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**DEPARTAMENTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN POSGRADOS Y
AUTOEVALUACIÓN**

Theme:

**DEALING WITH STUDENTS' LACK OF ATTENTION IN THE EFL
CLASSROOM**

**Tema de investigación previo a la obtención del título de
“DIPLOMA SUPERIOR EN METODOLOGIAS COMUNICATIVAS DEL
IDIOMA INGLES”**

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Tema:

**DEALING WITH STUDENTS´ LACK OF ATTENTION IN THE
EFL CLASSROOMS**

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Yo, María Belén Quinteros Altamirano portador de la cédula de ciudadanía No. 180357156-9 declaro que la investigación que presento como informe final, previo la obtención del título de DIPLOMA SUPERIOR EN METODOLOGIAS COMUNICATIVAS DEL IDIOMA INGLES son absolutamente originales, auténticos y personales.

En tal virtud, declaro que el contenido, las conclusiones y los efectos legales y académicos que se desprenden del trabajo propuesto de investigación y luego de la redacción de este documento son y serán de mi sola y exclusiva responsabilidad legal y académica.

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ABSTRACT

Lack of attention in a classroom will always be a problem for everyone involved in the educational process, which of course includes the Learning of a Foreign Language. The present work has compiled the most relevant literature available about the subject and material directly or indirectly related that will help the reader to identify the different aspects of the problem and based on the most important learning theories at hand analyze the causes for lack of attention. How can it be avoided using motivation and leadership in the classroom and how can it be approached by using the right methodologies and techniques. Special attention has been put towards ludic activities to attack this problematic because several publications have been found in the course of this research that suggest ludic activities are the most suitable to create an environment in which students will not feel bored and will actually acquire significant learning along with a feeling of a better relationship with their peers and teachers.

RESUMEN

La falta de atención en el aula será siempre un problema para todos los involucrados en el proceso educativo, que por supuesto incluye el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera. El presente trabajo ha recopilado la literatura más relevante sobre el tema y material directamente o indirectamente relacionado que ayudarán al lector a identificar los diferentes aspectos del problema y sobre la base de las teorías de aprendizaje más importantes a la mano para analizar las causas de la falta de atención. ¿Cómo se puede evitar utilizando la motivación y el liderazgo en el aula y cómo puede ser abordada mediante el uso de las correctas metodologías y técnicas? Especial atención se ha puesto a las actividades lúdicas para atacar esta problemática, porque varias publicaciones han sido encontradas en el curso de esta investigación las cuales sugieren que las actividades lúdicas son las más adecuadas para crear un entorno en el que los estudiantes no se sientan aburridos y realmente puedan adquirir un aprendizaje significativo junto con una sensación de una mejor relación con sus compañeros y maestros.

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INTRODUCTION

Lack of attention in a classroom is a very old and common problem. There are many reasons for it, probably thousands regarding any subject matter, let alone the learning of a new language, in which in some cases like in any other skill to be acquired, it needs practice which means constant repetition, besides this certain condition that the learning of a new language presents itself, there are other reasons for a student to feel bored and uninterested, one very important is the attitude of the teacher and the techniques used to grab the students attention, a teacher with a dry subject presentation and personality can become similar to a strong sleeping pill on the best of students, even when the student is personally interested in learning the language; worse yet is the teacher that has been working for over 30 years and has become apathetic as they approach retirement, hence the need for this investigation to focus on that particular point since learning a new language is not an easy task to achieve, therefore it is important to come up with solutions as to avoid the common problems that any field of study presents, in this case lack of attention in the classroom, as mentioned before this investigation will concentrate in one of the most relevant reasons for it, which is the teacher's attitude and techniques they use to keep students motivated, so it is the purpose of this study to recognize them and analyze them to achieve that motivation and to prevent students from getting bored and stop paying attention, to analyze the lack of attention in students of English as a Foreign Language and determine the best possible ways to

keep students interested and motivated to learn and use the language, through understanding the process of learning and use of methodological techniques and recreational activities, to define the most common reasons for the lack of attention in the classroom in students of English as a Foreign Language, assess the best techniques, considering the natural learning process, applicable in the classroom for the motivation of students to learn English as a Foreign Language, the sources to be used will be direct input from ESL teachers and instructors, books on Educational Methodology, Communication Skills, General Psychology, Psycho pedagogy, Child Psychology, Evolutionary Psychology, Classroom Management, Specialized Magazines, Internet publications of scientific studies and findings on the subject and the experiences acquired by the author through being an EFL student.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Theoretical Framework

1.2 Background

The object of the present work is to analyze reasons and ways in which the learning of English as a Foreign Language becomes boring and students stop paying attention.

It has been difficult to find specific literature, being this a very broad subject, nonetheless, information on subjects directly related to the process of learning have been researched and compiled, such as Classroom Management, Recreational Activities for Learning, Motivational Strategies for Learning, Teaching Methodologies amongst the more important, in order to come up with an analysis that brings to light the importance of the methods being used to teach English as a Foreign Language and avoiding lack of attention in the classroom.

1.3. Philosophical Foundations

It is located in an epistemological approach in the critical-propositional paradigm because this approach overcomes the positivist paradigm, which attaches great importance to the technical experimentation, production, profitability and efficiency that otherwise leans on the fact of making money and producing science. But the critical-propositional paradigm has to do with the integrated development of human beings giving it the opportunity to have a better quality of life.

1.4. Sociological Foundation

The study of the English language in the world today is not an option anymore, it is a necessity, given the wide dissemination of this language in every aspect of life all across the globe, from any professional field to entertainment, it's truly the world's *lingua franca*, with that in mind we can certainly say that any person who wants to succeed in today's world, should be able to communicate in English at least within their professional scope.

Many see it as a form of colonization, but if we assume that adaptability is the basis of survival, we should adapt to the environment we have, which is increasingly understood and communicated in English.

1.5. Psychopedagogue Foundation

In accordance with the philosophical foundation, this research paper adheres to Social Constructivism, as this is the way to overcome this behaviorism.

For Piaget the term constructivism implies that the subject actively builds an understanding of the world. He notes the difference between development and learning.

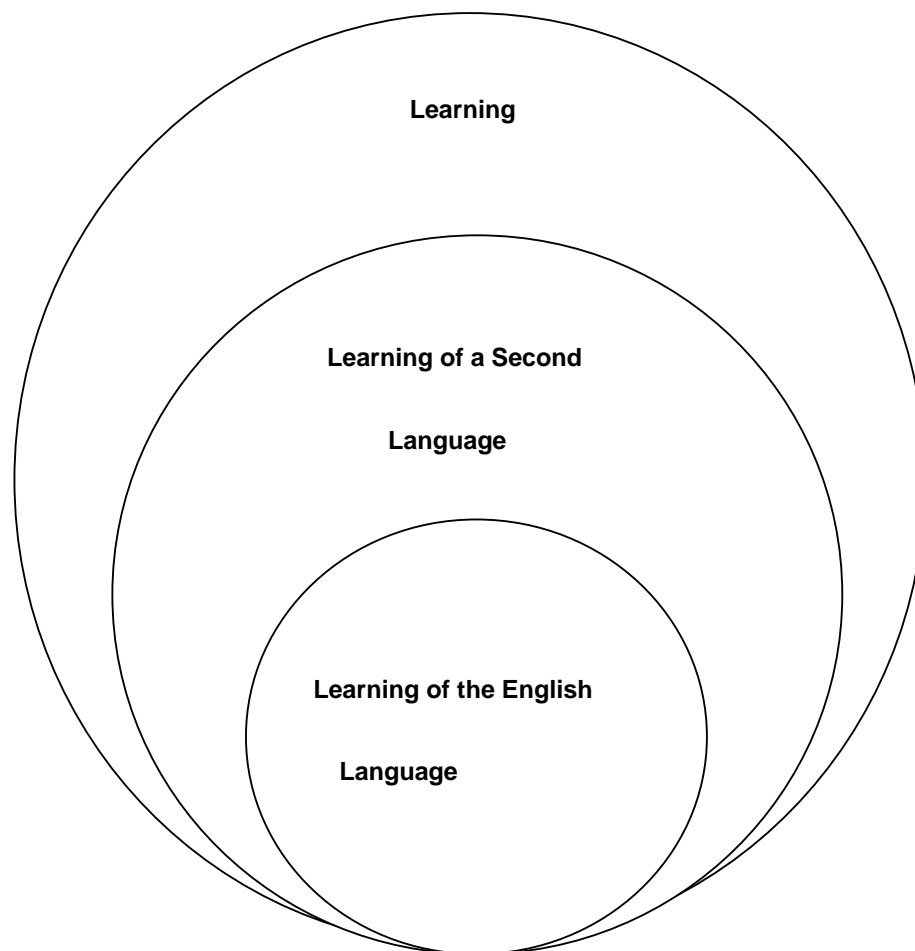
For him, learning development explains, understanding that this will only be possible with the development. Learning is a product of the capacity to act on the surrounding environment and reflect on the consequences, conditions and results of such actions. Development is an internal drive that is older than formal education and therefore prior to any organized education.

However, Vigotsky (VYGOTSKY, L. K. "*Pensamiento y Lenguaje.*" ed. Pléyade, Buenos Aires. 1985.) points to the influence and importance of social facts considered fundamental to people around the learner and develops. Thus, learning is a product of social exchange, introducing the so-called Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). He notes also the active learning of the child's mental development which generates evolutionary processes that otherwise could not be updated.

According to Ausubel (AUSUBEL, David P. "*Psicología educativa. Un punto de vista cognoscitivo.*" ed. Trillas, Puebla; trad. Mario Sandoval Pineda. Et. Al. 1982) meaningful learning is constructed when we are able to establish specific relationships between new learning and the well-known, that is, when we relate the new information with our previous compression schemes.

1.6. Theoretical Foundation of English Language Learning

For a better understanding of this reasoning let's start with the network of categories for this variable:



1.7. Learning

The concept of learning is not univocal, has been taking place according to the pedagogical approach or model being used. There are three trends that explain the learning:

a. Traditional Learning

"The basic method of learning is the academic, verbal, that dictates its lessons under a disciplinary structure with students who are primarily receivers." (FLOREZ, R. *"Recopilación de Conceptos de Psicología."* ed. Trillas, Puebla, 1994.)

It implies that the truth in the teaching-learning process is unique to the professor, regardless of the intellectual level of the learner, where the owner of the truth is the educator. In this system the student is only a repeating entity and therefore will never be a critical entity in society.

b. Technocratic Learning

"It is a transfer of technical knowledge through pilot training using educational technology." (FLOREZ, R. *"Recopilación de Conceptos de Psicología."* ed. Trillas, Puebla, 1994.)

The positive part of this learning is for students to combine science with practice, through constant practice (strengthening) to become an expert, obviously going through processes of experimentation to achieve the desired results. Only the results are evaluated. But leaving aside the human side, it does not take into account values that students should build.

c. **Critical Learning**

"Through community cooperation, students could consider themselves as capable, even obliged to commit with critical analysis and problem resolution." (PAGONIS, W., *Moving Mountains: Lessons on leadership and logistics.*, ed. Harvard Book Press., New York, 1992)

Group work encourages the student to participate directly in decision making; therefore, the individual approach and analysis of it in the group itself are of unparalleled worth. Student interaction with the group is vital, thus enhancing interaction with others who perhaps are savvier about the problems to face.

1.8 Learning of a Second Language

The knowledge of foreign languages provides the individual with rewarding benefits to a level not only professional and academic, but personal.

The psychology of learning is about changing the structures of the native language by others of the new language with which the individual is able to communicate. It is not the mere learning of new knowledge or skills, conducted in the native language, there is a difference between that learning and the learning of a new language.

On the other hand we also have a large computer in our head, bigger and more powerful than we think. The relationships that I made between different systems or structural logic of the languages are fast, multiple and in the sense of deepening relations, as in fact the logical system is the same for everyone.

We all have a universal grammar, as Noam Chomsky has said; we all have a universal logic that manifests itself in different languages, in their internal structure, in its logic grammar. A language is a logic structure of some families of words (semantics)

of some sounds (phonetics) that make up a set of signs (language), with which we communicate ideas, feelings, needs, etc.

For learning a second language is necessary for the teacher to act not only as a mother and the environment to be the most appropriate, but as a technician, a professional very psychologically close to the group.

Any native can meet the expectations of a student in questions of (phonetics, accent, syntax, etc.) there is no need to be a philologist to address these needs. Just a native, but you do have to be a professional in group psychology who has experienced learning a language, a professional in group dynamics, who can create an atmosphere of freedom and acceptance, or to be a teacher that amalgamates all these aspects which fall within the language learning. The teaching will be the answer given by the teacher to the whole set of learning issues.

We all know how learning has been considered as synonymous with behavioral change, however, one can say with certainty that human learning is more than a simple behavioral change, conducts a change in the meaning of the experience that one carries inside.

Human experience involves not only thoughts but also emotions and only when considered in whole enables the individual to enrich the meaning of their experience.

In the educational work is necessary to consider three elements: teachers and "how they teach", the structure of knowledge that make up the curriculum and how it is produced, and finally the group and social fabric in which it develops the educational process.

In this sense we apply the theory of meaningful learning of *Ausubel* to second language learning. The author tells us (AUSUBEL, David P. "*Psicología educativa. Un punto de vista cognoscitivo.*" ed. Trillas, Puebla; trad. Mario Sandoval Pineda. Et. Al. 1982) that student learning depends on the 'previous structure' that is related to the new information. It is understood as 'cognitive structure' the set of concepts, ideas and structures that an individual possesses in a particular field of knowledge.

Because the phenomenon of association happens at all levels, words, phrases, ideas, images, symbols... It is really old knowledge, traditional, but is good to renovate and broaden it, so as to be able to apply it to the teaching/learning of a second language process.

Ausubel sums up this fact in the following phrase: "If I had to reduce all educational psychology to one principle, I would enunciate: The most important factor that influences learning is what the student already knows. Investigate this and teach consequently."

The first thing to know about students is their native language and then what studies of other languages they have and with which methodology those other languages were learned, if they have the grammatical sense of language deeply rooted, it must be known how to act to change the method in the upcoming study of the new language, what kind of first language they have (Anglo-Saxon, Latin, Slavic ...), what specific language is their first language, to see what structures are the same, similar, or simply different, what is missing in their language , etc.

Minds are never "blank" and according to Chomsky, "We all have a general grammar in which we can anchor to form new structures in the new language." Every student of a Second Language has at least All students of a second language has at least implicitly and explicitly the grammar of their first language. That is why to recognize grammar, not to study grammar, makes learning possible and the use of a second language in people's communication.

All of this means that it is very important to take into account what the student already knows, in order to establish a relation with what the student will learn. This Process takes place if pupils have concepts in their 'cognitive structure', which means, propositions, structures and relevant ideas, with which the new information, the second language, can interact.

When the learning contents are related in a non-arbitrary and substantial way with what the student already knows –their first language., we have a significant learning.

The new structures and concepts can be learned significantly to the extent in which the other structures and relevant ideas are properly clear and available in the cognitive structure of the student and so they function as an anchor point for the new ones.

This way is normal for students to try and translate at first, comparing grammars, but little by little they should abandon that idea and employing the new ones directly, for which the development of the so called "four skills" will be indispensable.

The study of a Second Language requires the development of these skills: Oral Expression, Written Expression, Oral Comprehension and Written Comprehension. It will be necessary to keep a balance between them as to obtain an adequate linguistic competence.

Now, in many cases, the student is familiar to written expression and comprehension and feels self conscious about oral expression and comprehension. Aware of this, often the student himself feels self pity for not taking advantage of the opportunities of studying in the past and in occasions the argument serves as an alibi to keep a passive attitude towards proposals to use oral expression. To compensate this sort of generalized gap the units programmed in the didactic units of language teaching are not enough, given that a parallel and homogenous learning process is assumed.

Thus, the teacher must find a way to strengthen these skills almost without letting the students know to overcome their initial resistance and not making them feel saturated with a very prolonged effort which could be counterproductive.

1.9 Children and English

As it is a common belief that teaching a language at a young age it is less difficult than teaching to adults, information on teaching English to children will be added.

The suggested method for teaching English to children includes showing objects, (present object), so the child will be able to perceive it through the senses. In this instance the adult must enunciate the word several times, (word sound), in order for the child to imitate the sound; this whole process is called *Introjections*.

The **Projection** phase comprises two steps: 1) Show the object and ask the child to pronounce the name; and 2) Pronounce the word and ask the child to show the object. These phases are according to *Piaget framed under the pre-operational stage*. (PIAGET, Jean... "El nacimiento de la inteligencia del niño." ed. Grijalbo, México; trad. Pablo Bardonaba. 1994.)

- In the educational aspect, to achieve this task, a good teaching English program should contribute the child to be capable of:

- Accept and incorporate to their everyday life different ways to name and interpret the surroundings.

- Understand simple conversations about relevant subjects for his/her age (family, school, community, likes and dislikes, obligations, recreational activities, etc.)

- Express his/her ideas and needs orally, using simple structures and preferable in a creative manner.

- Perform writing and reading activities such as telling tales and short stories.
- Participate in recreational activities (singing, dancing, parties, etc.) related to different English speaking countries.

For a child to learn English is necessary for him/her to listen to a lot of English. Or in turn the child should be immersed in a family environment in which English plays an important role. It is clear that the teaching of English to Ecuadorian children does not involve the afore mentioned standards; for that reason it will be so beneficial to plant some seeds in the child's readiness so he/she may take better advantage of their English studies in secondary school.

Parents should ensure that the child knows how to recite or sing something simple, suitable for their age. The child should be able to explain the meaning of words and their function in the phrase. If the child learns a few songs in English, something is going to remain.

The activities performed with the children to foster their linguistic development will also help them learn about the world and will set the foundations for social interaction and the learning of reading.

Linguistic development comes more or less in the same way in all languages: children hear sounds and imitate them, they perform certain coos and they babble (they repeat a wide range of sounds, they play and experiment with vocalization), and learn to recognize words. They start using words, to follow simple instructions and then to combine words. Gestures are often followed by words while children make an effort to express themselves.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Causes for Lack of Attention

There are many causes for lack of attention or inattention as it may also be called, that affect students in general, which obviously includes students of a foreign language.

A large portion of these causes are found under the category of Learning Disabilities or LD's and three others under a clinical pathology category of neurological developmental disorders that according to studies are found in between 5% to 10% of the population, especially in children, but not exclusively since it may persist in some individuals reaching their adulthood suffering from this condition. Those three causes are: Inattentiveness, Hyperactivity and Impulsiveness.

In this chapter the most important Learning Disabilities will be reviewed in articles found in magazines as well as the internet, then the literature found on Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder as a whole, which according to these publications are the most common causes for lack of attention. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ADHD>. Article retrieved on August 2010.)

2.1.1 Learning Disabilities

A learning disability is a general term that describes specific learning disabilities. A learning disability can cause a person to have trouble learning and using certain skills. The skills that are most commonly affected are: reading, writing, listening, speaking, reasoning, and mathematics.

Learning disabilities (also abbreviated as LD's) vary among people. A person with learning disabilities may have a type of learning problem different from another person. An individual may have problems with reading and spelling. Another person might have problems with understanding math. Yet another person may have problems in each of these areas, as in the understanding of what other people say.

Researchers believe that learning disabilities are caused by differences in brain function and form in which it processes information. Children with learning disabilities are not "dumb" or "lazy." In fact, they usually have average intelligence level or above average. What actually happens is that their brains process information differently.

The importance of a study of factors that occur in learning disabilities, lie in the need for them to develop a corrective program. It is not easy to discern what the cause and which is the immediate effect of a difficulty. The causes are often subtle ways that escape detection. There may be difficulty in determining the cause for errors and weaknesses of teach, despite this difficulty, in order to correct them, the study of the factors that contribute to its emergence and development cannot be dispensed.

Three paths can be offered for the teacher to follow and overcome or reduce a school's known limitations:

- Reduce the limiting factor making the student able to make effective learning; for example, advising visual check that you suspect a child suffers a visual defect, or any other action, such as screening, then establishing a plan of rehabilitation that can overcome negative effects resulting from their unfavorable status quo.

- Alter learning methods so that the child will not have to force those capacities or functions affected by a specified limit. For a deaf child, for example, be addressed spelling taught mainly by visual methods, leaving aside, as far as possible hearing procedures. In the case of a student with expressive and pronunciation difficulties, not to postpone the teaching of reading until there is no defect, but rather modify the reading program in such a way that allows progress in reading at the same time and in the extent that the situation is corrected.

- Adapt to the possibilities of the child, accepting and respecting their condition, especially in their academic performance to keep expectations in line with the reality of the case.

There is no "cure" for learning disabilities. They are for life. However, children with learning problems can progress a lot and can be taught ways to overcome the problem of learning. With the right help, children with learning problems can and do learn successfully.

LD's are very common in countries such as the United States, where up to 1 in 5 people have a learning disability. That means almost 3 million children (6-21 years old) have some form of learning disability and receive or should receive special education in school. In fact, more than half of all children receiving special education have a learning disability (Annual Report to Congress, Department of Education of the United States, 2002), if that's the case in countries that are considered developed, in developing countries the situation must be more complicated. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ADHD>. Article retrieved on August 2010.)

2.1. 2. Signs

There is no one sign that shows that a person has a learning disability. Experts seek a noticeable difference between the current school progress and the level of progress that could be achieved given their intelligence or ability. There are also some indications that could mean that the child has a learning disability. These are included below. Most of them are with the tasks of primary school because learning disabilities tend to be discovered in primary school. It is likely that the child does not exhibit all these signs, or even most of them. However, if the child exhibits several of these problems, then parents and the teacher should consider the possibility that the child has a learning disability.

When your child has a learning disability, he or she:

- May have trouble learning the alphabet, rhyming words or to connect the letters with their sounds.

- Makes mistakes when reading aloud, and often repeat or stop.

- Cannot understand what they read.

- May have difficulties with spelling.

- Can awkwardly hold a pencil.

- May struggle to express their ideas in writing.

- May have a limited vocabulary.

- May have trouble remembering the sounds of letters or hear small differences between words.

- May have difficulty understanding jokes, comic illustrations, and sarcasm.

- May have trouble following directions.

- May mispronounce words or use an incorrect word that sounds similar.
- May have trouble organizing what he or she wants to say or cannot think of the word they need to write or talk.
- May not follow social rules of conversation, such as taking turns, and may get too close to the person who listens.
- May confuse math symbols and misread numbers.
- May not be able to repeat a story in order (what happened first, second, third).
- May not know where to begin a task or how to go from there.

If a child has unexpected problems learning to read, write, listen, speak, or study math, then teachers and parents can investigate further. The same is true if the child is struggling in any of these skills. It is possible that the child should be evaluated to see if there is a learning disability occurring. (Smith, S.L. (1995). *Sin respuestas simples*. Pittsburgh, PA: Learning Disabilities Association)

2.2 Attention-Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD or AD/HD or ADD) is a neurobehavioral developmental disorder. It is primarily characterized by "the co-existence of attention problems and hyperactivity, with each behavior occurring infrequently alone" and symptoms starting before seven years of age. (Biederman, J (1998). *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*: 4–16.)

ADHD is the most commonly studied and diagnosed psychiatric disorder in children, affecting about 3% to 5% of children globally and diagnosed in about 2% to 16% of school aged children. It is a chronic disorder with 30% to 50% of those individuals diagnosed in childhood continuing to have symptoms into adulthood. Adolescents and adults with ADHD tend to develop coping mechanisms to compensate for some or all of their impairments. 4.7 percent of American adults are estimated to live with ADHD. (Dulcan, M *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*: 36 October 1997)

ADHD is diagnosed two to four times as frequently in boys as in girls, though studies suggest this discrepancy may be due to subjective bias of referring teachers. ADHD management usually involves some combination of medications, behavior modifications, lifestyle changes, and counseling. Its symptoms can be difficult to differentiate from other disorders, increasing the likelihood that the diagnosis of ADHD will be missed. Additionally, most clinicians have not received formal training in the assessment and treatment of ADHD, particularly in adult patients.

ADHD and its diagnosis and treatment have been considered controversial since the 1970s. The controversies have involved clinicians, teachers, policymakers, parents and the media.

Topics include the actuality of the disorder, its causes, and the use of stimulant medications in its treatment. Most healthcare providers accept that ADHD is a genuine disorder with debate in the scientific community centering mainly on how it is diagnosed and treated. The American Medical Association concluded in 1998 that the diagnostic criteria for ADHD are based on extensive research and, if applied appropriately, lead to the diagnosis with high reliability. (Goldman LS, Genel. M, Bezman RJ, Slanetz PJ. 279 April 1998)

2.2.1 Childhood ADHD

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder or ADHD is a common childhood condition that can be treated. ADHD may affect certain areas of the brain that allow problem solving, planning ahead, understanding others' actions, and impulse control.

The American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) considers it necessary that the following be present before attaching the label of ADHD to a child:

The behaviors must appear before age 7.

They must continue for at least six months.

The symptoms must also create a real handicap in at least two of the following areas of the child's life:

- In the classroom,
- On the playground
- At home,
- In the community, or
- In social settings.

If a child seems too active on the playground but not themselves where, the problem might not be ADHD. It might also not be ADHD if the behaviors occur in the classroom but nowhere else. A child who shows some symptoms would not be diagnosed with ADHD if his or her schoolwork or friendships are not impaired by the behaviors.

Even if a child's behavior seems like ADHD, it might not actually be ADHD; careful attention to the process of differential diagnosis is mandatory. Many other conditions and situations can trigger behavior that resembles ADHD. For example, a child might show ADHD symptoms when experiencing:

A death or divorce in the family, a parent's job loss, or other sudden change, undetected seizures, an ear infection that causes temporary hearing problems, problems with schoolwork caused by a learning disability, anxiety or depression, insufficient or poor quality sleep, child abuse. (*American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry*. "ADHD - A Guide for Families" June 2009)

2.2.2 Adult ADHD

Researchers found that 60% of the children diagnosed with ADHD continue having symptoms well into adulthood. Many adults, however, remain untreated. Untreated adults with ADHD often have chaotic lifestyles, may appear to be disorganized and may rely on non-prescribed drugs and alcohol to get by. They often have such associated psychiatric co-morbidities as depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, substance abuse, or a learning disability. A diagnosis of ADHD may offer adults insight into their behaviors and allow patients to become more aware and seek help with coping and treatment strategies. There is controversy amongst some experts on whether ADHD persists into adulthood. Recognized as occurring in adults in 1978, it is currently not addressed separately from ADHD in childhood. Obstacles that clinicians face when assessing adults who may have ADHD include developmentally inappropriate diagnostic criteria, age-related changes, co-morbidities and the possibility that high intelligence or situational factors can mask ADHD. Gentile, Julie. Adult ADHD: Diagnosis, Differential Diagnosis, and Medication Management.

(<http://www.psychiatrymmc.com/displayArticle.cfm?articleID=article218>.

Retrieved; May 2009)

2.2.3 Symptoms

Inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity are the key behaviors of ADHD. The symptoms of ADHD are especially difficult to define because it is hard to draw the line at where normal levels of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity end and clinically significant levels requiring intervention begin. To be diagnosed with ADHD, symptoms must be observed in two different settings for six months or more and to a degree that is greater than other children of the same age.

The symptom categories of ADHD in children yield three potential classifications of ADHD—predominantly inattentive type, predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type, or combined type if criteria for both subtypes are met, predominantly inattentive type symptoms may include:

- Be easily distracted, miss details, forget things, and frequently switch from one activity to another
- Have difficulty focusing on one thing
- Become bored with a task after only a few minutes, unless doing something enjoyable.

- Have difficulty focusing attention on organizing and completing a task or learning something new
- Have trouble completing or turning in homework assignments, often losing things (e.g., pencils, toys, assignments) needed to complete tasks or activities
- Not seem to listen when spoken to
- Daydream, become easily confused, and move slowly
- Have difficulty processing information as quickly and accurately as others.
- Struggle to follow instructions.

Predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type symptoms may include:

- Fidget and squirm in their seats
- Talk nonstop
- Dash around, touching or playing with anything and everything in sight
- Have trouble sitting still during dinner, school, and story time.
- Be constantly in motion
- Have difficulty doing quiet tasks or activities and also these.

Manifestations primarily of impulsivity:

- Be very impatient
- Blurt out inappropriate comments, show their emotions without restraint, and act without regard for consequences
- Have difficulty waiting for things they want or waiting their turns in games.

(Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder [ADHD]. Health & Outreach Publications. July 2009)

Most people exhibit some of these behaviors, but not to the degree where such behaviors significantly interfere with a person's work, relationships, or studies. The core impairments are consistent even in different cultural contexts.

Symptoms may persist into adulthood for up to half of children diagnosed with ADHD. Estimating this is difficult as there are no official diagnostic criteria for ADHD in adults. [15] ADHD in adults remains a clinical diagnosis. The signs and symptoms may differ from those during childhood and adolescence due to the adaptive processes and avoidance mechanisms learned during the process of socialization. A 2009 study found that children with ADHD move around a lot because it helps them stay alert enough to complete challenging tasks.

2.2.4 Diagnosis

ADHD is diagnosed via a psychiatric assessment; to rule out other potential causes or co-morbidities, physical examination, radiological imaging, and laboratory tests may be used.

In North America, the DSM-IV criteria are often the basis for a diagnosis, while European countries usually use the ICD-10. If the DSM-IV criteria are used, rather than the ICD-10, a diagnosis of ADHD is 3–4 times more likely. Factors other than those within the DSM or ICD however have been found to affect the diagnosis in clinical practice. A child's social and school environment as well as academic pressures at school is likely to be of influence.

Many of the symptoms of ADHD occur from time to time in everyone; in patients with ADHD, the frequency of these symptoms is greater and patients' lives are significantly impaired. Impairment must occur in multiple settings to be classified as ADHD. As with many other psychiatric and medical disorders, the formal diagnosis is made by a qualified professional in the field based on a set number of criteria. In the USA these criteria are laid down by the American Psychiatric Association in their Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), 4th edition. Based on the DSM-IV criteria listed below, three types of ADHD are classified:

1. ADHD, Combined Type: if both criteria 1A and 1B are met for the past 6 months.
2. ADHD Predominantly Inattentive Type: if criterion 1A is met but criterion 1B is not met for the past six months.
3. ADHD, Predominantly Hyperactive-Impulsive Type: if criterion 1B is met but criterion 1A is not met for the past six months.

The previously used term ADD expired with the most recent revision of the DSM. Consequently, ADHD is the current nomenclature used to describe the disorder as one distinct disorder which can manifest itself as being a primary deficit resulting in hyperactivity/impulsivity (ADHD, predominately hyperactive-impulsive type) or inattention (ADHD predominately inattentive type) or both (ADHD combined type).

DSM-IV criteria

Six or more of the following signs of inattention have been present for at least 6 months to a point that is disruptive and inappropriate for developmental level:

- Inattention:
 1. Often does not give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work, or other activities.
 2. Often has trouble keeping attention on tasks or play activities.
 3. Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly.
 4. Often does not follow instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace (not due to oppositional behavior or failure to understand instructions).
 5. Often has trouble organizing activities.
 6. Often avoids, dislikes, or doesn't want to do things that take a lot of mental effort for a long period of time (such as schoolwork or homework).
 7. Often loses things needed for tasks and activities (such as toys, school assignments, pencils, books, or tools).
 8. Is often easily distracted.
 9. Often forgetful in daily activities.

IB. Six or more of the following signs of hyperactivity-impulsivity have been present for at least 6 months to an extent that is disruptive and inappropriate for developmental level:

- Hyperactivity:
 1. Often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat.
 2. Often gets up from seat when remaining in seat is expected.
 3. Often runs about or climbs when and where it is not appropriate (adolescents or adults may feel very restless).
 4. Often has trouble playing or enjoying leisure activities quietly.
 5. is often "on the go" or often acts as if "driven by a motor".
 6. Often talks excessively.
- Impulsiveness:
 1. Often blurts out answers before questions have been finished.
(See: NAQT)
 2. Often has trouble waiting one's turn.
 3. Often interrupts or intrudes on others (example: butts into conversations or games).

CHAPTER 3

3.1 How to Avoid Lack of Attention

Before using any techniques to avoid this situation, motivation and leadership in the classroom are the main tools for teaching any subject matter. The literature found on these two themes is reviewed in the following pages.

3.1.1 Motivation

To keep motivated throughout any event in life will certainly help the consecution of any goal. In the case for this study, which is the lack of attention in EFL students, motivations plays a very important role, since a motivated student will be able to learn faster and will use the language in a much more fulfilling way.

3.1.2 Conceptualization

Motivation is a group of biological, instinctive and psychological factors that represent the internal impulse, capable of driving an individual towards a particular goal, it is something similar to a propeller that pulls the organism to the achievement of certain objectives. In the educational field, motivation is the action of producing the feeling of interest, stimulating the desire for learning and directing the effort to reach the proposed goals. To get students to learn, it is not enough to explain the subject clearly and demand them to pay attention. It is necessary to awaken their enthusiasm, to create in them a genuine interest for studying and create a taste for doing their school work. That interest, that desire and taste will act in their spirits as a justification for any effort made to learn.

Motivation is a psychological factor that propels action and in that action is involved self-esteem which in turn is nothing more than self confidence, from this point a wide range of possibilities for success derive, or the fear of failure. (CONROY, T., Article retrieved on July 2010.)

3.1.3 Types of motivation

a. POSITIVE MOTIVATION

In this type the student accepts and recognizes the importance that the learning of a certain subject has. This type subdivides in *Intrinsic Positive Motivation*, which is the most important, because is caused by internal stimuli and then *Extrinsic Positive Motivation* in which the force that drives the student to learn is produced by external stimuli. From this it is understood clearly that is through positive motivation that different subjects should be taught, because it takes as an essential standard for teaching internal and external stimuli and is exactly this type that must be applied to the teaching of a foreign language, for the difficulty and peculiarity of this type of teaching

b. NEGATIVE MOTIVATION

It is called negative because the stimuli used to drive the student to study are negative, but they still force them to study. This type also subdivides into *Negative Psychological Motivation*, which is a way in which one can achieve a good performance using negative stimuli such as contempt, harsh criticism, harsh words, etc. *Physical Negative Motivation*, for a better performance the teacher stimulates the student with physical punishment.

**Moral Negative Motivation* is the one in which threats, passing judgment on personal issues, shame and public humiliation and reprobation are used to stimulate the student to perform better.

3.1.4 Motivational Sources

When talking about motivation sources should be mentioned, these are: the student's psychological, biological and social needs, curiosity, interest typical of their age, social events relevant to the students, positive characteristics of the learning environment, recreational activity, the teachers personality, social approval, to avoid frustration and failure, financial need, desire to stand out, efficiency, desire to experiment, aspirations and desire to please loved ones, amongst others. (ENCARTA 2000)

3.1.5 Principal Factors for Motivation

a. TEACHER'S PERSONALITY

The teacher is the guide, the driver and counselor in the learning process; therefore inevitably all of their physical as well as psychological characteristics influence the motivation or demotivation of their students.

b. DIDACTIC MATERIAL

This material of support creates motivation according to their structure, vivacity, ease of handling, relation to the objectives of learning, etc.

c. USED METHODOLOGY

The better the method is being used, the more motivating it will be for the student to learn. From this derives the importance of the psycho pedagogical and didactic formation of the teacher along with the thorough scientific knowledge which constitutes the reason for learning. (Izquierdo, Enrique. *"Motivación Positiva."* 2000:13)

3.1.6 MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES

- Avoid negative criticism.

- Program group work.

- Positively rate work performance.

- Foster cooperation.

- Demand tasks that are accessible to students.

- Promote activities in which risk of failure is moderate.

- Set up chat sessions with groups to allow less motivated individuals express their concerns and opinions.

- Perform activities and enjoyable jobs for less motivated students.
(Encarta 2000)

3.1.7 Leadership

An important factor to consider when it comes to maintaining a class motivated, willing to learn and therefore without lack of attention, is leadership exercised by the teacher. We have all witnessed on several occasions of life, of how a leader can influence the consecution of a goal, is maybe charisma, intelligence and gift of leadership, assertiveness, or all as mentioned above, the leader and specially in the case treated in this work is extremely important. EFL students will be benefited provided that their teacher is a leader which will keep them focused on achieving that goal will undoubtedly be to master English. (educationleadership.files. Article retrieved on July 2010.)

3.1.8 Conceptualization

Regarding leadership it has been said "during the last few decades, authors have committed to the investigation of the best possible style of leadership, one that would prove successful in most situations, nonetheless most researches show that there is not a unique method of leadership. Leaders that succeed are the ones that are able to adapt their behavior to the needs of their own unique environment." (Blanchard & Hersey. "*El Liderazgo*.", ed. Warner Books. New York, 1992.)

Regarding *moral leadership*, it is mentioned "It is not money or organizational capabilities, not even knowledge that are lacking to improve the world, but *moral leadership* committed to values of social justice, equity and participation. There are different mental models prevalent to leadership, such as: authoritarian, paternalistic, all-knowing, manipulative and democratic." (ANELLO, E. y De HERNANDEZ, J. "*Liderazgo Moral*.", 1999)

"The leader must before anything be reliable, leadership is only possible if the field has been prepared beforehand. A leader's work is as much personal as it is organizational.

To be able to lead a person must show at least two active and essential characteristics: empathy and proficiency, these two characteristics can be cultivated deliberately and systematically; the development of this personal character is the first brick in the building of leadership.

The one that master the facts is an expert, has expertise, no one can lead without skill and empathy, and these two requirements are those that generate respect.

To create and promote organizations that support the exercise and development of leadership, is the second brick.

The personal character of the leader is made, no one is born a leader, and it means that anyone who is willing to work hard and develop the characteristics afore mentioned can definitely be a leader.

Leaders should be motivators, educators, role models, spokesmen and animators; they must be accessible and diligently seek contact with colleagues and subordinates.

Leadership implies cooperation and this requires a proper context, a leader has to rely on his/her instincts and develop a knack for hunches. If someone works really hard, their instincts will become reliable, their hunches will be based on skill and empathy and they will be right and then leadership will seem to flow with ease." (PAGONIS, W., *"Moving Mountains: Lessons on leadership and logistics."*, ed. Harvard Book Press., New York, 1992.)

Leadership has the function of managing groups and little or big collectives or sometimes it could encompass an entire society, the MEC in its document "Manual del facilitator" (1997) states that "to exercise a good leadership it is necessary to become a leader" and in its document "Administración Educativa" (1997) says that "leadership is a process by which a certain person is nominated as leader and this person ensures the cooperation of others, to achieve the objectives of a particular situation."

Efficient leadership originates diverse positive results such as cooperation, enthusiasm, solidarity, all of which have a foundation in people relations as well as personal and institutional growth. A leader is the one who occupies the central role in a group and has the ability to influence in other people's conscience.

The leader in the achievement of its functions can create social environments or leadership styles which are:

- NATURAL

It is the first style and is the type of people who taking advantage of their real capacities organizes and decides the group's work.

- AUTOCRATIC

Is a type of leader oriented to producing, their words are commands and there is no right to an opinion or for contradiction, they are always right, logical arguments are not allowed, They are prone to lean towards the goals they have set themselves, without asking for an opinion. They try to control the behavior through the application of disciplinary actions and legal methods.

The autocratic leader is a person that acts outside of the group, they do not delegate, do not want their status diminished, in occasions they do not acknowledge the attributions of internal organisms when they want to take back their authority. They do not allow anyone to defend things done in their absence.

Confuse their status with personality cult, expects rewards for the sole fact that they are the principal, envy when someone else increases their status, because they fear for their position.

When an autocratic leader disappears all the problems the group had start to surface, becoming a very difficult situation to handle.

- LAISSE-FAIRE

This is the liberal leader, the one that "let do, let pass" everything, its style is anarchist, this leader doesn't care that much about power, their subordinates have a high level of independence, because this type of leaders themselves depend of their subordinates.

They are humanistic, their concern is for their subordinates primarily, they try to fix personal problems but is indifferent towards group work, does not promote productivity, dispenses responsibility and unity of criteria.

They are not committed to the achievement of goals and policies, the group is completely free to act, do not participate in discussions, they only care that their subordinates feel good emotionally, they do not stimulate the group's productivity.

- DEMOCRATIC

This one is the ideal type of leader, because these type of leaders are in between the latter ones. They take into account productivity as much as well-being and achieve a good environment for their subordinates.

Decision making is shared between the leader and the group; the democratic style tends to focus group relations and the role of this in the organization, it also characterizes for emphasizing common goals and work achievement; every person feels that they make an important contribution.

This leader guides the group in search for acceptable goals and efficient planning; in this case subordinates have a greater feeling of freedom and satisfaction; for this reason creative leadership is implicit in this style, because the leader is the light that shows the way.

The democratic leader does not work by means of domination, but through persuasion and suggestion. It is important to highlight that this style of leadership is the most suitable for education.

When relevant this leader takes decisions, but explains afterwards to the group so they can reach agreements. Most of the times, decisions are taken with the corresponding participation of the group, seeking consensus before imposition or election.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 Strategies to catch Student's Attention

4.1.2 Ludic Activities in the Learning Process

The current situation of education in our country demands a change of attitude of all sectors involved in it, that is why priority is given to the active participation of the actors in this process, especially the student under the guidance of teachers, and particularly in the last decade in Ecuadorian education significant changes have taken place in the relationship between the student and the teacher, understanding that the student is no longer merely the object of education but an actor in search of a comprehensive training.

As it has been said "The student does not learn on his own, or for himself, but he learns accompanied by others creating a reciprocal learning teaching dynamic." (ESTEVEZ SOLANO, C., "*Evaluación integral de procesos*", ed. Magisterio. Bogotá, 1996.

In this new landscape it is worth trying new methods, techniques, and strategies or in turn it is worth trying new methods, techniques and strategies to update devalued strategies such as play and recreational activities, since entering the school children are in an age in which they dominate their thoughts, feelings and fantasies, and taking into account that is through play that they relate to objects and with reality, seeking to create a new reality that allows them to meet their physical, mental, emotional and social needs.

It is worthwhile trying to place recreational activities in the educational environment, inside and outside the classroom as another strategy that will help to increase the range of methods and techniques that teachers apply in their daily routine, so as to focus efficiently their tasks inside the classroom, but recreational activities are often mistaken for just mere play. As mentioned by Carlos Alberto Jiménez Vélez (*JIMENEZ VELEZ, C.A. "Cerebro Creativo y Lúdico."*, Cooperativa Editorial del Magisterio. Colección Aula Abierta., Colombia, 2000) "Recreational activities are a pervious concept, difficult to define, but that can be felt, can be experienced and can be recognized in many of our cultural practices. This way, behavioral activities, such as the ones that most teachers perform make no sense to enhance the quadrants in the right hemisphere of the human brain that control playfulness and sense of humor.

- CEREBRAL HEMISPHERES divide the human brain which is an organ that elaborates information and also a creator of thought and intelligence, this faculty allows it to make use of experiences stored in it to solve all kinds of everyday cognitive problems.

The brain weight of a newly born is of 360 to 370 grams; just about third of an adult's human brain (1360 to 1400 grams). In a 9 month old baby the brain weights about 600 grams.

And when they reach their second year their brain weights between 900 and 1011 grams.”; that is why is necessary to try and understand the human being in its early stages of development, primarily in their cognitive and emotional aspects.

- THE LEFT HEMISPHERE it is an algorithmic processor that manages factual, detailed information; it specializes in the recognition of parts that constitute a whole, it is lineal and sequential. It goes from one point to another gradually, step by step. It processes verbal information; it encodes and decodes speech. It takes apart the sections that form a whole.

- THE RIGHT HEMISPHERE it combines the parts to create a whole, it synthesizes and uses analogical-experimental procedures, parting from already synthetic or globalized models of information, enabling the brain to organize the information. It's specially efficient in the visual and spatial process (images). It seems to be the source for creative perception. Words and shapes do not mean anything, but together, it obtains a much clearer communication.

Perception is one of the most important and complex acts of all of the brain's information processes; the left hemisphere is rich in detail and analysis, but the right hemisphere is panoramic and holistic in the management of information, although it loses clarity when it comes to detail. A photographic analogy could be use in this case, between a tele-objective and a wide angle lens.

From this view the right hemisphere of the brain specializes in images and in non lineal relations, therefore, it is the principal source for creative perception, not only for artist, but to all people who find pleasure in dreaming and living in a world of imagination and fantasy.

The fundamental premise that assumes a didactic-pedagogical strategy for the student is not the reception of knowledge and information, but the thought of an effective method to capture

the knowledge that mankind has stored throughout the ages and that tries to transfer them on a selective way to new generations, so they will have a firm foundation to take charge of society in the present time and the future, given that learning how to learn consist basically in the acquisition, development and perfection of strategies not only to acquire and store knowledge but for the exploration, discovery and solving of problems, components that if achieved will make the day to day learning experience very significant, to allow the student to take an easier leap from fantasy to reality, integrating the intellectual, emotional, physical and cultural, guiding actions towards the achievement of the fundamental goals of education, the integrated formation of the human being.

For a long time human beings made efforts to develop creative activity and the increase productivity, skills and capabilities of people or improve qualitatively the systems and educational programs.

To reinforce this criteria many authors could be cited, authors that emphasize that the world is living a true revolution of knowledge of self, that will change human progress, future generations should be in mind then for them to have a wide range of opportunities to learn how to interpret this new world of knowledge, because if they know their own unique ways of learning, they will take a firm first step in the 21st century.

Any change in education causes great reaction, that is why educators will not succeed if they keep doing things the same old way, so it is worth to journey in the field of recreational activities, trying to define them as an attitude towards life, an attitude that will facilitate reasoning, that properly motivates, increases the development of skills, decreases unprepared lessons, rote learning, disinterest in the classroom, passive students and wrong methods of learning, inside a frame of attitudes of enjoyment, pleasure, and satisfaction.

It is convenient to say that games are a good companion to the ludic, some authors tend to confuse them, trying to clarify as much as possible, and this investigative work offers some definitions from the encyclopedia "A Handbook for the Educator." (2000)

Throughout time several authors and theories try to explain in their own way and from the point of view of their own period of time as much as they could this subject:

- Pre-Exercise Theory, Gross, K (1899), playing is placed inside of the laws of psycho-physiological growth (hence its definition as pre-exercise) and it develops during childhood, period in which a child exercises in a natural way, perfects its inherited instincts and prepares for adult life (hence its denomination as "auto-affirmation.")

- Child Dynamics Theory, according to Buytendijk, H. (1978), playing reflects origin, evolution and/or the evolution of child impulses. They are typical of child dynamics, which is characterized by its ambiguity and motion impulsiveness, along with a pathetic attitude towards reality and shyness when facing situations.

- Psychoanalytic Theory, Freud, S. Parragón (2001), in Freud's opinion playing does not take into account the principle of reality but pleasure. A Child will replicate through playing what has caused a huge impression on him, this way a child is linked to unconscious feelings and assumes the best way of naturally release tensions and problems.

- Piagetian Theory, Piaget, J (1956), to Piaget playing forms part of a child's intelligence, because it represents the functional or reproductive assimilation of reality for each stage of individual evolution. The sensory and motion capabilities, symbolic or reasoning, as essential aspects of the individual's development, are the ones that determine the origin and evolution of playing. Their Interaction with the environment through adaptation (imitation of behavior), assimilation (symbolic play) and the balance between both (conceptual representation), will shape the type and characteristics of the game in each one of the stages that this very ample theory proposes.

- Vygotsky's Theory, Vigotsky, S.L. (1942), playing comes up as a need to reproduce social contact. Nature, origin and reason for playing are all of social kind and through playing scenes are represented that go beyond individual instincts and internal pulsations. Contrary to Piaget's ideas, to Vigotsky playing is the one that determines development, because it facilitates the passage from some incipient and immature acquisitions to others more secure and permanent.

- There are two lines of evolutionary change that come together in human beings: one that is more particular to Biology (self preservation and reproduction of the species) and another one more social and cultural (the integrating and shaping of our own culture and social group.)
- Wallonian Theory, Wallon, H. (1972), in this theory Wallon thinks playing is a realization of the individual with a goal in itself, of a complex and ambivalent character, in which takes place simultaneously the realization and relaxation of the impulse, the running away and the domination of the real, the possibility of external creation and the creation of self.

The teacher should know thoroughly everything related to this theories, so as to involve them in the design of the new curriculums, it is assumed that many curricular contents should be approached through playful activities, because the human brain enriches itself along with its own personal experiences the environment, and play and ludic activities are a common element present in all stages of development and are vital, therefore the environment is able, through their stimuli, to promote or to stop learning, creating an environment where it is allowed to make mistakes, facilitating the consecution of what is wanted, where the student can flexibly face the duality of mistakes and successes, and the fact will not be overrated.

"Learning comes from mistakes, for this to stop being just another old saying and starts being a reality we should consider making mistakes as normal, that it is good to observe them and take responsibility for them. A serious problem for adults is the very little capacity of taking responsibility for their faults or limitations and look for someone to blame." (Ortiz de Maschwitz, Elena. 1998)

This paradigm should change drastically, we must encourage a sort of social laboratory, in which trial and error are normal, only through this change a true learning will be achieved, with new mental models for new generations, only free minds are able to create, finally then education must have as one of its primary objectives the creation of free human beings, free to think and act, then they will be capable of productive activities, activities in which they will be able to freely create.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Through careful research and thorough analysis of the material relevant to the theme that was found we may conclude that the subject of English as a Foreign Language is a complex issue, that can be approached in many ways as in any other subject matter because learning processes are the same in some aspects, but there are also differences that need to be taken into careful consideration.

Lack of attention is not only some bad habit and even though in some cases it may be, if a student shows signs, it should not be taken for granted, since as we have seen through this investigation, it may actually be a more critical case of a Learning Disability or something even more serious such as Attention-Deficit Hyperactive Disorder.

Recommendations

In any case, if a teacher tries carefully to use the following recommendations, it may be quite easier to avoid lack of attention or to identify students with more serious or even clinical cases:

- Appropriate teaching methodologies, which will allow the teacher and the student to enjoy the experience of learning a new language while actually acquiring some significant learning.

- The use of recreational or ludic activities that will increase the student's interest and will lighten the burden that some aspects of learning another language present such as grammar, along with other benefits like the improvement in the teacher-student relationship as well as the peer to peer relationships. Another benefit that can be mentioned by the use of recreational activities and techniques is that the students can feel a lot freer to make mistakes and to practice the language through play, which will not feel as much as studying but more as a leisure activity, thus avoiding the much resisted lack of attention.

- Motivation plays a key role in these four approaches to avoid lack of attention in the classroom, because without the right type of motivation no game or methodology will achieve the goal of any EFL teacher, which is the mastering of the foreign language being taught.

- Finally but not least important, leadership; leadership exercised by the teacher, a democratic leadership that will inspire as well as guide students towards their goal, a leader who will manage and solve problems making everyone feel important and a part of a group of people that work together to achieve a significant and enjoyable learning experience.

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