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**Carrera de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa**

Autonomy-supportive teaching for developing intrinsic motivation in English students  
of second of Bachillerato at UESMA

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## RESUMEN

Este trabajo de investigación analiza la necesidad de aplicar un nuevo estilo de enseñanza con estudiantes de Inglés de Segundo de Bachillerato de la Unidad Educativa Salesiana María Auxiliadora (UESMA), con el objeto de desarrollar e incrementar su motivación intrínseca en el aprendizaje. En este trabajo se intenta demostrar la presencia de bajos niveles de motivación intrínseca y autonomía percibida por parte de las estudiantes al aprender un segundo idioma, como lo es el inglés. Se presentan resultados significativos mediante el uso de una combinación de métodos que permiten triangular la información obtenida. Los resultados muestran la falta de motivación intrínseca y autonomía percibida en una importante cantidad de estudiantes. Una guía que promueve la adopción de un estilo de enseñanza que apoya a la autonomía para docentes es propuesta como posible solución.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** MOTIVACIÓN INTRÍNSECA, AUTONOMÍA, APOYO A LA AUTONOMÍA, ENSEÑANZA



## ABSTRACT

This research paper analyzes the necessity of applying a new teaching style with English students of Second of Bachillerato at Unidad Educativa Salesiana María Auxiliadora (UESMA) in order to develop and increase their learning intrinsic motivation. One of the attempts is to demonstrate the presence of low levels of intrinsic motivation and perceived autonomy in students when learning a second language, in this case English. Significant results were achieved using a combination of a set of methods that allowed to triangulate the gathered information. The results showed lack of intrinsic motivation and perceived autonomy in an important number of students. A guideline for promoting the adoption of an autonomy-supportive teaching style for teachers is proposed as a possible solution.

**KEY WORDS:** INTRINSIC MOTIVATION, AUTONOMY, AUTONOMY SUPPORT, TEACHING.

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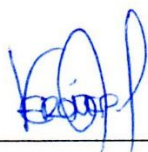
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## CLAUSULA DE PROPIEDAD INTELECTUAL

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## INTRODUCTION

This research is aimed to show and propose teachers an alternative that could promote and develop intrinsic motivation in students for learning English, which can occur when teachers adopt an autonomy-supportive teaching style.

After the analysis of the current state of students' motivation for learning English in second of Bachillerato at UESMA, the researcher could determine the necessity of applying a new teaching style that could develop or increase intrinsic motivation in students, since it was determined the presence of low levels of intrinsic motivation in an important number of students, and specifically, low levels of perceived autonomy. Some factors and conditions that influence on students' motivation were also identified.

In order to assist students, a thorough research led the author to focus on the Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2004) and its construct Autonomy-supportive style of teaching for developing intrinsic motivation in language learners. Consequently, this teaching style was identified as an effective one to increase students' intrinsic motivation and perceived autonomy. Promoting autonomy in students is central to education, since promoting it involves respecting students and their choices, and motivating them to be responsible of their acts. For this reason, a guideline for teachers was designed in order to assist them in promoting and supporting students' autonomy in their learning process. The aim of the guideline is to assist teachers in promoting and supporting students' autonomy in the classroom.

The guideline contains a set of acts of instruction which are necessary to promote autonomy in students. They make the guideline a practical tool for teachers.



It also includes detailed examples that show how the acts of instruction can be applied to real contexts inside the classroom.

This research report is organized in five chapters. The first chapter includes the rationale for carrying out this project. It also presents the background, justification, research questions, and objectives. The second chapter presents the review of relevant literature and the theoretical framework, which are focused on motivation, the Self-determination theory and the Autonomy-supportive teaching style. The third chapter presents the research approach and design used to conduct the study. It includes detailed information about the participants, setting and data collection process and analysis. The results and its interpretations are presented in chapter four. Finally, the fifth chapter presents conclusions and recommendations. Additionally, the guideline is included in the appendices.



## CHAPTER I

### RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

#### 1.1. Purpose

The main purpose of this project is to promote and develop intrinsic motivation for learning English in students of Second of Bachillerato at Unidad Educativa Salesiana María Auxiliadora (UESMA), through assisting teachers in the adoption of an autonomy-supportive teaching style that could help students in this process.

#### 1.2. Statement of the Problem

Motivation is a key factor for the achievements that any person could get in any aspect of life since it provides the primary impetus to initiate a behavior, and it helps to preserve the driving force to keep going through a process. In the educational field, motivation is considered an important element that moves an individual to start learning and to maintain effort along the learning process. According to Cheng and Dörnyei, (2007) motivation plays an important role when learning a second language since it challenges learners in language classrooms and predicts learning success. Motivation can be classified in two groups: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation refers to functional reasons for learning the language, related to the tangible benefits attached to learning it, while intrinsic motivation refers to the inner aspiration that learners have to engage in an activity because it is enjoyable and interesting. When learning, it is desirable the presence of intrinsic motivation in students because through it, learners have a personal and affective disposition toward the language since they find it attractive and pleasant to

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learn. However, it is more common to find learners with extrinsic factors that move them to learn. For example, a student might study for an exam only to get a good grade. It implies that this student won't be interested on what was learned once the exam is finished. It can occur when students are required to learn as mandatory.

Students who are part of the curriculum of Ecuadorian schools and high schools have to learn English as mandatory. This is also the case of students from UESMA. Lack of internal motivation is a common problem in students who have to learn this foreign language. Students do not have internal reasons, goals and purposes for learning, which moves them not to focus on learning itself, but on getting grades to pass the course.

Some research has demonstrated that this lack of intrinsic motivation can be attributed in a great proportion to the teaching contexts and the incomplete fulfillment of learners' needs. This reality can be changed by promoting in teachers the use of different techniques and teaching styles that foster students' engagement on learning, where students' needs could be covered in a more effective way.

According to Ryan and Deci (2004), creators of the Self-Determination Theory, students need to fulfill three basic needs in order to feel intrinsically motivated: autonomy, competence and relatedness. Based on these needs, the authors investigated the acquisition and regulation of non-intrinsically motivated behaviors, and they found evidence of the power of Autonomy-Supportive Classroom Teaching as a good method for motivating students intrinsically. In the authors' words: "contexts supportive of autonomy were found to foster greater internalization and integration of motivation in students" (p. 76).



Accordingly, the lack of intrinsic motivation that students have can be changed if teachers adopt this teaching style. For this reason, the creation of a guideline to promote the use of an autonomy-supportive teaching style would help teachers to adopt an effective way to keep their students motivated and students to feel more involved in the learning process and enjoy learning English.

### **1.3. Background and Justification.**

The Education System in Ecuador has established some language learning standards for high school students. Students must get the English proficiency levels set by the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) A1, A2 and B1, according to what was established by the Ministry of Education Agreement since 2012. The progression through the levels is the following:

- Level A1 at the end of 9<sup>th</sup> year of Educación Básica General
- Level A2 at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> year of Bachillerato
- Level B1 at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Bachillerato

In that way, students from the Ecuadorian education system learn English as a second language mandatorily since it is part of their curriculum. Students from UESMA have also to accomplish this requirement. Moreover, since UESMA is part of the international network of Cambridge English schools, students' English proficiency has to respond to international certified levels of English, which correspond to A2, B1 and B2. It means that students from this high school need to acquire higher levels of English proficiency.

When languages are taught as a requirement as in this case, it is common that learning behaviors take place only to obtain a reward or to avoid a punishment.



Such behaviors commonly disappear when the conditions are removed and goals have been reached (Deci and Ryan, 2000). In this sense, many students learn this foreign language with extrinsic motivation, which means that they have to do it to meet some extrinsic obligations or requisites, as to accomplish the requirements of curricula in studies to pass the school year. This is why many aspects of education and learning are not considered relevant or important enough for students. However, if learners are self-determined and internalized, extrinsic rewards can lead to intrinsic motivation according to the self-determination theory, introduced by Deci and Ryan (1985). Self-determination in learning takes place when students have fulfilled three psychological basic needs: competence, relatedness and autonomy.

Therefore, the adoption of an autonomy-supportive teaching style in the classroom can contribute to students' learning intrinsic motivation. According to Reeve (2009) the use of this teaching style can contribute to regulate and internalize non-intrinsically motivated behaviors. For this reason, the creation of a guideline that assists teachers in adopting an autonomy-supportive teaching style with English students is proposed, in order to help teachers put into practice a more effective way to keep their students motivated in the classroom and to help students feel interested and enjoy learning English.

#### **1.4 Objectives**

The main objective of this research is to assist teachers on promoting and developing intrinsic motivation in students of Second of Bachillerato at Unidad Educativa María Auxiliadora, through promoting the use of an autonomy-supportive teaching style.

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### **1.1.4 General Objective**

To promote the use of Autonomy- Supportive classroom teaching in order to develop students' intrinsic motivation in Second of Bachillerato at UESMA through the development of a guideline.

### **1.4.2. Specific Objectives**

1. To determine the current state of students' motivation for learning English in second of Bachillerato at UESMA, and identify factors and conditions that would help them to feel more motivated.
2. To determine the importance of using Autonomy-Supportive Teaching to motivate students.
3. To contribute to the development of students' intrinsic motivation.

This study seeks to answer two main research questions.

- How motivated students are for learning English in second of Bachillerato at Unidad Educativa Salesiana María Auxiliadora?
- What can teachers do to create intrinsic motivation in their students when learning English?

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is divided in two parts. First, it is focused on an extended review of existing literature related to second language learning motivation, which covers a variety of theories and authors who have contributed to explain what motivates human behavior when learning a second language. Second, this chapter covers the theoretical framework which provides the basis for this project that is focused on the importance of Self-Determination Theory and its construct Autonomy-Supportive style of teaching for developing intrinsic motivation in language learners.

#### 2.1. Literature Review

Motivation is considered an important characteristic when learning a second language because it provides the primary impulse to start learning it, and also it helps to maintain the effort along the process. For this reason, more and more researchers have decided to examine different strategies, teaching styles and methods that contribute to motivate students when learning a second language. In this section of the chapter, important research in this respect will be analyzed. Before starting, it is important to mention that the study I proposed is based on the Autonomy-Supportive classroom teaching method, which focuses on the development of intrinsic motivation in students. The following literature review attempts to contribute, support and demonstrate the importance of this teaching method in order to develop students' inner motivation.

First of all, it is important to state that there are different types of motivation. According to research conducted by Dörnyei (1985), there are inner and external

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factors that can make a person feel motivated to do or not to do something. In this sense, we can talk about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Additionally, Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) examined the link between teachers' motivational teaching practice and their students' language learning motivation. They also analyzed the relationship between the students' self-reported motivation, their actual classroom behavior, and the teacher's classroom practice. The latter two aspects are very important to take into account when talking about motivation. We can see the influence of the teacher's performance and teaching style reflected on the evidence of the results of linking those aspects to motivation.

In their study Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), included 40 ESOL classrooms in South Korea, involving 27 teachers and more than 1,300 learners. With them, they measured the students' motivation by a self-report questionnaire and a classroom observation instrument. The results of this study indicated that the language teachers' motivational practice is linked to increased levels of the learners' motivated learning behavior as well as their motivational state. This is an important evidence of the effects of motivational strategies on student's motivation.

Furthermore, Deci and Ryan, (1985) state and take into account the different types of motivation as a base for their study and the development of their Self-Determination Theory, which can be classified at the same time in some sub-categories. Those two big categories of motivation are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. For them, this classification is based on the different reasons or goals that give rise to an action. In the authors' words,

The most basic distinction in the kind of motivations a person can have is between intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it is



inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome. (p. 55)

Taking into account the existence of different types of motivation, it is important to state that developing intrinsic motivation in students when learning a second language is more important than extrinsic motivation. As we already know, talking about motivation can be considered as a subjective field difficult to deal with. However, the role the teacher plays during the teaching time can show dramatic changes in the students' response. Reeve (2012) explains through examples and real experiments that classroom conditions and the teaching style applied by the teacher can enhance and support students' intrinsic motivational processes or undermine and thwart them. Therefore, the teacher performance during the class can support but also neglect and frustrate students' motivation, engagement, and positive classroom functioning.

The establishment of the existence of two types of motivation makes us think about how important it is to focus on the development of one or another. In this regards, research conducted by Lepper and Hodell (1989) has demonstrated that by applying only extrinsic motivation methods without considering intrinsic factors, teachers could be doing more harm than good. In this sense, the fact of rewarding students through extrinsic motivation means assigning simply a good grade without considering students' inner needs, which contributes to a destructive cycle of rewards in the long term. This can produce a negative effect in motivation for future task completion once the reward is removed.

Based on Lepper and Hodell's research, some studies and experiments demonstrated, through a designed test, the hypothesis that making learning more



fun for students will produce an improvement in learning, retention and subsequent interest in the subject matter, in this case English learning. With this purpose, the investigators developed more than one version of an educational activity for students, where they had identical instructional content, but different motivational appeals. The results obtained demonstrated to be a good support for the hypothesis about the importance and benefits of appropriately designed motivational educational activities.

However, the support and development of students' inner motivation requires a lot of effort because students commonly show a lack of it when learning a second language, and it is more common if we consider teenagers. This lack of motivation can be attributed in many cases in a great proportion to the teaching contexts and the incomplete fulfillment of learners' needs. According to Ryan and Deci (2004), creators of the Self-Determination Theory, students need to fulfill three basic needs in order to feel intrinsically motivated: autonomy, competence and relatedness. Based on that premise, the authors investigated the acquisition and regulation of non-intrinsically motivated behaviors, and they found evidence of the power of an Autonomy-Supportive Classroom teaching as a good method for motivating students intrinsically. This method is based on developing a learning success and enhanced motivation in students, where they have more control of their own learning process, and some level of responsibility for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of their own learning in order to experience some level of ownership. In the authors' words: "contexts supportive of autonomy were found to foster greater internalization and integration of motivation in students" (p. 76). Seen in this light, the lack of intrinsic motivation that students have can be changed if teachers adopt this teaching method. Moreover, we can find some applications of these ideas by the hand of Verónica Elizabeth Merchán García



Reeve and Halusic (2009), who show clearly that it is possible to apply and see results of the theory and its principles through the adoption of an Autonomy-supportive teaching style.

To determine the presence and its extent, or the absence of intrinsic motivation in students, the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory is a questionnaire that can be used. In the research made by Liu et al. (2006), it was possible to identify students' intrinsic motivation through the analysis of the fulfillment of the three mentioned psychological needs: competence, relatedness and autonomy through the use of this questionnaire. Once lack of intrinsic motivation is determined in students, the academic self-regulation questionnaire can be also used to identify the kind of extrinsic motivation they have. Gonzalez, Dowson, Brickman and McInerney (2005), applied the questionnaire to different contexts to show its reliability and consistence. As a result, it was determined to be an effective instrument to determine extrinsically motivated behaviors. These tools can provide general insights about how motivated students are and what a teacher can do to help and assist students in the process of being motivated to learn.

It is known that not all students have intrinsic motivation for learning because they do not find school to be intrinsically motivating by itself. In cases like that, it is necessary to consider a combination of extrinsic rewards and environmental factors that are interesting for students. In this way, we can successfully engage students who tend to have low academic motivation. Two authors contribute to this concept; Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000) have argued that extrinsic rewards always damage intrinsic motivation. For them, the value of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation may depend on the length of involvement and complexity of the task. They mentioned



that “for very long and complex tasks, a combination of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic rewards may be most effective” (p. 162). However, according to Deci (1999), rewards that are used to control people’s behavior tend to reduce their sense of self-determination. In this sense, he recommends teachers to use unexpected and sporadic rewards, considering that it may cause only little harm. Nonetheless, they should not be given so frequently that students come to expect them.

A good strategy for increasing student motivation, according to Turner (1995), is to allow students to make decisions about their own work, which is the basic idea of the Autonomy-Supportive teaching style. In this way, students will tend to be more interested in what they do and the results. This is based on the fact that when students are given choices, they tend to show more persistence, goal-setting, and some other self-regulated learning behaviors. In this sense, Reeve (2009) proposes a set of teachers’ instructional behaviors that are associated with an autonomy-supportive teaching style, which are: nurturing inner motivational sources, providing explanatory rationales, relying on informational language, acknowledging students’ expressions of negative affect and displaying patience.

Taking into account all the presented information, there is no doubt about the importance of motivating students to get the best results from them. It is important to make them feel as more motivated as possible when learning a second language. This can be the essential factor that can make a difference in the success students have. The use of the autonomy-supportive teaching style and method has shown important results in motivating learners. Therefore, as it has been stated, this study will be based on this method. The authors Noels, Pelletier, Clément and Vallerand (2001) have determined some considerations to keep in mind. Teachers need to



work on creating a pathway out of hopelessness when it is notorious the absence of motivation in learners. For this, the teacher has to help students set small yet attainable goals that are visible and recognizable. Also it is important to develop projects that offer always input from students, where they can foster an increased sense of ownership and self-directedness once they are involved in them.

Additionally, it is very important to encourage and find the ways to use immersion settings. This implies teaching the language in context. Therefore, students have to be encouraged to take advantage of any opportunity where they can use the target language in real contexts that will help them to use strategies of self-direction that the target culture provides. Lastly, teachers need to consider how much they will need to control the learning process, since it will be required the introduction of more autonomous learning activities.

Additionally, when we talk about the adaptation of the teacher's performance and teaching style, it is essential to consider the importance of Psychology. Taking this into account, we can focus on the study developed by Williams and Burden (1997). There, we find aspects related to the teacher's inner sources and aspects he needs to work on in order to obtain the best results from his performance in the classroom. It is mentioned the importance of affect and decision making in the classroom. Also, the establishment of self-access with students is an element that the teacher has to be ready to get in the classroom. This is very important to consider because current research intends to focus on the teacher's performance and teaching style to get the best results with students through motivating them. In this regard, Pelletier, Legault and Séguin-Lévesque (2002) analyzed how teachers' actual behaviors can influence on students and students' motivation. In their study, the authors examined the social-contextual conditions that lead 254 teachers to be

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more autonomy-supportive or controlling. They also discovered that the more teachers perceive pressure from above and below, the less they are self-determined toward teaching.

In addition, when we talk about motivation, it is important to mention the research presented by Stephen Krashen (1988), an expert in the field of linguistics. He developed five hypotheses about language acquisition, and one of them is related directly with some factors that affect motivation. This hypothesis is called the Affective Filter. According to his ideas, the affective filter considers some variables like anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation as important limiters or enhancing factors in language acquisition. In this sense, Krashen stated that learners with high self-confidence, good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are more likely to succeed in second language acquisition. This hypothesis was studied by Wang (2009) who applied a questionnaire to two hundred Chinese students in order to identify the influence of affective factors to language acquisition. It was concluded that motivating factors are important in the field of second language learning since they move learners to initiate behaviors and make an effort on learning, which can be turned into positive learning outcomes. On the other hand, low self-esteem and debilitating anxiety can lead students to block their development in the acquisition of the language by 'raising' the affective filter and forming a 'mental block' that prevents the student from learning the new language.

Krashen's research is an important resource to take into account when we want to analyze the factors that affect the development of motivation in students. As it was aforementioned, anxiety can be considered as a barrier that in most of the cases makes students avoid the learning process. It prevents students from trying to



use the language in real communicative contexts. However, anxiety can be a motor for helping the student to make his/her biggest effort in order to learn the language, and in that way, he/she can take advantage of this factor.

Also, since we are considering the students' characteristics that can motivate or prevent the student from learning, the concept of Linguistic Self-confidence appears as an important factor in the process of motivating students. This concept was proposed by Clément (1990) and has given rise to an extended study to examine the interrelationship between social contextual variables, attitudinal and motivational factors, self-confidence and second language acquisition and acculturation processes. The existence of self-confidence in students decreases levels of anxiety in using the second language. Therefore, this topic is important from the students' point of view when developing motivation.

Finally, a theory related to motivation that is worth analyzing because of its current development and conceptualization is L2 Motivational Self System, developed by Dörnyei (2005.) According to his new concept, motivation and second language learning are based in the 'ideal self,' which refer to the ideal or desired attributes a person would like to possess, according to personal wishes or aspirations. Therefore, the author's theory is based on the idea that if proficiency in the target language is part of the learner's ideal self, he or she will have it as powerful motivator to learn and improve his or her performance in the language. This is explained by the individual's psychological desire to reduce or eliminate the discrepancy between our actual self and other possible or future selves. In this regard, the 'possible selves' concept refers to the ideas of what we would like to become, what we could become and what we are afraid of becoming. If a person has





it clear, the process of motivation becomes easier to follow and develop. This theory was analyzed by Magid (2014) who studied the learning behaviors of a group of English students in Singapore through experimentation. In this research, students' vision of their ideal-self on learning a second language was enhanced. Also, students were assisted in setting more clear and specific goals for learning English. Findings showed that 90% of participants became more motivated, confident and willing to learn English. It was proved that if the teacher helps students identify the ideal and possible selves, learners will have a clear idea of what they want to achieve because the image that they will create of them might act as a booster and powerful motivator, since learners will try to reduce the discrepancy or difference between what they are and what they want to be.

In all this process, the teacher can develop different styles, activities and the teaching materials that can have a strong influence on motivated behavior. This new concept can be used as a base for the use of autonomy-supportive teaching methods, where the teacher would motivate students by giving them the opportunity of being themselves and thinking about what they want and what they expect, giving them the possibility to be an active part of their learning process and to have partial control of what he or she wants to learn and in which form.

In conclusion, there is vast research that needs to be considered when we talk about motivation. It is important to consider as many theories, hypothesis and ideas as possible in order to combine them and use the best aspects of them. This literature review has analyzed only eight threads of plenty of research related to Motivation in students when learning a second language. However, it is important to mention that they are only a guide in the development of the project I propose.



## 2.2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.2.1. Language Learning Motivation.

Motivation is a term used in an extended amount of fields, mainly in psychology and other research contexts. A simple definition is not possible since there is only a little agreement in the literature of the exact meaning of this concept. Anyway, most researchers agree that motivation is responsible for determining human behavior. Keller (1983) stated that “motivation refers to the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in this respect” (p.389).

In the educational field, and particularly on learning a second language, motivation is a multifaceted construct. Therefore, describing its nature and features requires particular care since it is easy to find limited or superficial representations of motivation in literature. The term motivation can be used in different senses such as affect, cognition, mental energy, inner force, attitudes, set of beliefs, behavioral response, or directional choice. Although there does not exist an absolute, straightforward and unequivocal concept of motivation, Zoltan Dörnyei (2000) contributed with an extended research around motivation, which has been tested and evaluated through decades of continuous study.

Dörnyei (2000), who established a consistent and strong relationship between motivation and second language success, attempted to synthesize the different conceptions of motivation, and defined it as “the process whereby a certain amount of instigation force arises, initiates action, and persists as long as no other force comes into play to weaken it and thereby terminate action, or until the planned outcome has been reached” (p. 118).



For him, motivation is a key factor for the achievements that learners could get. It occurs because motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate the learning process of a second language, but additionally it helps to preserve the driving force to keep going through this learning process. Therefore, motivation influences the rate and success of learning. Cheng and Dörnyei, (2007) state, “learners' motivation is a key variable that frequently concerns and challenges practitioners in language classrooms” (p. 153).

Due to the importance and influence that motivation has for learning, motivation has been classified in two specific types. This classification follows the original proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1972), which separates motivation as integrative and instrumental. Those terms were expanded by many researchers and of course Dörnyei (2000) recognized them as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The presence of these two types of motivation can influence and control the procedure and outcome of learning.

#### **2.2.1.1. Intrinsic Motivation.**

Intrinsic motivation in learning a second language refers to the inner aspiration that learners have to engage in an activity because it is enjoyable and interesting. It also implies the desire and satisfaction of understanding and learning something new. In that way, learners satisfy their curiosity to explore the world in order to learn more. For Gardner and Lambert (1972), it also includes learning a language with the intention of participating or joining to the culture of its people, even being a member of them. Therefore, learners show a personal and affective disposition toward the language since they find it attractive and pleasant.

#### **2.2.1.2. Extrinsic motivation**



Extrinsic motivation refers to functional reasons for learning the language, related to the tangible benefits attached to learning, (Gardner, 1985). In extrinsic motivation, learners' behaviors are commonly directed to obtain a reward or to avoid a punishment. For example, a student might study for an exam only to get good marks or avoid being ridiculed by classmates, but that student would probably not get additional information on the topic or be interested on what was learned once the exam is finished.

### **2.2.1.3. Internalization of Extrinsic motivation**

Extrinsic motivation has commonly been considered as capable of undermining intrinsic motivation in learners. For example, learners can lose their natural intrinsic interest in an activity if they have to do it to meet some extrinsic obligations or requisites, as to accomplish the requirements of curricula in studies. This is why many aspects of education and learning are not considered fun or satisfying for students in an immediate sense. As examples, students learning a second language may not find fun or interest in writing an essay or memorizing lists of new vocabulary. In those cases, intrinsic motivation at first sight is not evident, so learners will require other incentives or reasons to learn.

However, under certain circumstances, if learners are self-determined and internalized, extrinsic rewards can lead to intrinsic motivation. In that way, the self-determination theory, introduced by Deci and Ryan (1985), plays an important role in the intrinsic-extrinsic paradigm. According to Deci and Ryan, people have the innate need of autonomy, which consists on the desire to be self-initiating and self-regulating of their actions. Therefore self-determination, which consists on engaging in an activity that has been desired and chosen, and that has provided a sense of



personal ratification, is seen as a requirement for any behavior to be intrinsically motivating.

### **2.2.2. The Self-Determination Theory**

As it was mentioned, the Self-Determination Theory, created by Deci and Ryan (1985) and developed by different researchers, plays an important role on motivation. This theory focuses on the degree to which an individual's behavior is self-motivated and self-determined. Therefore, the different reasons or goals that give rise to an action in an individual can reflect the kind of motivation a person has. At this point, the two kinds of motivation mentioned before are highlighted. According to Deci and Ryan (1985):

The most basic distinction in the kind of motivations a person can have is between intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome. (p. 55)

Self-Determination is focused on the dominant role intrinsic motivation plays in an individual's behavior. Additionally, Deci and Ryan (1985) proposed three main intrinsic needs involved in self-determination, which are innate and psychological. They are the need for competence, autonomy, and psychological relatedness.

#### **2.2.2.1. Competence**

Need of competence refers to the ability to control the outcome and feel expertise. Competence in the self-determination theory always refers to the individuals' 'perceived competence', which can be different from their actual level of ability. In the classroom, students can feel competent when the teacher presents to



them learning activities that are challenging, which motivate students to test themselves and expand their academic skills and abilities. Challenging students implies providing students with activities with content that is appropriately difficult for the abilities they already have. An easy class is not taken seriously by anyone since it does not require any effort to complete it, so students will get bored easily and not committed to develop it.

It also involves providing students with appropriate performance feedback, which must emphasize on students' effectiveness by providing relevant information on how to master the tasks presented in order to promote success and feelings of efficacy. By providing personal performance feedback to students, the teacher can create personal interaction with learners and improve their knowledge retention.

The fulfillment of this need will be translated into engagement, and it is based on the fact that learners will only get involved in and personally value the activities they can actually understand and do. (Deci and Ryan, 1985)

#### **2.2.2.2. Relatedness**

Relatedness refers to the universal want to interact and be connected to others. It is related to the importance of developing and maintaining close personal relationships, including feeling part of group. It is based on the importance people give to interactions, which are desired by most people and are essential for feeling comfortable and in a general well-being state. Relationships provide satisfaction of the need for relatedness, and it is felt when there is warmth and an accepting atmosphere, where the environment makes people feel genuine care about the others. In the educational field, McGonigal (2012) states that social connection is half of what keeps learners coming to class or scheduling sessions. Social



connection makes people arrive early and stay late just to talk and share experiences with the people part of the group.

Some specific ways of making learners feel related to the class involve to be interested on knowing how much they like talking about themselves, and how much they want to hear about the teacher. It also includes asking them if they enjoy or not being talked to while they are in the process of developing an activity or talking with them when it has been finished.

Relatedness can also be felt when the teacher is involved in being in touch with students. It means having some personal calls or talks with students in which they will be complimented by pointing out positive personality characteristics or congratulating them on any positive outcome they have had during a period. In this sense, it is important to make students feel in complete control over what was accomplished.

### **2.2.2.3. Autonomy**

Autonomy is the primary human need among the three innate psychological needs, and it is an important element of the self-determination theory. It refers to the need that people have to be causal and responsible agents of their own life and act in harmony with their integrated self. Therefore, autonomy implies a sense of integration and freedom, taking the perspective of the term volition: a sense of unpressured willingness to engage in an activity (Deci and Ryan, 2000). It occurs when individuals feel the desire to work and develop activities that are concordant with their integrated sense of self.

In addition, it is important to mention that according to Deci and Ryan (2000), the self-determination theory does not equate autonomy with independence or

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individualism. It means that individuals can feel autonomous and therefore intrinsically motivated even if they are in front of choices not made originally by them. It occurs only if individuals fully internalize the value of external regulatory factors into the self, like choices made by someone else, not necessarily themselves. Consequently, people do not feel autonomous when their behaviors and actions are experienced as controlled by forces that are not assimilated into the self.

When autonomy is fostered in learners of a second language in classrooms, learners' inner motivation increases. Autonomy takes place when learners start taking responsibility for their own learning, and recognizing that their learning success or failure are attributed to their own efforts and strategies rather than to factors outside their control.

Autonomy lets the individual take responsibility on what they do, and that can be reached if the individual feels free to have options and choices in what they have to do. In contrast, the presence of some external factors like rewards or deadlines, which restrict and control, also decrease intrinsic motivation since the individual becomes less interested, and consequently undermines their autonomy.

In this sense, the role teachers have in the learning process is of great relevance, since it has been proved that the teachers' style has a strong relationship with learners' intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, according to studies conducted by Noels, Clement and Pelletier (1999). One relevant conclusion was that autonomy-supporting teaching style fosters intrinsic motivation.

Those psychological needs are the basis for having intrinsic motivation, since their fulfillment motivates the individual to initiate behavior. When students' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are supported in Verónica Elizabeth Merchán García





the classroom, learners are more likely to internalize their motivation to learn and to be more autonomously engaged in what they are being taught.

The existence of those psychological needs is based on the principle that states that humans have an inherent potential which needs to be nurtured from the social environment. Well-being and growth are the results of the fulfillment of the three mentioned needs.

#### **2.2.2.4. Self-regulation: Autonomy and intrinsic motivation**

As it was stated, autonomy is one of the three psychological needs to have intrinsic motivation. Situations that give autonomy to an individual tend to develop in the individual intrinsic motivation since they show more interest and commitment. However, it does not mean that if a person only has external factors and reasons that lead them to learn a second language they cannot internalize those factors. In this sense, the term self –regulation plays an important role. Self-regulation refers to the internalization and integration of extrinsic motivation to the self. Internalization of external motivation occurs in four different forms since they are associated to four different types of extrinsic motivation, and they occur according to the degree to which extrinsically motivated activities are felt as autonomous.

#### **Types of extrinsic motivation**

The four distinct types of extrinsic motivation proposed by the self-determination theory are differentiated according to the degree of autonomy presence. It can be associated with differentiated classroom practices, such as autonomy-supportive versus controlling ones. They are: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and integrated regulation.



*External regulation* is the least autonomous type of extrinsic motivation. In this, behaviors take place to obtain a reward or to avoid a punishment. Such behaviors commonly disappear when the controlling conditions are removed. In learning, it occurs when learners only study or make any effort to get an acceptable grade or to avoid failing a subject. After his goal has been reached, learners stop making any effort to learn. This form of regulation is experienced as relatively controlling.

*Introjected regulation* is the kind of extrinsic motivation where behaviors take place to satisfy internal exigencies, such as self-aggrandizement or to avoid self-derogation. For example, with introjected regulation, learners study to feel proud of getting a good grade or to avoid feeling guilty for not having studied enough. It also includes behaviors that are enacted to satisfy learners' ego, where learners' self-esteem is correlated to their performance in an activity. It implies that learners feel pressured to learn in order to avoid shame of not being good enough or to feel worthy. This kind of regulation is also felt as controlling.

The third kind of extrinsic motivation is *Identified regulation*, which in comparison to the previous two kinds, reflects a greater presence of autonomy. Here, behaviors are enacted because they are considered valuable or important for the learner. For example, learners might study a second language because it is important to master it in order to have future competence in something bigger like working in the country where the target language is spoken.

Finally, *integrated regulation* is the most autonomous type of extrinsic motivation. In this kind, the identified regulations have been synthesized, combined and coproduced with other aspects of the self. For example, a student might study a

second language because doing so enables him to enter a profession in which he can help a cultural group in need to interact with society, which is consistent with his values and interests.

Both identified regulation and integrated regulation are perceived as relatively autonomous, since they emanate from the self and are congruent with it. The following chart proposed by Niemiec and Ryan (2009), shows the internalization continuum that illustrates the various types of extrinsic motivation and its internal perceived locus of causality, which refers to the extent to which individuals perceive their actions as caused by internal or external reasons. It is a measure of felt autonomy for behavior.

<b>Regulatory styles</b>	<b>External regulation</b>	<b>Introjected regulation</b>	<b>Identified regulation</b>	<b>Integrated regulation</b>
<b>Associated processes</b>	Salience of external rewards or punishments	Satisfy internal contingencies: ego involvement	Find value/importance in an activity	Synthesize identifications with other aspects of the self
<b>Perceived locus of causality</b>	External	Somewhat external	Somewhat internal	Internal


**Continuum of relative autonomy**  


Table 1: Continuum of relative autonomy

This differentiation is useful for the process of understanding and working on the internalization of extrinsic motivation, which involves self-regulation and integration. Internalization is relevant since it can lead people to self-initiate and maintain volition for adopting a behavior, and specifically for learning a second



language, which many times may not be inherently interesting or enjoyable due to different factors. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that when learners have well-internalized extrinsic motivation for learning, they learn better and report higher levels of psychological health, which is totally beneficial for them.

### **Implications of autonomy-supportive environments in education**

According to Reeve (2009), the presence of autonomy-supportive environments and teaching styles in educational contexts fosters intrinsic motivation in students and are associated with positive outcomes in the classroom. For Reeve, an autonomy-supportive style consists of the following aspects: adopting the students' perspective, welcoming students' thoughts, feelings, and actions, and supporting the students' motivational development and capacity for autonomous self-regulation. Autonomy-supportive style is put into practice through behaviors such as nurturing inner motivational sources, providing choice, providing rationales for requested behaviors, relying on non-controlling and informational language, encouraging student's experimentation and self-initiation, displaying patience, providing feedback and acknowledging and accepting expressions of negative affect.

A student feels autonomy in learning when the pressure of being evaluated diminishes. It also happens when they have the perception of having a voice and choice in academic activities in which they are engaged. It is facilitated when teachers provide students with a meaningful rationale for why a learning activity is useful.

The opposite teaching style is a controlling one, which can thwart inner motivation in learners. It includes behaviors such as the use of external sources of



motivation, neglecting rationales, the use of pressuring language, displaying impatience for students to produce the right answer, and proclaiming power to overcome students' complaints and expressions of negative affect. In other words, a controlling style presses students to behave in a particular way, ignoring their feelings and personal needs (Deci & Ryan, 1985), by the use of techniques such as surveillance, rewards, excessive personal control, and even intimidation.

### **Autonomy-supportive teaching style: implications for teachers**

One of the main reasons why teachers do not use an autonomy-supportive teaching style and prefer to use a controlling one is the existence of external pressures that are over them (Ryan and Brown, 2005). It occurs in many cases when teachers feel more controlled in their own professional activities. A study conducted to twelfth-grade Canadian teachers by Pelletier (2002) demonstrated that the more teachers perceive pressure from above, the less autonomous they are toward teaching, which at the same time was associated with teachers being more controlling with students. The pressures teachers can feel from above refer to different obligations, for example having to comply with an imposed curriculum, or the pressure toward performance standards. Once the teachers' satisfaction of autonomy is weakened, they commonly put less enthusiasm and creativity in their teaching practices. All of this pushes teachers most of the time to rely on extrinsically focused strategies that leave in second place other more effective, interesting, and inspiring teaching practices that could be implemented.



### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the methodology used to develop this research. The study started with a diagnosis in order to establish the current state of students' motivation and to identify strategies and tools teachers can use to promote intrinsic motivation in their students when learning English.

With this purpose, a mixed methods approach was applied, which includes qualitative and quantitative components. Firstly, the qualitative method was used to explore and understand perceptions, feelings, emotions, and opinions about students' motivation. The data was collected through a focus group and interviews. On the other hand, a quantitative method was also used to determine the kind of motivation students have and in that way identify whether there was lack of intrinsic motivation. Therefore, two questionnaires were applied to 30 students in order to gather information that could be measured. The study was cross-sectional since it involved data collected at a defined time. The study used a descriptive analysis of the gathered information. The following chart represents the instruments used to give an answer to each of the research questions proposed at the onset.

<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Instruments</b>
How motivated are students for learning English in Second of Bachillerato at Unidad Educativa Salesiana María Auxiliadora?	IMI Questionnaire SRQ-A Questionnaire Interview
What can teachers do to create intrinsic motivation in their students when learning English?	Focus group Interview



### 3.1 Participants

Since this research is focused on María Auxiliadora High School's students, all participants were individuals taken from this High school. Therefore, this research had as participants both teachers and students, who participated through the application of different instruments.

About teachers, a group of 7 English teachers, five women and two men, were part of this research. They work with students from eighth grade to third Bachillerato in María Auxiliadora High School. They work a total of 8 hours per week with each class, and most of them teach to a total of 3 classes. Therefore, their total working hours per week are 24 hours. The purpose they follow for teaching English is to fulfill the requirements of the current educational curriculum. Additionally, the High School' teachers focus on preparing students to learn the language to maintain the institution accreditation as a Cambridge school.

About the group of students who participated in this research, a sample of students from Second of Bachillerato from UESMA was taken into account. A complete class was taken to participate, which meant a total of 32 students who belong to Second of Bachillerato "C". Their English level ranges from A2 to B1, according to the international standards from the Common European Framework for language learning (CEFR). Their ages were between 16 and 17 years old. Their socio-cultural status is medium-high and high, taking into account that this is a private high school with a high monthly fee they have to cover. In order to develop this research study, it was necessary to count with the authorization and consent from students' representatives to participate in it. From the total of 32 students who were planned to participate, 2 of them didn't have their representatives' consent.



Students were required in this study in order to obtain details about their current state of motivation for learning English and information about factors and conditions they consider would motivate them the most. Teachers were inquired too through a focus group in order to get information about what they consider to be motivation and how motivated they think their students are.

### **3.2. Instruments**

The qualitative instruments used in this research were a focus group with teachers and structured interviews with students. Additionally, the quantitative instruments used were two questionnaires applied to students: Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) and Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-A), both of them from the Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Several instruments were used in this research study to be able to triangulate information, which means to compare different data sources. Therefore, by applying all those instruments it was possible to collect and compare information to establish stronger foundations about the necessity of applying a teaching style with students that could fulfill their lack of motivation and autonomy in classes.

### **3.3. Data Collection Procedures and Data Analysis**

#### **3.3.1 Qualitative Methods**

##### *Focus Group*

In this research, a focus group was carried out as a tool to collect qualitative information (Appendix 1.) A focus group consists on a number of people, usually between 6 and 12, brought together with a moderator to discuss and share their point of view on a specific topic (Kawamura & Morgan, 1998). The focus group was Verónica Elizabeth Merchán García





carried out with seven English teachers from María Auxiliadora High School: two men and five women. The purpose of using this tool in this research was to identify different views around the existence of intrinsic motivation in students, and to gain understanding of the perspective of teachers towards how they feel regarding student motivation and the tools they consider important to build the desire to learn. The session took place on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at one of the classrooms of the institution. It was carried out in the teachers' mother tongue to collect meaningful data and semi-structured questions were used. Responses were audio recorded.

The analysis of the focus group started with the transcription of the audio-recorded information. Then, Member Checking was used to help improve the accuracy and credibility of the gathered information. With this technique, participants reviewed the transcriptions and affirmed that they reflected their views, feelings and experiences, and in this way, they also affirmed the accuracy and completeness of the transcription.

After this process, the information collected in the focus group was translated into the target language to be analyzed through content analysis. Content analysis is an instrument of qualitative data reduction and categorization based on central consistencies and meaning, which is useful to indicate the presence of meaningful pieces of content known as units of meaning. Content Analysis can be done at different levels, depending on the objective of the analysis (Stewart, 2007). This research pursued semantic level since the objective of this research was to identify units of meaning that would describe the phenomenon of intrinsic motivation in students. For applying this analysis, an extensive strategy was used, in which the



elements were reduced to a maximum to discuss the selected number of elements exhaustively.

The process of content analysis started by the creation of themes and subcategories were participant's interventions could be grouped once they had been broken down and reduced into manageable units of analysis, which is also known as coding (Stewart, 2007).

### *Interview*

Additionally, in this research, interviews with students were carried out (Appendix 2.) Interviews are data collection methods where questions are asked by an *interviewer* to an individual to obtain information and perceptions on a specific topic (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). There are different types of interviews. In this research, a structured interview was applied to four students from Second of Bachillerato, who represented 14% of the total population of class. The purpose of using interviews with students was to obtain students' perceptions and points of view on their motivation to learn English, and identify factors that influence them at the moment of learning. The interviews took place on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in one of the classrooms of the institution. Each interview was audio recorded. They were carried out in the students' mother tongue to collect meaningful data.

To analyze the collected information, first the audio-recorded information was transcribed and translated into the target language. Then, content analysis was used to examine given answers. One more time, content analysis of the interviews pursued the semantic level in order to identify units of meaning that would refer to



intrinsic motivation in students. The extensive strategy was also used, where elements were reduced to a maximum to discuss the selected elements exhaustively. Participants' answers were coded into units of analysis and grouped in themes and subcategories.

### **3.3.2. Quantitative Methods**

#### *Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI)*

The Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) is a multidimensional measurement from the Self-Determination theory used to evaluate participants' experienced intrinsic motivation while performing a given activity (Ryan, 1982). The instrument originally assesses six subscales or dimensions: interest/enjoyment, perceived competence, effort, value/usefulness, felt pressure and tension. It uses a series of statements which have to be responded through a Likert scale of 7 points, according to how true statements are for participants.

According to the purpose of this research, an adapted version with four subscales relevant to the issue of autonomy was used (Appendix 3.) It is important to mention that according to its creator (Ryan, 1982), the inclusion or exclusion of specific subscales have no impact on the others. The subscales included the following dimensions: seven items for students' interest/enjoyment dimension, five items for perceived competence dimension, five items for perceived choice dimension and five items for pressure/tension dimension; all of them towards the activities developed in the English class during the previous 3 weeks, related to the content of Unit 7 of the student's book Think 4. Students had to rate statements on a 1 to 7 scale according to how true they were for them.



Previous to its application, the questionnaire was piloted through its testing with a group of students with similar characteristics. Piloting this instrument was helpful to identify a few words difficult to understand for students, which were replaced with synonyms easier to understand for them. Additionally, the structure of this questionnaire was modified according to the provided suggestions and observations.

The questionnaire was administered to students on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and it was carried out in the students' classroom. It was applied in the target language and the researcher was present in order to help students understand the questionnaire's items when needed. The participants for this research were 30 students, who represent the Second of Bachillerato "C". Two students were excluded since they did not have with their parents' authorization. Therefore, the findings were based on 94% percent of the students' population in that class.

Once information was gathered, a descriptive analysis was carried out. To start, the Cronbach's alpha test was used to determine the internal consistency of the items in the questionnaire. The alpha coefficient obtained was 0.828, which means that the questionnaire showed high internal consistency. Once its consistency was determined, a combination of items was carried out according to the four dimensions that were planned to analyze. In that way, it was possible to create new variables based on grouping values of the existing ones into a set of 7 categories that rated how acceptable the level of each dimension in participants was.

Quantitative data was analyzed through the use of SPSS 25.0.

*Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-A)*



This is a questionnaire from the Self-determination Theory (Ryan and Connell, 1989) that helps differentiate the four types of extrinsic motivation learners have according to how regulated learners' motivation for a particular behavior is. In that way, it is possible to identify relatively autonomous versus controlled behaviors in learners. In the questionnaire, four subscales related to why students do things are evaluated. The four subscales are: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and intrinsic motivation. Originally, it uses a set of 17 statements which have to be responded through a Likert scale of 4 points according to how true statements are for participants. For this research, the Likert scale was modified to include 5 points and not only 4 since it was important to use a scale with a neutral middle category (Appendix 4.)

The four subscales included the following dimensions: five items for students' external regulation, six items for introjected regulation, three items for identified regulation, and three items for intrinsic motivation. Students had to rate statements about why they do things in the English class on a 1 to 5 scale according to how true they were for them. The questionnaire was administered to students on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and it was carried out in the students' classroom. It was applied in the target language and the researcher was present in order to help students understand the questionnaire's items when needed.

The participants for this research were the same 30 students who participated in the previous questionnaire, who represent the Second of Bachillerato "C". Previously, the instrument was piloted with a group of students with similar characteristics. Piloting demonstrated that the questionnaire did not present difficulties or suggestions from participants.



Similar to the IMI questionnaire, a descriptive analysis was carried out and the Cronbach's Alpha was calculated, obtaining 0.72, as the coefficient, which means the questionnaire had acceptable internal consistency. Then, the scores for each of the four categories of self-regulation were calculated by averaging the items that made up each category. In that way, it was possible to determine the amount of students that have each of the four kinds of external motivation.

### **3.4. Ethical Considerations.**

As any research study, this project required the consent from participants. In the case of students, who are minors, it was necessary to have with the authorization and consent from their parents to participate, which included their collaboration with two questionnaires and an interview. From the total of 32 students who were initially included in the proposal, two did not have their representatives' consent.

To protect students' confidentiality and anonymity, their identities were protected and they were given freedom to withdraw at any time during this research. The information obtained was kept strictly confidential, with the sole purpose of scholarly research.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

In this chapter results and findings of the investigation are presented. The objectives of this investigation were to establish a diagnosis of the current state of students' motivation and to identify strategies and tools that teachers could use to promote intrinsic motivation in their students when learning English. After the collection and analysis of the data gathered through different quantitative and qualitative instruments, the following are the findings obtained.

#### 4.1 Qualitative Methods

##### *Focus group*

The focus group (FG) was helpful to determine teachers' perceptions about students' motivation. Also, it provided important conclusions about actions teacher can take in order to increase and develop intrinsic motivation in students, based on their experience and the challenges they face every day. Through content analysis of the focus group, four major themes were established with some subcategories. Results are presented through the description of each theme.

##### Perceived motivation

Teachers perceive that students normally have many reasons that motivate them to learn English. It depends on different factors, according to the student. However, most of teachers agreed that nowadays most students have external factors that motivate them, for example getting good grades. One participant's response summarized this perception:



*There are girls who work only because they want to have a grade. Few have a reason to think and say 'I want to learn English because it's going to be useful for me', and not because they have any kind of obligation. (FG, T1)*

Another participant mentioned other kind of external factors that motivate students: 'influences'. In that way, students feel motivated based on the influences they receive from people and the desire of reaching something bigger.

A subcategory in this theme was the *influence of the educational system* on students' motivation and freedom to enjoy learning. It was mentioned that since education is becoming more structured and formal, activities that could be more enjoyable for students cannot be done in class. One of the participants stated:

*Unfortunately, it is the system that sometimes restricts that kind of intrinsic motivation that we all have. (FG, T2)*

Teachers also mentioned that not all depends on the educational system. For them, it is also of great importance the role of teachers to motivate students, and the influence they create on learners since the first school years. According to two participants:

*If we motivate properly, we will influence positively or negatively on students. (FG, T3)*

### Autonomy support

This theme had some subcategories. One of them referred to the *degree in which teachers take into account students' perspectives*. They affirmed that taking





students perspectives can be 'a double-edged sword.' According to them, giving excessive consideration to students' perspectives can be negative. One teacher summarized this idea:

*There should always be a space between teacher and student. Always.*

*You can help them, you can guide them, but up to a limit. (FG, T3)*

Another subcategory was *freedom given to students*. Teachers consider that giving freedom to students in the class is a motivating tool to help them be creative and work with enthusiasm. Of course, they mentioned that it can only be done as long as it is controlled by the teacher. It implies the ability the teacher has to improvise according to the students' needs and adaptations that they can suggest. Opinions on that are the following:

*It is very good to give freedom to students, to let them choose what kind of activities they would like to do, as long as it is controlled. (FG, T4)*

*You must have the ability to improvise inside the classroom. (FG, T2)*

The last subcategory was the *perceived level of control and pressure on students*. Teachers affirmed that they do not consider they pressure their students nor have an excessive control over them. It would be negative for their learning. Another contribution to the topic stated that some students can feel pressure from the rest of their classmates.

*In a certain sense there is pressure, but not from the teacher but from the rest of the classmates. There are girls who have a very low level,*



*and they feel pressure because they are in a group where the rest know a lot. (FG, T1)*

### Perceived teacher's autonomy

An important theme referred to the autonomy teachers feel for planning and do their work. In that point, contrasting perceptions were shown. Some teachers expressed they feel controlled by a system they need to follow, which implies having some limitations. On the other hand, another teacher stated that although he always has a plan, it is flexible, so he can adapt it and work freely, so he feels autonomous in his classes.

*The system does influence, but I believe that each one owns their subject. (FG, T5)*

### Motivating suggestions

As a final theme, motivating suggestions were provided by teachers in order to increase or develop intrinsic motivation on students. They stated that there are always new things to learn and apply. They talked about giving students role models, different activities and motivational speeches. The suggestions collected through the focus group are part of the proposed guideline. One of their suggestions was:

*They are not only sitting or coming to classes to waste their time, so it is important to tell them that they are preparing themselves for the future. (FG, T1)*

The information obtained through this focus group was compared with the study made by Reeve and Halusic (2009), where the experiences and



recommendations of K-12 teachers about how to put motivational principles from Self-Determination Theory into classroom practice were presented. Comparing them, the themes and topics pointed out in both studies were similar since they were related to motivational aspects, such as taking students' perspectives into account, avoiding controlling practices and using autonomy-supportive styles. The study made by Reeve and Halusic (2009) also presents points of view and opinions from participants similar to the ones provided by teachers at María Auxiliadora High School, which is satisfactory to the goal of promoting autonomy-supportive teaching styles to develop and increase students' intrinsic motivation.

### ***Interviews***

Through the content analysis of the interviews (I) carried out with students, it was possible to define 4 major themes: reported motivation, perceived autonomy, perceived control and pressure, and desired motivating factors. Also, a number of sub-categories were identified. The following are the results and findings of the interviews.

#### Reported motivation

According to students, all of them feel motivated to learn English. Most of them mentioned external factors as reasons to learn English. Some of them included opportunities to find a job in the future or to study abroad. One student mentioned internal factors that motivate her to learn English. In her words:

*It is something that is really useful for us and I like it. I feel good speaking the language. (I, E1)*



As a subcategory, *interest and attention* in the class was evaluated through their responses. In that sense, although all students stated they feel motivated and predisposed to learn in the English class, most of them talked about the moments in which their interest and attention in the class gets lost. According to them, their interest in the class decreases according to some activities they have to develop; for example, they mentioned writing activities with topics that are irrelevant for them, listening and reading activities where they do not understand, grammar classes which are monotonous, or simply classes where they are tired because of other activities of the day. In spite of that, according to the interview, a student's opinion can summarize the general perception of all of them:

*I feel very predisposed to pay attention and do activities. I think it's not just a matter of the teacher, I think it's also issue of each student to give a little of them in the class. (I, E2)*

About this theme, it is important to mention that it is connected to the theme *Perceived motivation* from the teachers' focus group. By comparing reported motivation to perceived motivation, there is a contrast in the information collected from teachers and students. All students mentioned they felt motivated to learn English and they provided examples of internal factors that motivate them. However, teachers stated that nowadays most students seem to mainly have external factors to learn, such as getting good grades. In spite of that, they recognized that there are some students who show internal desire for learning.

### Perceived autonomy

According to the interview, almost all students mentioned that they feel autonomous in the English class most of the time because they feel free to work in

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activities where they can create something by themselves and they can share their opinions and points of view freely. However one student stated:

*The teacher does not let us decide on the activities because she already comes with everything planned and we must continue with everything quickly. (I, E3)*

As a subcategory of autonomy, students talked about their opinion on the *teacher's interest towards students' perspectives*. All of them said that they felt their teacher is interested on their perspectives since suggestions and opinions were always welcomed in class. One student stated:

*There is a space in most of the classes in which we talk about our points of view and how we feel, and I like it.(I, E4)*

Students' Perceived autonomy is related to the theme *Autonomy-support*, from the teachers' focus group. By contrasting teachers and students' perceptions, it is evidenced that students do not perceive autonomy when they are required to develop pre-established activities in the class. In that sense, teachers recognized that promoting student's autonomy could only be done in class as long as the control in the class were maintained.

#### Perceived control and pressure

Most students affirmed they did not feel excessive control from the teacher in the English class. One student stated:

*I do not feel pressured; the teacher lets us talk a lot. She dominates the class but does not control us. (I, E3)*



On the other side, one of them could explain that she felt pressured:

*I feel that in classes I am worried about what I should answer or about participating and seeing if it is right or wrong what I am going to answer. (I, E4)*

Relating this theme to the information collected through the focus group with teachers, it was determined that indeed, students commonly feel pressured or tense mainly when they try to get a correct answer to avoid feelings of embarrassment within the class in general if they are wrong.

#### Desired motivating factors

Students talked about things they would like to have in class to feel more motivated to learn and participate. Students gave suggestions about the topics they would like to work on, activities and games, and they also suggested changing the environment where they receive classes to feel more relaxed. One of them said:

*I think I'd like to have more activities like games or listening activities on topics that are more according to what we live. As we have always said in class, sometimes doing a listening with a song motivates us a lot. (I, E2)*

Comparing students and teachers opinions, teachers consider that motivation can be developed in students by showing them intrinsic reasons to learn a second language. On the other hand, students consider they are already motivated to learn English, but they could be more motivated if teachers developed more interesting and fun activities. Apparently, students already have reasons to learn, but they would



like to maintain that motivation through the use and development of more interesting activities.

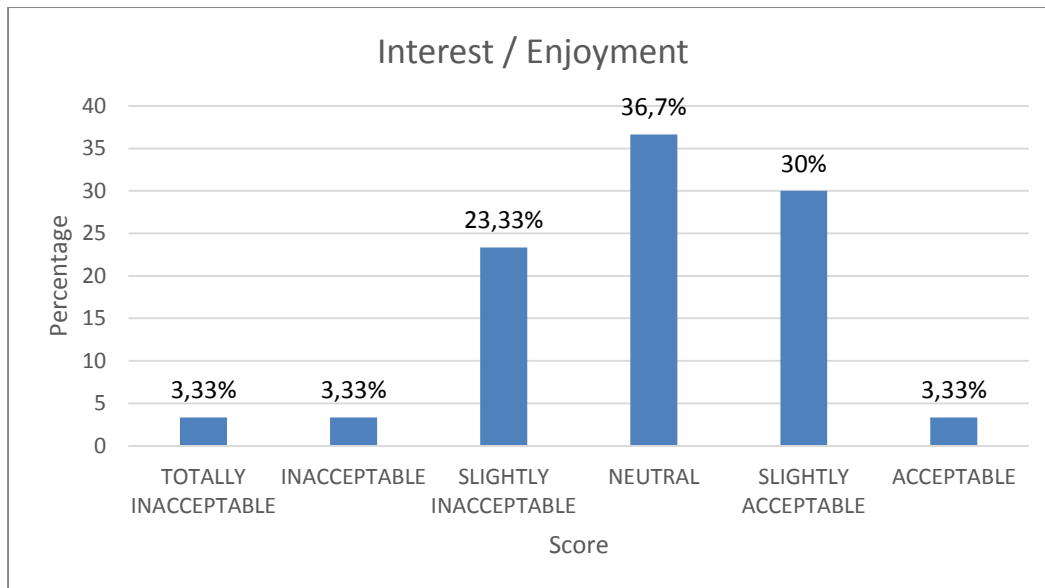
Finally, it is important to mention that the themes in the interviews can be compared to the ones present in the investigation made by Dornyei and Guilloteaux (2008), where 40 ESOL classrooms in South Korea were analyzed in order to measure students' motivation by a self-report questionnaire and a classroom observation instrument. Although interviews were not used in Dornyei and Guilloteaux' study, information about students reported motivation and their perceptions was also gathered. Both studies used similar themes to get information about the students' motivation.

All the information collected through these interviews was helpful to understand in a better way the current state of students' perceptions towards their own motivation and how they feel in their English class. Valuable information was gathered to be taken into account for the creation of the proposed guideline.

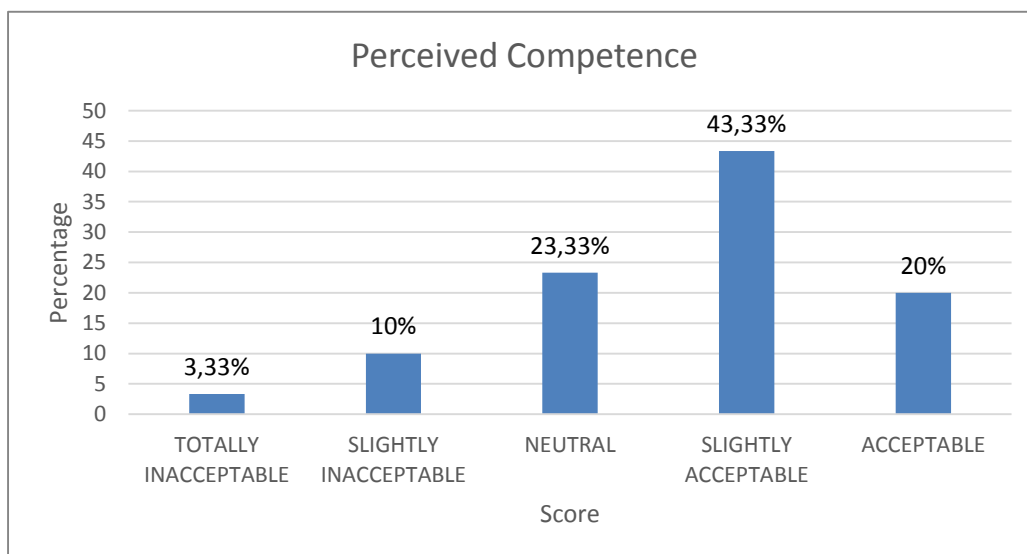
## **4.2. Quantitative Methods**

### ***Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI)***

The presence of intrinsic motivation in students was analyzed through a questionnaire applied to them. For that, four dimensions that are indicators of the existence of intrinsic motivation and perceived autonomy were evaluated. The four dimensions were: interest/enjoyment, perceived competence, perceived choice and pressure/tension. Their presence in the student participants was the following:

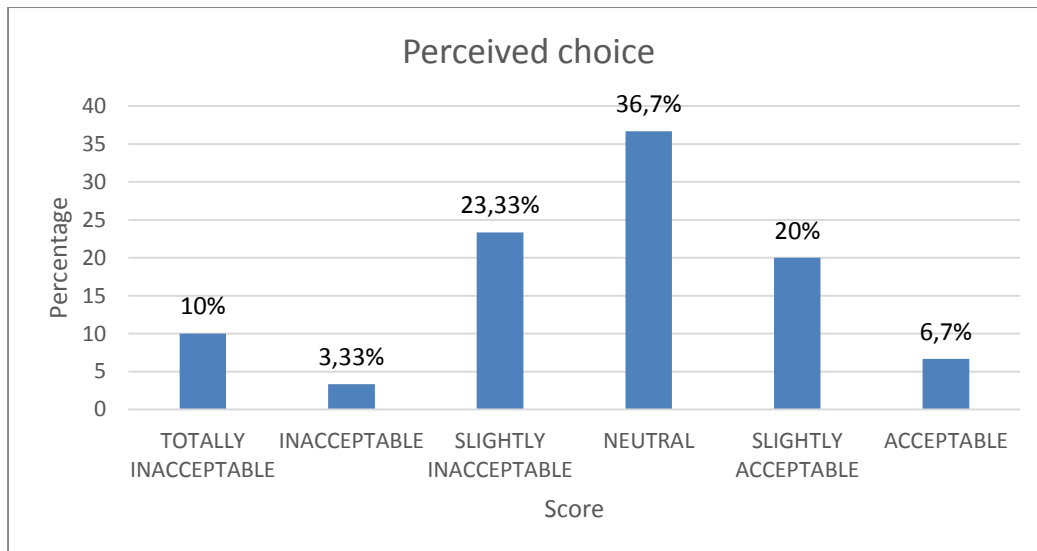


Graph 1: Presence of Interest/enjoyment in students

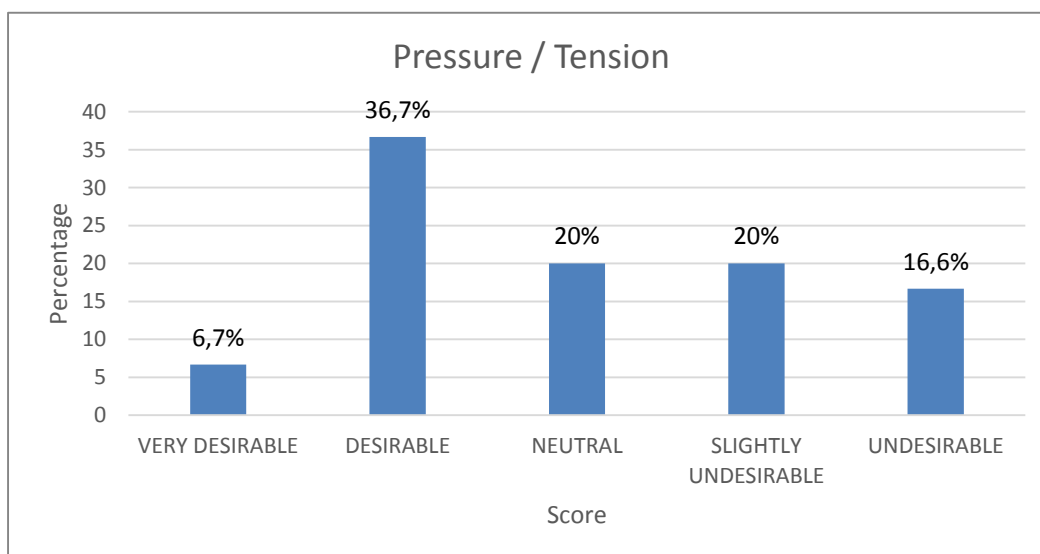


Graph 2: Presence of Perceived competence in students





Graph 3: Presence of perceived choice in students



Graph 4: Level of Pressure/Tension in students

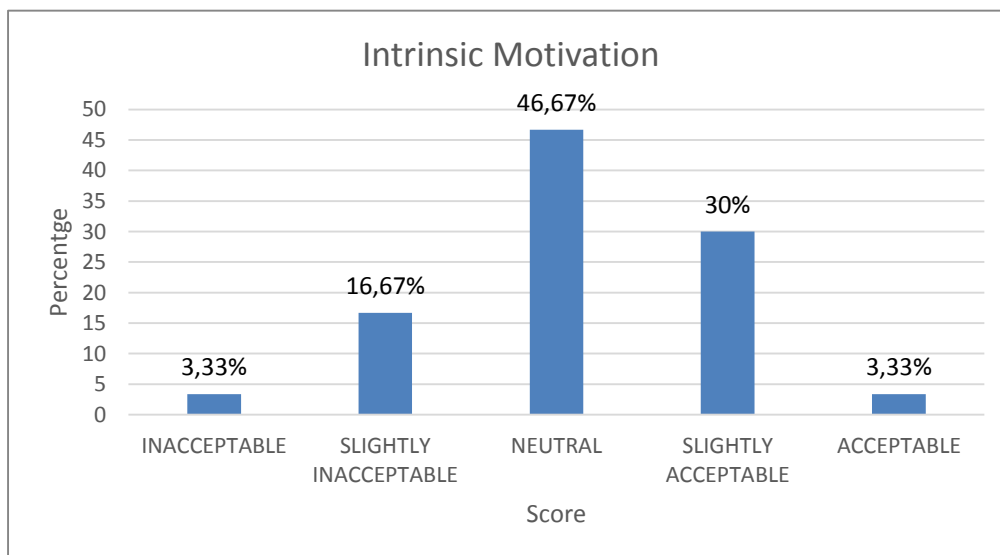
As it is shown in graphs 1 to 4, if we combine levels of totally and slightly unacceptable presence of each of the four dimensions, we can see that 30% of participants feel an unacceptable level of interest and enjoyment in the English classes, 13.3% of them feel an unacceptable level of perceived competence, 36.66% of them feel an unacceptable level of perceived choice, and 36.6% feel an undesirable level of pressure and tension.

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These findings indicate that most students feel competent for the English class and the activities they develop in it. However, for many of them, their interest and enjoyment in the class is low. They feel that there is no choice about doing or not the activities in the class and they feel pressured and tense while working in the class.

From the four dimensions analyzed with IMI questionnaire, two of them are directly related to the perceived autonomy of students: Perceived choice and pressure/tension dimensions. According to the results, it is demonstrated that those factors have the highest level of unacceptability in this study if we talk about intrinsic motivation; 36.6% each of them.

Graph 5 presents the level of intrinsic motivation, combining the presence of all the four factors analyzed.



*Graph 5:* Presence of intrinsic motivation in students

As we can see, 33.33% of students have an acceptable or high level of intrinsic motivation. 46.67% of students stay in a neutral position on the existence of

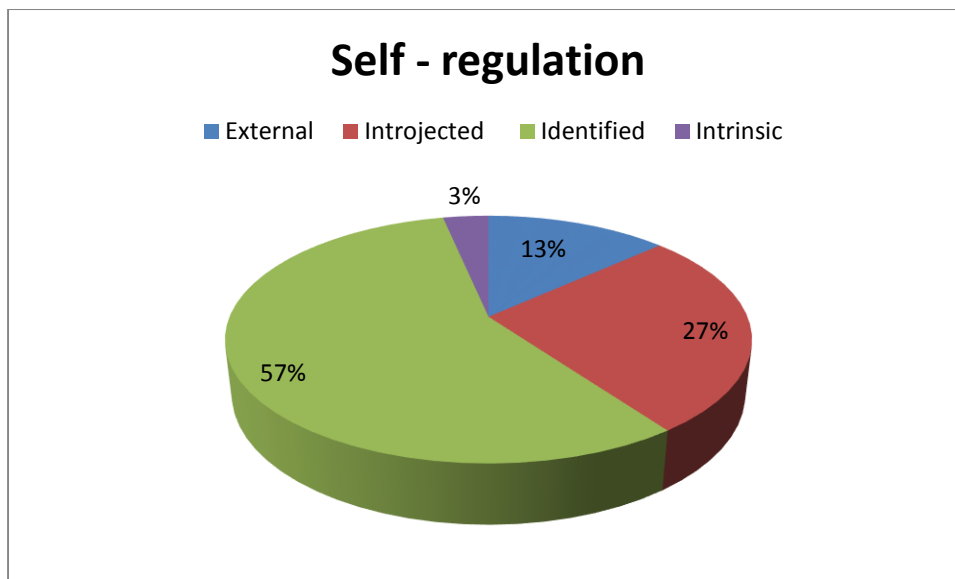


intrinsic motivation. Finally, 20% of students have an unacceptable level of intrinsic motivation since it is too low. In conclusion, it is necessary to increase and develop intrinsic motivation in 66.67% of students.

The findings facilitated by the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) in this research are consistent with the findings of other earlier studies. One of them, developed by Liu et al. (2006) used this questionnaire to identify students' intrinsic motivation, as well as students' needs for competence, choice and relatedness. The concluding results showed that the IMI questionnaire provided reliable results, which were also validated through comparisons based on its application in different contexts. In the current research the application of the questionnaire to students had similar circumstances. Therefore, the results provided by the questionnaire were also reliable.

### ***Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-A)***

Through the analysis of the Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire it was possible to determine the proportion of the four kinds of extrinsic motivation students have for doing things in the English class, based on how regulated their behaviors are. In that way, the current state of students' motivation was possible to determine. The results are shown in graph 6.



*Graph 6:* Amount of students with each kind of extrinsic motivation

According to the Self-determination theory, both Intrinsic and Identified regulated behaviors are perceived as relatively autonomous behaviors. As it is shown in Graph 6, only 3% of students have intrinsic regulated behaviors, and 57% of students have identified regulated behaviors.

On the other hand, 27% of students show the presence of Introjected regulation and 13% present external regulation. It indicates that their behaviors are perceived as relatively controlled. Therefore, it is evidenced that 40% of the students show a low level of perceived autonomy in the English class, which needs to be developed and increased in order to increase levels of intrinsic motivation.

The SRQ-A questionnaire has been applied in different contexts. In the study made by Gonzalez, Dowson, Brickman and McInerney (2005), the SRQ-A questionnaire was applied to different contexts to show its reliability and consistence in its structure. As a result, it was determined to be an effective instrument to determine self-regulated behaviors. Another interesting finding also stated that



results on this questionnaire can be reflected on academic achievement. The results obtained in the mentioned study are similar to the ones of the current research study when talking about contexts related to academic fields.

It is important to highlight the use of different instruments for collecting information in this research study. All of them contributed to validate the study since data sources could be compared, which gave more insight into the subject of intrinsic motivation and the necessity of autonomy in students.

There were not found contradictions in the information collected through different sources. Rather, strong foundations were established once the information reflected consistencies between them. As proof of this, students' answers to the two questionnaires and interview showed agreement. It can be mentioned that 36.67% of participants showed low levels of perceived autonomy according to the IMI questionnaire. This information could be verified with the information collected through the SRQ-A questionnaire, where it was determined that 40% of students had external and introjected regulation, which means their behaviors are less autonomous and more controlled.

Similar information was gathered through the interviews to students. From the total of participants, 25% of them stated clearly that they didn't feel autonomous in the class. Finally, these results could be supported with the teachers' responses in the focus group about the autonomy-support they give to their students. Results showed that they would like to support the students' autonomy, but it was not always possible because of the system and planning they must follow.



In that way, triangulation of information was of great importance to make results valid and reliable. The results presented and provided by the use of quantitative and qualitative methods contributed to determine the presence of low levels of intrinsic motivation in an important amount of students, and specifically, low levels of perceived autonomy. It has been evidenced the necessity of applying new teaching styles that could develop or increase that kind of motivation and satisfy in better ways students' need of perceived autonomy.

As the result of the analysis, a guideline for the use of an Autonomy-supportive teaching style is provided (Appendix 5), which has been created in order to help teachers increase and develop intrinsic motivation in students who are learning English as a second language, through working on students' perceived autonomy. This guide is based on the Self-Determination theory, developed by Deci & Ryan (2000) and some principles and acts of instruction about autonomy-support, created by Reeve (2009).



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Conclusions

The research study conducted was aimed to show and propose English teachers a teaching style that could promote and develop intrinsic motivation for learning English in students of Second of Bachillerato at UESMA. As a result of the study, a guideline was created in order to assist teachers in adopting a more appropriate teaching style that could help students to develop and increase their learning intrinsic motivation: an autonomy-supportive teaching style.

Prior to the creation of the guideline, in the research process it was confirmed that low levels of intrinsic motivation in 20% of students in second of Bachillerato at UESMA exist. Additionally, a thorough research led the author to identify low levels of perceived autonomy in 36.67% of students. Autonomy is one of three psychological needs that every individual possesses and needs to fulfill in order to have intrinsically motivated behaviors (Deci and Ryan, 1985). As a result, this study focused on this component. Promoting autonomy in students is central to education, since students' perceived autonomy has been proved to be an important factor on their intrinsic motivation for learning (Deci and Ryan, 2000). It involves respecting students and their choices, and motivating them to be responsible of their acts. For these reasons, a guideline for teachers was designed in order to assist them in adopting an autonomy-supportive teaching style that could promote students' autonomy in their learning process.



In order to identify levels of motivation in students when learning a second language, a qualitative and quantitative approach was adopted, using a set of complementary methods and instruments that could help in the process of getting to conclusions. It included the application of quantitative instruments through two questionnaires to students. Also, qualitative information was gathered through an interview to students, and a focus group to teachers. The qualitative methods were helpful to collect information that included some factors and conditions that influence on students' motivation. After the analysis of the state of students' motivation for learning English, the author could determine and confirm the necessity of helping students to increase their levels of intrinsic motivation, for which applying a new teaching style could be helpful for students.

The study focused on students of second of Bachillerato at Unidad Educativa Salesiana María Auxiliadora. The participants were a complete class of students from that level, which represented a sample of 31% of the total population, considering that the population was students of second of bachillerato. In that sample, 13% of participants collaborated on a personal interview about the topic of intrinsic motivation. The sample size was appropriated to have an acceptable confidence level of the obtained results. With the results, it was possible to identify lack of intrinsic motivation on an important number of students. The results were generalized to the total of the population (three classes of second of bachillerato.)

## **5.2 Recommendations**

After the development of this research, four recommendations could be proposed. For each conclusion, a recommendation has been designed.





Through the creation of a guideline for English teachers that assists them in the process of adopting an autonomy-supportive teaching style, students' intrinsic motivation for learning can be positively affected. The application of this guideline and its principles of instruction in further research is suggested. After its application, the results and findings of this research could be contrasted and compared to the ones obtained in further research in order to achieve more conclusive results.

An important aspect to consider in the development of this research is that it was focused on the Autonomy psychological need for the development of the guideline. However, it could be more interesting if a research proposal is made to combine this element with the Competence and Relatedness psychological needs. This is because the three of them are factors that influence on intrinsic motivation, according to the Self-determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Also, each of them is closely related and in some cases one could influence on the others.

Furthermore, the collected information in the research process through qualitative and quantitative approaches was used with the sole purpose of identifying levels of motivation for learning in students, and levels of perceived autonomy in their learning process. However, the gathered information through the methodology applied in this research was rich in details about students' perceptions about their teachers, their perceived performance in class, the reasons that move them to behave in a certain way, and their personal opinions and suggestions about what would motivate them the most. That information could also be used to get deeper conclusions and identify lack of other components that influence on intrinsic motivation in order to get more conclusive information. Also, it could be possible to



develop and analyze correlations between the results obtained with different instruments.

As it was stated, the study was applied to a representative sample, which included the application of questionnaires to 31% of the total of students of second of bachillerato, and their participation was confidential. It would be interesting in order to put into practice the proposed guideline that teachers could apply the questionnaires used in this methodology to the total of students they have. It would be useful in order to get individual information of each student to get a general overview with detailed information of each student's perceived intrinsic motivation and perceived autonomy. With this information, the teacher would be able to focus on students who show the lowest levels of those factors.



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## APPENDICES



## Appendix 1

### FOCUS GROUP STRUCTURE

**Date:** March 28, 2018

**Place:** Unidad Educativa Salesiana María Auxiliadora,

**Topic:** Motivation in students

**Moderator:** Verónica Merchán

#### Participants:

- T1 8<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher
- T2 9<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher
- T3 10<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher
- T4 1<sup>st</sup> Bachillerato teacher
- T5 3<sup>rd</sup> Bachillerato teacher
- T6 3<sup>rd</sup> Bachillerato teacher
- T7 English Area Coordinator

#### Questions

1. Qué se les viene a la mente cuando escuchan la palabra motivación y motivación intrínseca.
2. En términos generales, ¿consideran que sus estudiantes tienen motivación intrínseca para aprender en su clase de inglés?
  - a. ¿Cuáles creen que son las verdaderas razones para que sus alumnas aprendan inglés?
    - i. ¿Creen que están interesados en aprender cosas nuevas?
    - ii. ¿Creen que solo están interesados en obtener buenas calificaciones o en evitar malas notas?
3. ¿Qué tan importante es para ustedes involucrar a sus alumnas con su clase? (hacerlas sentir parte de la clase) ¿Han sentido que no están involucrados con la clase? En qué casos has experimentado eso.
4. ¿Para ustedes, es importante tomar en cuenta la perspectiva de las estudiantes? Es decir, tomar en cuenta sus pensamientos, sentimientos y las





situaciones por las que atraviesan, en lo que se refiere al desarrollo y planificación de sus clases?

5. ¿Consideran que sus estudiantes se sienten presionados o tienen un alto nivel de control durante las actividades en su clase?
6. En sus actividades laborales, se sienten controlados o limitado, ya sea por obligaciones con las que cumplir (currículum, planificaciones, autoridades, etc.) Qué tan autónomo se siente en la planificación y desarrollo de sus clases? (actuar según sus criterios)
7. ¿Considera que debería cambiar algo en la forma en que maneja su clase para incrementar la motivación intrínseca de sus alumnas para aprender Inglés?



## Appendix 2

### Interview for students

**Date:** April 4th, 2018

**Place:** Unidad Educativa Salesiana María Auxiliadora

**Topic:** Motivation in students

Type of interview: Structured Individual Interview

**Interviewer:** Mr. Xavier Naranjo

#### Participants:

- E1
- E2
- E3
- E4

#### Questions:

1. ¿Qué es para usted motivación?
2. ¿Se siente motivada para aprender en su clase de inglés?
3. ¿Cuál es la razón que le lleva a aprender Inglés? (deseo por aprender nuevas cosas, obtener buenas calificaciones, cumplir con un requisito, etc.)
4. ¿Está predispuesta a prestar atención y aprender en su clase de inglés? ¿En qué tipo de actividades ha notado que su nivel de atención disminuye?
5. ¿Cree que su docente adopta y toma en cuenta la perspectiva de las estudiantes? (pensamientos, sentimientos, situaciones que atraviesan, etc.)
6. ¿Cree que su profesor promueve su autonomía en las clases? (capacidad de sentirse libre y a la vez responsable de elegir cómo llevar a cabo las actividades propuestas)
7. En sus clases, ¿siente un alto nivel de control por parte del docente durante las actividades? ¿Se siente presionada?
8. ¿Qué cosas preferiría que su docente hiciera para tener una clase en la que se sienta más motivada a aprender?

**Appendix 3****IMI QUESTIONNAIRE****Introduction**

Dear student,

This questionnaire is designed to determine how motivated you are for learning in your English class and what factors influence your motivation. Your responses will only be used for research purposes.

**Directions**

This questionnaire is based on the activities developed in the English class during the last 3 weeks, related to the content of Unit 7. For each of the following statements, please indicate **how true they are for you**, using the following scale:

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

Not at all true

somewhat true

Very true

STATEMENT	SCORE
1. While I was working on the tasks I was thinking about how much I enjoyed them.	
2. I did not feel at all nervous about doing the tasks.	
3. I felt that it was my choice to do the tasks.	
4. I think I am pretty good at these tasks.	
5. I found the tasks very interesting.	
6. I felt tense while doing the tasks.	
7. I think I did pretty well at the activities, compared to other students.	
8. Doing the tasks was fun.	
9. I felt relaxed while doing the tasks.	
10. I enjoyed doing the tasks very much.	
11. I didn't really have a choice about doing the tasks.	
12. I am satisfied with my performance at the tasks.	
13. I was anxious while doing the tasks.	
14. I thought the tasks were very boring.	
15. I felt like I was doing what I wanted to do while I was working on the tasks.	
16. I felt capable of doing the tasks.	
17. I thought the tasks were very interesting.	



18. I felt pressured while doing the tasks.	
19. I felt like I had to do the tasks.	
20. I would describe the tasks as very enjoyable.	
21. I did the tasks because I had no choice.	
22. After working at the tasks for a while, I felt pretty competent.	



## Appendix 4

### SRQ-A QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear student,

The present questionnaire is designed to determine the reasons you as student have for doing things and participating in your English class. Your **responses will only be used for research purposes.**

#### Directions

For each of the following statements, please indicate **how true they are for you**, by placing an **X** in the answer that represents you.

#### Why I Do Things

1. I do my classwork so that the teacher won't yell at me.  
 Very true       Sort of true       Neutral       Not very true  
 Not at all true
2. I do my classwork because I want the teacher to consider I'm a good student.  
 Very true       Sort of true       Neutral       Not very true  
 Not at all true
3. I do my classwork because I want to learn new things.  
 Very true       Sort of true       Neutral       Not very true  
 Not at all true
4. I do my classwork because I'll feel bad about myself if I don't do it.  
 Very true       Sort of true       Neutral       Not very true  
 Not at all true
5. I do my classwork because it's fun.  
 Very true       Sort of true       Neutral       Not very true  
 Not at all true
6. I do my classwork because that's the rule.  
 Very true       Sort of true       Neutral       Not very true  
 Not at all true
7. I enjoy doing my classwork.  
 Very true       Sort of true       Neutral       Not very true  
 Not at all true
8. I participate in class because I want the other students to think I'm smart.



- ( ) Very true      ( ) Sort of true      ( ) Neutral      ( ) Not very true  
( ) Not at all true
9. I participate in class because I'll feel bad about myself if I don't try.  
( ) Very true      ( ) Sort of true      ( ) Neutral      ( ) Not very true  
( ) Not at all true
10. I try to participate in class because it's fun to answer questions.  
( ) Very true      ( ) Sort of true      ( ) Neutral      ( ) Not very true  
( ) Not at all true
11. I try to participate in class because that's what I am supposed to do.  
( ) Very true      ( ) Sort of true      ( ) Neutral      ( ) Not very true  
( ) Not at all true
12. I try to answer questions by participating in class to find out if I'm right or wrong.  
( ) Very true      ( ) Sort of true      ( ) Neutral      ( ) Not very true  
( ) Not at all true
13. I try to do well in the English class because that's what I am supposed to do.  
( ) Very true      ( ) Sort of true      ( ) Neutral      ( ) Not very true  
( ) Not at all true
14. I try to do well in the English class so my teachers will think I'm a good student.  
( ) Very true      ( ) Sort of true      ( ) Neutral      ( ) Not very true  
( ) Not at all true
15. I try to do well in the English class because I like doing a good job on my school work in general.  
( ) Very true      ( ) Sort of true      ( ) Neutral      ( ) Not very true  
( ) Not at all true
16. I try to do well in the English class because I will get in trouble if I don't.  
( ) Very true      ( ) Sort of true      ( ) Neutral      ( ) Not very true  
( ) Not at all true
17. I try to do well in the English class because I'll feel really bad about myself if I don't do well.  
( ) Very true      ( ) Sort of true      ( ) Neutral      ( ) Not very true  
( ) Not at all true

Appendix 5

**Autonomy-Supportive Teaching  
for developing Intrinsic Motivation  
in English Students**

**A guideline for teachers**



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## Introduction

The Autonomy-Supportive Teaching Guideline has been created in order to help teachers to increase and develop intrinsic motivation in students who are learning English as a second language through working on students' perceived autonomy. This guide is based on the Self-Determination theory developed by Deci & Ryan (2000), and on some principles and acts of instruction about autonomy-support created by Reeve (2009).

According to Self-Determination Theory, every individual has three basic psychological needs:

- Competence
- Relatedness
- Autonomy

By nurturing feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in students, it is possible to generate integrated regulation, which is the internalization of previous external-to-the-self motivation. Therefore, the fulfillment of these psychological needs leads the individual to have intrinsic motivation to initiate any specific behavior. In this sense, when students' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are supported in the classroom, they are more likely to internalize their motivation to learn.

After the analysis of results obtained through a research study, it has been demonstrated that teachers can do help nurture students' need of perceived autonomy. For this reason, this guideline is focused on the autonomy psychological need in order to help students be more autonomously engaged in what they are being taught, by assisting teachers on how to put into practice an autonomy-supportive teaching style.



### Glossary of terms

- **Self-determination:** It is focused on the dominant role intrinsic motivation plays in an individual's behavior. This theory refers to the degree to which an individual's behavior is self-motivated and self-determined.
- **Autonomy:** Autonomy is the primary human need among the three innate psychological needs and it is an important element of Self-determination theory. It refers to the need that people have to be causal and responsible agents of their own life and act in harmony with their integrated self. Therefore, autonomy implies a sense of integration and freedom
- **External regulation:** It is a type of extrinsic motivation. In this, behaviors take place to obtain a reward or to avoid a punishment. Such behaviors commonly disappear when the controlling conditions are removed. In learning, it occurs when learners only study or make any effort to get an acceptable grade or to avoid failing a subject. After their goal has been reached, learners stop making any effort to learn.
- **Introjected regulation:** It is the kind of extrinsic motivation where behaviors take place to satisfy internal exigencies, such as self-aggrandizement or to avoid self-derogation. It includes behaviors that are enacted to satisfy learners' ego, where learners' self-esteem is correlated to their performance in an activity.
- **Integrated regulation:** This kind of extrinsic motivation reflects a greater presence of autonomy. Here, behaviors are enacted because they are considered valuable or important for the learner.
- **Intrinsic regulation:** It is the most autonomous type of extrinsic motivation. In this kind, the identified regulations have been synthesized, combined and coproduced with other aspects of the self.



- **Student-centered teaching:** It is a teaching method where students' needs and abilities are the first consideration within the class. It involves active learning from students, whose learning styles influence directly on the design of a course.



## **SECTION A. ABOUT THE GUIDELINE**

### **Autonomy and its importance**

Autonomy is the human quality of being causal and responsible agents of one's own actions and living in harmony according to one's beliefs and perceptions, without the influence of external forces. According to the self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan (2000), the more autonomous a person feels in any field, the more intrinsically motivated he or she is for initiating any specific behavior. In the educational field, students can perceive autonomy on their actions within the class when teachers support it in an appropriate way.

Consequently, autonomy-supportive teaching can be understood as the teachers' actions to foster inner motivational sources in students. It can be put into practice through actions such as: providing choices to students, providing rationales and explaining value, relying on non-controlling and informational language, displaying patience and considering students' perspectives (Reeve, 2009).

The use of this teaching style can contribute to increase and develop students' intrinsic motivation in any subject or field. In this case, it can be a potential tool for teaching a second language. When students feel autonomous in their learning, they have the perception of having a voice and choice in academic activities. Therefore, it is easier to get students to be conscious of their responsibility on their learning process and be more open to enjoy what they are about to learn. Additionally, the use of autonomy-supportive teaching styles in the classroom has been proved to be related to positive outcomes from students (Reeve, 2009).

### **What is this guideline about and who is it for?**

This guideline explains how to put into practice an autonomy-supportive teaching style for English teachers in order to promote student's autonomy in their learning process. The aim of the guideline is to assist teachers in promoting and supporting students' autonomy in the classroom.

It is important to highlight that teachers' role in supporting autonomy in students is limited. They cannot directly give students a sense of it. Instead, teachers



can provide students with contexts and relationships rich in supportiveness so that students can begin to experience and put into practice their own sense of autonomy.

This guideline is centered in a set of acts of instruction that are necessary to promote autonomy in students and which make this guideline a practical tool for teachers. The guideline also includes detailed examples that show how the acts of instruction can be applied to real contexts inside the classroom.

### **Importance and necessity of a guideline**

The existence of a guideline based on autonomy-support responds to the students' necessity of having a sense of autonomy. Every human has this psychological need, and teenagers are not the exception. The fulfillment of this necessity brings well-being and psychological health to the ones who possess it since it is a basis for having intrinsic motivated behaviors. In this guideline, teachers will get guidance on how to help students feel and develop a sense of autonomy. The guide aims to maximize the students' perceived independence, self-regulation and responsibility to increase students' inner motivation, through informing teachers about ways of creating a supportive context to promote their autonomy.

Promoting autonomy in learners is central to education, since it involves respecting students and their choices, and motivating them to be responsible of their acts. Putting it into practice can be a challenge for teachers since it can be confused easily with permissiveness and loss of control in the classroom. It can happen when teachers do not know how to best promote autonomy since it can be considered that respecting a person's autonomy in their choices could affect the accomplishment of their responsibilities as teachers inside the class. Therefore, it is important to create balance between promoting autonomy and accomplishing teachers' responsibilities towards the class. This guideline is intended to assist teachers in this process.

### **Development of the guideline**

The development of this guideline is based on a theoretical and conceptual framework related to the Self-determination Theory and Autonomy-support in educational fields. The central elements in which it is founded included an extensive literature review and data sources obtained through qualitative and quantitative



techniques. In that way, it includes teachers and students' contributions around the topic. This was really important at the moment of determining difficulties and barriers in supporting autonomy in students, where teachers' perspectives were valuable.

The guideline includes a glossary of terms that explains key terms, a set of acts of instruction in which autonomy-support is based, and examples on how to put into practice this teaching style.



## **SECTION B. THE GUIDELINE**

For assisting teachers on the process of supporting and promoting student's autonomy in learning a second language, a set of seven autonomy-supportive acts of instruction have been taken into account (Reeve, 2009). This guideline presents teachers ways to put into practice an autonomy-supportive teaching style based on acts of instruction.

### **Getting to know students' preferences and desires**

Considering students' desires is an activity that autonomy-supportive teachers do. Teachers should ask students specifically about what they desire and what they expect from the English class. It can include asking them about their preferences, relevant contents and topics for them or activities they prefer the most. It is true that students are not commonly confident enough to express what they want; for this reason, teachers can work on creating an environment for psychological safety. It means, to create an environment where students feel comfortable enough to acknowledge what they feel and ask for help when they need it. It implies not judging or criticizing them. With this purpose, teachers can create anonymous boxes, where students can describe openly their preferences and expectations. This is an activity useful at the beginning of the school year.

Knowing and considering what students want will make students feel their interests and psychological needs are acknowledged, especially if the teacher integrates them somehow in the daily lessons. It can also help teachers decide which are the most important contents and topics that should be taught. It is obvious that most of the times contents cannot be changed since they are part of a given curriculum; however, knowing students' interests and preferences can help teachers adapt the contents that are not considered relevant for students by focusing on their preferences to engage them in the class. In that way, if teachers take the time to listen to their preferences, they can turn boring contents into attractive activities. Therefore, an ability teachers need to develop is to connect students' desires to contents that may look uninteresting to students. For doing this, teachers can:



- ✓ Use topics that are interesting for students to teach perceived uninteresting content. According to students' age, there are matters that are important to them. Use them in the class.
- ✓ Use attractive activities to teach that content. Most students love to complete songs, watch movies or act out roleplays. Using these activities may help students to get engaged with the content.
- ✓ Move students to apply theoretical knowledge into practice. In that way, passive students can be turned into active learners, which may help students feel involved and enhance their achievements. Activities that can work include: interviews with native speakers, the creation of chats with native speakers or visits to places commonly visited by them.
- ✓ Arouse curiosity on students towards the content that needs to be taught by finding specific cases where the necessity of learning that content is evidenced.
- ✓ Connect the content to any students' personal situation.

Finally, if these ways of giving value to uninteresting contents do not work, teachers can explain students how these topics and contents are important and useful for their professional future. In that way, students can internalize an originally externally regulated behavior. This is explained in the following act of instruction.

### **Nurturing inner motivational sources**

Inner motivational sources refer to inherent forces every student possesses, which move them to engage in the class activities since they find them connected somehow with their interests. When students' inner motivational sources are taken into account inside the classroom, they have active engagement in the class since they have an authentic sense of desire to accomplish activities. Teachers should use students' inner motivational sources as central part of the learning process. Some sources refer to autonomy itself, relatedness, perceived competence, curiosity and interest. Teachers can nurture those sources by the following actions:

- ✓ Offering students self-direction with the learning activity. In this sense activities are presented to students, but the teacher gives them freedom to direct and realign the activities to correspond more closely with their personal



interests. In that way, they can decide how to develop the task. It works mainly with projects that have a final result, where students can decide what steps to follow and how to present the final result. Of course, it is necessary to provide them with general instructions.

- ✓ Presenting activities to students that are challenging for them. It implies preparing activities for students that can be done by them but not easily or relatively fast. These kinds of activities require also an extra effort from students in order to complete them. Challenging activities provide students a sense of being able to complete an activity by them, and at the same time feeling proud for what they were able to do.
- ✓ Showing relatedness to students. It can be shown by the creation of a warm and accepting atmosphere in the classroom. Teachers can use activities where lots of interaction is required, where they have a feeling of being part of a group. It implies knowing how much students like talking about themselves, and how much they want to hear about the teacher. Activities of this kind include speaking activities, interviews, debates, group work, among others, where the activities deal with topics about general concerns they have.
- ✓ Creating curiosity on students. Teachers should use activities that make students feel interest in exploring the world in order to learn more. In that way they will find activities attractive and pleasant. It can include showing students documentaries or reading activities about topics that are interesting for them. Then, activities like debates or post-reading activities can be of great help.

### **Providing rationales and communicating value**

Providing rationales to students refers to explaining them why a particular action might be useful for them. It includes giving students reasons, validations, justifications and logics for studying a specific topic or content. This helps students integrate or internalize external regulated behaviors. In other words, students can find integrated values and reasons to learn something that previously they might have considered as irrelevant or mandatory. Therefore, students are more willing to get engaged on learning as increased interest predicts increased effort. Once students have identified how learning or participating on an activity can be valuable or important for them, they will perceive their effort on learning as autonomous.



Providing a rationale to students includes explaining them why a rule exists or why an apparently uninteresting activity is worth their attention.

Wrong ways of providing rationales include:

- ✗ Telling students that they need to learn what is trying to be taught because it is going to be part of a test (external regulation).
- ✗ Another wrong way would be telling students they have to learn because it is part of their educational curriculum, or because it is what they are supposed to do in class (introjected regulation).

A partially good way of providing rationales to students would be explaining students that learning a specific topic or content is an opportunity to cultivate a useful skill that will be convenient to have when they become professionals in the future (identified regulation). However, the best way of providing rationales includes the students voluntarily accepting the benefits of learning a specific content because it seems useful to the self (intrinsic regulation). In that sense, students are the ones who provide their own rationales, but teachers can lead this process by motivating them to express real benefits of learning from their own perspectives.

It is important to mention that it is not the rationale itself what motivates students to learn and put their effort within the class; instead, it is the way in which the rationale is presented and communicated what influences students to perceive autonomy on what they are about to do. Consequently, the following act of instruction must be taken into account.

### **Relying on informational, non-controlling language**

Students feel autonomous in contexts where there is no excessive perceived control. The way in which teachers communicate and interact with students can influence on the control students perceive in the class and activities. For having an effective communication, the teacher can put into practice the following specific behaviors:

- ✓ When providing informational messages, teachers should avoid controlling and rigid messages such as straight directions. Instead of that, they can use



flexible messages, where options are provided to them. For example, teachers can use statements such as “You can try this way if you prefer” or “You can choose which activity to start with.” Of course it implies previous planning of a class, where giving this freedom to students works within the class activities.

- ✓ Offering encouragement helps students feel confident on what they are doing and on sustaining their engagement. Statements such as “You’re close” or “You can do it” help a lot.
- ✓ Teachers can also offer hints and suggestions when doing an activity about how to make progress if the student seems to need it. In that case, statements like “Starting with checking new words seems to work better than trying to understand the full text at once” or “It might be easier to check meaning on the dictionary first” can be useful.
- ✓ Giving feedback is also important. It should be done in an appropriate way, where teachers use praise as informational feedback. In that sense students’ progress or improvement must be recognized with positive messages, such as “Good job” and “That’s great.” In that point, try to avoid verbal disapprovals of what the student cannot accomplish yet.

All those behaviors can help students not to feel controlled in class and therefore more autonomous in what they do. It is important to mention the behaviors that the teacher should avoid in order to use non-controlling language:

- ✗ Telling students how things should be done. It is better to let students discover and solve activities in the way that suits them better.
- ✗ Using commands. Of course, teachers must lead the class but there are always kinder ways of telling students what they have to do. Instead of telling students “Take out your dictionaries”, teachers can use phrases like “Dictionaries are helpful for the following reading activity.”
- ✗ Making *should/ought to* statements. Avoid statements that include phrases like “You should, you must, you have to, you got to, or you ought to do...” Those are representations of controlling language.
- ✗ Asking controlling questions. Students can feel tense and controlled when teachers ask questions to examine if they have completed an activity or if they

have done a task in the way they were told. Phrases that teachers should avoid are “Did you do it as I showed you?” or “Why haven’t you finished yet?”

- ✘ Using deadline statements. Students get stressed when teachers are frequently using statements communicating a shortage of the time destined to an activity. In that sense, try to avoid phrases like “You only have 1 minute left” or “It’s almost time.”
- ✘ Criticizing students. Don’t judge student’s lack of ability to accomplish an activity in the way you intend them to do it. Avoid phrases like “No, no, no, that’s wrong!” or “Why did you do that? You shouldn’t have done it in that way.”
- ✘ Comparing students. Every student is different and the pace in which they are able to master a topic or content is not the same for everyone. For this reason, phrases like “Your classmate did it faster” or “The rest of the class has already finished it” should be avoided.

### **Adopting the students’ perspective**

Autonomy-supportive teachers take into account the student’s perspectives. Regarding perspectives, we refer to the way in which students experience and feel the class. It includes thoughts, feelings and actions that students present along the class and that are not commonly considered relevant by the teacher. However, when students feel they are being heard, they feel more confident and autonomous since they feel that their perspective matters. For this reason, teachers should encourage students to express themselves and acknowledge their points of view. That is why it is important to welcome students’ thoughts, feelings, perceptions or suggestions to the class because in that way teachers are supporting the students’ motivational development. Additionally, adopting students’ perspective can help the teacher understand students’ behaviors in a better way. Some ways of showing the adoption of students’ perspective are:

- ✓ Taking 5 minutes per week to listen to students’ feelings and thoughts about the class. It is a feedback made by students, where they can explain the things that have worked or not for them about the class. As students may feel not confident about expressing what they really think, the use of anonymous boxes can be helpful.



- ✓ Using empathic statements. Teachers can show students that they acknowledge their perspective or experience when doing activities that are challenging for them with phrases such as “Yes, I know this exercise is not easy” or “You’re right, it is a little difficult but let’s try.”
- ✓ Taking into account the students’ class schedule. It is important to remember that the English class is not the only one that students have. In this sense, teachers can arrange their class’ schedule according to the students’ general class schedule. There are days which are heavy for students, where subjects like English, Mathematics, Science and Biology are set for the same day. Therefore, teachers can assign more relaxing or fun activities for those days to students, and grammar classes for days in which they do not have plenty of difficult subjects.
- ✓ It is well-known that students get excited when they are taken outside the classroom for specific classes. Teachers can take this into account by planning some classes outdoors.
- ✓ Acknowledging and accepting expressions of negative affect. Students will not always be willing to work in class or they will find some activities irrelevant or unnecessary; however, it is important to listen to what they think. In that way, students will feel confident to talk with the teacher about what they think. Obviously, it is necessary to find respectful ways to talk about negative thoughts towards the class. Once negative expressions have been welcomed, teachers can contrast them by providing rationales as it was previously explained. Otherwise, they can take into account the students’ perspective and accept negative expressions as constructive information to adapt and transform an activity that is seen as “not worth doing” into an activity that could be more enjoyable and bring greater benefits for them.

### **Providing choices within structure**

Giving choices to students in the classroom is a principle based on student-centered teaching. It can help to increase the students’ level of involvement and develop a sense of ownership and responsibility on their individual learning. Commonly, teachers do not like giving choices to students since they believe that in that way they are losing their authority in the classroom. Also, teachers prefer to



have everything meticulously planned and controlled and they do not give choices to students. In that way, teachers thwart students' autonomy.

For avoiding that, teachers can help students feel independent by allowing them to make decisions and have choices. It does not mean that teachers do not need to plan their classes; in fact, they should be so well planned that it allows students to have freedom to make choices. When they are allowed to make their own decisions, they perceive their autonomy is being supported.

Some common examples of providing choices to students refer to allowing students to choose:

- How to develop an activity. Allowing students to choose how to develop an activity moves them to express themselves and their preferences. For example, if the activity is about summarizing a book with a seven-paragraph essay, letting them choose the way of summarizing it will make them feel autonomous and free to show their creativity. Some students would surprise teachers by building a web page or creating a book trailer.
- The activities that will be graded. For doing it in an effective way, teachers can present students the total of activities they will develop during the unit and let them choose, for example, from 5 activities, which ones will be graded. The extra activity that was not chosen could be taken as extra credits for the ones who decide to submit it. When working with projects, another technique that could be applied would be letting students submit a project any time during the unit, as long as it is submitted before the last day it is finished.
- Due dates for homework or projects. Giving choices for students in that sense include asking students the date that works better for them to present homework and projects. Teachers can present them a set of choices and then students can decide which date fits better for them, considering other obligations they may have. It is positive to give them choices because in that sense teachers show students that they are also important, and decisions can be made in agreement. However, once due dates have been set, it is important to maintain them because changing them many times can show lack of seriousness and responsibility from both teachers and students.



- What topics to cover. Doing this in class leads students to feel a sense of ownership of the class. Of course, when topics are part of a curriculum, it is hard to remove them from the teachers' planning. Therefore, teachers can use some techniques to influence on them and make them choose all the contents they need to learn. For example, teachers can show students the list of topics and contents to be covered by showing the usage of each of them in real contexts; in that way, the teacher will arouse on students the curiosity and necessity to learn about each of the topics. Another thing that teachers can do by letting students choose the topics they prefer the most is to use the order of preference in which topics were selected to teach them.
- Working independently or in groups. There are students who prefer to work alone because of many reasons. Therefore, teachers should not force them to work with others as long as the topic and the activity would be understood by the student. About working in groups, it is good to let them choose partners who share their interests. However, it may lead students to create ineffective groups where they get distracted easily and do not work. For this reason, an autonomy-supportive teacher must be able to recognize and identify students who share common interests to alter some of the students' preferences, and create effective groups where they can feel comfortable too.

By providing choices to students, students are empowered, which moves them to decide how they learn and demonstrate their learning. However, teachers should be cautious to notice if the provided freedom to students is not working for their learning. Sometimes, students could not be able to manage freedom in a responsible way. Therefore, teachers must be attentive to the pieces of learning that students show and provide always a structure for every choice they give in class.

### **Displaying patience in the classroom**

Patience is an important factor that students require in order to engage themselves freely and productively in class. It refers to the serenity that teachers show to students during their learning process, especially when they are struggling to understand an activity. Patience is required within the class since the learning process takes time, even if teachers do not have enough time to spend in a specific topic. Students need time and space to comprehend, assimilate and put into practice



the new knowledge in the desired way. Therefore, the following are actions a teacher can take in order to display patience in the classroom.

- ✓ Allowing students to work at their own pace: not every student gets to the point of knowing how to solve an activity at the same pace than the rest of students. Therefore, teachers must give students a span of time where all of them can complete an activity. For fast finishers, teachers can provide them with extra activities to perfect their knowledge or even ask them to help students who struggle to complete the task.
- ✓ Allowing students to work in their own way: there is not always an only right way of doing things. Students can find ways that suit them better on how to solve an activity or how to associate things in a way that makes more sense to them.
- ✓ Waiting for students' signals. Once it is evidenced that a topic has been understood by students, teachers should continue with something else. It will be evidenced on students' initiative, contributions and willingness to keep learning.

The following are actions a teacher must not take since they reflect impatience and interrupt the learning process in students:

- ✗ Offering to do the activity for the students. In this way, students will not put their effort on solving the activity and in future activities they will not even try since they will expect the teacher to solve everything.
- ✗ Intruding on the students' workspace. Once an activity has been set, students should have their own space to work on the activity. Therefore, teachers should be attentive to signals that show that the student has not understood what to do. Only in this case, the teacher should intervene. Otherwise, teachers should leave students to work in their own learning.
- ✗ Rushing to tell students what the correct answer is. By doing this, the teacher will lose the learning opportunity.





## **Barriers to autonomy**

Sometimes barriers can inhibit the ability of students to be autonomous. Some students may lack the ability to communicate their feelings, their desires and preferences. In cases like that, teachers must find the way to help students to communicate by making use of individualized support.

Also, there may be organizational barriers to autonomy. In this sense, it is possible that the existing classroom management restricts learners to have their autonomy in class. Sometimes it is common to find overprotective approaches in education that prevent the use and implementation of actions that support or promote autonomy. The current guideline can assist teachers to promote autonomy in students and at the same time to support organizational change.

Other barriers can include the teachers' preferences for a controlling teaching style that does not provide sufficient support to students' autonomy. It also implies the resistance to change.

## **Conclusion**

Supporting autonomy in students who learn a second language involves teachers engaged with their students since it is an important aspect in student-centered teaching. The information presented in this guideline provides a practical tool to assist teachers in promoting and supporting students' autonomy in their learning. As it is important to have a balance in supporting autonomy and preserving the control of a class, this guideline can help teachers to reach that sense of balance. Additionally, for checking effectiveness of the teachers' actions, a permanent dialogue with students should exist.

Putting into practice the acts of instructions shown in this document can be challenging. It is necessary to highlight that this guideline is informative and it can be used as a tool to encourage teachers to examine their actions and attitudes in the class, and to consider how controlling versus how autonomy-supportive their teaching styles are.



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