2008) asserts, “…there may be changes in the underlying system although there is no output change. Changes in underlying systems with no surface manifestations are typically subsumed under the category of reanalysis or restructuring” (p. 489). Thus, the initial input and corrective feedback provided during this AR intervention might have triggered the process. However, although results were not measurable in the short term, when the intervention took place, some long-term follow-up on the participants’ performance and outcomes regarding the grammatical structures presented could provide further evidence on the effects of feedback.
Chapter 6. Conclusions and Implications

Learning English (as a foreign language) online at a university level, in this case at the Universidad Veracruzana, is becoming a relevant option because of the advantages it offers to the education system and to some students. One of the aims of this Action Research was to explore how the implementation of a valuable tool, such as extensive feedback, could influence the students’ learning outcomes and perceptions. According to the results, feedback could be proposed as a resource for facilitators to overcome some of the difficulties that have emerged, in terms of perception and learning consolidation, along the implementation of this new language teaching-learning modality. From the results exposed in this report, it can be concluded that evidence was found to support the positive effect feedback may have in enhancing the teaching presence in the learning environment, which in turn may have a positive effect on students’ engagement, participation and motivation.

However, the results obtained in terms of learning consolidation (learning outcomes) were found to be less conclusive, since there was no clear evidence of improvement derived from the feedback provided. This may be explained by the theoretical approaches posited by SLA researchers like Krashen (2009) and Gass (2008), who affirm that language learning is a multifaceted experience where learning processes take place mainly on the side of the learner, and many factors play a role in the final outcomes: the Affective filter, student’s previous knowledge and capability of attention, learning strategies and even self-confidence to use what has been learned to produce output. On the side of the facilitator and course contents, there are other variables, such as the frequency and amount of input, and the flexibility to adapt to students’ particular needs throughout the online course, which may influence the effectiveness of extensive feedback. Other factors, for instance the availability of technology, economic, social and cultural conditions, as well as the possibility of receiving training in the use of computers, may also determine the success of English online courses both in terms of learning consolidation and engagement from teachers and students.
Despite all these variables, it is worthwhile considering the arguments offered by Gass (Gass, 2008) in favor of the implementation of feedback in learning environments:

In sum, there is a major role for apperceived input, determined to a large extent by selective attention. Without selective attention, grammar development does not take place. In other words, a first step in grammar change is the learner’s noticing (at some level) a mismatch between the input and his or her own organization of the target langue (p. 491).

One of the implications of this point of view is that feedback might be a valuable tool which is worthwhile implementing and evaluating, if possible in the long term, in order to manage its adaptation and improvement, guided by students´ needs.

Further research is suggested to determine to what extent certain language contents are not consolidated from one activity to another, even after feedback has been provided and a correction has been produced by the students. It would also be worth investigating if this is due to individual variations or related to specific language contents.

Another area to explore is that of peer feedback, in terms of feasibility, as well as its impact on students´ perceptions and learning outcomes. Last but not least, the implementation and systematic analysis of feedback on pronunciation, taken from audio recordings of all the activities delivered, could also provide useful data to evaluate the possible advantages of including this in the online English courses at UV as part of the activities to be delivered throughout the course.

It is hoped that the findings reported in this paper may contribute to the teaching resources available to online TEFL facilitators, for them to overcome the numerous challenges teachers and students are facing in these emerging pedagogical environments.
REFERENCES


ABOUT Universidad Veracruzana (UV):  [http://www.uv.mx/universidad/campus/](http://www.uv.mx/universidad/campus/)  
http://www.uv.mx/universidad/info/introduccion.html
APPENDICES

Appendix A

Eminus modules, as shown to participants

(https://eminus.uv.mx/Eminus/manuales/Facilitador/Manual-Facilitador.pdf)
Appendix B

Examples of feedback provided and second corrected versions delivered by the students:

1st version

U21: I have a big family. My mother, my father, my two brothers and my pets. My mother’s name is Leonora and she is a teacher. My father’s name is Luis and he is a retired high school teacher. The name of my big brother is Edgar Luis. He is a Doctor. The name of my other brother is Renzo and he is a student. I have pets. My little cat Lola is beautiful. She is my partner of life. She lives with me. I have another pet but they live in my origin country, Tabasco. My dog and my cat are called Many and Jaky. Many is a Chihuahua and Jaky is a Pug. I’m Osmany and I study medicine in Veracruz.

2nd corrected version

U21: I have a big family. My mother, my father, my two brothers and my pets. My mother’s name is Leonora and she is a teacher. My father’s name is Luis and he is a retired high school teacher. The name of my big brother is Edgar Luis. He is a Doctor. My other brother is Renzo and he is a student. I have pets. My little cat Lola. She is beautiful. She is my partner of life. She lives with me. I have another pet but they live in my origin country, Tabasco. My dog are called Many and Jaky. Many is a Chihuahua and Jaky is a Pug. I’m Osmany and I study medicine in Veracruz.

1st and 2nd corrected versions in Forum activity

26/Feb/2017 11:36 hrs.
Hi, everybody, my name is Osmany and my last name is Romero. I am from Oaxaca, Mexico. I was born in Coatzaocolas, Oax. I am an Odontology student.

27/Feb/2017 08:55 hrs.
Wow! Super correction! Congratulations :)

26/Feb/2017 20:28 hrs.
Hello everybody. I am Osmany Romero. I am from Coatzaocolas City. I am 21 years old. My first language is Spanish. My second language is English. I was born in Coatzaocolas City. I am from Coatzaocolas City but I live in Veracruz City. My e-mail is and my telephone number is.
Appendix C

Examples of qualitative analysis for open questions in the questionnaires.

10. El realizar una segunda entrega de mis trabajos me pareció:
   a) Muy útil
   b) Útil
   c) Poco útil
   d) Nada útil
   e) Sólo más trabajo adicional
   f) Otro
   ¿Otro?

11. El facilitador me acompañó durante las actividades del curso:
   a) Siempre
   b) Casi siempre
   c) A veces
   d) Casi nunca
   e) Nunca

¿Por qué lo percibiste así?

12. En el siguiente curso de inglés virtual preferiría:
   a) No recibir retroalimentación
   b) Recibir retroalimentación sólo si lo solicito al facilitador
   c) Recibir retroalimentación pero no realizar segundas entregas
   d) Recibir retroalimentación y realizar segundas entregas si así lo decido

FINALMENTE, POR FAVOR COMPLETA CON TUS PROPIAS PALABRAS LAS SIGUIENTES FRASES:

13. La retroalimentación recibida durante el curso Inglés 1 en EMINUS fue...
   Feedback

14. Lo que me pareció bien del desempeño del facilitador fue...
   Perception

15. Lo que mejoraría del desempeño del facilitador es...
   No need for second versions in certain cases

Si gustas dar tu opinión general o algún comentario que quisieras expresar respecto a este curso virtual de Inglés 1, será bienvenido. General perception on line course

Sólo quisiera decir gracias porque no pensé que un curso virtual fuera tan gratificante, los temas son realmente útiles y ayúdanos a mejorar los cursos de clases.

Gracias por participar en este proyecto de investigación. ¡Fue muy grato trabajar contigo!
Appendix D

Comments and perceptions from students

FINALMENTE, POR FAVOR COMPLETA CON TUS PROPIAS PALABRAS LAS SIGUIENTES FRASES:

13) La retroalimentación recibida durante el curso Inglés 1 en EMNUS fue  
   Excelente, me tocó muy confiante sobre todo mi pronunciación ya que fue algo nuevo para mí. Aunque me habían ayudado ni
   siempre, tanto en encontrar la pronunciación correcta y segura
   como en desarrollar mejor

14) Lo que me pareció bien del desempeño del facilitador fue  
   Su cariño, amistad, disposición de tiempo y acuerdo con mis inquietudes y curiosidad, por lo cual me motivó a trabajar más

15) Lo que mejoraría del desempeño del facilitador es  
   La única que podría ser, es que no pasó de una a 2 palabras a
   momento, ya que si se presenta un retraso, se obstaculiza todo el proceso

Si gustas dar tu opinión general o algún comentario que quisieras expresar respecto a este  
curso virtual de Inglés 1, será bienvenido.

Sólo quiero decir gracias porque no puedo que un curso virtual  
fuera tan divertido hasta el final porque todo oralmente fue
   un gusto y ayuda a mejorar tus cursos oír

Gracias por participar en este proyecto de investigación. ¡Fue muy grato trabajar contigo!
FINALMENTE, POR FAVOR COMPLETA CON TUS PROPIAS PALABRAS LAS SIGUIENTES FRASES:

13) La retroalimentación recibida durante el curso Inglés 1 en EMINUS fue
   
   _muy buena_, me ayudó mucho a mejorar _y me ayudó mucho_.

14) Lo que me pareció bien del desempeño del facilitador fue
   
   _su constancia_ y _su ejemplos concretos_.

15) Lo que mejoraría del desempeño del facilitador es
   
   _me gustó mucho su desempeño_ y _me ayudó mucho su desempeño_.

Si gustas dar tu opinión general o algún comentario que quisieras expresar respecto a este curso virtual de Inglés 1, será bienvenido.

_Gracias._

Gracias por participar en este proyecto de investigación. ¡Fue muy grato trabajar contigo! ☺
FINALMENTE, POR FAVOR COMPLETA CON TUS PROPIAS PALABRAS LAS SIGUIENTES FRASES:

13) La retroalimentación recibida durante el curso Inglés 1 en EMINUS fue De gran ayuda

14) Lo que me pareció bien del desempeño del facilitador fue Que siempre estuviste dispuesto a ayudarme

15) Lo que mejoraría del desempeño del facilitador es 

Si gustas dar tu opinión general o algún comentario que quieras expresar respecto a este curso virtual de Inglés 1, será bienvenido.

Gracias por participar en este proyecto de investigación. ¡Fue muy grato trabajar contigo!
FINALMENTE, POR FAVOR COMPLETA CON TUS PROPIAS PALABRAS LAS SIGUIENTES FRASES:

13) La retroalimentación recibida durante el curso Inglés 1 en EMINUS fue
    eficiente y útil. El manera m.3 escusas vi en que quedo mejorar.

14) Lo que me pareció bien del desempeño del facilitador fue
    que siempre estuvo disponible ante una duda.

15) Lo que mejoraría del desempeño del facilitador es
    que en los audios no se tenga que volver a mandar todo el audio por una película.

Si gustas dar tu opinión general o algún comentario que quisieras expresar respecto a este curso virtual de Inglés 1, seré bienvenido.

Gracias por participar en este proyecto de investigación. ¡Fue muy grato trabajar contigo! 😊
Appendix E

Examples of coding implemented in activities, exams and final project:

**U6t1.**

Hi. **u1.9 My u1.5 name is u1.2 ...... I am u1.2 from Veracruz and u3.3 those U4.4 are u1.2 my u1.5 skills: I can u6.2 sing, play the u3.1 violin, the u3.1 piano u3.3 and u3.1 the flute. Of course, there are u1.2 some things I can’t u6.1 do. For example, I can’t u6.1 drive a u1.4 car because u3.3 my u1.5 mom does not want u7.1 to teach u8.3 me, I can’t u6.1 draw, memorize a lot of information, run fast or u3.3 jump high because u3.3 I’m fat. The name of my best friend My best friend’s name u2.2 is u1.2 ...... and u3.3 she is is su1.2 from Veracruz. She He u1.1 lives u7.1 near u4.1 my u1.5 house. She can u6.1 memorize a lot of information and u3.3 sing well, but u3.3 she can’t u6.2 be late home or u3.3 win me u8.3 in video games. We can u6.1 sing duets, play chess and u3.3 we can u6.1 cook muffins very well.

**U02T01**

I have u2.4 a u1.4 small family: my u1.5 parents u2.3 , my u1.5 sister u2.3 and u1.1 me u8.3 . My u1.5 mother’s u2.2 name is u1.2 ...... she She is u1.2 my u1.5 best friend and u3.3 she is is u1.2 a u1.4 tacher u1.8 . She has is u1.7 forty eighth eighteens years old. My u1.5 dad’s u2.2 name is u1.2 ...... He has is u1.7 fifty years old. He works u7.1 in u4.1 a u1.4 far place. My u1.5 sister’s u2.2 u2.3 name is u1.2 ...... She is u1.2 older that me ; she She has is u1.7 twenty six years old. My u1.5 sister u2.3 u7.1 lives in u4.1 Chile , she She marined with a u1.4 Chilean. I study u7.1 ....... at u4.1 the u3.1 University of Xalapa city, but u3.3 I live u7.1 u4.1 in Veracruz city. I like u8.1 to live with my u1.5 parents in u4.1 Veracruz. My u1.5 family is u1.2 the best in u4.1 the world. I love u8.2 to my family.
## Codes used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U1.1. Personal pronouns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U1.2. Verb TO BE (affirmative, interrogative, negative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U1.3. Interrogative words: What, Where, How, Who</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U1.4. Undefined articles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U1.5. Possessive adjectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U1.6 Countries, nationalities and languages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U1.7. Personal information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U1.8 Occupations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U1.9 Greetings and presentations: Formal and informal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U2.1. Imperative form (affirmative and negative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U2.2. Possessive (’s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U2.3. Family and family relations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U2.4 Verb &quot;to HAVE&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U3.1. Definite article &quot;the&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U3.2. Plural nouns (regular and irregular)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U3.3. Connectors and, but, or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U3.4. Adjectives to describe physical appearance and personality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U3.5. Describing clothes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U4.1.</td>
<td>Prepositions (in, on, under, next to, between, behind, at, close to, near)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U4.2.</td>
<td>There is/are (affirmative, interrogative, negative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U4.3.</td>
<td>Location public places (at, on, in, opposite)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U4.4.</td>
<td>Demonstrative adjectives (this/that)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U5.1.</td>
<td>The time (prepositions, What time is it...)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U5.2.</td>
<td>Dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U5.3.</td>
<td>Seasons of the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U5.4.</td>
<td>Verb TO BE+weather adjectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U5.5.</td>
<td>Verb TO BE+LIKE (weather) interrogative form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U6.1.</td>
<td>Modal CAN (affirmative, interrogative and negative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U6.2.</td>
<td>Uses of modal CAN (description of abilities, asking someone to do something)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U6.3</td>
<td>Adverbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U7.1.</td>
<td>Simple present affirmative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U7.2.</td>
<td>Simple present negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U7.3.</td>
<td>Simple present interrogative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U7.4.</td>
<td>Uses of Simple Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U7.5.</td>
<td>Verbs for everyday activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U7.6.</td>
<td>Adverbs of frequency (always, usually, sometimes, never)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U7.7.</td>
<td>Sequence connectors (after that, before that, then,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U7.8</td>
<td>Contrasting connectors (but)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U8.1.</td>
<td>LOVE, LIKE, DISLIKE, HATE, PREFER+ing (affirmative, interrogative, negative) to refer to hobbies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U8.2.</td>
<td>LOVE, LIKE, DISLIKE, HATE, PREFER+noun (affirmative, interrogative, negative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U8.3</td>
<td>Object pronouns (me, you, him, her, us, them)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U9.1.</td>
<td>Countable and uncountable nouns: food and drink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U9.2.</td>
<td>A/an/some/any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U9.3</td>
<td>How much/how many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U10.1.</td>
<td>Present continuous (affirmative, negative and interrogative) to talk about present actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U10.2.</td>
<td>Contrast simple present and present continuous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F

Samples of class documents of a student who showed an improvement in the use of specific grammar structures included in the syllabus (and tested in the exams and final project).

Samples of writing activities delivered throughout the course (only a sample is shown, since the total number of activities required during the course was 25).

| She | u1.1 is u1.2 Brenda Hernandez. She u1.1 is u1.2 from Veracruz u1.7 and u3.3 these u4.4 are u1.2 her u1.5 abilities: She u1.1 can u6.1 play volleyball, cook and u3.3 wash, but u3.3 also, there are u4.2 some things that she u1.1 can’t u6.1 do, for example: She u1.1 can’t u6.1 use the u3.1 computer, play football soccer, draw and or u3.4 sing. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is happening right now?</th>
<th>What do I usually do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I 1.1 I’m writing 10.1 this 4.4 text right now. I 1.1 I’m thinking 10.1 about 4.1 this 4.4 homework and 3.3 my 1.5 next finals exams. I 1.1 I’m eating 10.1 a 1.4 sandwich and 3.3 I’m drinking 10.1 water. I 1.1 I’m listening 10.1 to 4.1 music in 4.1 my 1.5 computer and 3.3 I 1.1 I’m trying 10.1 to 4.1 sing it too. I 1.1 I’m texting 10.1 with 4.1 my 1.5 sister 2.3. because She 1.1 is living 10.2 far away 4.1 from 4.1 me, 8.3.</td>
<td>I 1.1 I wake up 7.1 at 5.1 6:00 am. I 1.1 walk 7.1 to 4.1 collage. My 1.5 first class starts 7.1 at 5.1 8:00 am and 3.3 finishes 7.1 at 5.1 5:00 pm. I 1.1 I arrive my home around 5.1 8:00 pm. I 1.1 I have dinner 7.1 2.4 and 3.3 I 1.1 I call my 1.5 dad 2.3 and 3.3 then I 1.1 I call my 1.5 mom. I 1.1 I start 7.1 doing my 1.5 homework between 4.1 7 or 3.3 8 pm. I 1.1 I always 7.6 go 7.1 to sleep always at 8.1 12:00 am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| He | u1.1 is 1.2 the 3.1 prince William Arthur Phillip Louis, Duke of Cambridge. He 1.1 is 1.2 from 1.7 London, England. William is 1.2 very smart 3.4 and 3.3 sociable 3.4. He 1.1 is 1.2 handsome and 3.3 slim 3.4. He 1.1 has 2.4 blond hair 3.4 and 3.3 him 1.5 (GR) eyes are 1.2 blue. He 1.1 is 10.1 wearing 3.5 a blue sweater and 3.3 brown pants; 1.5 him (GR) shoes are 1.2 white. |

| She | u1.1 is 1.2 the 3.1 Catherine Middleton, Duchess of Cambridge. She 1.1 is 1.2 from 1.7 England. Kate is 1.2 friendly 3.4 and 3.3 reserved 3.4. She 1.1 is 1.2 pretty 3.4 and 3.3 tall 3.4. She 1.1 has 2.4 a 1.4 long 3.4 straight 3.4 brown 3.4 hair; her 1.5 eyes are 1.2 brown 3.4. She 1.1 is 10.1 wearing 1.4 a purple 3.5 blouse and 3.3 jeans; her 1.5 tennis is 1.2 (GR) white 3.3 and 1.1 are clean. |
My 1.5 name is 1.2 Karla, I 1.1 am 1.2 university student 1.8. I 1.1 usually 7.6 get u p 7.1 at 5.1 6 o’clock in 4.1 the 3.1 morning, but 3.3 sometimes 7.6 I 1.1 get up 5.1 5 o’clock in 4.1 the 3.1 morning because I 1.1 have 2.4 homework. After than 7.7 twice for 7.6 week I 1.1 go 7.1 to school by 4.1 bus and 3.3 other times I 1.1 walk 7.1. I 1.1 always 7.6 have 2.4 classes at 5.1 8.00 am to 5.1 6.00 pm. I 1.1 always 7.6 have 7.1 breakfast in the 4.1 school and 3.3 I 1.1 have lunch in the 4.1 school too. After 7.7 my 1.5 last class I 1.1 always 7.6 return 7.1 home and 3.3 I 1.1 have 2.4 my 1.5 homework. Before 7.7 I 1.1 have 2.4 7.1 a 1.4 shower and 3.3 then 7.6 I 1.1 have 2.4 7.1 dinner. Finally 7.6 I 1.1 sleep 7.1. I 1.1 usually 7.6 sleep 7.1 between 4.1 12 o’r 3.3 1:00 am.

Samples of sections of the mid-term and final evaluations coded (only the writing sections are shown, even though the grammar sections were also considered, since reproduction of the formal exams is forbidden).

Writing section in the mid-term exam:
Writing section in the final exam:

Samples of class documents of a student who did not show an improvement in the use of specific grammar structures included in the syllabus (and tested in the exams and final project).

Samples of writing activities delivered throughout the course (only a sample is shown, since the total number of activities required during the course was 25):

---

**My classmate’s likes and dislikes**

This u4.4 is u1.2 my u1.5 report about Yessica’s u2.2 likes and u3.3 dislikes. She u1.1 dislikes u8.1 run because she u1.1 gets u7.1 tired. She u1.1 can’t u6.1 swim, but u3.3 She u1.1 likes u8.1 watching swimming competitions. She u1.1 like u8.1 dance u8.1 and u3.3 She u1.1 dislikes u8.1 horror movies because She u1.1 gets u7.1 scared. She u1.1 like u8.1 cars but u3.3 more than the old cars and u3.3 She u1.1 loves u8.1 Veracruz City. She u1.1 dislikes u8.1 motorcycles because u3.3 u1.1 are u1.2 dangerous u3.4. She u1.1 drinks u7.1 coffee but u3.3 u1.1 prefer u8.1 cold water. And u3.3 she u1.1 loves u8.1 tacos.

---

I u1.1 have u2.4 a u1.4 big family. I u1.1 have live u7.1 with my u1.5 parents and u3.3 one brother u2.3. My u1.5 father’s u2.3 u2.2 name is u1.2 Armando and u3.3 he u1.1 have has u2.4 a u1.4 Railroad pension. He u1.1 worked for many years in u4.1 railways and u3.3 he u1.1 loved his u1.5 work. My u1.5 mother’s u2.3 u2.2 name is u1.2 Hilda and u3.3 she u1.1 studied for to be a u1.4 secretary u1.8 and u3.3 worked. She u1.1 does not work u7.2 now, she u1.1 is u1.2 housewife u1.8. My brother is named u1.1 have u2.4 one brother u2.3. His u1.5 name is u1.2 Marco Antonio. He has u1.1 is u1.7 thirty-four years old and u3.3 is u1.2 divorced but u3.3 he u1.1 has u2.4 a u1.4 girlfriend u2.3. My u1.5 parents u2.3 and u3.3 me I u1.1 live u7.1 in u4.1 Veracruz and u3.3 my u1.5 brother lives u7.1 in u4.1 Matias Romero with my u1.5 family. My u1.1 is u1.2 an u1.4 Elementary Teacher u1.1. I u1.1 am u1.2 an u1.4 odontology student u1.8 at u4.1 the u3.1 Universidad Veracruzana.

---
This is Gabriela. Her last name is Salazar. She is my teacher in the online English course. She is 48 years old. Gaby is from Mexico City but she lives in Laguna Real in Veracruz City. Her first language is Spanish but also talk English. Her husband is an engineer. Her telephone number is 229912277 and her e-mail address is garfelx2@hotmail.com.

This u4.4 is u1.2 William Arthur. He u1.1 is u1.2 the u3.1 Duke of Cambridge. His u1.5 full name is u1.2 William Arthur Louis Windsor. He u1.1 is u1.2 British. And u3.3 he has is u1.7 middle age. His u1.5 height is u1.2 6’3” so William is u1.2 very tall u3.4. He u1.1 is u1.2 well-built u3.4. He u1.1 has u2.4 short u3.4 blond u3.4 hair and u3.3 his u1.5 eyes are u1.2 blue. He u1.1 is u1.2 good looking u3.4. William is u10.1 wearing a u1.4 shirt, a u1.4 blue sweater u3.5 and u3.3 khaki u3.5 pants. He u1.1 is u1.2 married with to u4.1 Catherine. Her u1.5 full name is u1.2 Catherine Elizabeth Middleton. She u1.1 is u1.2 British. Catherine has is u1.7 middle age. Her u1.5 height is u1.2 5’8” so she u1.1 is u1.2 tall u3.4. She u1.1 is u1.2 slim u3.4. Her u1.1 She has u2.4 blond hair u3.4 and u3.3 her u1.5 eyes are u1.2 brown u3.4. Catherine is u1.2 a u1.4 beautiful u3.4 girl. She u1.1 is u10.1 wearing a u1.4 white shirt u3.5, a u1.4 purple sweater u3.5, jeans and u3.3 white sneakers u3.5.
Samples of sections of the mid-term and final evaluations coded (only the writing sections are shown, even though the grammar sections were also considered, since reproduction of the formal exams is forbidden).

Writing section in the mid-term exam:

Writing section in the final exam:
Appendix G

Gass Model of Second Language Acquisition