

**RAE**

1. TIPO DE DOCUMENTO: Trabajo de grado para optar por el título de LICENCIADO EN LENGUA INGLESA.
2. TITULO: El efecto de CALL (aprendizaje de idiomas asistido por computador) en el aprendizaje autónomo de los estudiantes de quinto grado en el Colegio San Antonio María Claret en Cali, Colombia.
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7. DESCRIPCIÓN DEL TRABAJO: El objetivo principal de este proyecto es conocer el efecto que tiene el aprendizaje de idiomas asistido por computador, apoyado en las herramientas WEB 2.0, sobre el proceso de aprendizaje autónomo de los estudiantes de quinto grado del Colegio San Antonio María Claret en Cali, Colombia, en un contexto de aprendizaje del idioma inglés como lengua extranjera.
8. LINEAS DE INVESTIGACIÓN: Educación y Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación.
9. METODOLOGIA: Investigación acción. Método cualitativo.

10. CONCLUSIONES: Cuando se combinan las metodologías de enseñanza de una lengua extranjera en las clases presenciales con la implementación de herramientas tecnológicas, a través de ambientes virtuales adecuados y llamativos, se fomentan la autonomía y autoconciencia de los estudiantes sobre su proceso de aprendizaje. A su vez, aumenta la motivación para que los estudiantes usen el idioma extranjero dentro y fuera del aula de clase, promoviendo el interés en el uso del mismo y la confianza de los estudiantes en su propio desempeño y habilidades.



THE EFFECT OF COMPUTER ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING ON FIFTH GRADE  
STUDENTS' AUTONOMOUS LEARNING AT COLEGIO SAN ANTONIO MARÍA CLARET  
IN CALI, COLOMBIA

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Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa

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Trabajo presentado como requisito para optar por el título profesional de  
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### Glossary

**Blended Learning:** The practice of using in-person learning and online experiences simultaneously with teaching purposes.

**CALL:** Computer-assisted language learning

**CEF:** The Common European Framework is a reference document designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency. It is used in Europe but also in other continents.

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ICT:** Information, Communication, Technology. The use of computers to enable learners to improve information-processing skills, to explore ideas, to solve problems, to access and surf the internet, to develop collaborative learning with students who are in other places, to participate in video conferencing.

**LCMS:** Learning Content Management System.

**TELL:** Technology-enhanced Language Learning.

**VLE:** Virtual Learning Environment. It is a system of teaching and learning tools designed to enhance student's learning experience by including computers and the internet in the learning process to communicate with each other online.

**VLO:** Virtual Learning Object. "Any digital resource that can be reused to support learning" (David Wiley, 2002). It can include educational resources, activities, explanation and assessment activities to facilitate the study and comprehension of academic contents.

**WEB 2.0:** Allows the Network User to share information online with the purpose of managing interaction via social media. E.g.: blogs, wikis, social networking and video sharing websites.

**WELL:** Web-enhanced Language Learning.

### **Abstract**

This project aims to know the effect of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) supported by WEB 2.0 tools on autonomous learning in an EFL context on fifth grade students at Colegio San Antonio Maria Claret. This research is conceptually supported by diverse learning theories such as behaviorist, cognitive-information processing and cognitive-constructivist learning, which incorporate autonomous learning and technology-web enhanced learning as well. The selected methodology for this study is Action Research, since it allows the participation of the different actors involved in the investigation process and their cooperation in creating a significant experience looking for the best results. It also brings important information for the researchers and a wider community, in order to find solutions to specific problems or widespread difficulties. The experiential process is guided by specific web activities for students in order to promote different study habits, supported on independence, curiosity, autonomy and investigation, that aims to an easier and suited (to their own needs) learning process of English.

The results of this study show that applying changes in methodology through the utilization of technological resources for teaching a foreign language is a big challenge that involves students, parents, teachers and institutions at different levels. Students in modern society are well prepared to face this kind of challenges, but in most cases, teachers and institutions are reluctant to the use of new technologies or simply do not have the resources to implement them into their classes. The advantages of using interactive web resources lead to an improvement in students' autonomy and responsibility, founded on their confidence when facing language and technology together, and their participation in the process of constructing those virtual scenarios. The Computer-Assisted Language Learning strategies have a positive impact not only for a meaningful education, but also for the autonomous learning process on students.

### **Resumen**

El objetivo de este proyecto es conocer el efecto que tiene el aprendizaje de idiomas asistido por computador, apoyado en las herramientas WEB 2.0, sobre el proceso de aprendizaje autónomo de los estudiantes de quinto grado del Colegio San Antonio María Claret, en un contexto de aprendizaje del idioma inglés como lengua extranjera. Esta investigación está respaldada conceptualmente por diversas teorías del aprendizaje, tales como el conductismo, el procesamiento cognitivo de la información y el aprendizaje cognitivo-constructivista, que a su vez incorporan el aprendizaje autónomo y el aprendizaje mejorado a través de la tecnología y el uso de la web. La metodología seleccionada para este estudio es la Investigación-Acción, ya que permite la participación de los diferentes actores involucrados en el proceso de investigación y su cooperación en la creación de una experiencia significativa en búsqueda de mejores resultados. También aporta información importante tanto para los investigadores, como para una comunidad más amplia, con el propósito de encontrar soluciones a problemas específicos o dificultades generalizadas. El proceso experimental está guiado por actividades web específicas para los estudiantes, con el fin de promover diferentes hábitos de estudio, apoyados en la independencia, la curiosidad, la autonomía y la investigación, que apunta a un proceso de aprendizaje del inglés más sencillo y adecuado a sus propias necesidades.

Los resultados de este estudio muestran que la aplicación de cambios en la metodología a través de la utilización de recursos tecnológicos para la enseñanza de un idioma extranjero es un gran desafío que involucra a estudiantes, padres, profesores e instituciones, en diferentes niveles. Los estudiantes de la sociedad moderna están bien preparados para enfrentar este tipo de retos, pero en la mayoría de los casos son los docentes y las instituciones quienes se muestran reacios al uso de nuevas tecnologías o simplemente no tienen los recursos para implementarlas en sus

clases. Las ventajas de usar recursos web interactivos conducen a una mejora en la autonomía y responsabilidad de los estudiantes, basada en su confianza cuando enfrentan el lenguaje y la tecnología en conjunto, y su participación en el proceso de construcción de esos escenarios virtuales. Las estrategias del aprendizaje de idiomas asistido por computadora tienen un impacto positivo, no solo para una educación significativa, sino también para el proceso de aprendizaje autónomo de los estudiantes.

## **Chapter 1: Project Identification**

This research project is to be carried out with the purpose of analyzing the effects that Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has on autonomous learning development and the use of the foreign language among students in a Blended Learning environment. The identification of the project, as requested by the University, is stated as follows:

### **1.1. Title of the Project**

The effect of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) on autonomous learning on fifth grade students at Colegio San Antonio María Claret in Cali, Colombia.

### **1.2. Faculty and Academic Program**

This research proposal belongs to Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales and is part of Programa de Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa.

### **1.3. Group and Research Line:**

Research Group: Tendencias Actuales en Educación y Pedagogía – TAEPE

Research Line: Educación y Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación.

### **1.4. Topic**

The present research focuses on Computer-Assisted Language Learning activities to promote the autonomous learning of a foreign language.

### **1.5. Project Tutor**

María Ximena Rojas



## **1.6. Researchers**

Yuly Anacona Zemanate

Linda Bronstein Narváez

Carlos Eduardo Estrada Silva

## **Chapter 2: Introduction**

There are constant questions among teachers: how to make learning interesting for students? How to approach learning assertively? Which elements can be used to support an active and dynamic learning process? It is well known that education – either formal or informal- faces different situations: students' lack of motivation and autonomy, teachers' outdated training and information, misused or limited educational resources and lack of initiatives to generate meaningful, adequate and active learning processes.

In a globalized and connected world (and reality), digital devices have a primary role in how we approach our reality and its diverse information channels, also helping to establish interaction routes in order to complement and build our knowledge, through discussion, contrast and investigation. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is an instrument used in language teaching and learning that allows students the use of computer in an independent way with the purpose of building and reinforcing their knowledge. Computer-mediated communication provides a means for connecting language learners to extensive resources available through the Internet, and teachers perform a meaningful role, since they can structure specific information hunting activities through the use of search engines, and also arranging the path for a proper use of education tools such forums, social media networks and specialized sites, in order to achieve a complete and useful learning process of a foreign language.

Keeping in mind the objective of supporting students to learn English as a foreign language with the help of technological and digital resources, in order to improve their autonomous learning process, learning theories are part of these initiatives such as behaviorism, cognitive-information processing, constructivism, binary, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, since they

conceive students' role as a primary part, encouraging autonomy and an active participation in their own process, deciding what they want to learn, how and when, seeking to establish a reciprocal relationship with the teacher and education –in general-, creating healthier and more productive entourage for all the parts involved and influenced by learning/teaching process.

In this project, the effect of Computer-Assisted Language Learning will be applied through activities and tools designed specifically for fifth grade students of Colegio San Antonio Maria Claret in Cali, Colombia. The collected information from this study is intended to improve the process of teaching English as a foreign language, providing the chance for the school to improve and strengthen their Bilingual Programs, for teachers to have better and more accurate resources to teach, and for parents and students to receive and assume education with the proper tools to face the needs of the current world: globalized, multicultural and interconnected.

The current research is divided in seven chapters, where questions, experiences and concepts are conjugated to develop a continuous and progressive process, looking to fulfill the main objective of this work, which is to promote and develop autonomous learning of English on Fifth Grade Students at Colegio San Antonio Maria Claret.

First chapter is the Project Identification where the relevance of analyzing effects of Computer-Assisted Language Learning on autonomous learning development is stated. The second chapter -this chapter- includes an introduction in which the setting of the study is explained. On the third chapter, the reader can find the description of the project, the statement of the problem, research question, general and specific objectives, rationale and literature review. The fourth chapter includes the theoretical framework development, a dissertation of the supportive learning theories divided in three groups: behaviorist, cognitive-information processing and cognitive-constructivist learning; these incorporate autonomous learning,

motivation binary theory, technology and web enhanced language learning, blended learning, task-based learning and collaborative learning. On the fifth chapter, there is the most relevant information about the Research Design, where the previous concepts and questions will be tested through a study within a specific context. The collected data will be analyzed on the sixth chapter, where information will be presented in specific categories that answer and explain the questions that motivated this project. Seventh chapter explains the conclusions, implications and facts that emerged on this research process, which are related to the categories presented in the Data Analysis chapter, including all of the actors involved in the EFL learning process and the promotion of autonomy in students. Finally, on the eighth chapter, the researchers describe the difficulties and limitations presented during the development of the project, as well as the presentation of ideas and findings that were not object of study in this project, but might lead to further research in the field of language learning through CALL.

### **Chapter 3: Description of the Project**

#### **3.1. Statement of the Problem**

Due to limited access to ICT resources, inoperative computers rooms, unfinished English Laboratory facilities, reduced use of technological and web resources among teachers, insufficient autonomous learning processes (evidenced through students' disinterest and laxity when carrying out diverse tasks) and students' lack of motivation to communicate using the foreign language (in and out of the classroom), fifth grade students at Colegio San Antonio Maria Claret have a restricted learning process of English as a foreign language. These facts carry ICTs use to promote autonomous learning towards the process of acquiring English as a foreign language.

There is a lack of ICTs teaching strategies at Colegio San Antonio María Claret, where the only approaches to them are reproducing soundtracks through USB/CD systems, and occasionally using video-beam to watch videos or movies. These reflects how limited and – usually- not very effective the use of ICTs is. As previously mentioned, the English laboratory is still under construction and teachers are not very accustomed to the proper use of computers' software, which is new to the school community.

Despite the different strategies carried out by the teachers in order to promote students' responsibility for their learning (inside/outside the classroom), it is clear that students do not perform the activities assigned to do at home or/in designated time/date. These activities include videos, exercises and interactive games which help to explain further topics discussed in class, in order to perform online workshops. These workshops aim to provide feedback on students' process and can be completed a number of times teachers consider proper. After each attempt,

students have access to their wrong answers, so they can identify their difficulties and make proper corrections. This motivates teachers to design new strategies that promote greater interest in learning, also stimulating and encouraging responsibility and autonomous learning.

Dam (2000) defines autonomous learning as the one that takes place in an environment created by the teacher, in which the learner is given the possibility to be consciously and actively involved in his/her own learning process. This process aims to make them aware of their responsibility in the learning process: what they learn and how they learn it (Gould, 2013), in order to improve their knowledge.

An advantage of CALL is how it helps to educate autonomous learners who will be able to experience freedom of choice (Hashemi and Aziznezhad, 2011). Web 2.0 allows students to use their knowledge and skills in a foreign language through social interaction, due to the practice in different contexts and the perception of language as a means to communicate, offering possibilities to express ideas when needed.

### **3.2. Research Question**

The proposed research paper is aimed at answering the question:  
What is the effect of CALL supported by Web 2.0 tools on autonomous learning in an EFL context on fifth grade students at Colegio San Antonio María Claret?

### **3.3. Objectives**

#### **3.3.1. General Objective**

- Determine the impact of Computer-Assisted Language Learning supported by WEB 2.0 tools in promoting and developing autonomous learning on young learners at Colegio San Antonio María Claret.

### **3.3.2. Specific Objectives**

- To explore a Virtual Learning Environment and its possibilities to encourage autonomous learning among students.
- To observe possible changes in motivation of students in the use of English Language in a Virtual Learning Environment.
- To estimate students' self-awareness on their autonomous learning process encouraged by CALL activities and WEB 2.0 tools and its purpose.

### **3.4. Rationale**

In globalized modern societies, foreign languages are a key requirement for constructing knowledge and developing learning and thinking processes, working as bridges for spreading culture and achieving social integration. Cummins (1984) suggested that there are some metalinguistic benefits of acquiring a second language, such as the ability of recognizing conventional and non-conventional linguistic symbols.

From a cognitive or language development point of view, a foreign language opens the possibility to know other ways of perceiving the world: alternatives to recognize the world around us and the development of wider methods of understanding and learning about life. Besides, from a practical point of view, a foreign language becomes a tool that serves economic, social, industrial, and military purposes. "Although, learning a foreign language in this way, misses most of its cultural and cognitive development motivations and becomes another strategy to build a better resume, get better employment and become more competitive in the knowledge economy" (Guile, 2006).

Given that young students feel familiarized, motivated and attracted by new technologies that usually offer several scenarios for social interaction and leisure time, the present research aims to examine the changes in the autonomous learning process of a group of students encouraged by the use of CALL activities and WEB 2.0 tools, increasing their interest in the use of English as a foreign language as a means to communicate their ideas and understand others as well.

This research may contribute to the institution for being a pilot for the implementation of technologic strategies that allow teachers to build and develop different resources in order to plan and execute study objectives successfully. Teachers might be able to organize and manage different aspects related to the subject in an interactive way, facilitating a constant monitoring process of students' performance that guides them in their learning objectives. Virtual Learning Environments offer students the capability of learning, practicing and improving their learning skills outside of the classroom at their own pace. The students can build their knowledge thanks to different tools and resources that teachers provide through the platform. In this way, when students revisit the topics in the classroom they can feel more confident and be more participative, since their knowledge has broaden and their skills have improved.



### 3.5. Literature Review

#### 3.5.1. Literature Review 01

<b>Author/Year</b>	Patricia María & Martínez Rico(2006)
<b>Reference</b>	María, P., & Rico, M. (2006). <i>Presencia de las Tecnologías de información y comunicación en el aula de inglés de secundaria</i> . (Tesis Doctoral). Universidad de Barcelona, Barcelona, España.
<b>Type of document</b>	Combined empirical study and study case; Thesis for attaining PhD degree.
<b>Description</b>	<p>The document posed two major objectives: one is to describe modern society in the context of ICT use in EFL teaching, while the other is monitoring how ICT has a positive effect on teaching-learning motivation. The research question was: How does ICT influences motivation on students?</p> <p>The research was carried out with one hundred and sixteen randomly chosen high school students, who were separated in two groups, one which served as the control group. After 10 sessions of one hour, it was established that the experimental group supported with ICT teaching strategies reached higher interest in learning English in comparison to the control group, by using different types of questionnaires to analyze the role of ICT in today's teaching context, as well as to seek for data that could show if ICT has a positive effect on students' motivation</p> <p>The researchers designed a web resource and a questionnaire with a wide list of variables related to motivation, which was applied in four educational centers. The information was collected and analyzed.</p>
<b>Conclusions</b>	Following the first objective of the research, 4 chapters were dedicated to describe the state of ICT integration in the education realm. This analysis was based on several questionnaires applied to teachers and students. It led to the conclusion that EFL is key in the globalized world, but there is still uneven access to ICT resources among countries to foster its use in education. Another

important issue was the change in the teachers' role after the intervention of ICT in modern society, especially English teachers, who are called to debate their relationship with students, changes in curriculums and implementation of new pedagogies. Only two - thirds of the teachers surveyed admitted ICT formation, indicating their lack of preparation about it, but also showing how seldom they take students to ICT rooms due to little availability, which reveals a deficiency in resources at schools.

Moreover, a students' questionnaire revealed that they tap into ICT resources in a limited way, just visiting websites or using the CD-ROM featured with the book.

About the second objective, the questionnaire applied in the study correlated the increase of interest towards learning English as a foreign language and a boost in motivation during ICT guided teaching sessions, but admits that the field is too wide and complex so it is not determinant to conclude that ICT on its own, has a motivational effect on EFL learning, accepting that ICT provides a pleasing environment which favors learning. Still, it was noticed that students with ICT integrated in the classroom are more willing to learn compared to students without it, hence we could predict that given the relation between efforts and learning, the first group of students will learn more in terms of content and skills.

The researcher suggested that it is important to improve teachers' formation and availability of ICT resources in the classroom; however, a consolidation of a clear ICT policy is the key in the educational system leading to the renovation of the curriculum and resulting in changing the attitude of teachers in a positive way.

**3.5.2. Literature Review 02**

<b>Author / Year</b>	Jaime García Salinas, Anita Ferreira Cabrera, Sandra Morales Ríos (2012)
<b>Reference</b>	Garcia J. Ferreira A, and Morales S. (2012) Autonomy in foreign language learning in technology-mediated contexts. Jaime García salinas: escuela de educación, universidad Santo Tomás, sede concepción. Chile. – Anita Ferreira Cabrera: Facultad de Humanidades y Arte, Departamento de Español, Universidad de Concepción. Chile. – Sandra Morales Ríos: School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, University of Newcastle. United Kingdom
<b>Type of document</b>	Case study
<b>Description</b>	<p>This project was developed in Chile in 2012 in a private university. 24 students, 7 men and 17 women participated in this research. They were in the first year of the bachelor degree in English Pedagogy and were chosen randomly between those who attended the subject “Developing communicational English I”.</p> <p>The level of language skills were: 13 had a Basic level (54.2%), while 11 had a pre-intermediate level (45.8%). Students’ English Learning level was measured with the Quick Placement test (<b>Oxford University Press, 2001</b>). The test evaluates reading skills, knowledge of grammar and listening comprehension through multiple-choice questions.</p> <p>During the research, students were divided into two groups: experimental group and control group, with 12 students each. The groups were organized in alphabetical order according to the requirements of the research. They were exposed to a free distribution program for the development of multimedia</p>

educational activities, which allows a varied range of exercises (grammar, vocabulary, and listening comprehension) to make the learning of the target language more interactive and dynamic. The researchers also taught to students different types of language-learning strategies. In the following sessions, students received printed material corresponding to a guideline where specifications were detailed to practice 4 strategies:

Daily, after each of the 14 work sessions (40 minutes each) with the CALL application, the task consisted in carrying out a reflection workshop with the students to comment on the type of strategy used on that specific day, in this way, it strengthened the internalization and use of the different learning strategies in order to make a more profitable and effective use of the computational application.

The pre-test and post-test adapted versions of the strategies inventory for language learning (SILL, from English Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) were applied to the two groups. Researchers performed an adaptation of the instrument to measure the use of strategies of learning foreign languages in environments mediated by a CALL application, because the original questionnaire only mediates the use of these in traditional, communicative teaching contexts.

The test consisted of 50 questions that inquired about personal background and previous experiences on language learning that students had.

Questions 1 to 9 were focused on the effectiveness of memory (memorization

	<p>strategies). Questions 10 to 23 represented the use of mental processes (cognitive strategies). Questions 24 to 29 represented compensation for lack of knowledge (compensation strategies). Questions 30 to 38 were related to the organization and evaluation of learning (metacognitive strategies). Questions from 39 to 44 were related to the management of emotions (affective strategies). Finally, questions 45 to 50 were focused on learning with others (social strategies). On the post-test they indicate a great improvement in learning a second language through CALL.</p>
<b>Conclusions</b>	<p>This research contributes to our project in a significant way, since it demonstrates that learning assisted by CALL increases the level of performance in a second language; it also guided us on applying and planning different teaching-learning strategies with our students.</p>

**3.5.3. Literature Review 03**

<b>Author / Year</b>	Asieh Farivar, Ali Rahimi (2014)
<b>Reference</b>	Farivar A. Rahimi A. (2014) The Impact of CALL on Iranian EFL Learners' Autonomy. Islamic Azad University, Bandar Abbas Branch, Iran Bangkok University, Bangkok, Thailand
<b>Type of document</b>	Study case; Article.
<b>Description</b>	<p>This study was an attempt to investigate the impact of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) on Iranian EFL learner's autonomy. 60 students who were selected from a language institute in Tehran (Iran) participated. They were divided into control and experimental groups; the study was executed in 20 sessions.</p> <p>They were tested with Cambridge ESOL Preliminary Test (PET) and as a pre-test; participants of both groups at the beginning of the study did a questionnaire, which evidenced that students were in intermediate level.</p> <p>The researcher gave to the experimental group different material including English software of BBC Courses (documentary and movies including practical vocabulary) but the control group did not have any interaction with computers, instead they used a traditional method (course book, classroom discussion, classroom activities). For the last session both groups were given the same questionnaire as a post-test.</p> <p>This post-test showed differences in the performance of the groups. The experimental group with an average of 35.96 did outperform the control group</p>

	<p>with the mean of 32. 60. It could be concluded, that the treatment given to the experimental group had a positive impact on enhancing students' autonomy, clearly showing how the use of CALL had a positive effect and impact in the students' process of learning language and allowed them to do it more effectively.</p>
<b>Conclusions</b>	<p>According to this study case, we can conclude that the application of technology considerably impacted the participants' autonomous learning in self-study centers.</p> <p>We can also emphasize that technology has the potential to foster autonomous behavior in learners, because it facilitates self-access in learning, and gives them many valuable opportunities to self-direct their learning and take control over it.</p>

**3.5.4. Literature Review 04**

<b>Author / Year</b>	Deborah Schneider (2014)
<b>Reference</b>	Schneider, D. (2014). <i>The Effects of an ICT-Based Reading Intervention on Student's Achievement in Grade Two</i> . University of Arizona.
<b>Type of document</b>	Empirical study; Article in the Reading Psychology Journal.
<b>Description</b>	<p>Participants of the study included 209 students in second grade classrooms (four classrooms in each school) in two public elementary schools in the south west of United States; of those, 107 were assigned to the treatment condition, while 102 were assigned to a business-as-usual comparison condition. However 32 participants (13 from the treatment condition and 19 from the comparison condition) left the study prior to post-testing owing to school moves, leaving 179 remaining cases. Of the remaining cases, eight were missing dependent variable or co-variable data, leaving 171 complete cases.</p> <p>The treatment group received MVRC (Mind-Play Virtual Reading Coach) online reading instruction in addition to Success for All reading and language arts instruction in the classroom setting. Participants assigned to the treatment group practiced with the software for 30 minutes each day, Monday through Thursday, for a total of two hours per week throughout the regular school year (mid-September through mid-April), with the exception of holidays, school functions and mandatory state testing days. Participating students assigned to the business-as-usual comparison condition received Success for All reading and language arts instruction but did not receive the MVRC intervention.</p>



	<p>During the time allotted for the MVRC intervention, students assigned to the business-as-usual comparison condition received additional language arts instruction from their classroom teachers consistent with the Success for all curriculum and routine classroom practice. Examiners obtained reading achievement data from each participating student. Pre and post-test measures included tests of the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement (WJ IV ACH), as well as the Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency, Second Edition (TOSWRF-2).</p> <p>A multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used to determine whether significant mean differences existed in (a) non-word reading, (b) real word reading, (c) non-word spelling, (d) real word spelling, and/or (e) reading fluency achievement scores favoring students assigned to use the MVRC online reading intervention, once the effects of differences in pre-test achievement scores and relevant demographic variables had been accounted for.</p>
<b>Conclusions</b>	<p>Analyses revealed a significant main effect of the intervention on achievement scores of participants assigned to the treatment condition, a result which was confirmed across three of the study's independent variables. Effect sizes ranged from moderate to very large.</p> <p>The results of the research suggest a very robust effect of the MVRC intervention on participants' reading fluency and spelling achievement gains. While significant effects of the intervention were not detected in isolated word reading tasks (i.e., non-word reading and real word reading), it is possible that</p>

	<p>participants in both groups had reached saturation in this aspect of decoding, as such tasks are heavily emphasized in the Success for All curriculums.</p> <p>Participants in both groups made statistically significant gains on word reading measures from pre-test to post test. Though the results of this study point to MVRC as a promising intervention, further research is warranted.</p> <p>High-quality intervention studies, including replication research, should be performed to further evaluate MVRC, as well as other ICT-based reading interventions commonly used in American public schools.</p>
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## **Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework**

In order to approach the main question of this research, it is necessary to elucidate the understanding of key concepts related to learning theories, autonomous learning and teaching strategies, among others. The core line of investigation required to dig deeper into practices related to teaching and technology stemming from ICT, narrowing down to CALL, WELL, Task-Based Learning and Collaborative Learning; finally the concepts of autonomy and motivation are addressed, since any improvement on language competence through autonomous learning is bound to be related to either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation.

### **4.1. Learning Theories**

People learn new ideas and concepts through different ways and this is associated with their personality, cognitive process and previous learning experiences. (Schunk, 2012) stated that *“learning is an enduring change in behavior or in the capacity to behave in a given fashion which result from practice or other forms of experience”*. In order to explain how individuals assimilate, acquire and construct knowledge, several authors have classified these theories into three basic categories:

- **Behaviorist learning theories**
- **Cognitive-information processing learning theories**
- **Cognitive-constructivist learning theories**

#### **4.1.1. Behaviorist learning theory**

Behaviorism is concerned to the human behaviors that are observable. It emphasizes that the changes on human behavior are based on stimuli followed by responses and results depending on environmental variables. One person selects a response instead of another because of previous

habits, customs or knowledge and psychological motivations existing at the moment of the action (Zhou & Brown, 2014).

The behaviorists consider that the only possible conducts to study are those which are possible to observe, considering within these the actions instead of thoughts and emotions (Zhou & Brown, 2014). The teacher might be able to realize if a student has understood a topic when the student is involved in the development of topic related activities; this result is the observable action. The behaviorist theory considers that behaviors are learned and can be replaced by new ones. The system of rewards and punishment inside of the classroom: punishing the inappropriate behaviors and rewarding the appropriate ones has been adopted within traditional education. The rewards must be interesting and motivating for students to get the responses the teacher expects.

John B. Watson (1878-1958) and Ivan Pavlov (1849 – 1963) considered that human behavior is the result of stimuli that elicit a certain response. While B. F. Skinner (1904-1990) believed that people learn in two ways: through rewards, making effort to manage something positive and punishment. In this way, the rewards must be interesting and motivating for students to get the responses the teacher expects (Zhou, 2014).

Some techniques have been considered in a classroom application, one of those is the reinforcement, related to behavior and its consequence or result, which could be positive (rewards in academic performance or leisure activities) or negative (academic punishment or absence of rewards) for the students. In this research, we have associated the positive reinforcement giving an additional grade or extra points to those students that participated on time or those who used the web resources to complete the activities, obtaining a certain degree of effectiveness, considering that this kind of reinforcement would motivate students to complete homework assignments.

#### 4.1.2. Cognitive-information processing learning theories

When students represent an active and significant role in their learning process, they are approaching into a cognitive model, as Piaget could witness in children that actively constructed their own knowledge, despite being limited to receiving it from another sources (Zhou & Brown, 2014).

This theory studies the mental processes that a person uses to interpret, operate and store information in the memory to acquire knowledge, therefore learning is influenced by motivational factors and the attitude associated to each individual. *“An important implication of Piaget’s theory is adaptation of instruction to the learner’s developmental level. The content of instruction needs to be consistent with the developmental level of the learner. The teacher’s role is to facilitate learning by providing a variety of experiences.”*(Zhou & Brown, 2014).

We can see how fundamental is the teacher’s role in encouraging students through virtual learning environments, to construct an independent self-aware method, so students are able to participate actively in their own learning process. Virtual learning environments facilitate students’ participation on different interactional activities such as dialogues on chats, providing the opportunity to propose topics, generating questions or opinions (according to their proficiency level). It’s clear that the teacher’s resources to develop this environments are supported by a wide range of experiences, alternatives and methods, where students’ knowledge is linked to significant and meaningful moments, especially with resources that catch their attention as well as make them feel acquainted and are related to their daily life.

As an example of the common places that students usually visit, social media platforms are an alternative and current space where they share a perspective they have about something with the world, as well as they contrast and discuss with others their perceptions about a wide range of

topics. Taking this experience as a prevailing situation, there are WEB 2.0 sites that create an environment where people (mostly students) can interact to construct new ideas such as MoodleCloud, Edmodo, Google Classroom or Remind.

#### **4.1.3. Constructivist learning theory**

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) in his “Sociocultural Theory of Human Learning”, states that knowledge is socially defined and we learn it as we interpret our surroundings by way of social interaction (Fosnot, 1996). Then, he considered that, *“as long as a person has access to a more capable peer, any problem can be solved. So the practical limits of human potential depend upon quality social interactions and one’s environment”* (Clabaugh, 2010). It’s important to mention that his concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), denotes the relevance of the capability to find solutions to different problems in an independent way, as well as under guidance or in collaboration with others.(Clabaugh, 2010)

Like Piaget and Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner promoted learning in a social and cultural environment, considering it as an active process that requires learners to develop their own ideas or knowledge. He argued that *“discovery learning inherently urges learners to take responsibility for their own learning and helps them not only to remember important factual information but also develop their high-order thinking skills”* (Gillani, 2003). The idea behind constructivism is the active construct of knowledge through discovering, transforming, contrasting and revisiting of information in a constant pace.(Dr. Bada, 2015). It is an approach to teaching and learning based on cognition as the result of a “mental construction” affected by the context that surrounds the student, as well as beliefs and relations with others. Perspectives and interpretations are independent for each individual. According to Jonassen (1994), constructivism activates the students' natural curiosity about the world, and helps them in engaging through their existing

knowledge and experience, learning to theorize, testing their models, and eventually drawing conclusions from their results.

Piaget also stated that development of intelligence and thinking can be understood as the process of biological adaptation that every learner applies to know and interpret the external world (Sjøberg, 2009), in which the notion of “schemas” implies a large part, since some ideas are assimilated and accommodated with others, considering the learner has an active role in an ongoing process of adaptation or transformation (Lefa, 2014).

According to Driscoll (2000), two of the key concepts within the constructivism learning theory are accommodation and assimilation. Assimilating causes an individual to include new knowledges and experiences into the old ones, helping to develop new attitudes, reconsider the mistakes, and evaluate the importance of concepts and experiences, altering their perceptions during and at the end of the process. Accommodation is a different process that implies the allocation of new concepts and experiences into the mental capacity the individual already owns. Individuals consider a particular way in which those concepts and experiences operate, but when they are out of that context, these individuals have to frame the expectations within the outcomes (Dr. Bada, 2015). In a virtual learning environment it is possible to establish interactions where students may construct their knowledge based on previous information and thus acquiring critical and reflexive thinking.

#### **4.2. Autonomous Learning**

Autonomous learning is referred to different types of activities that allow students to acquire abilities to manage their responsibility for their own learning process, playing the leading role of their achievements, inside and outside of the classroom, guided by the teacher, who has the responsibility to apply strategies that motivate students to learn independently through different

activities. Holec (1981) considered that *“learners should be given the responsibility to make decisions concerning to all aspects of their own special learning styles, capacities and needs”*, and defined autonomy as *“the ability to take charge of one’s learning”* (Nima Shakouri Masouleh, 2012).

An autonomous learner is characterized for acquiring several skills:

- “Learner independence”: Learners study on their own, choosing the learning strategies they consider relevant or useful, without being directly controlled by the teacher.
- “Self-direction”: learners increase their responsibility to achieve their objectives through the implementation of decisions regarding the strategies mentioned above.
- “Independent learning”: students take responsibility to comply with their learning activities, through guidance from the teacher, who is in charge of adapting different materials or activities to different types of students and their specific needs.

Candi (1991) mentions different features of autonomous learners: methodical, disciplined, logical, analytical, reflective, self-aware, curious, open, highly motivated, flexible, interdependent, interpersonally competent, persistent, responsible, venturesome, creative, self-sufficient, information seekers, knowledgeable, skillful about the learning process and critical thinkers. According to (Cakici, 2015), it is important to highlight in this performance the students’ empowerment on their active role in their learning process, because they can settle a plan to manage their goals, being aware of what, when and how to learn, and use the available resources wisely.

To promote learners’ autonomy in an L2 learning environment it is important for the teacher to make students aware of searching for significant means or strategies that allow them to learn



how to learn, through developing different skills in the field of knowledge and thus being able to apply them to diverse contexts. Kumaravadivelu (2003) highlighted that the teacher has the responsibility to help students in the following aspects:

- Stimulate critical thinking
- Encourage auto-control of their actions to assume the responsibility of their learning
- Develop appropriate strategies for students to achieve their goals
- Make students aware of their learning potential and help them confront their weaknesses and failures
- Promote a lesser dependence of students on an educational system to allow them to go beyond the knowledge obtained
- Have into account collaborative learning since social interaction has an important role in education.

According to Ellis and Sinclair (1989 p.10), the teacher has an active and central role in developing autonomous learning, due to the nature of guide and the support he/she gives through the selection and application of strategies in order to monitor this process, as well as allow students to acquire knowledge and routines that let them take responsibility for their learning, aiming at an ideal development of L2 activities.

It is important that the teacher elaborates an appealing environment for students in both virtual and real settings, creating discussion spaces in class in which they can express their ideas and opinions about any specific topic, allowing them to feel comfortable and confident to experience the foreign language and showing respect for others' beliefs.

Offering a wide and appropriate selection of strategies and the tools and skills on how to take advantage of them in favor of language learning as a goal is the main purpose of foreign language teachers who want to make their students self-aware of their process and their own need for learning and improving their performance. The teacher must also guide students who need individual support if possible (Kuramavadivelu, 2003).

Anna Chamot and her colleagues identified four processes that allow learners to exercise control over their learning process and objectives; these are: “planning, monitoring, problem solving and evaluating” (Kuramavadivelu, 2003, p.134).

Students must work on planning what to do, how to do it (according to teacher’s directions or requests), individually or in groups, having into account the tools and materials that they need to develop the activities, (e.g. VLE platforms, dictionaries and internet resources), when to do it (setting a schedule), where to do it (physically and/or virtually), and how to face problems and difficulties, as well as measure the performance and outcomes according to the goals. In order to comply with these requirements it is compulsory to identify the kind of strategies or study method, either visual or auditory, taking into account students’ needs, weaknesses and strengths, with the purpose to potentiate the learning of the foreign language; checking the achievement of objectives through constant self-assessment, e.g. by interacting with the teacher or classmates using the goal language, written or orally, in different settings (virtual or real) with the drive of improving and gaining knowledge; and taking advantage of teacher’s intervention and guidance for problem solving and the application of tests to get feedback, increasing their progress in learning. (Beyond Methods, p.139).

### **4.3. Motivation Binary Theory**

Motivation could be defined as the desire or wish that energizes and directs goal-oriented behaviors, being a key element for achieving the goals of the present research. According to Reiss (2012), psychologists have proposed some different ways of considering motivation: one method is dual, in which motivation is classified depending whether it arises from outside (extrinsic) or inside (intrinsic) the individual.

The element of motivation for the present study relies on learning processes related to the students' autonomy in the context of EFL and within the framework of CALL-TELL-WELL as language specific areas of ICT. This calls for careful planning through appealing activities at the moment of preparing and implementing teaching sessions for both the classroom and the virtual environment.

#### **4.3.1. Intrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic Motivation is associated with the individual's interests, delight, and natural satisfaction when fulfilling a task or activity (Schunk, and Zimmerman, 2008). Reiss (2012) defines intrinsic motivation in terms of individuals engaging in a behavior seeking personal reward; essentially, performing an activity for its own sake, rather than the wish for some external reward; like when a student practices an sport activity because he or she finds it enjoyable or somebody solves a puzzle because that person finds it challenging, fun and exciting.

This research considers that the use of foreign language in daily life contexts besides school is not usual for students at Colegio San Antonio María Claret; instead, they rather spend their time using their smartphones, tablets or digital devices during their free time for their leisure, which motivates them to perform activities in order to gain access to them. Hence, an extrinsic

motivation related problem, in this case developing and promoting the use of the foreign language, will be tackled through an intrinsic motivating strategy, this means, the use of ICT and Virtual Learning Environments with the expectation of achieving the goal.

#### **4.3.2. Extrinsic Motivation**

Extrinsic motivation takes place when the individual is keen on performing a behavior or engaging in an activity seeking to earn a reward or avoid a punishment (Schunk, and Zimmerman, 2008). Our education system emphasizes on attaining a scholarship based on high performance in standardized tests; at the same time, students are reprimanded and parents are asked to sign academic compromises every time students achieve low results in hired mocked exams. Hence, this research deals with external or extrinsic motivation, since students at Colegio San Antonio María Claret, like most schools in Colombia, avoid an adverse outcome.

However, some studies have demonstrated that offering excessive external rewards for an (already) internally rewarding behavior can lead to a reduction in intrinsic motivation, a phenomenon known as the over-justification effect.

Extrinsic motivation can be beneficial in some situations. It can be used to motivate people to acquire new skills or knowledge, and once these have been learned, people may become more interested to develop the task or activity. External rewards can also be a source of feedback, allowing people to know if their performance has achieved a standard deserving of reinforcement. (Myers, 2005)

While most people would suggest that intrinsic motivation is best, it is not always possible in every situation. In some cases, people simply have no internal desire to engage themselves in an activity.

#### **4.4. Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL)**

E-learning comprises an array of terms for learning enhanced by the use of computers. In a general level, there are some of these terms that stand out for their extended use in didactics:

##### **4.4.1. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)**

It is well known that current tools for communicating and learning are digital devices (in this particular case, computers), which perform a starring role in how we approach our reality and its diverse information channels, but they also help to establish interaction routes in order to complement and build our knowledge, through discussion, contrast and questioning.

CALL is an instrument used in language teaching and learning that allows students the use of computer in an independent way with the purpose of building and reinforcing their knowledge. Students can learn the foreign language through different activities such as videos, web resources, online games or discussion forums, among others. “The use of computers in EFL classroom has also psychological benefits in learning English, because students feel more confident as well as enjoy their success. Therefore, using different components of the computers’ programs stimulate students’ interest, increasing their motivation. This will have positive results in the development of language learning autonomy.” (Maliqi, 2016).

Computer-Assisted Language Learning through Web 2.0 tools offers different ways to allow people to get connected, practice a different language and learn about other cultures, no matter if they are close or extremely far from each other. There is a major database of materials for languages learning or any other topic related to any culture in the world. If teachers are well-trained, they can set and manage an optimal Virtual Learning Environment through the use of different, innovative and appealing resources on the Internet (Spolsky, and Hult, 2008).

#### **4.4.2. Web-Enhanced Language Learning (WELL).**

The huge growth of the World Wide Web (WWW) and the development of a number of Web protocols and standards have introduced the possibility of distributing documents and applications through the Internet. The major contribution of the Web, however, is not the distributional power, but the way in which this information can be accessed, viewed and interacted with. The Web enables any user that is connected to exploit the available resources on virtually any site within a friendly environment, in a relative short time. This development increases the potential of CALL significantly, since language courses can be found on the Web, one can communicate with native speakers around the world, etc. The emphasis of WELL is on improving the practical communicative skills of the learner, and the computer is used as a tool more than as a tutor; the applications provide no drills, but empowers the user to use or understand the language. The text that is used is mainly chosen by the student him/herself, implying that the system does not require any supervisor (Allodi, Dokter and Kuipers, 1998).

Basically, WELL consists of an instructional program based on multimedia materials which utilizes the attributes and resources of the World Wide Web to create meaningful environments where learning is fostered and supported and many resources, supportive collaboration, implementation of web-based activities are included. It presents the latest content of any topic that can be modified and is set in a framework of self-directed and self-paced instruction. It can also be evaluated and adapted, without a computer platform.

Some main advantages are:

- Materials to users are easily delivered
- WELL can be used for group or individual training

- Compatibility with different technological platforms, such as Windows, Mac, smartphones (Android and iOS), etc.
- Content can be updated easily
- Requires minimal technical support
- Access and sharing can be supervised
- Can be linked with other e-learning systems

#### **4.4.3. Blended learning**

The original use of the phrase “blended learning” was often associated with simply linking traditional classroom training to e-learning activities, such as asynchronous work (typically accessed by learners outside the class at their own time and pace). However, the term has evolved to encompass a much richer set of learning strategies or “dimensions.” (Singh, 2003)

This methodology can take place in different settings such as: school, house and others, and can have many elements included: courses, content materials, instant messaging applications, blogs, platforms and other. It is necessary to have an excellent interaction between student and teacher, student to content, student to student and student to platform, based on interaction, where these connections can be appealing to participants and encourage them to go further in their learning process and also, inspire them to use these kind of elements more often. “Involving blended learning model provides the essential methodology structure needed to effectively combine face-to-face instruction, online instruction and arrays of content object and consent of all form factors”. Bonk and Graham (2006)

Blended learning has been structured by three categories (Bonk and Graham, 2006):

- Enabling blends which primarily focus on addressing issues of access and convenience

- Enhancing blends allows incremental changes to the pedagogy but do not radically change the way teaching and learning occurs
- Transforming blends: blends allow a radical transformation of the pedagogy.

The concept of blended learning is rooted in the idea that learning is not just a one-time event—learning is a continuous process, which is a very useful methodology for our research since through it we could plan how to address in a constant and progressive way new issues, to implement pedagogical changes and to rethink/reformulate those techniques that did not give the expected result or were not very well received for our students, transforming the learning process from a one-direction relationship (from teacher to student) to a mutualist and active role from both parts, where the guidance of one (teacher) strengthen the interests and goals of the other (student).

Teachers' role is fundamental in this specific project, because they convey enthusiasm, expert knowledge, experience and context. They can answer questions and direct the pace of the class, but the most important fact is the cultural effect: people interact and learn from one another. The biggest challenge of instructor-led training is the scale, especially when large class sizes reduce effectiveness and there's a long deployment times, that's why technology is intended to solve these problems: extent the teaching model in space and time, since it can reach more learners in a short period and they can learn at their own pace and speed with a constant and active guidance. (Bersin, 2004)

#### **4.5. Task-Based Learning**

Task-Based Language Learning (TBL) is an approach in which students can learn the needed skills to be able to communicate in an L2 through tasks. In the task stage, the purpose is to encourage communication in the class in both oral and written ways, in order to learn the goal



language. The learners must be exposed in a variety of ways to the use of language into their real world, exchange meanings, draw conclusions about different topics, and express their opinions according to the circumstances. *“TASKS are activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome”* as defined by Willis (1996). (Task-Based Learning, Pools-M, 2009, pgs. 3, 4)

The teacher performs a fundamental role providing meaningful activities according to the students' needs in order to motivate them, encouraging their attention and knowledge, increasing their vocabulary to promote language development, *“The teacher must help learners to recognize differences and similarities, help them to “correct, clarify and deepen” their perceptions of the foreign language. (Michael Lewis 15)”* (Task-Based Learning, Pools-M, 2009).

The following are the phases of TBL suggested by Willis (1996):

**Pre Task:**

- a. *Raise consciousness introduction to subject and task.*
- b. *Thorough introduction to topic by the teacher*
- c. *Use of pictures, posters and demonstrations*

In this phase, the teacher introduces the topics and the objective for the class. The new vocabulary regarding the topic might be taught through audios, videos, pictures or short exercises, like memory games or crosswords. On this stage, the main goal is that students use the target language to maintain a conversation in a real context.

**Task Cycle:**

- a. *Working with and using the target language.*
- b. *Activities like pair work, group work*
- c. *Exercises like information gap activities*
- d. *Gradual increase in the importance of planning*
- e. *Report and Presentation*

In this phase, it is important to implement the collaborative work. Students must work on the task in groups in order to address it into a real communication situation, in which it is possible to exchange information and opinions. During this phase, the students are under teacher's guidance and observation, having the opportunity to ask and answer questions to improve the development of their task. On this stage, it is essential to encourage students to use the vocabulary already learned, in order to complete the task, to plan the report and to do the presentation to their classmates.

**Post Task:**

- a. *Selecting, identifying and classifying common words and phrases*
- b. *Practice of language and phrases in classroom*
- c. *Building personal dictionaries*

In this phase, the teacher will encourage students to become self-aware of the contents they have learned, as well as the situations in which they can use the expressions and vocabulary gained after the task, according to a given context. Through teacher's support, the students can analyze the words, phrases, and the grammar to clarify their understanding. Also, the students can

build a personal dictionary in which they can write the phrases, words or relevant aspects considered important into communication. (Task-Based Learning, Pools-M, 2009)

The Task-Based Language Learning allows students to interact with others in a learning environment, using their previous knowledge through the four basic skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking, in order to understand the use of the target language. The communication between classmates is a fundamental key that allows them to exchange beliefs and opinions about any subject they feel attracted to, complying with the purposes of the class.

#### **4.6. Collaborative Learning**

Collaborative learning is a social interaction in which a group of students build their knowledge, searching meanings or working together to find a solution to a problem.

*“Collaborative learning has its home in social constructivism, which assumes that knowledge is socially produced by consensus among peers”* (Barkley, Major, & Cross, 2014). In collaborative learning the students have the opportunity to exchange their ideas and beliefs into an educational learning environment after having been exposed to any activity through videos, readings and other types of information providing activities having the opportunity to interact not only with peers but with the teacher, however it depends on the teacher to be part of the members. Smith and McGregor (1992) express that *“CL is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together”* (Barkley, Major, & Cross, 2014). It is important to highlight that CL implies that all members of the team or group have to participate actively in the construction of the ideas addressed to stated objectives, otherwise it is not CL. It requires responsibility, interaction, critical thinking, autonomy and oral or written communication.

All of these theories helped the researchers in the elaboration of this project and were decisive for the choice of instruments, the selection of the approach to be used and the methodology from which could be addressed the different stages of the study.

Autonomy in inevitable relation with the existing motivation for the different actors of the teaching-learning process, lay the foundations of this research, and through the use of technology and the benefits of information networks it is possible to link collaborative learning and Task-Based Learning for students and thus fulfill the objectives set in modern education.

## Chapter 5: Research Design

### 5.1. Type of Study

The main interest of this research is adjusted to children's reality in the English class at Colegio San Antonio María Claret. In order to carry out this project, we chose qualitative research due to its focus on understanding and deepening in the phenomena, exploring them from the perspective of the participants in a natural environment and in relation to their context. This method also allowed us to collect data such as: concepts, perceptions, mental images, beliefs, emotions, interactions, thoughts, processes and experiences expressed in the language of the participants, either individually, in groups or collectively. *"The data is collected in order to analyze and understand them, and thus answer research questions and generate changes in the educational processes of that group."* (Hernandez R, Fernandez C and Baptista M, 2010)

#### 5.1.1. Action research

The process of an action research project involves a number of phases: an approach to identify the problem, the formulation of some diagnostic, the selection of one diagnostic and the actions about the diagnostic. The process requires a critical stance that examines the real sense of the research and conditions to develop the entire research plan. The Action Research method is a way of including all members of the community, by allowing them to be protagonists of the research experience and the transformation of their reality, from the reflection and sharing of the information collected. This method is important and useful in the current project because it allows English teachers and students from Colegio San Antonio María Claret, to be part of a range of possibilities and solutions, as well as taking part in the progress achieved in the research about learning methods in teaching English to young learners.

This type of research provides some advantages due to the possibilities it offers to researchers to socialize with specific groups within the chosen community and to obtain information, so there is not only a need to search for, but also the possibility to get results out of the community itself, potential diagnosis and viable solutions. It was developed with the purpose of helping teachers to improve their English teaching methodology and to increase upon their existing knowledge, which benefit students in their learning process as well.

As previously stated, one of the main features of action research leads to helping to interpret the events from the point of view of those who are related to the problem situation, giving an inner perspective that the researchers must approach in a comfortable and respectful way. The researchers have found that interviews are an appropriate data collection instrument, since they lead the specific interests of the researchers while maintaining the active role and experiences of the participants. (Elliott, 2000)

## **5.2. Context**

It is vastly known how important English is as a Foreign Language to be competitive in a globalized world, in order to have access to a broad of opportunities for investment and economic growth, since it is the predominant language in the business environment. The prior is one of the main reasons why bilingual projects have been presented and executed to improve the level of English, transforming Cali in a more competitive city, in terms of socio-economic, academic and cultural investment (Alcaldía Santiago de Cali, Diciembre 2016).

The most recent projects are "The National Program of Bilingualism" and "Go Cali", with the aim of strengthening and improving the communicative skills in the foreign language, especially in students and teachers of public and private entities in Valle del Cauca. The Mayor of Cali, along with the Municipal Secretary of Education, public and private universities, SENA

(Learning National Service), Language Institutes and the Bilingualism Board have promoted workshops, seminars and training courses for teachers in order to support and promote the bilingualism.

"The *Go Cali* program has had a public and private investment of \$7,865 million and is comprised of four components:

- Lifetime English: Strengthening of speaking skills, listening reading and writing in English.
- Masterful English: Strengthening of communicative skills, pedagogy and curriculum in English.
- English Together: Playful encounters of official and private educational institutions to stimulate learning.
- Conversation Clubs: Complementary spaces for the practice of English.".(Cámara de Comercio de Cali, 2017)

As a more specific context, we present Colegio San Antonio María Claret, which is a co-educational private school founded in 1959 by priest Francisco Arango. Its students are recognized for their high academic level as well as for their high sense of values. It has maintained the highest category according to ICFES and has implemented NTC ISO 9001-2008 quality standards.

Students at Colegio San Antonio María Claret have obtained good results in proficiency level tests within the CEFR, with a significant number of students who have reached an A1 level for third and fourth graders and A1+ for fifth graders, in reading and writing skills. The bilingual program started six years ago, through an early partial immersion methodology in primary school that, nowadays, consists of 21 hours of English immersion in subjects such as: Social Studies,

Science, Physical Education, Art, Body Expression, Technology, Music as well as English as a Foreign Language, with this one being the main subject of the program, being present in 6 class hours per week (40 minutes each); teachers are usually Bachelor in Modern Language with a C1 level based on CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Language).

The program is designed to have students familiarized with English as a foreign language in different levels, through cultural enrichment and respect for foreign civilizations that encourage students' integral development in their learning process, allowing that students in economic-social levels two, three and four to reach a B2 level for eleventh grade, which may lead to more and better opportunities for their post-school life and personal development, as locating the Institution as one of the best-positioned bilingual institutions in the region.

### **5.3. Participants**

For this research students from fifth grade will participate given the fact that they are the second generation of bilingual students, therefore their process is more advanced compared to the first generation. They are between the ages of 9 and 11 years old, most of them belong to an economic-social level between 2 and 4 on a scale up to six levels according to Colombian standards.

Fifth grade students took the Greenwich Placement Test at the end of their 4th grade school year. This test complies with CEFR standards and the results showed that 57% of students reached A2 level in Language Use Proficiency, 42% reached the same level on Reading Proficiency and 38% in Listening Proficiency. There are 8 subjects taught in the foreign language at Colegio San Antonio María Claret: English, Art, Music, Technology, Social Studies, Science, Body Expression and Physical Education, for a total of 19 hours of immersion in the language.



We will take a random sample of twenty-seven students corresponding to one group out of seven groups in fifth grade at Colegio San Antonio María Claret in Cali, Colombia.

#### **5.4. Data Collection Instruments**

For our research, we used techniques to design a data collection plan. Such data collection instruments were chosen according to structure, reliability and objectivity. Our research involved a process of collection and analysis of qualitative data which were analyzed through appropriate data classification, conveying into one of several classes according to common characteristics.

##### **5.4.1. Semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews aim at contextual and different aspects of the interviewer's environment, working with words and not with numbers, which require precision in description and strictness in meaning; interpretation in qualitative interviews corresponds to accuracy in quantitative measurements. (Kvale, 2008)

The above allows the interviewer to develop and use an "interview guide", with a list of questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation, leading to follow a mutual trajectory in the conversation, which may redirect the course of it when the individual feels is appropriate to do it. Semi-structured interviews offer a clear set of commands for interviewers and can provide reliable, comparable qualitative data and often is preceded by observation, to allow the researchers to develop a deep understanding about the topic of interest, necessary for developing relevant and meaningful semi-structured questions.

For this project, we have proposed two stages of interviews: an initial interview to help us to identify what, how, when and why about the use of diverse virtual tools on different scenarios of

their life; the second one will help us to analyze through the process (data collected) during the course of this investigation.

#### **5.4.2. Teacher's Reflexive Journal**

“The journal is an instrument for analyzing the reflective thinking of teachers as much in training and execution.” (Porlán and Martin, 1993, pg. 21).

The journal is a tool in which the researcher registers his/her notes, reflections, points of view, preliminary conclusions, initial hypotheses, doubts and concerns (Hernandez R. Fernandez C. Baptista M., 2010). This instrument can contain descriptions of the environment and context, and is very useful because places, participants, relationships, events can be described; the teacher can also elaborate maps, charts and schemes which should be related to the main objective. (Fernandez C. Baptista M., 2010).

For this research a diary was written since CALL strategy was implemented. The teacher kept a record of the all face-to-face classes and it contains the teacher's reflection based on class descriptions, all referring to what the teacher observed of the students in order to analyze the progress and the difficulties. The main objective of it, was being able to witness and review student's learning process, through the development of different strategies which helped them to acquire and apply new knowledge in a wide range of topics, supported by resources designed and disposed by the teacher.

#### **5.4.3. Physical Material Artifacts**

Physical material as a form of document, broadly defined, consists of physical objects found within the study setting. Anthropologists typically refer to these objects as artifacts, which include the tools, implements, utensils, and instruments of everyday living. (Sharan, 2009)

In our case, the material consisted of different and diverse on-line activities which were organized and uploaded by the teacher in charge to the platform; these artifacts are known as “mute evidence”. Throughout the course of the investigation, researchers determined what was relevant, to get to know if the physical material could complement data gathered, being in our specific situation collected through interviews as well as an evaluation of activities performance (with statistics/results provided by the platform) and class observation when students have interaction with specific CALL activities.

The purpose of physical material is to provide an individual insight of students’ process, without causing any discomfort to their learning process. The tools and settings applied, require minimal collaboration and cause minimal awkwardness for subjects.

## **5.5. Instructional Design**

Heinich, Molenda, Russell and Smaldino (1993) developed a model to elaborate instructional designs, incorporating the instruction events proposed by Robert Gagné, to guarantee the effective use of media in the instruction. This ASSURE model has its theoretical basis on constructivism, starting from the students’ specific characteristics, their learning styles and promoting their active participation and commitment. The model consists of six phases or procedures:

### **5.5.1. Analyze learners:**

We outlined the main characteristics of our students’ population related to:

- General Characteristics: They are all fifth grade students, between the ages of 9 and 11 years old, most of them correspond to an economic-social level between 2 and 4 on a scale up to six levels according to Colombian standards. In addition,

their demographic characteristics correspond to the Colombian multiethnic population, which includes descendants from different origins, mainly mestizo Colombians, indigenous Colombians, afro-Colombians and white Colombians, in that order.

- **Specific entry skills:** 99% of the students involved in this project started their studies in the institution since first grade or lower levels (kindergarten and preschool). This means they have been for five years or more in the school's bilingual programme based on a foreign-language early immersion methodology. Besides, they have prior knowledge in handling computers since they study a subject called Technology and they also have used a website called "Bilingual Claret" ([sistemasclaret.jimdo.com](http://sistemasclaret.jimdo.com)) where some teachers share content (videos, worksheets, etc.) for different subjects like Science, English and Social Studies.
- **English proficiency level:** The students in this research project took the Greenwich Placement test at the end of the previous school year and the results showed that 57% of the sample achieved A2 level in language use, according to the CEFR. However, 42% and 38% of students obtain the same level regarding reading and listening skills, respectively.
- **Learners' Autonomy:** In general terms, students at Colegio San Antonio María Claret lack of independence, interest and awareness of their learning process. Therefore, most of them are not familiar with working by their own, unless any teacher assigns a homework or any other type of activity. This means, any web research or consultation task is the result of an assignment, and hardly ever constitutes a previous or complementary activity to the class.

- Students' Resources: Our sample is characterized for the access to at least one computer, tablet or smartphone at home, and their use of websites of social content and interaction through Internet in websites such as YouTube and Facebook, among others.

### **5.5.2. State objectives:**

Fifth grade students and teachers must follow the guideline for the course, elaborated by the English department, which is based on two text guides:

- Learning Zone 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition by Margarita Prieto, Simon Betterton (McGraw Hill Education, 2014) Student Book and Workbook.
- Reading Adventures 3 by Carmella Lieske and Scott Menking (Cengage Learning, 2013) Book, videos and audio files.

This guideline was created in compliance with the national Basic Standards of Competence in a Foreign Language by the MEN (National Ministry of Education), which purpose is for students to achieve a B1 level in the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) when they finish their high school studies.

The syllabus for the module on MoodleCloud includes:

- Adjectives for personality
- Expressions of agreement
- Wishes in the present
- Use of "Too much" and "Too many"
- Obligations (Had to) and habits (Would) in the past
- Personal and Possessive pronouns

- Reported Speech
- Past Passive Voice
- Reading Comprehension

Students should achieve the following cognitive and communicative competences:

- Express personal tastes as well as wishes about hypothetical situations.
- Understand and use expressions to communicate obligations and habits in the past.
- Interpret other people's stories or statements using their own words.
- Elaborate statements where they give prominence to the object in a sentence, rather than the subject.
- Understand and express the general idea of a text using verbal and written communication.

In terms of autonomy, students will be encouraged to:

- Use the virtual learning environment, not only as a set of tools but also as a communication spot with the teacher and other students, in order to enrich their foreign language learning process.
- Create study habits that allow them to manage their time as well as the resources presented.
- Generate written production through their own understanding and opinions, allowing them to share it with their classmates, promoting discussion spaces in the classroom, too.
- Foster research by the use of new resources and information sources, developing on students the necessary skills for independent work.

It is a main objective that students interact with the virtual platform on a regular basis, in order to improve their autonomy in their learning process. This will be encouraged by the implementation of relevant and appealing content, and the use of different types of activities.

Students are expected to:

- Watch YouTube videos and infographics displayed in MoodleCloud to reinforce the topics studied in class.
- Solve workshops, which offer immediate feedback on language usage performance skills.
- Practice on external websites in order to improve their listening, reading and writing skills through different activities.
- Play online and offline games to practice, reinforce and compete with their classmates in contest-like activities.
- Write their opinion regarding a specific subject and read the opinions others share in a virtual forum.

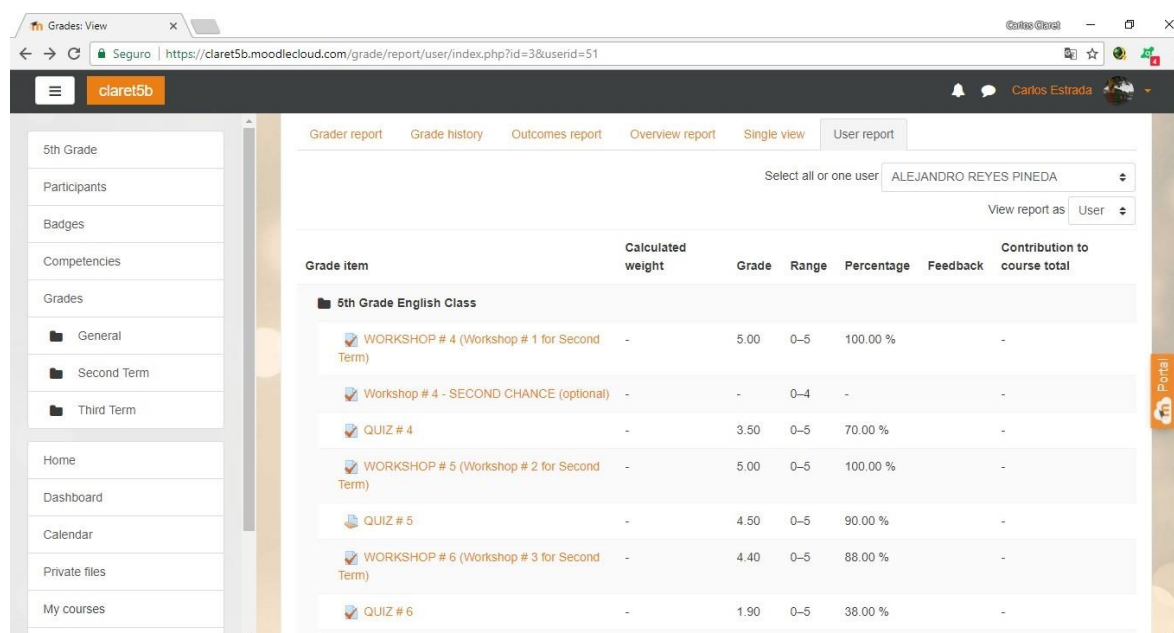
It is worth mentioning that the teacher will inform parents about the strategies developed in MoodleCloud (through e-mail) as well as the possibility of verifying the students' grades in the platform, on both virtual activities and regular class tasks, as a way to accompany the process of the students.

### **5.5.3. Selection of methods, media and materials:**

According to the learning theories studied for this project, the set of activities integrated in the virtual platform are framed into Task-Based Learning method and Collaborative learning strategies. These approaches allow us to identify, not only students' performance regarding the

topics studied in class, but also the students ability, aptitude and willing to work autonomously as well as develop asynchronous discussion group activities.

Moodlecloud also allows the teacher to include information from activities performed in class, such as presentations, worksheets, quizzes on paper, etc., therefore students and their parents have access to all the grades and can follow the progress in the subject.



Grade item	Calculated weight	Grade	Range	Percentage	Feedback	Contribution to course total
<b>5th Grade English Class</b>						
WORKSHOP # 4 (Workshop # 1 for Second Term)	-	5.00	0-5	100.00 %	-	-
Workshop # 4 - SECOND CHANCE (optional)	-	-	0-4	-	-	-
QUIZ # 4	-	3.50	0-5	70.00 %	-	-
WORKSHOP # 5 (Workshop # 2 for Second Term)	-	5.00	0-5	100.00 %	-	-
QUIZ # 5	-	4.50	0-5	90.00 %	-	-
WORKSHOP # 6 (Workshop # 3 for Second Term)	-	4.40	0-5	88.00 %	-	-
QUIZ # 6	-	1.90	0-5	38.00 %	-	-

*Figure # 1. Activities and Grading*

Given the nature of our sample, the means that might be most suitable are: images, videos and interactive games to reinforce/review the contents studied in and before the class, and also to promote the competitive spirit and interaction among students. For this purpose, we decided to use an E-Learning web platform called “MoodleCloud” because it fits our needs and is simple to use by students and teachers as well.



As stated above, the use of the text guides by the students is also very important to achieve each class's objectives and the practice through class activities, therefore, the contents will be directly linked to these books but the activities will be located in different sources. It should be noted that the evaluations at the end of each unit will be entirely developed by the teacher, and will be composed by activities related to the contents of the course guidelines and the text guides.

Students will also be taken to the English laboratory once every two weeks in order to work in pairs or individually on the E-Learning platform procedures and handling, so they can get familiar with MoodleCloud and other activities, websites and real-time online games used in this design and the evaluation tests to assess their learning process.

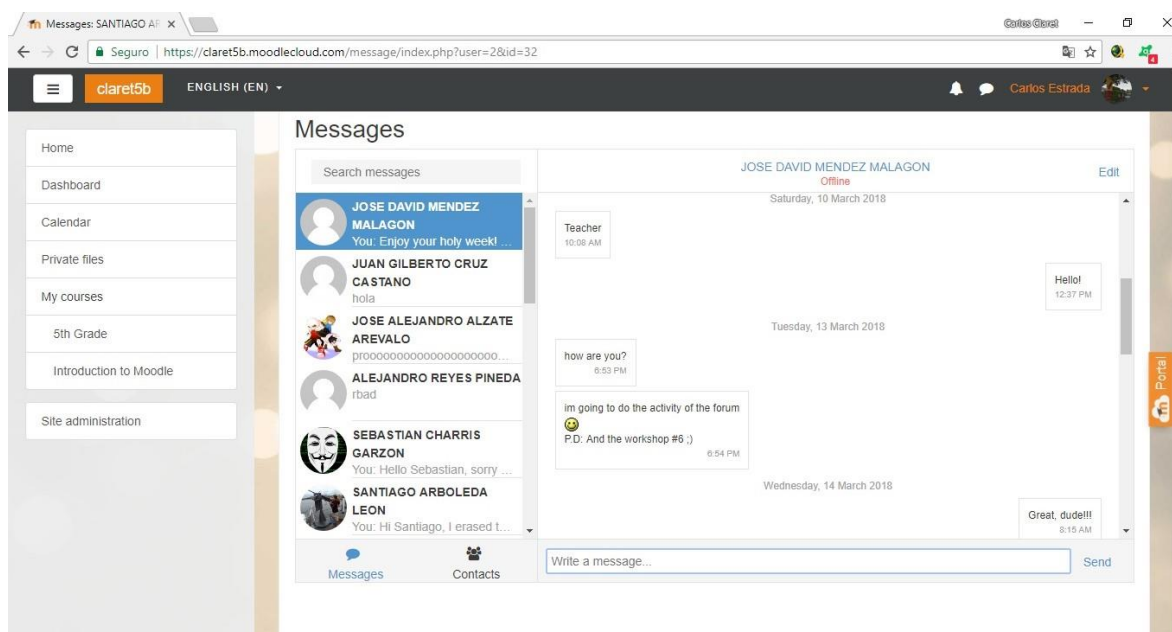
#### **5.5.4. Use of media and materials:**

We decided to use a virtual platform named MoodleCloud ([claret5b.moodlecloud.com](http://claret5b.moodlecloud.com)) to gather the online resources we will assign for autonomous work (videos, links, online activities, games, etc.). This website is the non-paid version of Moodle, which is one of the most popular and complete learning content management system (LCMS) used in schools, universities and companies around the world.

The process starts by creating the account to manage the site. Then, the site administrator registers each student by using the full name and student ID. The administrator uploads relevant content such as videos, external links, games, etc., in accordance to the topics studied in the classroom.

On the following stage, the students have a session at the English laboratory to learn how to log in the platform, where to find the course, the type of activities they can find as well as the characteristics, methodology and limitations for the games and the evaluation tasks (workshops

and quizzes). There will be around thirteen to fifteen combined sessions; this means that some of the sessions will take place at students' homes and some at the English laboratory in the school. Due to maintenance or availability of the laboratory, the number of sessions may vary. It is important to highlight that students will have the support from the teacher during the whole process through direct guidance in the classroom and in addition, to the chat and message service included in the platform. Students can ask questions about the general handling of the platform as well as their concerns regarding their performance and grading.



*Figure # 2. Interaction through the message board*

In the classroom, the teacher explains the topics and have students practice through individual and group activities included in the text guide and extra material from the teacher. There are different types of activities set in the platform. For each study unit, students can find information such as videos, pictures, charts, etc., followed by practice activities from external sources like

online grammar or vocabulary games, grammar exercises and contest-like questionnaires. At the end of each unit, the teacher evaluates students through the implementation of a workshop and a quiz.

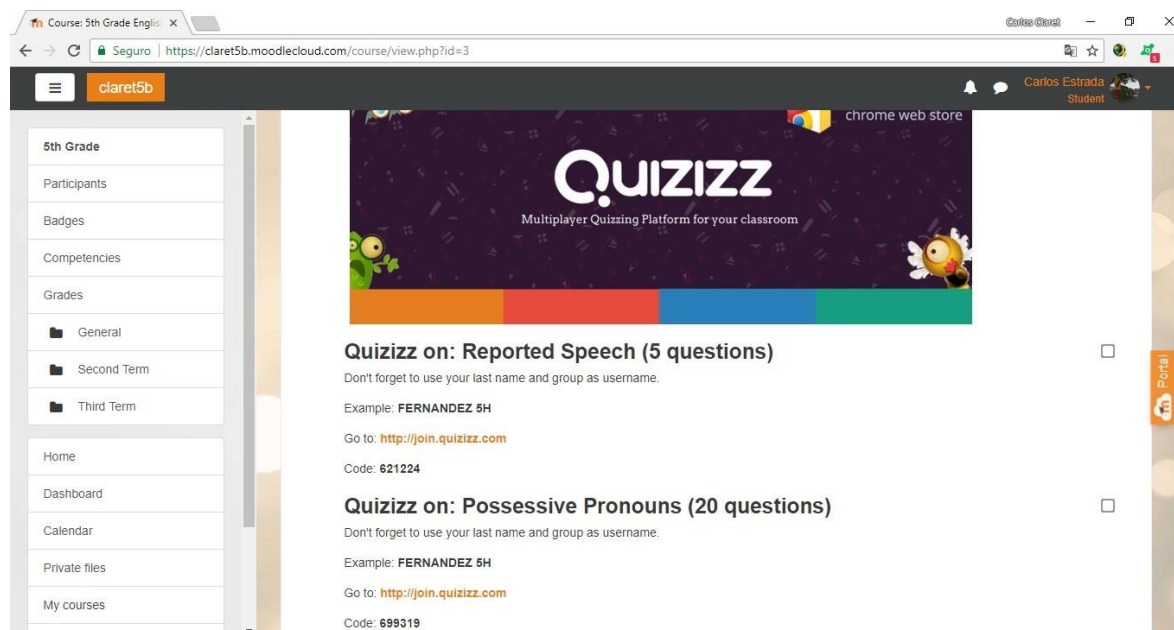
In the case of workshops, the students can take the test at home. They have the possibility of making two attempts: After the first attempt, the platform shows to students the wrong answers so they can repeat the activity once more having into account this information and making the corrections needed. The platform saves the highest score each student gets. On the other hand, quizzes take place at the English laboratory at school, where students take a short online test under teacher's supervision about what they studied in class and reviewed through MoodleCloud activities. Each student has ten to fifteen minutes to answer the questions that include matching, multiple choice and fill in the gaps activities.

It is important to note that the site administrator/teacher carefully selects from external sources the extra exercises to be published on Moodlecloud, in order to offer relevant content, feedback and provide activities to make students aware of their cognitive process and its results. There are also charts, infographics and even funny images that, in one or many ways can be supportive, attractive or just eye-catching. The layout of this website, on its free version as stated above, is not characterized for being nice-looking nor engaging; therefore, it is very important to catch students' attention through different ways or approaches.

One of the most innovative ways to catch students' attention and interest, as experienced in classroom classes, is competition. The teacher takes students to the English laboratory once again to have students participate on a contest-like website called Quizizz. On this website, the teacher chooses or creates a set of questions regarding one or more topics students are working on in class. Then, students must log in using their name or nickname on the website. When all students

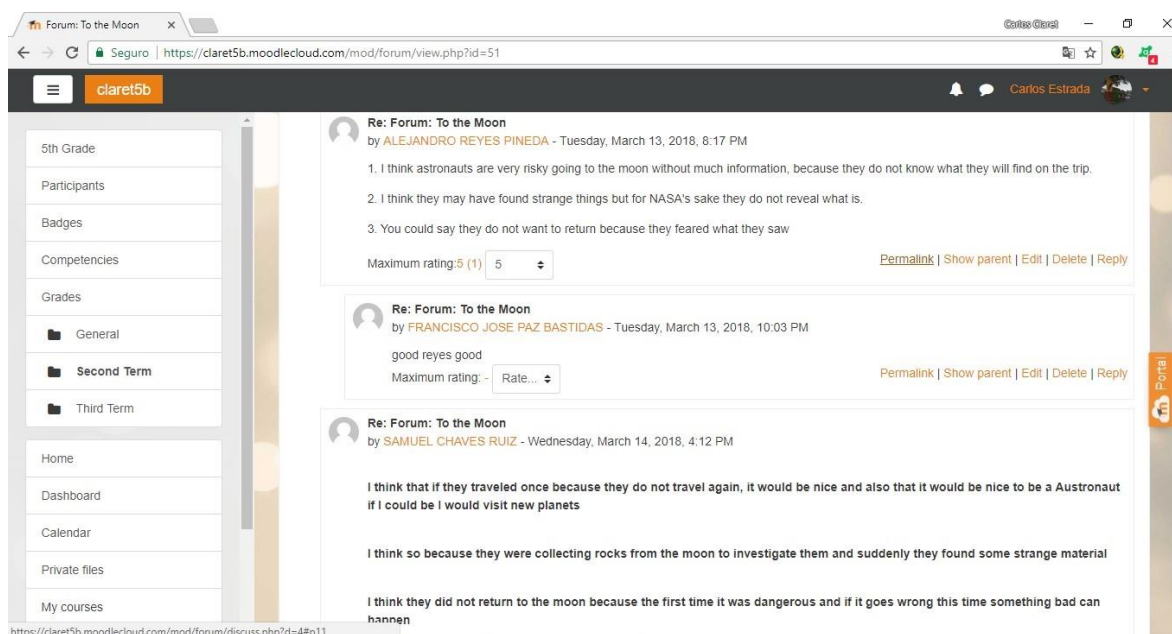
are logged in and ready, the teacher starts the activity and students must answer multiple-choice questions as fast as they can but accurately, in order to gain the highest possible score. After every answer, students are shown in a position chart for them to know how well they are answering the questions in relation to their classmates. Once they answer all questions, the final position podium shows them the top five. The most important part comes later, when the teacher can check and show students how well they performed as a group, the accuracy percentage, the most difficult question, the question they took longer to answer, and even check answers one by one.

Teacher plans Quizizz activities in different ways and times. One “do-it-at-home” session, in real time, in which students must connect from home, all at the same time along with the teacher. Through the chat included in the platform, they get the game code from the teacher to participate in the game. There are also “homework” sessions where students can log whenever they want, as many times as they need, in a period of one week, and compete against their classmates. These activities encourages them not only to practice through competition but also to prepare themselves in advance before taking the test to defeat their opponents.



*Figure # 3. Activities on Quizizz.com*

In order to enrich students experience on the virtual platform, and to obtain better results in the classroom, the teacher published a forum in which students must watch three videos that are related in different ways to the content of one of the text guides, and then participate giving their opinion based on three questions that guide the discussion. This activity is connected to a reading comprehension class and offers students relevant information, important data and even the confidence to comfortably participate in the class.



*Figure # 4. Example of written production and interaction through the forum*

### 5.5.5. Participation of students:

Students were encouraged to participate actively and cooperatively in the virtual platform through informative and educational activities, practical questionnaires, online workshops, real-time online group games, individual interactive games and a discussion activity by the end of the course.

### 5.5.6. Evaluation of the implementation process and learning outcomes:

The teacher periodically evaluated the students, in their cognitive and performance and communicative skills, as well as their autonomous process, by analyzing students' compliance with the activities and workshops dates. By the end of the second term, the teacher interviewed the students to identify their perception of the whole process, as well as the tools used in relation to their current performance in the subject, the use of the foreign language to interact with each

other, autonomy in their learning process and actions to be taken to improve the quality of this implementation.

## **Chapter 6: Data Analysis**

After implementing the strategy for this research study, consisting of the arrangement and application of CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning), and through the utilization of data collection instruments such as a semi-structured interview, a teacher's journal and students' artifacts, the researchers intend to analyze the results in terms of students' autonomy about their EFL learning process. This study was applied during a period of 4 months to fifth grade students at Colegio San Antonio Maria Claret, from December 2017 to March 2018, with the purpose of answering the question: "What is the effect of CALL supported by Web 2.0 tools on autonomous learning in and EFL classroom?"

In order to answer the research question and analyze the data, we chose "Grounded Theory", since it is a qualitative research design, based on the fact of being interpretative rather than descriptive. Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss developed this theory in the 1960s as a different way of approach to an empirical social research. This model aims to explain any phenomenon through specific procedures that involve field notes, semi-structured interviews, photographs, focus groups and class observations (Chong & Yeo, 2014). The data allow us to construct the theory through evidence and its interpretation with the purpose of understanding the problem investigated.

Each one of the data collection instruments requires analysis through open coding, axial coding and selective coding methods.

In open coding we analyzed the collected data in order to identify key words or phrases, to connect them with the research. This allowed us to identify the sub-categories, such as students' perceptions about the use of Internet, students' beliefs regarding the use of virtual platforms, the



impact of the virtual platform, autonomous learning, use of CALL for EFL learning and communication in the foreign language. All information was classified on each of the categories, highlighted with different colors. In axial coding method, the similarities and differences of the data were analyzed in order to choose the major categories in relation with sub-categories, which responds to primary topics classified in our research question, according to the answers given by students: Use of Technology (Computer-Assisted Language Learning), Autonomous Learning Strategies and Foreign Language Competences Development. In the selective coding method, we aimed to inter-relate the categories with our research main objective.

The most relevant information we gathered is listed below:

### **6.1. Use of Technology (Computer-Assisted Language Learning)**

This category emerges from the need of students to integrate the use of technology, not only for leisure, but also for educational purposes, using tablets and computers, which allow them to stay connected with their learning. The use of CALL provides the opportunity to interact with different web resources combined with traditional classroom sessions.

#### **6.1.1. Students' perceptions about the use of Internet.**

The use of Internet has been extended to many regions of Colombia in the late years, allowing many people to communicate and interact with others from different locations, for training on different topics, and for learning purposes in educational institutions, as a complementary resource to perform class activities and assign support activities. *“Computer-mediated communication through the Internet provides a means for connecting language learners in different parts of the world to practice a language”* (Spolsky, and Hult, 2008).

The perception students have about the use of the Internet is, firstly, as a tool to do homework. Other uses are watching videos on YouTube, listening to music (on different platforms), play videogames and download different types of files. When students were first introduced to the platform, they *“appeared confident and excited regarding the possibilities and interactive nature of the platform.”*, as can be read in the Teacher’s Journal. Some of them also considered MoodleCloud as a way for learning a foreign language. Some questions in the interview were related to the use students give to Internet and whether they use it to learn English or any other foreign language. Next, there are some answers given by students during a focus group interview:

***¿Para qué usan el Internet?***

- *Para hacer las tareas, jugar, YouTube.*
- *MoodleCloud, hacer las actividades que el profe deja, escuchar música, sistemasclaret, YouTube, descargar cosas.*

***¿Usas el Internet para aprender inglés?***

- *Si, traductor.*
- *Yo he hecho “Duolingo” y también una aplicación, que no es sólo para inglés, que se llama “Preguntados”*

As the fragment of the interview shows, the students do not have a specific purpose to use the Internet, but several. Some of them acknowledged they take advantage of the Internet to learn and to practice a foreign language. Some of the students’ answers were related to the Internet usage frequency:

***¿Cuántas veces a la semana usan Internet?***

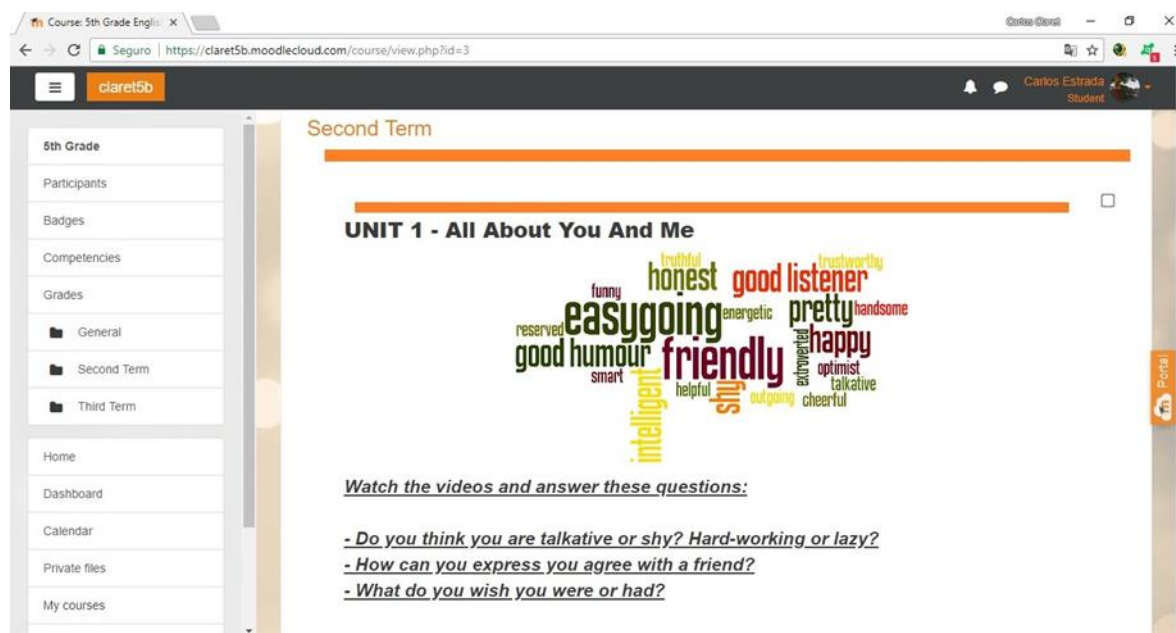
- *Todos los días.*

- *Una vez.*
- *Cada 5 días*
- *Cada vez que me piden una tarea, investigar, casi todos los días.*

***¿Qué día usa más el Internet?:***

- *El viernes.*
- *Fin de semana.*
- *Sólo los domingos*

As stated before, there are students who use the Internet every day through computers or tablets, to investigate homework or to learn something related to a specific subject. However, some students have limited access to Internet and affirm that they only use Internet once a week.



*Figure # 5. First Session on VLE (1/2)*

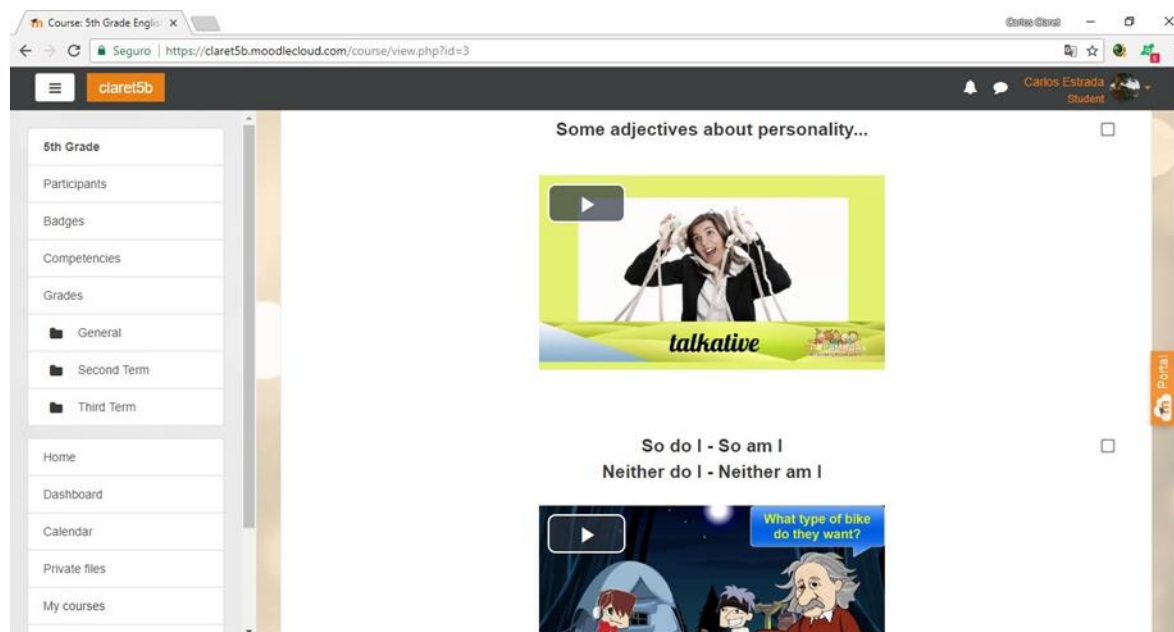
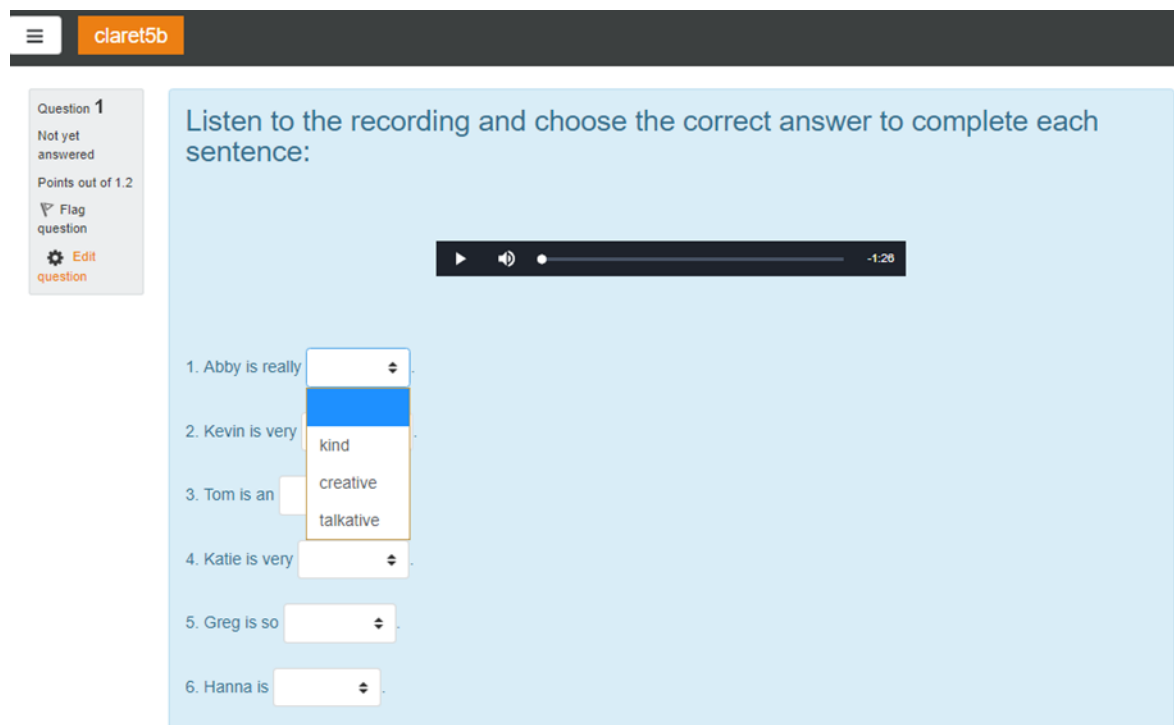


Figure # 6. First Session on VLE (2/2)

Videos were a strategy implemented as an activity in which students required listening, speaking, reading and writing skills to use the English language in order to express their opinions and beliefs. *“TASKS are activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome”* as defined by Willis. (Task-Based Learning, Pools-M, 2009, pgs. 3, 4). The teacher asked to students to watch the videos and answer questions such as: do you think you are talkative or shy? Hard-working or lazy? How can you express you agree with a friend? What do you wish you were or had? Students discussed the topic in class and then, they had an online workshop in which they were able to check their achievements regarding the specific topic.



*Figure # 7. Workshop No. 4*

As indicated in teacher's journal 2, *"in the next class in the classroom, the teacher asked students how they dealt with the assigned task and their performance and handling of the platform. Just three students admitted to have visited the platform and have developed the workshop. Two of them told the teacher not knowing their grade. The rest of the students mentioned they would visit the platform before the workshop's deadline. When the teacher asks about the reasons why they did not complete the activity yet, most of students said that given the time to be done, they usually do homework and similar activities one or two days before the limit date"*.

Despite the tendency to procrastinate, students start showing their understanding of the topic and the raise of study habits and the responsibility in using technology for educational purposes.

### 6.1.2. Student's beliefs regarding the use of virtual platforms.

The modern society is immersed in a technological culture in which we are in constant connection with different types of learning resources. Virtual platforms are composed of tools that allow students to develop and construct their knowledge in an educational environment, without the need of being in a specific physical space, and through synchronous and asynchronous activities that allow students to interact with others. Lev Vygotsky stated: *“as long as a person has access to a more capable peer, any problem can be solved. So the practical limits of human potential depend upon quality social interactions and one's environment”* (Clabaugh, 2010).

When asking students about their understanding of the virtual platforms concept and their liking for them, it was obvious that for some of them the concept is not clear and they tend to confuse those platforms with applications or social networks. Some of the questions in the focus interview were related to their understanding of the virtual platform concept and their opinion about virtual platforms. Following, there are some answers given by students:

***¿Qué entiende usted por plataforma virtual?***

- *“Puede ser como Instagram, Facebook, Google”*

***¿Qué opinión tiene de las plataformas virtuales?***

- *“A mí me gustan mucho las plataformas virtuales, son muy divertidas y puedes aprender muchas cosas”*

Some sessions after the start of the process, the teacher could observe that the perception of students of the virtual platform had changed, and students had a better comprehension about the purpose of virtual platforms and their advantages over typical classes and evaluations.

Due to unavailability of the English Laboratory at the school, a quiz that had been scheduled for a specific date had to be held on paper. As mentioned on Teacher's Journal 5, "The students showed their unconformity since they say they like better to take tests on computer because they are easier for them to answer and the instant grading makes them not to wait for the results."

**claret5b**

**5th Grade English Class**

Question 2  
Not yet answered  
Points out of 1.0  
Flag question  
Edit question

**Part B. Complete the sentences with the correct POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE and the correct VERB to form the Reported Speech. 1 POINT (0,2 each).**

a.  
Direct Speech: Elisa said, "My brother is living in Paris"  
Reported Speech: Elisa said that \_\_\_\_\_ brother \_\_\_\_\_ living in Paris.

b.  
Direct Speech: Camila said, "My \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_ is a Mazda"  
Reported Speech: Camila said th \_\_\_\_\_ his \_\_\_\_\_ father's car \_\_\_\_\_ a Mazda.

c.  
Direct Speech: Linda said, "My parents are from Spain"  
Reported Speech: Linda said that \_\_\_\_\_ parents \_\_\_\_\_ from Spain.

**VS.**

**Claret**  
FUNDACIÓN EDUCATIVA CLARETIANA

Teacher's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: D \_\_\_\_ / M \_\_\_\_ / Y \_\_\_\_  
Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group: \_\_\_\_\_

**5th Grade - 2nd Term - 2nd QUIZ**

**Estandar:** Habla de mí, de mis compañeros y de nuestras actividades cotidianas con oraciones simples, encadenadas (lógicamente) y a veces memorizadas.

**Indicadores de desempeño:**  
Comprende y utiliza las expresiones "too many", "too much" y "not enough" para expresar cantidades.  
Utiliza la expresión "had to" y el modal "would" para expresar obligaciones y acciones en pasado.  
Narra historias, ideas sucedidas en el pasado utilizando el discurso directo e indirecto.

**PART A. Read and circle the correct words. (0.5 points each).**

**My Family**  
by Joshua Reyes

My grandparents moved to Canada from the Philippines forty years ago. My grandpa was a doctor, and at that time, there weren't enough doctors in Canada. It was hard for my grandma to get used to life in Canada. She said there was too much land and not enough people. Life in Canada was very different than life in the Philippines. But after some time, my grandparents got used to their new life. They made a lot of friends and decided there were too many good things about life in Canada that they stayed here.

- Joshua's grandparents came from Canada / the Philippines.
- Forty years ago, there were too many / not enough doctors in Canada.
- It was easy / difficult for Joshua's grandma to get used to life in Canada.
- Joshua's grandma said there was not enough / too much land in Canada.
- They believed there were too many / not enough benefits to life in Canada, and decided to stay.

**PART B. Complete the sentences. (0.5 points each).**

**Use these words:** would had to

- My sister \_\_\_\_\_ wear a uniform to school last year, but I didn't.
- I \_\_\_\_\_ study for my test last night, so I couldn't go out.
- Jack \_\_\_\_\_ tell jokes in class everyday, until the teacher told him to stop.
- My grandpa \_\_\_\_\_ listen to the radio because he didn't have a TV.
- We \_\_\_\_\_ go to bed early because we had a test the next day.

*Figure # 8. Virtual Quiz vs. Paper Quiz*

In teacher's journal 3 we can read: "Most students felt confident about handling the platform and answering and sending their quizzes; just a few of them needed instructions for this purpose." When they do the quizzes at home, they feel in a friendly environment, obtaining better results. Students tend to get nervous when they face regular quizzes on paper.

## **6.2. Autonomous Learning Strategies**

This category comes up from students' need to be autonomous in their learning process, having a clear objective aimed at the foreign language, which leads them to take responsibility and the appropriate management of their time.

### **6.2.1. The Impact of the Platform.**

Blended learning requires the ability of the teacher to achieve some empathy with students, through the setting of an environment and activities, through creativity and visual appeal. On the other hand, students become responsible for generating a process, in a conscious or unconscious way. Their motivation is related to the tools and resources presented by the teacher, as well as the generation of their own stimuli that allow them to be part of their learning process.

A research by the University of Tennessee's Physician's Executive MBA (PEMBA) program for mid-career doctors has demonstrated that blended learning programs have an overall 10% better learning outcome than the traditional classroom learning. This learning includes multiples forms of virtual e-learning, self-paced instruction and physical classroom delivery, combined with the ability of the students to test their learning in the work context immediately and to collaborate with peers in adaptation to their unique environments (P. Dean, M. Stahl, D. Sylwester, & J. Peat, 2001).

The adaptation process to the new methodology consists of a continuous development of Internet skills, combined with the implementation of new tools and new rules inherent to the virtual environment. There is a relation between what students find in the platform, what they can apply to their daily life, and their perception of the environment. As stated in the Teacher's



Journal 1, *“A couple of students said expressions like “Now, I know how to say that in English” or “This is how I feel”, which evidences the understanding of new concepts and ideas.”*

In this sense, the vast majority of students expressed their liking for activities in which interaction with their classmates was involved through games or any other activity. As stated on Teacher's Journal 6, *“they (students) showed themselves very excited with the game and at the end of the round some of them realized that it is important to answer not only fast but correctly, in order to get the highest score. They asked insistently for another session of the game, thus the teacher gives them a new one related to the topics studied in class.”* The forum and Quizizz.com were the most visited activities in terms of written production and interaction, through the generation of ideas and the cooperative nature of the first one, and the practice of communicative skills and sense of competitiveness in the second. These activities were key to the encouragement of students' intrinsic motivation and even several of them asked the teacher to include new activities with similar characteristics, which allowed them to compete with their classmates and generate new spaces of opinion or use the existing ones to discuss new topics. According to Schunk and Zimmerman: *“Intrinsic Motivation is associated with one's interest, enjoyment, and inherent satisfaction in a task or activity”*.



*Figure # 9. Students Practicing on Quizizz.com*

There are some examples of answers from the students in the focus interview:

***¿Qué entiende usted por plataforma virtual?***

- “Por ejemplo, en la página de inglés de MoodleCloud, tú ves el tema de los verbos en pasado, entonces la gente se puede meter, repasarlo y aprendérselo.”

***¿Qué opinión tiene de las plataformas virtuales?***

- “Por ejemplo, MoodleCloud, que es para aprender algo nuevo y divertido.”

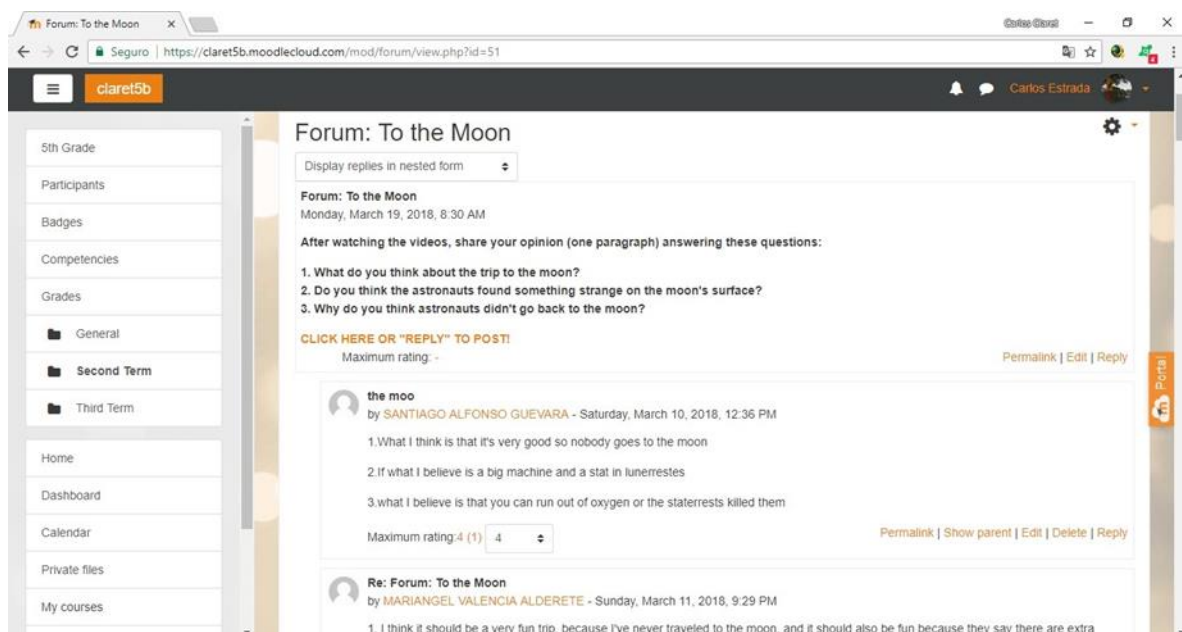
***¿Qué piensas de las actividades que se subieron a la plataforma MoodleCloud para aprender inglés?***

- “Los “Quizizz”, es como una práctica para cuando ya tengamos los quices escritos, ya sepamos el tema, ya sabemos que cosas podemos mejorar.”

### *¿Cuál fue la actividad de MoodleCloud que más te gusto?*

*“a mí me pareció muy chévere el foro, porque uno puede comentar, podemos ver los videos y podemos comentar y hablar con otras personas, y si tenemos mala ortografía escribiendo en inglés, tú nos puedes corregir y entonces uno puede aprender más”*

The interview showed us how students prefer to learn through interactive activities, because they can get immediate feedback on their achievements and mistakes in an enjoyable way. Most students realized the importance of learning English as a tool that allows them to take advantages of new opportunities and new knowledge. We can evince this on Teacher’s Journal 9: *“Sharing their thoughts and being able to read the opinion of others was motivating to students. Some of them said they really liked to support or argue the ideas of their classmates through their own point of view, supported on their previous knowledge and the information they gathered on the virtual platform and other sources. Most of the students said they wanted more activities like this one.”*



*Figure # 10. Forum Activity*

According to Piaget's theory *"The content of instruction needs to be consistent with the developmental level of the learner. The teacher's role is to facilitate learning by providing a variety of experiences."* The forum was a strategy that allowed students to experiment their use of English language, elaborating ideas (according to their level) and to feel confident regarding their opinion and constructions. They could compare their answers with their classmates and receive feedback.

### **6.2.2. Autonomous learning.**

One of the biggest difficulties identified on students at the beginning of this study was the little to none autonomy they showed towards their own learning process, both in the foreign language study and other subjects.

Several students stated that among the most useful aspects of the platform implemented, there is the possibility of reviewing topics that might have not been clear enough after the in-person classes. They also think that a person can learn about different topics using platforms such as MoodleCloud, or websites like "Preguntados.com". Some students recognized the usefulness of the activities presented in the virtual platform as a preparation for different types of assessments, in terms of improving their ability and effectiveness to face them, thanks to the feedback they immediately receive and the use of timers that demand mental agility.

The autonomy on students evinced an improvement that can be read in the Teacher's Journal 4: *"This time, students develop the workshop more efficiently, obtaining better grades in less time. Only one student failed to do the workshop. The teacher clarifies this time there will not be second chance, focusing on the importance of being punctual and responsible."*

It is important to highlight that some students are aware of the time management in terms of their duties. When they were questioned about the effectiveness of the platform applied on their autonomy process, they say they are the ones who decide when to carry out the assigned activities and tasks, as well as the possibility of doing them from the comfort of their home. Access to the platform at any time of the day or week was another of the aspects that generated on students the feeling of freedom, despite having to meet certain deadlines. Holec considered *that “learners should be given the responsibility to make decisions concerning to all aspects of their own special learning styles, capacities and needs”* cited in (Cakici, 2015). It is important to emphasize that autonomous learning always needs to be guided by the teacher.

These are also some evidences in answers given by the students in the focus interview:

***¿Alguno de ustedes ha participado en algún curso virtual, aparte de MoodleCloud?***

- *“Yo he hecho “Duolingo” y también una aplicación, que no es sólo para inglés, que se llama “Preguntados” y se pueden revisar las respuestas malas y competir con otras personas.”*

***¿Qué piensas de las actividades que se subieron a la plataforma MoodleCloud para aprender inglés?***

- *“Me parece que son muy útiles, para, por ejemplo, reforzar un tema que tú no tienes muy en claro.”*

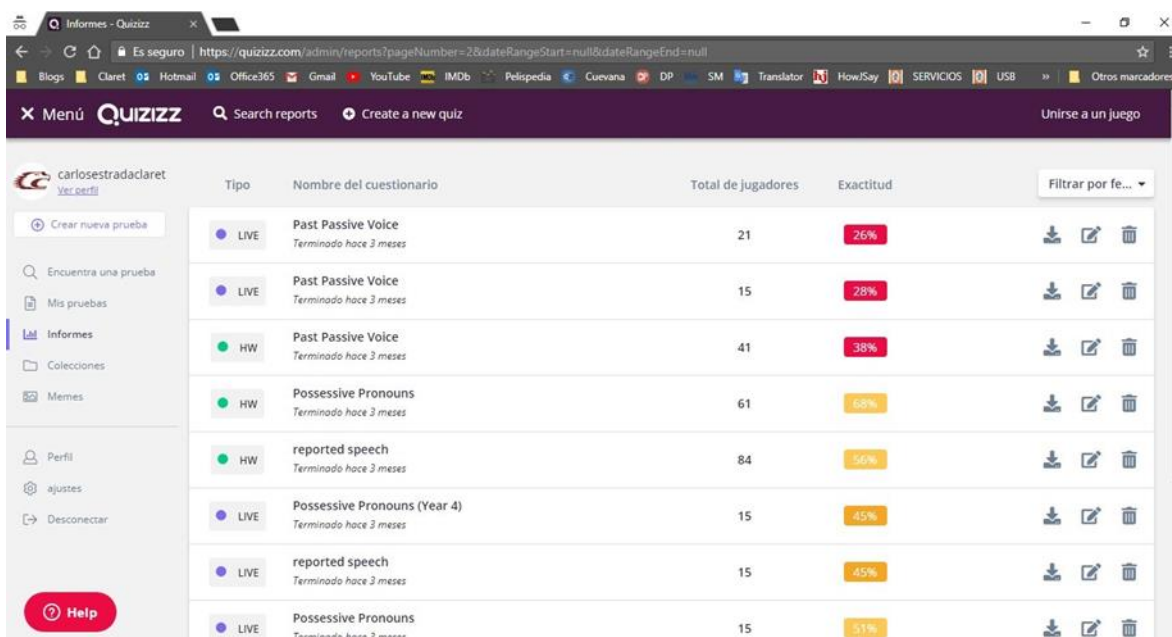
***¿Cuál fue la actividad de MoodleCloud que más te gustó?***

- *“Los “Quizizz”, es como una práctica para cuando ya tengamos los quices escritos, ya sepamos el tema, ya sabemos que cosas podemos mejorar.”*

***¿Crees que la plataforma MoodleCloud te ayudó a ser autónomo en el aprendizaje de inglés? ¿Por qué?***

- “Sí me ayudó, porque con el foro uno era el que decidía cuantas veces entrar y en qué momento”

The Teacher’s Journal 8 also addresses this matter: “*The teacher told students there would be extra points for the upcoming quiz if they participated in the activities. 84 students practiced with the first questionnaire (56% accuracy), 61 with the second (68% accuracy) and 41 with the third (38% accuracy). Despite the activities were not mandatory, the participation of students is around 80%, which is remarkable. This is a sign of improvement in their autonomous learning process.*”



**Figure # 11. Quizizz Homework Report**

In figure # 11, it can be evidenced that students were motivated in activities that allow them to improve their English under the teacher's guidance, strengthening their autonomy with a specific purpose.

According to Watson and Pavlov *"human behavior is the result of stimuli that elicit a certain response."* while B. F. Skinner (1904-1990) believed that *"people learn in two ways: through rewards, making effort to manage something positive and punishment. In this way, the rewards must be interesting and motivating for students to get the responses the teacher expects"* (Zhou, 2014). Considering this, the teacher gave extra points to those students who participated on time and completed the activities on Quizizz, as part of motivation strategies to encourage students' participation and the use of the platform to learn English.

### **6.3. Foreign language competences development**

This category appears from the need in students to improve their attitude towards the foreign language and to increase the frequency in the language use, through appropriate materials and tools such as videos, articles, and forums that encourage students in their learning process.

#### **6.3.1. Use of CALL for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learning.**

The importance of incorporating the use of Web 2.0 in the implementation of CALL is, without a doubt, the implementation of a very particular tool that includes the use of computers, tablets and smartphones, allows the acquisition of other skills and abilities in learning by facilitating the interaction between student-student and student-teacher, using the English language. As Vygotsky considered, *"the potential of knowledge is subject to the social environment and interaction with others, and what they can contribute to this cognitive process"* (Fosnot, 1996). Web 2.0 technologies encourage autonomous and collaborative learning among

students through activities that take place outside the classroom, under the guidance of the teacher, and mostly at students' homes. In order to identify how students implement CALL as a learning strategy, they were asked about their willingness for using the Internet to learn English. The vast majority answered affirmatively and some of them stated they also have a virtual account in platforms such as "OpenEnglish.com" and "Duolingo". A few students specified that they prefer to learn English at school or through the use of online translators. These are some examples of their answers in the focus interview:

***¿Te gusta el Internet para aprender inglés?***

- *"Tengo cuenta en "OpenEnglish.com".*

***¿Qué entiende usted por plataforma virtual?***

- *"Para mí, una plataforma virtual es como una estrategia de apoyo para las personas que no entienden las cosas en clase"*

***¿Cómo te sentiste participando de "Quizizz.com"?***

- *"Me gusta "Quizizz" porque uno aprende inglés, y cuando uno va ganando o perdiendo, va mirando los errores."*

***¿Qué piensas acerca del uso de plataformas y páginas web para aprender inglés?***

- *"Que las páginas web dejan más talleres, en el caso de sistemas claret, en cambio en las plataformas, son para aprender, si no sabes algo ahí te explican."*

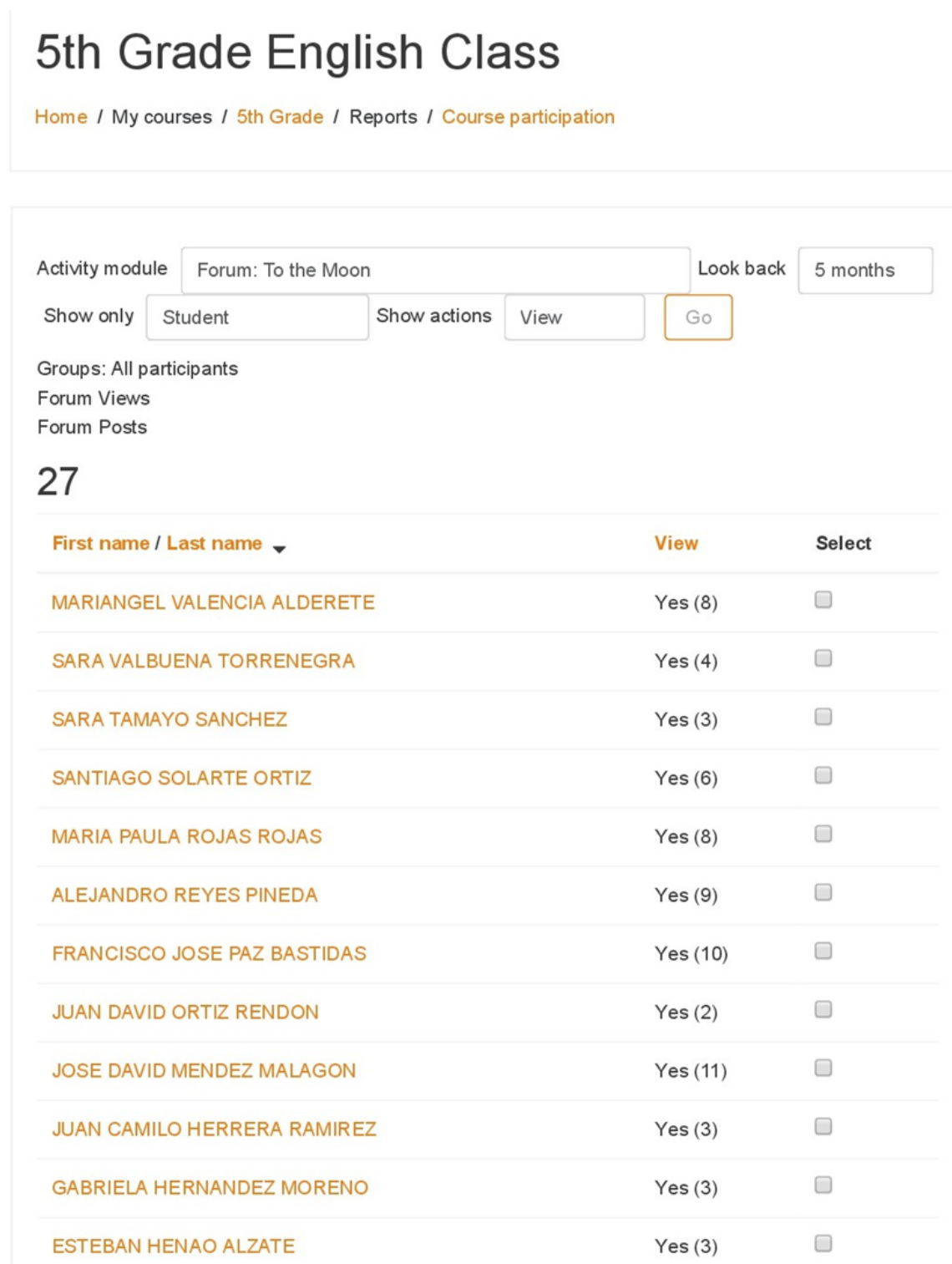
***¿Cuál fue la actividad de MoodleCloud que más te gusto?***

- *"A mí me pareció muy chévere el foro, porque uno puede comentar, podemos verlos videos y podemos comentar y hablar con otras personas."*



We could notice that students felt confident with activities that promoted collaborative learning. It was motivating and satisfying for them because this allowed them to be creative, explore the language and use it according to the vocabulary they already knew and new words they had just learnt. In Teachers Journal 1, we can read: *“Some of the students recognized the relation of the videos with the topics studied in class, as well as new vocabulary that enrich their communicative skills.”*

Students considered the platforms an enjoyable and interesting way to learn English, to improve their vocabulary or the grammar as a reward. Reiss (2012) affirmed, “Using different components of the computers’ programs stimulate students’ interest, increasing their motivation. This will have positive results in the development of language learning autonomy” (Maliqi, 2016).



*Figure # 12. Forum Participation per Views*

### 6.3.2. Communication in English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Although the use of private messages allowed some students to communicate with the teacher, and he encouraged them to use English in this virtual space, this tool did not have a significant impact among students, nor did promote the interaction between them using the foreign language. On the other hand, through the assignment of a specific task in a group forum, interaction was generated directly in the foreign language in a cooperative way, and this generated spaces for discussion in the classroom using English. Students had already appropriated some words and expressions related to the subject that was being studied, and they had also established their point of view about the topic. Following, there are some of their answers in the focus interview:

*¿Cómo te sentiste participando de los foros?*

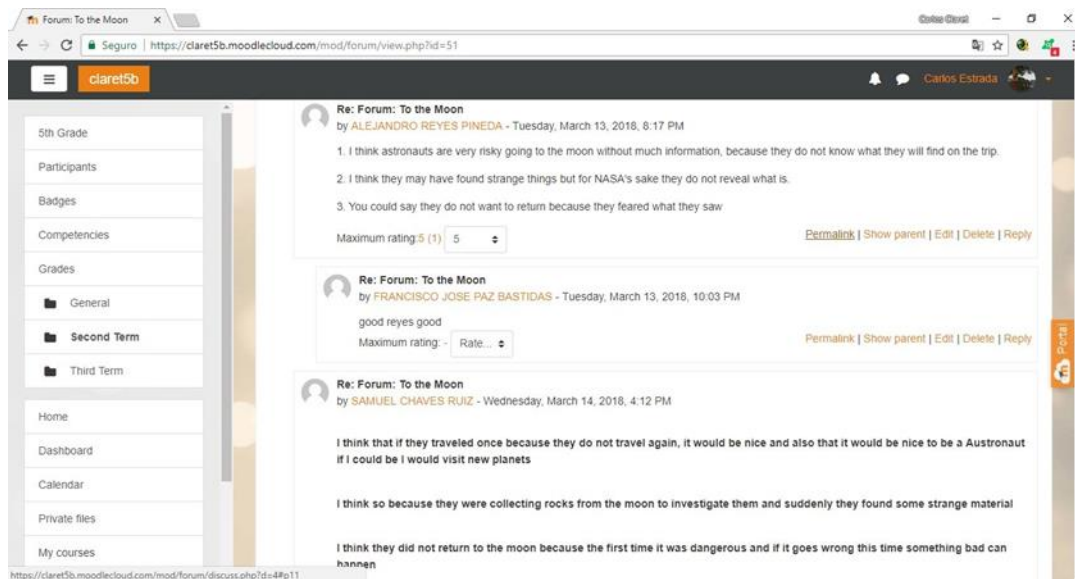
- *“Para mí los foros eran algo muy interesante porque uno podía opinar sobre la respuesta de otra persona, y uno podía decir si está de acuerdo.”*

- *“Me pareció muy bacano porque es como si fuera una red social, pero sin correr peligro alguno.”*

It is important to highlight the way in which some students associated the forum activity, its purpose and its possibilities to their previous concepts about the use of social networks. One student said in the focus interview: *"I think it was very cool because it is like a social network, but without any danger."*

There is evidence regarding the communication in the foreign language in Teachers Journal 9: *“The students were asked to log into MoodleCloud and post their opinion about the issue. They were encouraged to read their classmates’ opinions first and then to show their agreement or disagreement... Some students showed their agreement with others and expressed some previous*

*knowledge about the topic. Later, in the classroom, the teacher brought to class a reading activity about the President Kennedy's speech and the purpose for the trip to the moon. Students show themselves confident when participating in the debate. They added information they found in different sources such as Wikipedia and Google, what evidenced they made a brief research work without being asked to do it. They also showed interest in the class and the attention rate was higher than usual."*



*Figure # 13. Forum Activity Interaction*

Although the use of English in the forum is not optional, the students feel motivated to express their ideas in a clear and concise way. Jerome Bruner believed it is important *“to promote the learning in a social and cultural environment, considering it as an active process that requires learners to develop their own ideas or knowledge.”* He explained that *“discover learning inherently urges learners to take responsibility for their own learning and helps them not only remember important factual information but also develop their high-order thinking skills”*

(Gillani, 2003). The fact of introducing an interesting topic through a communicative activity with the purpose of learning English promoted autonomous learning in students. The motivation led students to research for further information on different sources such as Wikipedia and Google regarding the topic. Candi (1991) mentioned different characteristics of autonomous learners. Some of those being reflective, self-aware, persistent, responsible, curious, creative and information seekers (Cakici, 2015), which shows their active role in the learning process.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusions and Implications**

The Effect of Computer-Assisted Language Learning on Autonomous Learning is a project applied to fifth grade students at Colegio San Antonio Maria Claret in Cali, Colombia, in order to support their learning process of a foreign language (English), as well as boost autonomy as an inherent element of education, including students, teachers and the school. The need of combining technology-assisted strategies and autonomous learning, alongside a constructivist and motivated stand, converge in order to prepare and provide students with entourage that the world is setting up: tech-driven, globalized, multicultural, with access to a wide load of instant information, and willing to connect and contrast different points of view in order to create bigger initiatives.

Although some educational theories have been promoting the idea that knowledge is a double path process, where teachers and students must have an egalitarian and active role, it is very common that this process has been relegated to a teacher reciting information to students who lack motivation, autonomy and responsibility, performing the same activities repeatedly, without any significant learning or important change on the ideas they provide. There is also the fact that educational resources are usually misused or limited, reducing the possibilities and restricting the learning process.

Throughout this project: planning, conceptual support, implementation, development, observation and data analysis, have given different insights about an alternative approach to teaching and how students assume an active role in their learning process. The following conclusions provide statements of the process performed at Colegio San Antonio Maria Claret:

1. Students in modern cultures are familiar with different types of content and tools on the Internet, and they are usually willing to handle and learn about new ones. Resources in CALL environments are not limited to videos, images and exercises. In a modern culture where videogames are an important part of students' lives, the inclusion of online games and activities in the virtual platforms related to the topics studied in class is strategic to promote the practice, interest and enthusiasm. For this reason, teachers must take advantage of the ability that students have using those resources to benefit the English language learning. *"The use of computers in EFL classroom has also psychological benefits in learning English, because students feel more confident as well as enjoy their success. Therefore, using different components of the computers' programs stimulate students' interest, increasing their motivation. This will have positive results in the development of language learning autonomy."*(Maliqi, 2016). In this study, the teacher found out that developing interactive games based on Internet tools and the implementation of discussion forums generated changes in the perception of students about learning activities, as well as the degree of interest about the use of the foreign language. Self-direction and learner independence were evinced in students in terms of their enthusiasm for acquiring information about different topics and their need to express their ideas regarding those topics through English language. The teacher had to work on the correct selection of contents and the accurate selection of tools and strategies to keep students interested in using the foreign language.
2. Before starting this study, students had misconceptions about virtual platforms, their purposes and advantages. When they started to use MoodleCloud, they learnt what a virtual platform has to offer and discovered that these kind of online systems make a

meaningful environment possible through the implementation of many resources, and allow them the use of asynchronous tools for interaction. Students are able to learn outside the class, at their own pace and place, combining face-to-face instruction with online learning (Bonk and Graham, 2006). Once students got familiar with the VLE, they started a constant improvement process in order to boost their performance in communicating ideas through the foreign language, as well as self-control over the moment, place and time invested on the platform.

3. The implementation of virtual learning environments is part of a recent approach for teaching different subjects and topics. Extensive materials and different ways to manage a class in a dynamic and interactive way are available through the Internet (Spolsky, and Hult, 2008), in which is possible to communicate and share information student-student and student-teacher. The impact of these resources on students in this study is measurable in terms of their perception, usage and performance, and their motivation in using the foreign language. The teacher had total control over the content, objectives, activities and materials in order to reach the goals, but these aspects were adjusted to students' needs according to their experience and partial results. Contrary to traditional teaching methodologies, classroom sessions in a blended learning environment might become a complementary activity that allows the constant revision of the process. When students reach a high level in their autonomous learning process, regular classes can be a space where they can discuss, interact, practice and solve doubts regarding topics they have studied or researched in the CALL environment.



4. Autonomous learning was the main concern when this study began, since students were not used to work in virtual settings because they were accustomed to traditional tasks and activities on books or the subject's notebook. The possibilities and advantages of these kind of environments were quickly assimilated by students, as well as they understood the platform as a safe scenery and the tool that allowed them to develop the activities wherever and whenever they consider best, which was the key to assure access to adequate content in an acceptable time, and promote supervised interaction with educational purposes among independent learners. However, parents were also important in students' learning process, as they were able to accompany students in fostering their autonomy skills and following their academic performance.
5. The use of CALL for EFL learning is given not only through the resources incorporated on the virtual platform. Integration of topics studied in class with students' reality and their social environment is key to promote students interaction and autonomy beyond the classroom. Content in a virtual environment should be interesting and attractive to students, in order to encourage students to express their opinions and consider their classmates' points of view, developing critical thinking and self-awareness of their learning process, gaining independence and an inner source of interest in expressing ideas through the foreign language. It is also important to link not only activities between classroom and the virtual environment, but also connect the evaluation methods. The use of online quizzes and other types of activities is one of the main advantages in CALL. In this study the use of web resources implied a change in teacher's methodology and assessment, since the teacher could provide instant or posterior feedback to students. Students were inclined to feel more comfortable and confident when using computers; in

addition, this nurtures autonomy in students since it may lead to exploration about topics they like or find interesting. However, if evaluations are not aligned with the study and practice activities, students can feel disoriented and the results might be contrary to the real skills and performance of students.

6. Students' communication in a foreign language was a challenge the researchers faced from the beginning of this study, due to lack of interest and shyness in students to use it. It is usually thought that interest of students in a specific topic or subject relies on the grades, however, after this study we can state that students' motivation goes beyond the grades. When students feel confident and interested in a topic or online activity that offers the possibility for them to compete or interact with their classmates, their level of commitment and responsibility increases substantially and they show signs of independence in their learning process and improvements in their autonomy through the setting of schedules in which they decide when and how to solve activities. The setting of stimulating and inspiring activities is key to encourage students to learn and use the foreign language to enable the communication with their classmates and the possibility of expressing their ideas.

The implementation of CALL represents a huge change, not only for teachers but for educational institutions in different levels, since the actors involved in this process are usually programmed to grasp themselves to traditional methodologies in learning processes. Despite the modern human is conscious of the technological nature of contemporary life, institutions, as well as teachers and parents tend to follow the path they think has worked regarding educational objectives so far.

Change is a difficult challenge to accept and introduce in learning environments, and institutions tend to be reluctant to economic investments that might not have positive, visible and measurable results. The use of technology for educational purposes implies an economic effort from institutions, in terms of acquiring new hardware and software, hire third-party services and teachers' training, since they are the ones that connect the students to the virtual resources.

On the other hand, teachers who are not usually connected to technology might feel confused and overwhelmed by the possibilities CALL can provide them. Teachers might also think that the time and effort they spend on putting together all the resources students need will not represent an important profit, in terms of students' learning and time invested-time saved relationship. Therefore, besides training, teachers need to be encouraged to use technology for their own benefit; they must be able to observe evidence and know experiences from other teachers and even students that can testify in favor of these technologies.

The role of students in this implementation of CALL might seem passive, but nothing could be further from the truth. Students are in charge of, not only use and take advantage of the resources in order to build their knowledge, but be part of the process as customers, since they have the possibility of giving their opinions about the materials and tools they find in the virtual environment, after becoming self-directed independent learners. Students have more and constant contact with innovation regarding modern technologies and they feel more confident in this type of environments. However, when dealing with educational contents and objectives, autonomy is one of the skills students lack. It is important to create a sense of responsibility for the assigned tasks in this kind of platforms and to foster self-awareness of their own learning process and the advantages technology can provide in this matter.

Despite parents are not directly involved in the students' learning process, they are highly responsible for promoting students' autonomy and even encourage students to the learning of the foreign language. In this study, the subjects were around 10 to 11 years old, therefore, they must be accompanied by an adult, not only for safety reasons due to the risks of the Internet, but also to foster students to become aware of the importance of their own learning process and their role and responsibility. Parents were able to check the students' progress through the access to their grades and the performance and feedback in different activities. Teachers must have constant communication with parents to assure students are aware of pending tasks and activities are significant to them.

The educational process should be organic, receptive and changing; all the parts related to it are vital to its impact, scope and duration on the lives of those who are involved. Although contexts may differ, students have the need to learn properly and accurately a wide range of knowledge to have an active, meaningful and productive role on society, while teachers need to count on resources that allow them to make themselves understandable specifically, clearly and practically, in a world saturated with contradictory information, useless tools and confusing realities. Education should be a pleasant, joyful and remarkable process, related to our own lives, where the student who is interested in acquiring knowledge can find alternatives and possibilities in the teacher to make the learning process simple yet significant.

The following chart indicates the categories identified in this research:

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
To explore a virtual learning environment and its possibilities to encourage autonomous learning among students.	Use of Technology (Computer Assisted Language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of internet.</li> <li>• Student's beliefs regarding the use of virtual platforms.</li> </ul>
To estimate student's self-awareness on their autonomous learning process encouraged by CALL activities and WEB 2.0 tools and its purpose.	Autonomous Learning Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact of the platform.</li> <li>• Autonomous learning.</li> </ul>
To observe possible changes in motivation of students in the use of English Language in a Virtual Learning Environment.	Foreign Language Competences Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of CALL for the foreign language learning.</li> <li>• Communication in English foreign language (EFL).</li> </ul>

*Table # 1. Categories of the Research*

## **Chapter 8: Limitations and Further Research**

In modern society, we take for granted the access to technology and especially Internet, as a fundamental part of our lives, and the gateway to tons of information from different sources. However, in this study the researchers had to face some difficulties related to the accessibility of students from their homes to a device with Internet connection, for them to be able to comply with the required activities. Most of the times these issues were solved by granting the access to a computer room at school during their break time, with the limitations of time that this represented for the students and the teacher.

Time can be a variable that limits the application of any study and the development of the strategies applied on the subjects. Nevertheless, when the time is associated to autonomy in students, this can be translated into responsibility, which can be considered as one of the biggest concerns and challenges to deal with in this study. Students at Colegio San Antonio María Claret were accustomed to laxity when dealing with tasks at school, since it is very common for them to get extra time from teachers to comply with their academic duties in almost every subject. For this reason, it was a progressive work to create the necessary awareness in students about the importance of being punctual and responsible for their effort in their own learning process.

There were other setbacks like technical difficulties with computers at school, temporary internet issues and availability of the English laboratory, which in some occasions forced the teacher and the class to use traditional methods of evaluation and assessment. However, these activities and the topics related to them were addressed in both the classroom and the virtual platform in order to guarantee a correlation with the contents of study and the web strategies.

The accompaniment of students by their parents were not as expected, in terms of monitoring and supervising the students' academic process. Despite most of the parents were told about the possibility of tracking their children's progress, the teacher received some emails from parents asking for extra time to get activities done, which evidenced they were not aware of the students' academic duties. The researchers decided to be flexible in most of the cases to avoid punishment as a teaching strategy. Instead, flexibility helped both parents and students to gain responsibility and study habits.

The researchers identified one possible subject of study that could lead to further research: There were different types of activities and strategies the researchers applied in the virtual platform, but the ones that students liked the most were those in which they could get immediate feedback on their answers and they could compete against their classmates. The term associated with this kind of activities is known as "Gamification", which is the application of activities that allow social interaction through game-like strategies with educational purposes. In the field of language learning, this might be an interesting subject of study, since some of the students in this research who evidenced an above-average level of English, expressed they have learned English through videogames that are not intended to the teaching-learning of a foreign language.

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## Appendixes

### 1. Letter to Parents about the Implementation of the VLE:

Cordial saludo,

Quiero informarles a todos los padres de familia y/o acudientes de los estudiantes de los grupos 5A, 5B, 5C y 5D que a partir del día 2 de Diciembre estará habilitada una nueva plataforma para la clase de Inglés, en la cual los estudiantes encontrarán material de estudio de diversas fuentes y tipos y además se realizarán algunos talleres calificables y otras actividades académicas.

Los materiales, al igual que el desempeño de cada estudiante en esta plataforma, serán objeto de estudio por parte mía, con el propósito de realizar mi proyecto de grado en la Universidad de San Buenaventura y poder optar por la titulación profesional en la carrera de Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa.

De igual forma, quiero informarles que en esta plataforma será posible revisar las notas de sus hijos de manera online en la asignatura de inglés. Para consultarlas, puede usar el siguiente enlace y buscar la sección "Grades", debajo de los "indicadores de desempeño":

<https://sistemasclaret.jimdo.com/english/5th-grade/second-term/>

Una vez en la plataforma MoodleCloud, se debe iniciar con los datos de cada estudiante:

- Nombre de usuario: Código del carné del estudiante
- Contraseña: El mismo código del carné (a menos de que el estudiante la haya cambiado)

Si un estudiante no registra nota en algún taller u otra actividad calificable, quiere decir que no lo realizó dentro del plazo estipulado, por lo tanto su nota es 1.0.

Cualquier inquietud, me pueden escribir a mi correo: [carlos.estrada@claret.edu.co](mailto:carlos.estrada@claret.edu.co)

Atentamente,

Carlos Estrada

Docente de Inglés