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AN ACTION RESEARCH FOR IMPLEMENTING AFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING ANXIETY AND INCREASING MOTIVATION IN EFL BEGINNER LEARNERS AT CAMPUS LIBERIA OF UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL (UNA) IN GUANACASTE, COSTA RICA

INVESTIGACIÓN ACCIÓN PARA IMPLEMENTAR ESTRATEGIAS DE ENSEÑANZA AFECTIVA PARA REDUCIR LA ANSIEDAD Y AUMENTAR LA MOTIVACIÓN EN ESTUDIANTES PRINCIPIANTES DE INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA EN EL CAMPUS LIBERIA DE LA UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL (UNA) EN GUANACASTE, COSTA RICA

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An Action Research for Implementing Affective Teaching Strategies for Reducing Anxiety and Increasing Motivation in EFL Beginner Learners at Campus Liberia of Universidad Nacional (UNA) in Guanacaste, Costa Rica

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of teacher feedback and behavior on student motivation and performance in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. It highlights the negative effects of harsh feedback and emotional abuse, contrasted with the positive outcomes of supportive teacher-student interactions. Using a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and classroom observations of 64 beginner EFL students, the research identifies various self-motivation techniques students use, such as positive self-statements and relaxation methods. The study also evaluates the effectiveness of a pedagogic proposal incorporating five affective teaching strategies, which significantly enhance student engagement and learning. The findings underscore the importance of a positive and empathetic classroom environment, recommending that teachers and educational institutions adopt supportive and innovative teaching methods to improve EFL education outcomes.

Keywords: motivation, pygmalion, relaxation technique, feedback, teaching strategy

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Investigación Acción para Implementar Estrategias de Enseñanza Afectiva para Reducir la Ansiedad y Aumentar la Motivación en Estudiantes Principiantes de inglés como Lengua Extranjera en el Campus Liberia de la Universidad Nacional (UNA) en Guanacaste, Costa Rica

RESUMEN

Este estudio explora el impacto de la retroalimentación y el comportamiento del profesor en la motivación y el rendimiento de los estudiantes en aulas de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL). Destaca los efectos negativos de la retroalimentación severa y el abuso emocional, en contraste con los resultados positivos de las interacciones de apoyo entre profesores y estudiantes. Utilizando un enfoque de métodos mixtos que involucra encuestas y observaciones en el aula de 64 estudiantes principiantes de EFL, la investigación identifica varias técnicas de automotivación que usan los estudiantes, como afirmaciones positivas y métodos de relajación. El estudio también evalúa la efectividad de una propuesta pedagógica que incorpora cinco estrategias de enseñanza afectiva, las cuales mejoran significativamente el compromiso y el aprendizaje de los estudiantes. Los hallazgos subrayan la importancia de un ambiente de clase positivo y empático, recomendando que los profesores y las instituciones educativas adopten métodos de enseñanza de apoyo e innovadores para mejorar los resultados de la educación EFL.

Palabras clave: motivacion, effecto pigmaleon,tecnica de relacion, retroalimnetacion,estrategia de enseñanza

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INTRODUCTION

This final project proposes action research to implement affective teaching strategies aimed at reducing anxiety and increasing motivation in EFL beginner learners at Campus Liberia of Universidad Nacional (UNA) in Guanacaste, Costa Rica. The objective is to identify factors that provoke anxiety, particularly focusing on the teacher's personality, and to determine teaching strategies that could enhance motivation among these learners. The ultimate goal is to create a pedagogic proposal that incorporates these strategies, offering valuable benefits to the academy and the field of EFL.

Research has shown that teachers' personalities significantly impact students' performance, often leading to negative feelings such as anxiety, stress, and dissatisfaction. Recognizing that schools are not factories and students are not mere “learning/producing machines” is crucial. Affective factors play an essential role in academic contexts. Students often experience fears and other negative feelings in class due to various factors, including the introduction to a second language and negative attitudes from professors. Participation and motivation can be greatly influenced by the teacher's personality.

Beginners face significant challenges in language learning, needing considerable effort to construct even simple sentences. This cognitive process, described by Chomsky's generativist view as principles and parameters or universal grammar, occurs unconsciously. However, many teachers tend to overlook this, negatively impacting student performance and motivation.

Costa Rica, where Spanish is the official language, has incorporated English into its school curriculum, with many children learning it from an early age. In 2018, President Carlos Alvarado Quesada launched the Alliance for Bilingualism (ABi) to expand English teaching coverage. This national strategy aims to create universal access to English learning, recognizing its importance in a globalized world.

Guanacaste, a major tourist destination, sees a significant number of English-speaking visitors, emphasizing the need for English proficiency among locals. In 2018, Costa Rica welcomed over 3 million visitors, with more than half from North America, highlighting the necessity of English language skills for Costa Ricans.

Higher education institutions have also recognized the importance of English, incorporating it into various curricula. Motivating students to appreciate and pursue English learning is crucial for their personal and professional development.

Implementing affective teaching strategies at Campus Liberia of UNA can provide significant benefits to EFL beginners. Addressing emotional and cognitive challenges can create a supportive learning environment, enhancing motivation and reducing anxiety, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes.

Research Purpose and Justification

The purpose of this research is to explore the role of affective teaching strategies in reducing anxiety and enhancing motivation among beginner EFL learners at Campus Liberia of Universidad Nacional (UNA). By identifying the specific factors, such as teacher personality, that contribute to learner anxiety and decreased motivation, this study aims to develop a pedagogical framework that fosters a more supportive and productive learning environment. The relevance of this research lies in its potential to fill a gap in existing literature regarding the emotional impact of teaching strategies on beginner EFL learners. Additionally, the study responds to the growing demand for English proficiency in Costa Rica, particularly in Guanacaste, a region heavily reliant on tourism. Implementing effective strategies to reduce anxiety and boost motivation can directly contribute to better academic outcomes, ultimately equipping students with the necessary skills to succeed in both local and global contexts.

Background Antecedents

Effective teaching necessitates good behavior, a fundamental yet often overlooked aspect of education. Baloglu (2009) emphasizes that children's behavior in school is significantly influenced by factors within the school, such as the behavior and attitude of professors. Despite its importance, the impact of teacher behavior on student performance and motivation has not received adequate attention from scholars, researchers, and educational institutions. Globally, researchers have recognized the influence of students' attitudes and behaviors, along with other personal situations, on their academic success. Instructors and institutions must actively identify these influencing factors through action research and other pedagogical tools. Teachers play a multifaceted role: they act as guides, helpers, friends, and motivators, contributing to the development of well-rounded individuals who can positively impact their families and society. Teachers' daily experiences in the classroom demonstrate that in education, there are no universal truths; every action taken by a teacher is a conscious decision.

It is crucial to explore classroom environments to understand and justify the pedagogical decisions and actions taken, especially in contexts where the teacher's personality is not continuously observed and evaluated.

Teaching is inherently personal, influenced by the teacher's personality and values. Teachers unconsciously transmit their beliefs and convictions. Rodrigo (2016) highlights the lack of research on the impact of teachers' emotions on their students' emotional competence, although studies like Morris et al. (2013) indicate that teachers' emotions significantly affect children's emotional understanding. Excessive negative emotions from teachers, particularly anger, can hinder children's ability to process emotional information, underscoring the need for teachers to maintain self-control.

Universities, as centers of learning and development, are ideal environments for generating ideas through action research that can lead to positive changes in education. These institutions host numerous students annually who are at the final stage of their academic formation, ready to overcome obstacles and achieve their future goals. Superior educational institutions must provide a collaborative and friendly environment to motivate students and prepare them for the future.

Universidad Nacional (UNA), a public institution founded in 1973, comprises eight campuses across Costa Rica. Its origins trace back to the Normal Schools of Costa Rica, established in 1914 to train educators. UNA now offers 79 bachelor's degree programs, 58 postgraduate programs, 30 accredited majors, and serves around 20,000 students annually (EEUNA, 2020). UNA has significantly contributed to the social and economic development of Costa Rican society.

Campus Liberia, one of UNA's campuses in the Chorotega region, is ideal for this action research project due to its modern infrastructure, significant student and professor population, and its programs and methodologies. Students at this campus must take English courses to graduate, aligning with UNA's goal of providing a qualified English-speaking labor force to a region where tourism is a major industry. Guanacaste, a top tourist destination, attracts over 50% of the country's annual visitors (Fernandez & Sanabria, 2019). In 2017, the Chorotega region was visited by 40% of international arrivals to Costa Rica, representing 885,975 visitors who stayed at least one night in the province (Fernandez & Sanabria, 2019). The tourism industry in this region is a significant economic driver, generating jobs and attracting substantial investment.

Observations from academic assistants and professors have indicated that students' performance and motivation are impacted by teachers' personalities. Many students avoid enrolling in courses with professors who have rude personalities, preferring to wait until another professor is available. This suggests that a teacher's personality and attitude, particularly in the first year of language study, are crucial for students to achieve their academic goals. A negative teacher's attitude can demotivate and frustrate students, even leading to course abandonment.

This project aims to improve student-teacher relationships by proposing affective teaching strategies that reduce anxiety and increase motivation in EFL beginner learners. It seeks to demonstrate with real data that students prefer friendly and empathetic teachers who can create a healthy and confident classroom atmosphere. Baloglu (2009) emphasizes the importance of maintaining a positive, productive classroom environment conducive to learning.

The potential readers of this project include teachers in general, future teachers, and language teachers. Good manners in class are essential for creating an atmosphere of peace and understanding. Language classes require special considerations, as using a second language (L2) to communicate is inherently different from using one's mother tongue (L1). If students fear being shamed in class, their participation will decrease. Conversely, if teachers can make students feel "at home" in class, they will participate more confidently, and the class will flow naturally. The concept of classroom security is a pedagogical consideration that future teachers must internalize in their teaching practice.

This proposal is innovative for Campus Liberia and the English Department, as it focuses on how teachers' personalities affect students, sometimes producing negative feelings like anxiety, stress, and demotivation. The results of this research can significantly benefit the English Department at Universidad Nacional, helping students become successful and good language learners (GLLs).

Theoretical Framework

This section provides the theoretical foundation supporting the action research project "Implementing Affective Teaching Strategies for Reducing Anxiety and Increasing Motivation in EFL Beginner Learners at Campus Liberia of Universidad Nacional (UNA) in Guanacaste, Costa Rica." It discusses key concepts and theories relevant to the project, including emotional experiences in learning environments, motivation factors, the Pygmalion Effect, and meaningful learning in TEFL.

Emotional Experiences: Learning in Chaotic vs. Sane Environments

In the classroom, teaching and learning are interactive processes. Creating a positive learning environment is crucial for effective teaching. Phillips (George Lucas Educational Foundation, 2014) stresses the importance of striking a balance between emotional openness and maintaining authority as a teacher. Teachers should foster a sense of security and confidence among students, promoting a harmonious and respectful classroom atmosphere. Baloglu (2009) emphasizes the challenge of learning in chaotic environments and underscores the need for a positive and productive classroom atmosphere conducive to learning.

Motivation: The Pygmalion Effect in the Classroom

Motivation plays a pivotal role in learning. The Pygmalion Effect, discovered by Robert Rosenthal, suggests that higher expectations lead to higher performance. Positive reinforcement and supportive language can significantly impact students' motivation and performance. Boyce (2020) recommends strategies such as creating challenges, using positive language, and providing feedback to foster motivation in the classroom.

Motivation and Meaningful Learning in TEFL

Motivation and meaningful learning are essential in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Teachers and students alike have intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that must be nurtured. Rodrigo (2016) highlights the positive effects of teacher caring and enthusiasm on student motivation. A well-planned motivation program can reinforce institutional values and empower each member of the educational community.

Second Language Acquisition

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the process of learning a language other than one's mother tongue. The debate between generativism and behaviorism continues, with theories emphasizing both internal cognitive processes and external environmental factors in language acquisition. Ellis (1985) outlines characteristics of an optimal learning environment, including high-quality input, perceived need for communication, and opportunities for practice.

In summary, these theories and concepts provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics of teaching and learning in EFL classrooms.

Teachers can draw from this knowledge to create effective and engaging learning environments that promote student success.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology is a crucial part of research, outlining the procedures and tools used for planning and executing the study. This section details the research approach, type, and instruments for data collection in this action research.

Description of the Research Approach

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches are important for collecting and analyzing data. Quantitative research involves numerical data and supports data analysis with numbers and graphs, confirming theories and assumptions. Qualitative research, on the other hand, involves non-numerical data, such as prose descriptions and diaries, which provide deeper insights through reflection and interpretation (Funiber, 2019c, p. 12). This action research employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data from group observations, surveys, and focus groups, as detailed in the next subsection.

Description of the Research Type

This action research integrates mixed methodology, utilizing data from both qualitative and quantitative paradigms to enhance understanding. Creswell (2014) emphasizes that mixing data provides a stronger comprehension of research problems than using either method alone (p. 264). Mixed methods have gained prominence in social sciences, yielding holistic outcomes (Creswell, 2014, p. 265). Educational research often seeks to explore beyond known solutions, thus this project follows action research standards and methods, integrating them with a mixed-methods approach. Tomal (2010) highlights that action research systematically addresses educational problems, using appropriate interventions to collect and analyze data and implement actions (p. 14).

Description of the Research Instruments

The data collection instruments for this action research are organized to align with the mixed-method approach, as recommended by academic standards.

Survey

Surveys are effective for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Parker, cited in Griffe (1992), notes that surveys reflect the attitudes, preferences, and opinions of respondents, making them valuable in democratic contexts (Funiber, 2019b, p. 35). This research uses two descriptive surveys based on the Likert Scale, addressing classroom motivation and affectivity. These surveys include both open and closed questions, providing essential quantitative and qualitative data.

Group Observation

Group observation is a qualitative method that provides valuable insights through direct observation. Creswell (2009) explains various types and roles of observation, noting its advantages and disadvantages. In this study, group observation was used to monitor classroom dynamics, including student motivation and reactions. For example, students were observed while watching a video of a rude professor, and their feedback was recorded. This method, commonly used by ethnographers and educators, enhances understanding of classroom phenomena.

Focus Group

Focus groups are another qualitative tool where participants share their opinions while being observed by a researcher. Denzin & Lincoln (2005) highlight the use of focus groups in pedagogy, politics, and qualitative research (p. 888). They provide deep insights into real-world issues (Bourdieu & Wacquant, cited by Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 887).

In this research, focus groups allowed students to freely express their emotions and opinions in a secure environment. This setting reduced anxiety and stress, encouraging open participation and providing a broad range of responses to support the analysis. The next section will describe the components related to the field of study, the students, and the institution involved in this action research.

Participants

The participants in this research are 29 Business Administration and 35 Hydrologic Engineering students, aged 18 to 40, enrolled in their second year at a top public university in Costa Rica. These students, mostly from low-income families, are highly motivated to improve their socioeconomic status through education despite the country's economic challenges. Gender representation is nearly equal with 34 girls and 30 boys. The detailed breakdown is as follows:

Table 1 Participants groups

Group	**Number of Participants**
Business Administration Students	29
Hydrologic Engineering Students	35
Group gender	**Number of participants**
Males	30
Females	34

Note: the total of participants in this sample is 64 between the two majors and their gender.
The university campus has 9 major but only two were considered to the study.
The course name in their programs for other major is called integrated English for other majors I or II (code; LIX) according to the faculty of Philosophy and Letters in the university.

The participants have an average English proficiency level of low intermediate, as estimated by the educational system for secondary school graduates in reading and writing. The students' context is positive, supported by the quality infrastructure provided by the university, which includes access to essential resources such as the internet, a library, and competitive academic and administrative services. For the quantitative data analysis, the descriptive method was employed using pivot tables and charts. Meanwhile, for qualitative data analysis, the phenomenological analysis strategy was utilized to explore the essence and structure of the participants' lived experiences in the context of teaching and learning academic writing with the use of artificial intelligence. Content analysis was also applied to code responses and identify emerging patterns and categories.

Tasks and Procedures

In this action research study, tasks and procedures were carefully designed to integrate both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, enhancing the depth and breadth of data collection and analysis.

Survey Administration

Two descriptive surveys were administered to collect both quantitative and qualitative data regarding classroom motivation and affectivity. The surveys utilized the Likert Scale and contained both open and closed questions. This dual approach provided numerical data for statistical analysis and textual data for thematic analysis.

Table 2 Procedure of survey administration

Task	Description
Development	Surveys were developed based on literature and validated through pilot testing.
Distribution	Surveys were distributed to students at the beginning of the study.
Collection	Responses were collected electronically and manually.
Analysis	Quantitative data from the closed questions were analyzed statistically, while qualitative data from the open questions were subjected to thematic analysis.

Note: This table outlines the steps taken in the survey implementation process, including development, distribution, collection, and analysis of survey data

Group Observations

Group observations were conducted to gain qualitative insights into classroom dynamics. This involved observing students' behaviors, interactions, and reactions to specific stimuli, such as a video of a rude professor.

Table 3 Procedure of group observation

Task	Descriptionn
Preparation	Observation checklists were prepared based on key aspects of classroom interaction and student behavior.
Observation Sessions	Several classroom sessions were observed, focusing on students' responses and engagement.
Recording	Detailed notes were taken during each session, capturing both verbal and non-verbal cues.
Analysis	Observational data were coded and analyzed to identify patterns and themes related to student motivation and affectivity.

Note: This table outlines the steps in the classroom observation process, including preparation, observation sessions, recording, and analysis.

Focus Groups

Focus groups provided a platform for students to express their thoughts and feelings in a supportive environment. This method facilitated in-depth discussions and uncovered deeper insights into students' experiences.

Table 4 Procedure of focus groups

Task	Description
Formation	Focus groups were formed, each consisting of 6-8 students to ensure active participation.
Sessions	Multiple focus group sessions were held, each lasting approximately 60 minutes.
Moderation	A trained moderator guided the discussions, ensuring all participants had the opportunity to share their views.
Recording and Transcription	Sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.
Analysis	Transcriptions were analyzed using qualitative methods to extract key themes and insights.

Note: This table details the process followed for conducting focus groups, from formation and session planning to moderation, recording, transcription, and analysis.

Statistical or Qualitative Analysis

This study employed a combination of statistical and qualitative analysis techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Creswell (2014) highlights that integrating both methods offers a more robust comprehension of research issues than using either approach alone (p. 264).

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data from the surveys were analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends, correlations, and differences in student motivation and affectivity.

Table 5 Data Analysis Process

Steps	Description
Data Cleaning	Survey responses were reviewed for completeness and accuracy.
Descriptive Statistics	Measures such as mean, median, and standard deviation were calculated to summarize the data.
Inferential Statistics	Techniques such as t-tests and ANOVA were used to determine the significance of observed differences.
Visualization	Data were presented using graphs and charts for easier interpretation.

Note: This table outlines the steps involved in analyzing the survey data to ensure accuracy, summarize key measures, test for statistical significance, and visually represent the findings

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data from open-ended survey responses, group observations, and focus group discussions were analyzed to uncover deeper meanings and patterns.

Table 6 Qualitative Data Analysis Steps

Steps:	Description
Transcription	All qualitative data were transcribed verbatim.
Coding	Data were coded using open, axial, and selective coding techniques.
Thematic Analysis	Coded data were grouped into themes and sub-themes to identify significant patterns.
Triangulation	Data from different sources were cross-verified to ensure reliability and validity.
Narrative Presentation	Findings were presented in a narrative format, providing a rich, contextual understanding of the research problem

Note: This table summarizes the steps involved in qualitative data analysis, including transcription, coding, thematic analysis, triangulation, and narrative presentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, the emotional and motivational dynamics between teachers and students play a pivotal role in the learning process. This document explores the multifaceted impacts of teacher feedback and behavior on student motivation and performance, highlights various self-motivation techniques employed by students, and presents a pedagogic proposal aimed at beginner EFL learners. By examining the effects of positive and negative teacher interactions, student self-encouragement strategies, and innovative teaching methods, this analysis offers insights into creating a supportive and effective learning environment. The findings are drawn from an action-research process involving detailed observation and student feedback, emphasizing the importance of a positive, empathetic, and engaging classroom atmosphere for language acquisition

Impact of Teacher Feedback and Behavior on Student Motivation and Performance

Negative Feedback and Emotional Abuse

Impact of Negative Feedback: 91.5% of students (43 out of 48) reported feeling frustrated and demotivated if a teacher gave them negative feedback or suggested they were not suited for language learning.

Emotional Abuse by Teachers: 21.3% of students (10 out of 48) reported being victims of emotional abuse by teachers. Conversely, 70.2% (33 students) had never experienced such abuse, while 8.5% (4 students) were uncertain.

Teacher Behavior and Body Language

Effect of Body Language: Negative body language from teachers, such as disapproving facial expressions during oral exams, increased student anxiety and fear.

Preference for Positive Attitudes: Students consistently preferred friendly and positive teachers, correlating these traits with higher motivation and better learning outcomes.

Teacher Behavior and Classroom Environment

Avoiding Negative Teacher Behavior: A significant number of students (28 out of 30) would drop a course and retake it later if the professor created a negative classroom environment.

Institutional Intervention: 51 out of 53 students believed that universities should intervene when teachers create chaotic and negative classroom environments.

Student Self-Motivation Techniques and Preferences

Student Self-Motivation Techniques

This section presents various self-motivation techniques employed by students before tests or classes. The table below summarizes the frequency with which students engaged in actions such as encouraging and motivating themselves, making positive self-statements, concentrating on their learning, using relaxation techniques, discussing their feelings, maintaining a positive attitude and supporting peers, imagining class scenarios, and reflecting on their attitudes weekly. The data highlights the students' proactive efforts to enhance their learning experience and manage classroom stress.

Table 7 Student Self-Motivation Techniques

Technique	Always (%)	Sometimes (%)	Never (%)
Encouraging and Motivating Themselves	55.3% (26)	42.6% (20)	4.3% (2)
Positive Self-Statements	55.3% (26)	40.4% (19)	6.4% (3)
Concentration on Learning	66% (31)	36.2% (17)	0% (0)
Relaxation Techniques	59.6% (28)	34% (16)	6.4% (3)
Discussing Feelings	27.7% (13)	40.4% (19)	34% (16)
Positive Attitude and Peer Support	61.7% (29)	38.3% (18)	0% (0)
Imagining Class Scenarios	29.8% (14)	44.7% (21)	25.5% (12)
Weekly Reflection on Attitude	53.2% (25)	42.6% (20)	6.4% (3)

Note: Percentages are based on a total of 48 students surveyed.

Affective Teaching Strategies

Use of Music, Poetry, and Comics: 97.9% (46 students) agreed that these techniques help in understanding difficult topics, while 8.6% (4 students) disagreed, and 4.3% (2 students) were undecided.

Relaxation Techniques During Stressful Situations: Students believed that techniques like deep breathing, listening to music, and meditation could help them:

a) Feel relaxed and achieve better grades.

b) Lower anxiety levels.

c) Feel supported by the professor.

d) Gain self-confidence.

e) Reduce classroom pressure and nervousness.

Teacher-Student Relationship

Teacher as a Guide and Support: Students valued a supportive teacher-student relationship, indicating that teacher support during stressful situations would boost their confidence, motivation, satisfaction, and overall positivity.

Experiment Results: During an in-class experiment, students observed changes in the teacher's attitude, which affected their class participation and willingness to ask questions, highlighting the impact of teacher behavior on student engagement.

Pedagogic Proposal for EFL Beginner Students

Affective Teaching Strategies

The affective teaching strategies for EFL beginners emphasize creating a supportive and engaging classroom environment. Teachers should be kind and smile, greeting students warmly and maintaining positive body language while avoiding personal conflicts in class. Positive feedback should be given regularly to boost student confidence, using both verbal praise and written messages. Relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing and interactive activities, can help reduce student anxiety. Additionally, teaching methods should incorporate stories and drawings related to real-life situations to make grammar lessons more engaging. These strategies foster a positive classroom atmosphere, improve student motivation, and enhance overall learning outcomes.

Table 8 Teaching Strategies

Strategy	Definition
Being Kind and Smiling	Create a welcoming classroom atmosphere by greeting students, showing interest, and maintaining positive body language. Avoid personal conflicts and handle issues through conversation and negotiation.
Using Positive Feedback	Provide regular positive feedback to motivate students and boost confidence, using verbal praise, written feedback, and peer comments.
Using Relaxation Techniques	Implement techniques like deep breathing, clapping, interactive games, singing, motivational talks, and appropriate jokes to reduce student stress and anxiety.
Using Stories and Drawing to Teach Topics	Enhance grammar lessons by incorporating stories and drawings, relating them to real-life situations to aid comprehension.
Creating a Nice Environment in the Classroom	Foster a positive classroom environment by being kind, avoiding ridicule, and addressing individual student needs privately.

Note: This table summarizes the strategies aimed at improving classroom dynamics, increasing student motivation, and enhancing the overall learning experience for EFL beginners

CONCLUSIONS

This EFL research project has pretended to find answers and solve and the following research question: How can affective teaching strategies be implemented for reducing anxiety, and increasing motivation in an in EFL beginner class at Universidad Nacional (UNA) of Costa Rica? From the point of view of this research question, what has been proposed in this final project is gathering essential information related to the topic in order to understand and have a clear and certified perception of the context where the research problem is located. For this case, the researcher focused all his attention on the classroom based on elements such as motivation and affectivity of students in academic contexts as essential tools for a better performance of students, harmony and positivism in the classroom and incorporating the use of affective teaching strategies and relaxation techniques for reducing anxiety and increase motivation of learners.

This project is a contribution to the English teaching field as a foreign language because it has explored and analysed how teachers' behavior affect students' performance in class activities, as one of the main reasons why most Language students feel overwhelmed and shy in class with no active participation at

all or in a reduced percentage. It is important to note this is not only a matter of attitude of students, but also of language, which is a human barrier in terms of communication.

The application of this research project has contributed to the clarification of the various issues related to the teaching of language classes where motivation and the use affective teaching strategies have been categorized as some of the most important elements for teaching and have students interested in classes and curricular activities promoted by educational institutions and scholars.

This project will be useful to inspire teachers in the innovation, design, and implementation of affective teaching strategies as a way to motivate students to take classes, participate and perceive the classroom as a friendly environment where learning can be an extraordinary experience with no student's desertion of specific classes or the educational system, which is a very important fact that has interested us a lot from the very beginning of this research. Moreover, it has been of our interest to give teachers important alternative and tools to face and have more interactional classes, motivate students, and make teachers raise awareness about a change of rude and negative attitudes and behaviors in class, such as those related to oral communication and body or facial gestures, which can affect language students more than in the rest of subjects due to that natural barrier that we have called language. The idea recalls on transforming the classroom in a "friendly and secure zone" where students can feel free interact with teachers with no fears of any kind until they can have a good command of language and not frustrate them in their attempt to reach it.

For future research in the education field, this project can be taken as a model to go deeper in the field of "teachers' behavior and attitudes in class" that provoke demotivation, shyness, low participation, anxiety, among other negative feelings in language students. It is very mandatory to say that a sane classroom environment must have its levels of responsibility, where every member can be able to recognize and compromise to work on that and make the corresponding part with a clear objective of learning and teaching well and enrich education.

In reason to the arguments presented previously, these are some of the scopes that have been brought as the solution to the research question and specific objectives planned for this action research:

Motivation and affective feedback are essential elements which can produce and generate some better students' performance in class and during their language acquisition process.

Hence, teachers are in many of the situations the responsible for strengthening and increasing motivation of students in the classroom by producing and then reproducing those “Pygmalion effects cycles” into the classroom.

Motivation is the key for success for all the processes that students need to develop during their learning process. A very important fact that is worth mentioning is related to all the difficulties people in general can have working and studying out and separated from motivation.

Affectivity is very important in academic contexts such as the classroom; students affirmed they prefer more a sane environment of classroom than a chaotic one. Hence, the way teachers behave in class will be always personally assessed by students deciding their participation or not in class when they feel emotionally affected by the professor. Students in most of the cases prefer having a friendly and empathetic teacher.

Friendly and empathetic teachers can produce positive feelings on students such as: motivation, self-confidence, interest, security, enthusiasm for subject learned, positivism and good inspiration to do things well. The importance of being friendly to students is goes beyond the subjects studied in class that students have affirmed they prefer deserting from courses because a rude professors and bad behavior in class produce high levels of demotivation, stress, anxiety, fears, dissatisfaction, and no concentration.

This action research affirms that when the professor is friendly and empathetic in class, students feel free to participate more even though their answers and arguments can be incorrect or wrong. More research can be done in this field considering teachers’ behavior and attitudes.

Analyzing the research instruments of this study, it has clearly been certified that students prefer not to participate in classes where professors are rude to students because they do not feel free to be active and participate giving their arguments in class, the main reason is that they feel fear to be ashamed in front of the class. A negative feeling such as fear can in the same way affect students’ self-esteem and their motivation to continue in the course. As we know important research has been done studying students’ behaviour and attitudes but rarely the opposite (the causes).

In cases such as verbal misbehavior (aggression and bullying) students indicated that educational institutions must intervene immediately in order to stop all about these kinds of negative behavior.

Students also indicated the necessity to include a section for evaluating “Teachers Behavior” not only academically but also affectively in the rubric of teacher’s evaluation performance with the objective of evaluating and assessing professors every semester.

The implementation strategies such as music, poetry, stories, etc., are of great help for students to learn any subject even in superior education. All about these types of teaching and learning strategies are not only related to schools and kids because students of superior levels such as universities think they are very necessary for a better understanding and development of subjects studied in class.

The implementation of affective teaching strategies such as listening to music, singing, clapping, deep breathing and other relaxation techniques are helpful before applying a test or doing expositions because they offer students more confidence and can low down the levels stress and anxiety.

Self-assess your pedagogical practice every week; it will help you improve and grow personally and professionally.

As it has been mentioned in the previous paragraphs, this project constitutes a contribution to the field of TEFL in superior education, empowering and inspiring teachers and future teachers to be better professionals able to contribute, experiment and research in the field of EFL. Additionally, there are potential contributions of action research for teachers and future teachers of English as a Foreign Language because this project provides important support, supplementation and recommendations for motivating students and the teaching practice according to the needs and expectations of students, such as anxiety. Anxiety has been proven to be one of the main negative factors affecting students in their language learning process.

Learners’ anxiety during their second language learning might be a cause of dropout in the educational system. Hence, this paper explores and seeks certain strategies to avoid dropout in higher education due to motivational and anxiety issues. Foremost, this paper converges in like manner with other second language research such as positive input or feedback related with neurolinguistics’ programing in the fact that motivation is key to engage learning with the process of second language acquisition as portrays Al-Ghamdi (2017):

Feedback is the most significant tool in the educational system as Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) identified the need to create a system that serves feedback as its essence for observing and

evaluating students. Also, Hattie (2009) found that feedback is among the most important factors that influence students' learning process. He drew this conclusion after integrating over 800 meta-analyses and a huge number of studies (p. 83).

Therefore, the inquiry done in this field is relevant to contribute with the efforts to succeed in the SL process. For this purpose, every action to foster motivation and reducing anxiety might improve the teaching –learning process. Teachers as mediator can apply several methods to engage students and promote meaningful learning in their class setting. First and foremost, working on emotional intelligence and interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects in the persona can be a way of programing agency and inner motivation in learning. Another, strategy which has brought innovation in the actual teaching approach is fostering formative online Forum's feedback, Dialogue and disciplinarily. During the application of proposal lots of social media tools helped the process of positive feedback and encourage students to express, argue and dialogue with the teacher spontaneously promoting strong bonds and relation within the teacher mediator and the learners Hyland & Hyland (2006) stated:

> From these case studies we argue that such online forums have the potential to help students develop disciplinary understandings and try out the literacy practices of their discipline within a supportive environment. Whether this potential is realized is influenced by the role the tutor adopts and the tasks that are set. It is these aspects that we examine in detail through an analysis of forum interaction as formative feedback (p. 185).

Social media can connect students with the mediator or facilitator to enhance formative and cooperative feedback giving a holistic peer support in the classroom.

On the other hand, the teacher as facilitator shall develop a meta observation of the students behave and personality to work on cognition and emotional intelligence on them. Ledesma Ayora (2013) commented the following.

> The teacher must be a constant observer of the personality of the students, with the intention of capturing the states of mind that they present in terms of the activities they carry out, if they do not present motivation, teach them to reframing until the meaning is changed of the assignment and see it in a way more effective (p. 46).

Therefore, working on motivation and the issues that this brings if students feel anxiety, plays an important role in the maintenance of effective teaching strategies. This paper is exploring the application of a strategies proposal to reinforce students' engagement and motivation which is increasingly important in education.

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