

Playing to learn.
Reimagining Classroom Interaction through Game-Based Learning

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Dedicatory

This research is dedicated to the person that was a part of my soul but for life matters our paths were destined to be apart. His farewell was a huge impulse to see far and beyond. To everyone who was there before and after. To Lana and Raquel, that were always by my side while I was working on the project. To the kids with whom I connected from the very first observation and made my vision about teaching young learners change. To teacher Aida for introducing Hannah Arendt's work. To teacher Gudrun for believing in me. To Teacher Viviana Neira for patiently walking with me in this process. To my lovely friends and family. To the music that worked as fuel while writing and to my bike for taking me everywhere all these hard-work years.

Abstract

This qualitative action research study was conducted with firstly 4th and finally 5th grade students at Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento with the purpose of analyzing the influence of game-based learning on students' engagement in English classes. Through that analysis, the concepts of healthy authority and leader-peer interaction were also tested to see if it was possible to improve them in the classroom. The study followed an action research approach and was developed in four stages: diagnosis, theoretical review, intervention design and implementation, and evaluation of results. Data was collected through diagnostic tests, workshops, observation, listening and speaking assessments, writing tasks, and a final perception survey. The intervention included board games, missions, role-playing activities, and collaborative challenges focused on integrating vocabulary, simple structures, and socio-emotional learning within meaningful contexts. This project provided students and teachers with practical game-based strategies to enhance engagement, foster cooperation, and support the gradual development of communicative skills in the English classroom.

Key words: Game-Based Learning, Engagement, Authority, leadership, peer, cooperation.

Resumen

Este estudio de investigación-acción cualitativa se llevó a cabo con alumnos de cuarto y posteriormente quinto grado del Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento con el objetivo de analizar la influencia del aprendizaje basado en juegos en la participación, percepción y compromiso de los alumnos en las clases de inglés. A través de ese análisis, también se evaluaron los conceptos de autoridad saludable e interacción entre líderes y compañeros para ver si era posible mejorarlos en el aula. El estudio siguió un enfoque de investigación-acción y se desarrolló en cuatro etapas: diagnóstico, revisión teórica, diseño e implementación de la intervención y evaluación de los resultados. Los datos se recopilieron mediante pruebas de diagnóstico, talleres, observación, evaluaciones de comprensión auditiva y expresión oral, tareas de escritura y una encuesta final de percepción. La intervención incluyó juegos de mesa, misiones, actividades de juego de roles y retos colaborativos centrados en la integración de vocabulario, estructuras sencillas y aprendizaje socioemocional en contextos significativos. Este proyecto proporcionó a los alumnos y profesores estrategias prácticas basadas en el juego para mejorar la participación, fomentar la cooperación y apoyar el desarrollo gradual de las habilidades comunicativas en el aula de inglés.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje Basado en Juegos, Engagement, Autoridad Pedagógica, Liderazgo, Interacción entre Pares, Cooperación.

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1. Contextualization and Problem Statement

This research was grounded in Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. The information presented in this section was taken from the school's Institutional Educational plan formulated in 2023 and direct classroom observations. This section will first describe the context (neighborhood), and the way it impacts on the school environment. Then, it will focus on the institution itself by analyzing its educational infrastructure, pedagogical approach and the specific curriculum design in the English language learning. The school *Domingo Faustino Sarmiento* is located in Rio Negro, the northwest area of Bogota which is known to be a commercial and strategically well-located economic place in the city.

This neighborhood is known to have a mixed socio-economic population, so many people in this place face some economic challenges since most of the inhabitants are workers of the place. This may translate into limited access to educational resources such as books, technology, and extracurricular academic support; additionally, social dynamics also influence student behavior since the school is surrounded by mechanical workshops and pubs; consequently, the place makes it difficult to find recreational places and exposes students to a harsh environment impacting the social and emotional development of children.

The institution has four branches divided into grades. This project was conducted in branch B, whose grades are first to fifth grades (primary education). It has limited space since it only has a small building with classrooms, including a computer, a soccer and basketball court and a little parking lot for bicycles. In the observation phase of this work, it was observed that the lack of

space for children that share this environment was a generator of some problems of coexistence such as violent actions against their peers.

The school's pedagogical approach has a curriculum that integrates local needs and characteristics of its educational environment. The institution is committed to providing a holistic education that prepares students both academically and personally, with leadership and entrepreneurship as the key foundations of its educational project structured in 2023. For 4th and 5th grade students, the curriculum aims to improve basic competencies in areas such as mathematics, language, natural sciences, and social studies, while also promoting the essential socio-emotional skills for their overall development.

Education at this level is characterized by a practical and collaborative approach, where students are encouraged to participate actively in the learning process through classroom projects that allow them to connect academic content with their immediate surroundings. According to Proyecto Educativo Institucional (PEI), educational activities are supposed to be designed to be meaningful and relevant, with the goal of motivating students to make connections between what they learn and real-life situations. This research is aligned with the school approach due to the emphasis on collaborative work, problem-solving, and implementation of strategies for students to progress while developing team-work abilities, respecting their learning styles and paces. For 4th and 5th grades, this means that teaching focuses not only on transmitting knowledge but also on developing critical and engaged citizens, focusing on values such as respect, solidarity, and responsibility. It was observed that the course on which this investigation is tailored lacked those values and abilities, and it is crucial to do something about it to reinforce them.

The English curriculum at the institution follows the guidelines of the *Basic Learning Rights* (DBA) and the *National Curriculum Standards* set by the Ministry of Education in

Colombia. The study plan is organized by grades from preschool to eleventh grade with a progressive structure that looks forward to having a consistent development of communicative skills in English. In the primary cycle, especially in 4th and 5th grades, it highlights reading, listening and oral abilities and seeks to introduce students to basic vocabulary, simple grammar structures, and everyday communicative situations.

For the population, the English curriculum is divided into thematic units such as greetings, food, family, parts of the house, and places in the city. The idea is to approach these topics through a communicative and functional methodology, encouraging students to use the language in practical and meaningful ways. It includes both linguistic and socio-affective components as the PEI and its evaluation is based on performance criteria such as comprehension, fluency, pronunciation and using English for basic communicative purposes.

However, it has been observed that the goals and approaches set are not always possible to accomplish. During the observation process, it was evidenced that the group of students struggle to have a healthy coexistence. Most of them did not find the classes engaging and this made it complicated for the teacher to develop their class in a normal way. The use of translation-based methods also showed the lack of significative learning objectives; furthermore, these activities did not follow a structure, and they were randomly assigned to cover what the English educational standards proposed. One example of this was a vocabulary activity in which students only had to copy a short dialogue from the board and repeat it aloud. This activity showed the absence of clear objectives, little student interaction, and no connection to meaningful learning, as students completed it mechanically without real engagement ([Annex 1](#)).

1.2. Participants

A characterization test ([Annex 2](#)) was applied to parents and students to gather information on sociodemographic, economic, family, and academic aspects. The participants in this research are a group of 27 fourth-grade students (later fifth grade), among 9 to 11 years old and living in Suba, Barrios Unidos, and Engativá with a socio-economic status ranging between levels 1 and 3.¹

While most of the students live with their parents, one of them lives in the *Laudes Foundation* which provides him with education, housing, and support for his/her reintegration into society. These students come from low-income backgrounds, which affects their access to resources and learning opportunities. Additionally, the group includes one student from Pakistan, who stands out as the only participant with a good level of English proficiency; this diversity adds a unique element to the classroom.

Based on the results of the characterization test, it was seen that 80% of the students were interested in learning English; however, 90% of them did not have someone to study with; hence, it was considered difficult for them to learn the language. Despite showing interest in learning English, their motivation was hindered due to the lack of real encouragement from the dynamics in the classroom. Only half of the students have access to technological tools, which has led to the decision not to incorporate technology-based activities in the classroom.

Regarding their socio-emotional characteristics, most students display a positive attitude toward learning English, although some express resistance to any type of academic activity. The group is not very cooperative, with children tending to work individually, and many of them

1 In Colombia, the term "estrato social" refers to the social stratification system used to classify households and residential areas based on socioeconomic characteristics. This system divides the population into six strata, ranging from 1 (lowest) to 6 (highest), with the purpose of determining the level of public services subsidies or surcharges that households will receive. The classification is mainly based on the physical characteristics of homes and neighborhoods, such as location, size, and infrastructure, rather than individual or family income. (Dane, Análisis de las clases sociales, 2022)

struggling with forming positive relationships with their peers. Finally, the lack of respect and positive authority makes it difficult to perform any activity to achieve basic education rights.

It is also important to recall the importance of the socioeconomical aspects that influence the learning process of a second language in the group. Many children come from families where education seems like an obligation, which means that it is not as important as other elements for them. It can be assumed that the lack of motivation and respect are also the product of this personal aspect, as Jama-Zambrano et al (2016) mention in their investigation, as the structure of the family plays a crucial role in a child's development, with stable families providing better conditions than those lacking one or both parents. Factors such as economic status, parental behavior, and the family's intellectual environment significantly influence a child's physical and psychological growth. Poor living conditions, including inadequate nutrition and overcrowding, negatively affect children's well-being, while professions and educational backgrounds of parents often determine the opportunities available for their development.

Finally, the information provided in this section shows some challenges in student engagement that need to be addressed; consequently, socioeconomic factors, limited educational resources and lack of cooperation significantly impact the population in this study. These observations provide the need for an intervention that enhances student engagement and cooperation. The implementation of game-based learning workshops presents an opportunity to create a more interactive and stimulating environment because it not only aims to improve student's academic performance but also reinforces social values such as respect, cooperation, leadership, and responsibility. With this research, addressing these issues makes it possible to align the educational experience with the institution's mission of developing and its curriculum.

1.3. Diagnosis

To assess the English proficiency level of the students who participated in this research, a diagnostic exam as well as the observation of their development in class were applied. The questions in the diagnostic exam were designed considering the basic standards of education in Colombia and the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR). They were evaluated ([Annex 3](#)) using a rubric that was divided into sections (4 abilities of the language) and graded on a scale from 1 to 5, with criteria established to measure comprehension, accuracy, clarity, and effort. In the reading section, students were evaluated based on their ability to correctly answer comprehension questions and identify unfamiliar vocabulary. The writing section evaluated the ability of students to answer completely, spelling accurately and engaging with the task like in the coloring section. The listening section measured students' ability to understand oral narratives. Lastly, the speaking section assessed pronunciation, fluency, and ability to respond to basic personal questions.

Initially, based on the field diary notes from the observation stage, it was noticed that the students made some efforts to communicate in English; however, several of them, feeling unmotivated, often changed to speaking Spanish. As a result, the entire class decided to use Spanish during lessons; moreover, internal issues related to a hard interaction among peers and the teacher were the causes of the problems like interpersonal conflicts and the lack of collaboration among students, making it difficult to conduct classes smoothly.

As for the reading section, given that the total number of children who took the test was 25, it can be concluded that most students (96%) had basic reading comprehension skills. While some had a better understanding of common terms (such as colors), more complex topics present challenges. Based on the results, the students were positioned at an A1 (beginner) level, as they are just beginning to understand and recognize simple words and phrases. More detailed and

abstract questions, like "What is Ana's brother's name?" Or "What does Ana like to do after school?" proved to be much more difficult since those questions required a higher understanding of grammar concepts and reading comprehension skills, even if the answer was almost textual. This implies that it is possible that those abilities have not been trained enough in class.

The writing section was evaluated through questions that implied personal information and interests. All students showed a solid ability to write short and concrete responses, especially about personal and simple topics. The fact that almost all answered the first questions correctly suggests that they were comfortable with common expressions and simple vocabulary. The instruction "Draw your favorite part of the day" implied a higher cognitive demand, as it combined creativity with the ability to describe or illustrate, which may have caused more difficulties for some students.

The students can be placed at the A1 level, as they can write simple sentences and answer questions related to personal information and basic descriptions. However, when a higher level of abstraction is required (as in the drawing), some students show difficulties; another important fact noticed is that most of the answers were given in Spanish. Questions like "What is your favorite color?" often appeared with the answer in their mother language, suggesting that even if the students understand the question, their lack of vocabulary made them answer incompletely.

The listening section was evaluated through a text that the researcher read as well as the speaking section, since it was necessary for them to answer what they understood from the examiner, the students should mark "true or false" in the sentences according to what they understood from the researcher. The students demonstrated that they have a solid understanding of simple phrases related to everyday activities and actions; however, when the sentences involve

more complex structures, specific vocabulary, or less routine situations (such as dates, birthdays, or specific animals), their performance suggested an A1 level.

They can understand basic words and phrases when spoken slowly and clearly but struggle with more complex or less common structures. Additionally, their lack of patience and concentration when they had to listen to instructions for more than two minutes was also an obstacle. Most of them stated they did not understand the instruction and only when the researcher came closer to explaining it one by one, they felt more confident. But it was not enough to attract their attention; some of them started to speak with their peers instead of doing the task.

In the speaking section, the students had an adequate command of spoken English when it came to simple and common questions related to personal information, preferences, and family. However, there was a noticeable problem with their ability to respond to more complex or abstract questions, such as their future or where they live. Based on these results, most of the students are at an A1 level in speaking; in fact, they can answer simple questions and participate in everyday interactions but struggle when asked to speak about more abstract or specific topics. The first questions were well answered by most of the group like “What is your name? How old are you? What is your favorite color? What is your favorite animal? What is your favorite food?”. On the other hand, more complex questions like “Do you have any brothers or sisters? What is the name of your school? What do you want to be when you grow up?” did not have the same performance.

The diagnostic exam and classroom observations provided important insights about students’ English proficiency and classroom behavior showing the areas that need improvement. In that way, students should access a more interactive methodology while evaluating how much it

is possible to change the concept of authority into a positive one, trying to transform the classroom into a cooperative space.

Rationale

This section explains the educational, institutional, and student-centered reasons why this research is formulated, and why it is relevant. In the first place, it presents the educational policies in Colombia and how they shape the standards and the importance of bilingualism and interactive methodologies in primary education. Then, it proposes the benefits of game-based learning in a context like the one presented in Domingo Faustino Sarmiento school. Finally, it explores the specific advantages of this didactic approach for students emphasizing how it can create the basis of cooperation, engagement, language acquisition, and socioemotional skills.

At a national level, the *Colombian National Bilingualism Program* (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2005) set up clear goals that define what is expected from English proficiency across all educational stages. It aimed to improve communicative competences to prepare students for the challenges they may face in a globalized society. Despite this, translation-based methodologies used in the population of this study have shown that they are ineffective in promoting meaningful language learning and use. With this research it would be possible to present another proposal that shows that young learners benefit more from interactive, student-centered approaches rather than from passive, worksheet-based learning.

Additionally, national education policies like the *Basic Learning Rights* (DBA) and the *Common European Framework of Reference Languages* (CEFR) highlight the importance of developing productive language skills (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2006). However, the diagnostic exam that was applied to the students showed significant gaps with many students struggling to express themselves in English. This separation of reality from the policies

demonstrates the need to explore alternative methodologies such as game-based learning, which is especially significant since the students find more interest and motivation in every activity that implies playing and show disgust to those that are presented as purely academic.

In the institution, the use of game-based learning to promote cooperation and engagement in the English learning process aligns with the school's institutional development plan (PEI). As mentioned in the contextualization section of this work, the PEI prioritizes holistic education, with the objective of balancing academic knowledge with socioemotional growth. In this sense, implementing game-based learning in this group would directly support the school's mission by offering a structured but also engaging approach that would foster both linguistic and interpersonal skills.

At student level, this research recognizes that children aged 8 to 12 need active learning environments to stay motivated. Game-based learning provides opportunities to assume separate roles, collaborate with peers, and engage in decision-making while improving the learning process of a foreign language. Helping the children to learn by doing what they like the most, that is playing, could significantly address the identified challenges in this work.

In synthesis, this research is essential because it proposes a solution to the problems observed in the focus group. It aligns with Colombia's bilingualism policies, enhances the school pedagogical model and benefits students by introducing an engaging and structured approach to learning English. By using game-based learning, this project aims to make a connection between educational policies and the classroom reality, making sure that students not only build their basis in English learning but also develop essential socioemotional skills.

1.5. Delimitation and Formulation of the Problem

The characterization of the 5th-grade group revealed common difficulties in English language use as well as challenges related to engagement and cooperation. Although the institutional curriculum is aligned with national standards such as the DBA and the CEFR, English is mostly taught through translation-based approaches, limiting meaningful interaction and communicative development. The observation and diagnosis showed the need for a pedagogical alternative capable of promoting productive skills, motivation, tolerance, and respect. In this way, this study proposes the implementation of *game-based learning* as a strategy to create the basis of a different learning style and respond to the socio-emotional needs of the students at Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Based on that, the research question and objectives were defined as follows:

1.5.1. Research Question

How does the use of game-based learning contribute to the improvement of the engagement with English in 5th grade students at Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento?

1.5.2. Objectives

General Objective

To analyze the influence of game-based Learning in improving student's engagement for learning English at Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento.

Specific Objectives

To characterize the English communicative abilities of 5th grade students at Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento.

To implement a series of workshops that aim to improve the level of engagement through games such as board games, missions, and role-playing.

To evaluate the impact of game-based learning on students' emotional, behavioral and cognitive engagement in their English classes.

2. Conceptual Background

In this chapter, some national and international studies were analyzed to establish state of art, with the objective of recognizing and understanding advancements in the field of EFL teaching, particularly regarding the implementation of game-based learning. This review focuses on how games can foster not only language acquisition but also the development of values such as respect, tolerance, coexistence, and positive authority within the classroom. Additionally, books, articles, and projects were examined to build the conceptual framework, with a focus on key concepts such as the role of games in EFL classrooms, game-based learning methodologies, some approaches to engagement and their impact on promoting interpersonal values and collaborative learning.

2.1. State of the Art

This section is dedicated to reviewing some studies that have been made in the past five years and that have a similar line to this study to establish a foundation for understanding the potential impact of implementing game-based learning strategies to address both academic and social-emotional challenges in the classroom. This study considered six previous studies, two of

which were international, two were national, and two locals carried out at the Universidad Pedagogica Nacional made between 2020 and 2024.

Almusharraf (2021) made a study called *Incorporation of a game-based approach into the EFL online classrooms: students' perceptions*. It was conducted at Prince Sultan University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The research involved a total of 276 undergraduate learners, with 233 students (154 female and 79 male) participating in the survey from two English language classrooms. Even if the use of technology is not relevant in this work due to the conditions of the observed population, Almusharraf's findings are significant. By including game-based student response system (GSRS) *Kahoot!*, it was possible to analyze students' perceptions of its effectiveness in raising engagement and motivation.

The study found that these types of strategies not only enhanced students' interest in language acquisition but also improved their confidence in participating actively. This goes together with the proposal and aim of this research since it assesses the usability and real impact of interactive learning environments to offer students a more engaging way of participating in class while developing essential social and communication skills.

Secondly, the study titled *Role of Game-Based Teaching in Leadership Skills Development* (2021) by Tariq and Abonamah was conducted at the College of Technological Innovation (CTI) at Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates. This study took place in a population of undergraduate students enrolled in the leadership and teamwork course of that university and it aimed to assess the impact of game-based teaching methods on the development of leadership skills of their students. Leadership competencies such as critical thinking, motivation, teamwork, and decision-making were the pillars of this work. It was carried out by applying a mixed

approach in which multiple game-based teaching methods were used to evaluate their effectiveness in leadership training.

Through a series of interactive game-based activities, the researchers recognized that students can increase their problem-solving abilities as well as their ability to work and collaborate in teams effectively. Even if Tariq and Abonamah's research differs in the population of this study, it is relevant to reinforce the concept of game scenarios as a structured environment where students can naturally develop leadership and cooperative behaviors. Additionally, it is also possible to say that the schools cannot wait until undergraduate populations enhance these values as is being assessed in this work.

Another relevant study for this research is titled *The Use of Games to Promote Interaction Among Eleventh-Grade Students at a Public Institution* (2022) and was led by Yuranis María Escamilla Caicedo at the Universidad de Antioquia. Conducted with 35 eleventh-grade students at a public school in Medellin, the project used active observation, teacher interviews, students' questionnaires, guided conversations, video recordings, and students' writings as data collection tools. In the Intervention, a diverse variety of interactive games was designed and included to promote communication, participation, and teamwork. The findings showed that, like the two previous interventions, integrating games in English lessons significantly increased student motivation, engagement and confidence when interacting in the target language. The study also highlighted how students become more willing to participate in classes, reducing their anxiety and fostering collaborative dynamics. This study was chosen to be part of the state of art because it demonstrates the potential of game-based dynamics in older courses like eleventh grade. This type of intervention not only works with kids but also with pre-adults. Transforming class

dynamics into public schools is also another important goal that was achieved, even if there are issues like the lack of motivation and socioeconomical conditions.

Additionally, the study called *Using Game-Based Conversational Activities to Enhance Oral Interaction in a Primary School in Montería* (2023) was conducted by Andrés Camilo Archila Ruidíaz at the Universidad de Córdoba. Archila wanted to focus on engagement and its role in communication, assessing how students' confidence and participation changed when the teacher added interactive games to the lessons. By using a qualitative action research approach, Archila used observations, interviews, and student writings to gather information. The intervention was held by conversational activities that were designed by the investigator to encourage verbal participation and reduce students' anxiety towards participation. The study demonstrated a slight improvement in the way they interacted with their peers and the teacher, although there were some limitations.

One of the main challenges was time constraints, because it was implemented over a relatively brief period, limiting the possibility of measuring more improvements. Classroom management issues and varying levels of prior knowledge among students also affected the uniformity of results. As the investigator mentioned, some students continued to be hesitant about their participation, showing that while game-based activities foster engagement, additional strategies may be required to reach deeper interaction levels.

At Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, the research study named *Comprensión de las relaciones de autoridad y poder en la práctica docente con los estudiantes de la sección de preescolar* (2022) was conducted by Carreño. Its findings provide important insights into how authority is sometimes misinterpreted as power or persuasion affecting the way students interact

with the role of the leader and the peer. Using non-participant observation with audiovisual support and interviews, Carreño was able to capture interactions between teachers and students and to analyze how different expressions of authority influenced the classroom and the relationship between the actors that coexisted inside it. It considered human development and socio-emotional capabilities and interpersonal relationships and how they impact students' growth in areas such as affiliation, emotions, and play in the short, medium, and long term. If students can understand that leadership is not connected to negative ideas, collaboration, participation, and motivation can be positively reinforced.

As the last research considered in this state of art, Ramírez (2024) conducted a qualitative action research study titled *Intervention to Strengthen Fourth-Grade Students' Oral Production in English Through Emotional Pedagogy* at CEDID Guillermo Cano Isaza that involved thirty fourth-grade students. The researcher used tools like questionnaires, field notes, and workshops to address students' emotional awareness and regulation to recognize the role of emotions in learning. This study was relevant because it was used as an example of the structure that needed to be followed in the composition of this document. Through Ramírez (2024), each section of this research was built according to the parameters that the university asked for.

Previous studies highlighted the importance and relevance of game-based learning as a strategy to foster engagement, leadership, and cooperation in educational settings. From international to local research, the demonstration that implementing interactive activities in the classroom, specifically in primary education, is fundamental since it assures it is possible to enhance student engagement, improve participation and create collaborative learning environments. Some of the studies faced limitations and that is why, in this study, they will be taken into consideration to implement them in a more careful way. By considering these research

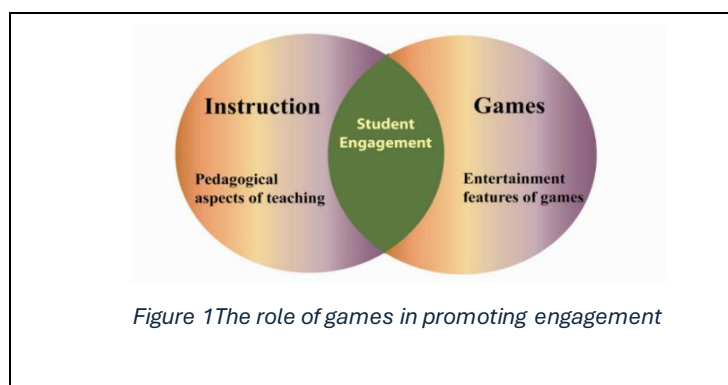
studies, this research is based on existing literature while addressing specific gaps related to engagement and aims to refine methodologies, trying to ensure a more effective and structured approach.

2.2. Conceptual Framework

The theoretical bases that have functioned as pillars of this project are stated in this section. It defines and characterizes key concepts based on the contributions of some important authors regarding games to improve English learning, the concept of engagement and its categories, and cooperation as a component of leadership.

Games

Games play a key role in this research since they are believed to have the capacity to enhance and improve the lack of engagement that the students demonstrated. Amr. (2012) better states this point by using the following graphic:



This graphic suggests that games are an effective educational tool because they can combine academic elements with entertainment, making children feel motivated during learning. Amr (2012) also mentions that defining games is almost an impossible quest since there is not one that can encapsulate every characteristic attributed to the word *game*; on the other hand, she refers to David Parlett to define that -game- is used for so many different activities that it is not

worth insisting on any proposed definition. In this research, it will be defined as a powerful instrument in educational settings, following Amr's (2012) path.

Moreover, Gee (2003) argues that games have inherent learning principles, such as situated meaning, active engagement, and problem-solving, which is relevant for this research since those learning principles can serve as rules for the students to follow while promoting healthy classroom relationships. The situated meaning works as the context and motivation to create the game and active engagement together with the problem-solving dimension to ensure meaningful interaction, authentic communication, and contextualized vocabulary acquisition.

From a cognitive perspective, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) supports the idea that games promote scaffolded learning. This means that students can reach higher levels of language competence through peer interaction and guided participation. The collaborative nature of playing in school as an educational tool allows this process to happen, making emphasis on the role of social learning and cooperative problem-solving while learning English in this specific case.

Additionally, Prensky (2001) recalls the necessity of differentiating between *serious games* and *education*, so it is necessary to underline the difference it has from simple gamification, as it fully integrates instructional content within the typical mechanics of a game rather than just adding rewards to traditional tasks. In the context of this research, games were used as a structured didactic tool that helped students to feel more engaged and motivated in English lessons. Through role-playing, missions, points collection, and diverse interactive activities, they will also develop social skills such as leadership, teamwork, and respect.

Game-Based Learning

According to Kapp (2012), game-based learning (GBL) is a teaching approach that can involve using the structure and motivational characteristics of games to create learning environments where students participate in a more interactive way. He considers that playing is a way in which students can assimilate concepts more easily, taking the learning process as something that is neither tedious nor purposeless. For him, this methodology creates realistic simulations where students learn inside safe contexts; they must follow the rules, interact with the system, and receive continuous feedback.

In fact, gamification takes elements from games like points, leaderboards, and badges into non-game contexts like a normal class to motivate learners to participate. In this research, the workshops were not designed to resemble to a game but to really be one that contains English learning as the core of the activity.

In this sense, Kapp (2012) found some key elements of GBL that include challenges, fantasy, and motivational elements like levels, rankings, and scores. Those elements provide satisfaction through goal achievement which, combined with an environment that makes them responsible and obliges them to use leadership skills, is precisely useful to achieve the investigation objectives.

The method also allows students to progress through increasingly complex tasks, adapting to individual learning paces and needs but prioritizing cooperation. When a group is made of differences and even like that, they can solve the game, children develop interpersonal values that make them aware of themselves and their belonging to a group. These dynamics ensure continuous engagement, motivating students both intrinsically (finding personal satisfaction in learning) and extrinsically (through rewards and recognition).

Authority

First, it is crucial to specify what authority means. For Hanna Arendt (1961), authority is a form of power that does not rely on coercion or persuasion but on the recognition and acceptance of its legitimacy. Arendt argues as well that the authority of a teacher is based not on a hierarchical position but on the responsibility, they assume to share the world they are introducing to others. That is why this responsibility cannot be confused with authoritarianism. While the one who controls imposes, the teacher is recognized and accepted because it is given with the knowledge, experience, and care for the group. This definition is relevant for this research since the games used want to proof that the authority figure in each game (the leader) is not the one who imposes and orders and is not the one who oppresses and inhibits, but it is the one who promotes healthy coexistence and leads the group due to his or her knowledge and wisdom.

Kojève (2014) categorizes authority into diverse types, including the authority of the master, the judge, the father, and the leader, each with varying degrees of legitimacy and influence. In a classroom, authority should ideally be like the one of the leaders, where the teacher and the students are recognized as intellectual and moral guides rather than enforcers of rules. The implementation of structured, role-based games aligns with Kojève's view that authority should be exercised in a way that it promotes voluntary compliance rather than fear-based submission.

To build the right conception of authority and obedience in the dynamics of games, Freud's structural model is analyzed as well. Freud (1923) meant to describe the mind's functioning through three components: the Id, ego, and superego. The *Id* is the primal and instinctual component that drives students toward immediate gratification as they play with their partners, seeking to fulfill basic desires without consideration for rules or social norms. In games, this impulse is sought to be channeled by designing activities that focus that spontaneous energy into structured tasks. For instance, engaging game mechanics can provide instant rewards that satisfy the id's urge for pleasure, yet these activities are controlled by clearly defined rules and objectives that guide students' way of behaving.

The ego, operating on the reality principle, plays a critical mediating role by balancing the impulsive demands of the id with the moral rules of the game. In the games, the ego is going to be reflected in peers' ability to follow game rules and navigate challenges, ensuring that immediate desires do not disrupt the learning process. The leader will act as the mediator that, through clear rules given, is promoting an organized procedure, making peers feel comfortable following the rules.

Meanwhile, the superego, which internalizes societal and parental standards, is cultivated through gamified experiences that emphasize values such as respect, tolerance, and responsibility. These experiences encourage students to feel pride in their achievements when they follow the rules, and to experience constructive guilt when they deviate, thus leading them to internalize a sense of positive authority. Through these principles, games not only boost engagement but also help students reconcile their natural impulses with the moral expectations of a collaborative learning environment.

The role of the leader

A leader is an individual who guides, influences, and motivates a group towards achieving a common goal (Northouse, 2018). In this work, the role of the leader is crucial since it provides the opportunity of assigning responsibility to the children who struggle the most with respect to others and healthy relationships in the classroom. Leadership in education involves taking responsibility, making decisions, and promoting collaboration among peers. Within the games, students who are assigned this role will learn to mediate conflicts, communicate effectively and support their teammates, reinforcing both language and socio-emotional learning.

The role of the peer

A peer is someone of equal status within a social or educational environment, often referring to classmates or group members who share common learning experiences (Topping, 2005). For this project, the role of peers serves as the important key as they contribute to achieving the proposed goal by paying attention to the leader and completing the task as it was assigned.

The children who are peers will need to develop cooperative activities which many of the classroom lack. Peers play a crucial role in collaborative learning, social interaction, and knowledge construction. In game-based scenarios, peer interactions promote language development, cooperative problem-solving, and emotional engagement, allowing students to learn from one another through dialogue, feedback, and shared responsibilities (Piaget, 1962).

Role-plays

Role-playing games also allow us to define the role of *leader*, *peers*, and the importance of having values in those interactions; consequently, they have been widely recognized as a powerful educational tool that fosters cognitive, social, and emotional development. According to Grande de Prado and Abella García (2010), role-playing games (RPGs) can create immersive

experiences where students must assume different identities, engage in problem-solving, and develop values through interaction. This methodology allows students to have a wide perspective, to enhance their critical thinking and social skills.

It has multiple advantages like the alignment of active learning principles. Rather than passively absorbing content, students can be active participants building knowledge through real-life scenarios. Additionally, research has shown that role-playing activities can strengthen motivation and engagement by allowing students to take ownership of their learning process (Grande de Prado & Abella García, 2010).

It is also possible to relate role-playing with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory because it highlights the role of social interaction in cognitive development. Children can develop linguistic competences through collaboration and guided participation within their *zone of proximal development*; it means that they can perform tasks with peer or teacher assistance that they would be able to finish alone.

Missions

Missions are understood as structured and purposeful activities or tasks that guide learners through progressive challenges allowing them to develop engagement, motivation and skill development (Willis, 1996). In a game-based learning environment like the one in this research, missions serve as contextualized learning experiences where kids must complete some specific objectives that may include solutions of problems, collaboration, and critical thinking.

According to Prensky (2001), missions have the capacity to make students feel more motivated by giving them a sense of purpose and clear objectives. Missions have the potential to transform learning into a structured journey that helps students feel engaged with the content

rather than passively receiving information. It is possible to align missions with some task-based learning principles since students use the target language to accomplish tasks that require a step-by-step process (Willis, 1996).

Salen and Zimmerman (2004) emphasize that missions in game-based learning environments can create a meaningful play experience by providing structured yet flexible goals. It is crucial to mention that a well-designed mission should include clear rules, engage in challenges and reward outcomes which align with cognitive engagement theories that will be conceptualized in further paragraphs.

Board games

They are recognized to be a valuable educational tool able to promote engagement, critical thinking and social interaction. Their structured but also playful nature can enhance cognitive development, motivation and collaboration, making them a powerful tool and alternative to traditional learning methods (Perrotta et al., 2013). When they are incorporated into the classroom, they can provide students with a hands-on, immersive experience that fosters deeper learning and active participation.

Marchis & Juhász (2020), argue that board games play a crucial role in primary education (the grade in which this research takes place), as they allow students to develop problem-solving skills, practice decision-making and reinforce content knowledge in a meaningful way. Their study highlights the perception teachers have of board games as effective tools to maintain students' interest and increasing their motivation, especially in subjects that require repetition and reinforcement such as English learning. Through structured gameplay, competition, and cooperative tasks, these useful elements have the ability to make students interact with the material in a more dynamic way than if they were just following translation-based strategies. In

this sense, Piaget (1962) states that playing at an early age is fundamental to promoting intellectual development and growth. Through board games, children can construct knowledge while interacting with their peers and their environment, it provides students opportunities for combining English learning with logical reasoning, abstract thinking and social negotiation which may help solving the problems that were found in the group.

In this research, board games are a pedagogical tool that reinforces English language learning while improving the focus interpersonal skills in this work. By using turn-taking, problem-solving, and decision-making mechanics, they create a collaborative and interactive environment where the roles of leaders and team workers can also be boosted and evaluated.

Engagement

Mentioned in the rationale, the observation process showed that one of the fundamental issues demonstrated by the students was the relationship between their classes and the motivation, reasons, and purpose to succeed in them. By combining games as a didactic strategy, this work looks forward to improving the conception of students about their classes, showing them that more than an obligation, they can be fun and interactive, thus enhancing engagement.

According to Fredericks et al. (2004), it is pertinent to divide engagement into 3 dimensions, behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. For these authors, behavioral engagement can be as well defined as 3 definitions, but in this research, it was simplified as to the students' participation in academic tasks and classroom activities. Emotional engagement is defined by the authors as "affective reactions in the classroom, including interest, boredom, happiness, sadness, and anxiety" and the way they interfere in their learning experience. Cognitive engagement in the last place is multiply defined as well, but it was taken as the demonstration of deep processing, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Behavioral engagement

As introduced previously, behavioral engagement refers to the way students participate actively in diverse learning tasks, including how they are involved in academic, social and extracurricular activities (Fredricks et al., 2004). Within this category, it was decided to merge *Authentic Engagement* and *Strategic Compliance*, components proposed by (Schlechty, 2001). Since both complement and strengthen the explanation of behavioral engagement and its pertinence in this work.

Within this category, (Schlechty, 2001) states that *authentic engagement* happens when students are intrinsically motivated and fully invested in the learning process because they find activities meaningful and relevant. Additionally, Deci and Ryan's (1985) mention *Self-Determination Theory* that intrinsic motivation is also absolutely related to *authentic engagement* since it plays a crucial role in fostering deep and sustained engagement. Students are more likely to participate when they perceive autonomy, competence, and an attractive challenge in their learning experiences.

In the context of this research, games are an effective alternative to achieving that participation because they naturally integrate interactive, goal-oriented and student-centered experiences (Gee, 2003). If students are allowed to assume roles, make choices, and solve meaningful challenges, they can reach the *authentic engagement* stadium. Games create an environment where children can feel motivated not necessarily by external rewards but by the learning process itself.

Now, talking about *strategic compliance* and its value in *behavioral engagement*, it is proper to say that it happens when students participate in learning scenarios not because of intrinsic motivation but rather to accomplish external expectations or receive rewards such as grades, points or privileges (Schlechty, 2001). While they follow instructions and complete assignments, their engagement remains on a superficial level which is a sign of lack of deep cognitive involvement or emotional investment (Fredricks et al., 2004).

In a gamified environment, the improvement of motivation through the acquisition of points or rewards can work as a bridge that can make students feel interested and connected to the activity in a first basis, with time, this superficial engagement can be replaced with some more significant recompenses and finally with situations that promote authentic engagement where their involvement is driven by curiosity, interest and meaningful interaction with the learning content.

Emotional Engagement

It refers to the affective connection students develop towards their learning experiences and how they influence their enthusiasm, interest, and sense of belonging in the classroom (Fredricks et al., 2004). When children are emotionally connected to the things they are learning, they are more likely to keep trying in academic activities, be curious, and autonomous of their progress. However, when this type of engagement is lacking, students may act without motivation for *ritual compliance* or disconnect entirely from the learning process of *retreatism* (Schlechty, 2001). These two levels of engagement can reflect the acknew issues in this project, as 96% of students in the observed classroom participated at a very superficial level, while the others clearly showed signs of disengagement, making it difficult to make worthy learning spaces.

One of the lowest levels of emotional engagement is *ritual compliance*, as Schlechty (2001) mentions when students complete tasks mechanically and do not show enthusiasm. They do not actively resist the idea of learning, nor disrupt the classroom, but they do not seek to understand and participate in academic activities. This behavior is often linked to external pressures such as what teachers or parents expect from them rather than wanting to do it by themselves. *Ritual compliance* is problematic because kids may appear engaged through their participation, but really, they do not have a meaningful emotional connection; this makes the learning contents something they may not retain and will not apply in future scenarios.

If students continue to experience learning as an uninspiring activity, *ritual compliance* can become *retreatism*, a state where students are physically present but mentally disengaged (Schlechty, 2001). *Retreating* students no longer respond to classroom tasks; they show signs of boredom; they act passively, and they sometimes frustrate. This level of disengagement is particularly concerning because it not only talks about lack of motivation but also a sense of not belonging in the learning environment (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

In the context of this research, addressing *ritual compliance* and *retreatism* is crucial to improve classroom dynamics and student motivation in English environments. Emotional engagement can be boosted by promoting positive emotions such as interest, sense of belonging, and appreciation for the effort done. *Game-based learning* offers a potential solution as it has proved to increase emotional engagement by making learning processes more interactive, immersive, and enjoyable (Gee, 2003). Incorporating interesting game mechanics such as role-playing, collaborative missions and problem-solving activities, this research aims to transform passive compliance into active emotional investment, finally improving both motivation and classroom coexistence.

Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement talks about the depth of students' investment in learning, which includes their willingness to try, think critically, and apply knowledge in a meaningful way (Fredricks et al., 2004). Different from behavioral and emotional engagement that focus on participation and how they feel about learning, it emphasizes how deeply students interact with the material. The ones who are cognitively engaged seek to understand more than memorize concepts, make connections between ideas, and keep on trying to solve challenging activities because they recognize the value of learning. This type of engagement is fundamental to promoting long-term academic success and intellectual growth, as it encourages self-regulated learning and problem-solving skills (Fredricks et al., 2004).

However, having cognitive engagement is not something that happens automatically; it requires correct instructional strategies and classroom conditions to be developed. When students consider what they are learning is not relevant or important, they may disengage and show resistance to participation (Schlechty, 2001). This is where *rebellion* emerges in the way some students reject learning altogether and refuse to engage with lessons or even disrupt the classroom environment. Unlike *ritual compliance* and *retreatism*, where disengagement is passive, rebellion is an active rejection of the learning process that may come from frustration, boredom or lack of autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Cognitive engagement is a fundamental concept for this research due to the results that were obtained in the observation stage. Students did activities and tasks applying a minimum effort in processing English concepts beyond basic memorization. There was a passive attitude towards the class, and it indicated that they were disconnected from the instruction, making it difficult to have meaningful cognitive involvement. As was proposed in the previous categories,

the aid of game-based learning strategies can help by promoting diverse problem-solving scenarios where students feel encouraged to reflect on their performance in each activity. In that way, they will be conscious about their strengths, weaknesses, successes and mistakes and they will seek to improve to have a better development in the next game which for Gee (2003) requires higher order thinking and persistence.

In this research engagement played a significant role in the students' learning process through this concept, it was possible to find a connection between students' actions and the way they participated, connected emotionally, and invested cognitively in their process. Using behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement it will be possible to analyze their influence in classroom dynamics and learning outcomes in the results analysis stage. Now, understanding these dimensions is essential due to the lack of motivation, limited participation and resistance observed in the classroom. The integration of this concept with games sets the hypothesis that it is possible to enhance *behavioral engagement* by shifting students from *strategic compliance* to *authentic engagement* where learning is led by curiosity and meaningful interactions rather than external rewards. Similarly, emotional engagement can be reinforced by trying to create a positive and comfortable class environment where kids can feel a sense of belonging, thus *intrinsic motivation* preventing *retreatism*. Lastly, cognitive engagement will be tried to be promoted by designing activities that require critical thinking, problem-solving and personal reflection, reducing passive participation, and minimizing *rebellion* in the classroom.

These theoretical foundations serve as the analytical lens through which the pedagogical intervention was designed, observed, and interpreted. Recognizing how engagement, authority, and cooperation interact in real classroom dynamics made it possible to define a methodological approach coherent with the complexity of this experience. The following chapter describes the

research design, the qualitative action research framework, and the data collection tools that allowed these principles to be examined in practice.

3. Methodology

As aforementioned, this chapter outlines the methodological framework of this research, detailing the process for gathering, organizing, and analyzing data to address the research question. It begins by defining the research type as action research, followed by an explanation of the qualitative approach used in the study. Additionally, this section provides an overview of the data collection tools and discusses the ethical guidelines observed throughout the research.

3.1. Research Approach

This work is based on a qualitative research approach that is known for emphasizing an in-depth, systematic, and critical process of collecting and analyzing data (Bisquerra Alzina, R. et al., 2009). This approach allows to make a detailed examination of the collected data, focusing on what was gathered on the observation and application process to have a better understanding of the research question. By prioritizing a subjective interpretation, this method captures so many classroom dynamics and student motivation in English learning, offering a rich perspective on the experiences and attitudes of participants. Through qualitative analysis, the study goes into the complexities of the educational context, resulting in a deep understanding of the research problem.

3.2. Type of Research

This research was based on an action research type Burns (2022) said, it involves planned intervention, implementing specific strategies, processes, or activities within the research context to address issues or questions of interest. Through this type of research, it is possible to make a

critical contribution to the current research context and environment for Burns (2022). There are some key steps that facilitate and conduct this research: First, the problem was defined by critically observing the population to gather strengths and weaknesses which provided the strategies that were utilized in this work. Secondly, evidence of the issues was gathered through a characterization test and a diagnostic examination explained in this document. Then, by analyzing the collected data, the investigator could make an intervention that was then tested in the systematization phase of this research, all looking forward to seeing if the identified problems could be solved or minimized.

In this way, action research worked as an adaptative and responsive methodology that helped to not only diagnose the problem but also implement and refine strategies while working in the research. The application of GBL in an action research framework was effective since it enabled to participate in scenarios that promoted leadership and cooperation. Through it, the researcher was able to design games and situations that could directly impact the context in a personalized way.

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

To analyze the influence of game-based learning on the research question regarding cooperation and leadership in English learning processes among 4th-grade students at Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, multiple data collection instruments were selected. According to Creswell (2014), data collection instruments in qualitative and action research are the tools the researcher uses to gather systematic information about the phenomenon, allowing a structured analysis of the participants' experiences. Three primary tools like the field diary, the characterization test, and the diagnostic test were used to ensure a comprehensive perspective of the first insights.

Field diary

In this study, it was employed with the purpose of collecting information regarding the context surrounding the observed individuals, as well as their development and performance within it. According to Bisquerra Alzina, R. et al (2009), the field journal is defined as a qualitative research technique used to systematically record the observations, experiences, reflections, and perceptions of the researcher during the data collection process. The field journal used in this research has a descriptive nature, as it was designed, as previously mentioned, with the goal of describing the physical, social, academic, and emotional environment of the students. At the same time, it holds a reflexive character, as the documented information prompted the researcher to engage in an analytical process regarding the data. (See the structure of field diary in [Annex 25](#))

Characterization survey

On the other hand, this research employed a characterization test that, according to Bisquerra et al (2009), is defined as a research technique used to assess or describe certain attributes or characteristics of a group, individual, or phenomenon. Its purpose was to gain a deeper understanding of the social and academic context, along with the emotional and technical relationship that the individuals have with learning English to gather valuable information that could help orienting the objective of this research.

Regarding the variables considered, the test was designed to explore the students' familiarity with the English language and their interest in it. The format of this test was written

with the intention that parents could assist the students during their completion; the researcher designed the test specifically for the target population. Finally, the test was carried out individually by students, with the support of their parents, and it was estimated to take around one hour to complete.

This characterization test was made with the purpose of gathering information about their background, learning preferences, and challenges in acquiring English. It began by asking about personal data that was confidentially treated including place of birth, age, city, neighborhood, and living arrangements; its next assessed access mobility, identifying how students commute to school. The test also explored learning (English) attitudes and preferences, such as whether they prefer learning alone or with others. (See [Annex 2](#))

Diagnostic test

The diagnostic test, according to Bisquerra Alzina, R. et al., 2009, is defined as a research tool used to assess the level of knowledge, skills, or competencies that participants possess in a specific area before implementing an intervention, program, or treatment. Its goal is to identify strengths and weaknesses, by providing a "diagnosis" of the current situation of the group or individual and guiding the next phases of the research.

In this study, the diagnostic test aimed to assess the knowledge and English proficiency of fourth-grade students at Colegio Domingo Faustino, based on the *Basic Learning Rights* for their grade level. They first propose the understanding of the main idea and supporting details in a short, simple informative text; second, they suggest students should be able to ask and answer questions about what, who, when and where in a conversation related to their personal information and context.

Regarding the format, the researcher created a questionnaire that combined multiple-choice and open-ended questions to evaluate the four English skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). It followed a skill-based assessment approach that had also a criterion-referenced diagnostic test since it was designed to determine the student's initial level of English and identify their strengths and weaknesses. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) state, it constructed test items that focused on each of a range of specific difficulties that students might be experiencing, to identify the exact problems that they are having from a range of potential problems.

The test was composed of a reading section made of multiple-choice questions to assess comprehension skills. A Short answer and written response to evaluate basic writing abilities, a listening comprehension section with true and false responses to measure general understanding and an oral interview with open-ended questions to evaluate interaction, comprehension and fluency. It was administered in the classroom setting to the group under study with a duration of 2 hours, and it was designed to be conducted without the use of technological tools.

The questions were made by the researcher following the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) knowing that at an A1 level students should be able to understand familiar names, words, and quite simple sentences, especially when supported by images. As well as writing simple isolated words and basic personal information, recognizing familiar words and basic phrases when spoken slowly and clearly and responding to simple questions about personal details using short, memorized phrases and simple sentences. (See [Annex 3](#))

Rubrics

In this research, the rubrics had a vital role in the evaluation of diverse stages like the diagnosis and the accuracy of the workshops that were utilized to enhance student's cooperation and engagement. Cano (2015) defines rubrics as an evaluative record that includes certain criteria or dimensions to be assessed, following levels or gradations of quality and classifying performance standards. Through rubrics, it was possible to measure the effectiveness of multiple evaluations and students' performance in activities in general. Rubrics not only assessed student's general English production paired with cooperation and engagement, but they were also aligned to the requirements for fifth graders recorded in the *Estándares Básicos De Competencias En Lenguas Extranjeras*. (See an example in [Annex 6](#))

Workshops

The workshop model for this research was implemented as a primary methodological tool for data collection during the pedagogical intervention stage of this study. The workshop model followed the principles of qualitative research and experiential learning processes proposed by authors such as Bisquerra Alzina, R. et al (2009). The workshops were designed not only to be pedagogical strategies but also to be structured tools for observing, analyzing, and measuring students' performance in context.

Each workshop contemplated content(s) which mentioned the *main topics to work on*, *competencies to be developed*, objectives of each session, *performance criteria*, *performance indicators*, *methodology and activities*, *Resources* and *evaluation criteria*. They were carefully planned to align with the research objectives and proposals and permitted a flexible yet focused approach to evaluate and explore students' development in emotional, social and linguistic competences within the EFL classroom. (See the structure in [Annex 26](#))

Contest board

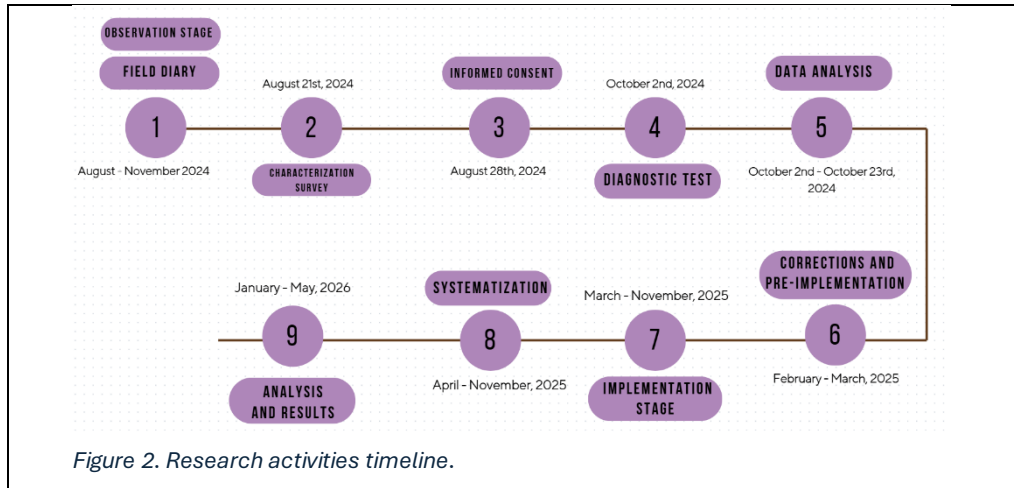
Another tool used during the implementation process was a visual contest board designed in the shape of a river to show students that progress could be evidenced like flowing water ([Annex 24](#)). It served as a motivational and observational device; consequently, for the group, the board worked as a dynamic representation of their progress throughout the workshops, visually tracking each team's performance and engagement. Inspired by the learning principles and the way classes could be managed in a gamified environment as Kapp (2012) proposed, this contest board allowed students to move forward along the river path by earning points through active participation, collaboration, task completion, respectful participation and willingness to improve their attitudes in each workshop. The visual tracking system encouraged a healthy sense of competition and promoted group accountability while providing the researcher with qualitative data related to students' behavioral and emotional engagement, by observing the way students responded to the challenge, it contributed to identifying affective and cognitive factors that influenced their performance.

Ethical issues

For this investigation to be held, and properly regulated, the children's privacy looked after by making their personal information and participation in the research anonymous. Parents and teachers were informed and asked for permission to develop the current study ([annex 4](#))

Schedule

This project began in August 2024 when students were in fourth grade and continued in 2025 as they progressed to fifth grade. The research was structured into various stages that included a systematic approach to data collection, intervention and analysis.



Conceptual matrix

Category	Subcategory		Performance indicators
Games	Leader	Authority	To demonstrate confidence in guiding peers, ensuring that rules are followed while maintaining a respectful and fair leadership style.
		Cooperation	To encourage teamwork by facilitating discussions, resolving conflicts, and making sure all members contribute to achieving the group's goals.
	Peer	Authority	To recognize the value of structured guidance in completing tasks effectively, showing respect and following leaders' instructions.
		cooperation	To actively support group efforts by collaborating, listening to others' ideas, and maintaining a positive and respectful attitude toward teamwork.
	Game performance		To fulfill the objectives of the games, demonstrating understanding of the concepts that were chosen to be reinforced
	Behavioral engagement	<i>Authentic Engagement</i>	To participate actively and express curiosity in class activities due to genuine interest rather than obligation.

Engagement		<i>Strategic Compliance</i>	To complete learning activities to receive external rewards but can recognize that their motivation does not depend on them.
	Emotional engagement	<i>Ritual compliance</i>	To recognize that doing the bare minimum does not lead to meaningful learning and actively seek to engage more deeply.
		<i>Retreatism</i>	To increase participation in activities, demonstrating more enthusiasm and willingness to contribute.
	Cognitive engagement	<i>rebellion</i>	To find constructive ways to express frustration or disagreement, rather than reject learning.

In conclusion, this methodological framework allowed the researcher to collect and analyze data systematically through qualitative action research. The selected instruments and strategies provided a deeper understanding of students' engagement, cooperation, and English learning processes. Based on these foundations, the following chapter presents the pedagogical proposal and the workshops implemented during the intervention stage of the study.

4. Pedagogical Proposal

This pedagogical intervention is based on a constructivist approach considering the school's horizon and vision of education, which focuses on learning as a social process in which students can build knowledge through interaction and collaboration (Vygotsky, 1978). Considering that the population chosen in this study consists of 4th and 5th grade students who need structured guidance to develop leadership and cooperation skills, as a matter of fact, game-based and interactive learning approach was chosen since it allows students to participate actively in real-life activities that promote engagement and oral participation.

4.1. Curricular Vision

The Curricular Vision of this research aligns with the school's PEI (2023) and *Pacto de Convivencia*, focusing on creating a “learner-centered environment that integrates academic content with the development of social-emotional skills.” Through a constructivist perspective, it aims to enrich the learning process by generating engagement, collaboration, and meaningful learning experiences.

The curriculum of this research is committed to going beyond the methodology that had been used by incorporating interactive and dynamic activities that address the specific academic needs of students while promoting fundamental values such as leadership and cooperation. By integrating these values into the teaching-learning process, the curriculum seeks to develop students who are not only competent in English but also in the interpersonal skills necessary for accurate social interactions. Furthermore, this curricular vision is aligned with the *Universal Design for Learning (UDL)* framework, ensuring that activities are accessible and adaptable to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

4.2. Vision of Language

In this project, the concept of language is built around Vygotsky (1978) who argues that language is fundamental for cognitive and social development, making emphasis on its function in the scaffolded learning process and how kids develop abilities by cooperative dialogue. Language is also seen as a powerful tool that can improve dynamics in the classroom since it is not only the final objective in the learning process, but it is a means for tailoring interpersonal values such as respect, leadership, and cooperation. Learning a language like English can become an engaging activity if it is done actively through collaborative activities like games and missions. This project uses language as a catalyst for cultivating a playful and reliable environment where everyone must participate to achieve the final goal.

4.3. Vision of Learning

As was mentioned in the curricular vision, a constructivist perspective was chosen since it is the one where students will need to be active participants in their learning process. By doing so, they will have the necessity to be active actors who use specific behaviors and values already explained (engagement, leadership, and cooperation).

As Bada (2015) states, a constructivist approach emphasizes learning as a social and experiential process, where students actively construct knowledge through interaction and participation. By engaging in the selected games, and taking the perspective of GBL, students are not only encouraged to use problem-solving skills but also to practice and internalize the theoretical concepts they need to see in their grade. Through scenarios that require collaboration, leadership, and decision-making, the games create opportunities for students to experience situations where they are the ones who build knowledge with their peers, also being seen as the ones who make decisions, negotiate with classmates, solve conflicts, and gradually become more conscious of their own learning processes and behaviors inside the classroom. The teacher is expected to be a facilitator who creates meaningful learning environments, proposes challenges, and accompanies students during the activities without positioning authority as control or punishment. but never a commander.

4.4. Vision of Classroom

In this study, the classroom plays an important role, not only in a communicative space but also one where respect, tolerance, leadership, and cooperation are always at hand. Students will be safe to interact with each other and the teacher since respect will always be necessary to develop and complete the activities. In this way, the classroom becomes a dynamic environment where students can express themselves, collaborate, and feel engaged in meaningful learning

experiences. By using a culture of mutual respect and positive interactions, the classroom serves as a foundation for both academic and personal growth. This safe and supportive space allows students to take risks, share ideas, and develop the interpersonal skills needed to succeed not only in the activities but also in their broader social and educational contexts. Through this approach, the classroom transforms into a "shelter" for cultivating essential values and building a keen sense of community among learners.

4.1. Instructional Design

The intervention was structured according to the objectives in this work and aimed to improve student engagement, learning, and cooperation through game-based learning dynamics. It follows a structured format that includes *objectives, competencies, methodologies, and evaluation criteria*, making sure it aligns with the conceptual framework and the research objectives. The instructional design consists of a series of workshops that were planned to foster active participation, students' interpersonal and linguistic skills, problem solving, and strategic thinking. Each workshop included specific activities that were divided into groups of two depending on their type (role-playing games, missions and board games) accompanied by sessions of reflection and evaluation where the students self-assessed their performance and their peers.

Each session of this workshop lasted approximately 60 minutes, and most of them were divided like that since there was not enough time to perform them in a complete way and step-by-step construction was needed. All the workshops were evaluated using rubrics that contemplated three complementary perspectives: *self-assessment, co-assessment, and hetero assessment* depending on the activity or aim of the workshop.

The rubrics included criteria such as *leadership and organization, teamwork and cooperation, engagement, rule-following, self-reflection, and task completion*, which were adapted according to the objectives and dynamics of each workshop. Additionally, all evaluation criteria were aligned with the Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lengua Extranjera (MEN, 2006) and the Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje (DBA) established for the elementary level.

The Ultimate Geo battle

The first workshop ([Annex 27](#)) focused on teamwork and decision-making in a board game-based geographical challenge. The main objective was to establish the basis of students' collaboration, organizational skills, and engagement while reinforcing vocabulary related to countries and nationalities. This topic was chosen since the head teacher was already conducting the lessons around it and a smooth transition between his classes and the implementation was needed. The class started with a brief explanation of the dynamics that were going to be used in the rest of the sessions from now². As it was an introductory activity, the main idea was to make students familiar with the new rules of the classroom. The resources were cards with country names and nationalities made by the researcher, a printed world map taken from *Canva*, sheets of paper and pencils, and a board to pair the countries and nationalities made by the researcher as well.

Considering the development, it was divided into two parts: first, the leaders of each team received cards with country names and nationalities, which they had to correctly pair and then

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- ²Each group will have a leader and a secretary to help organize the tasks, respect their roles and support each other.
 - Use as much English as you can during the activities, especially the words we have learned in class.
 - Follow the rules of each game carefully, teamwork and fair play are more important than winning.
 - Everyone in the group must participate, make sure all voices are heard and included.
 - Have fun, stay focused, and try your best, your effort will help your team succeed!

together with the secretary they needed to explain what the group needed to do. Secondly, each team received a printed world map and had to place five assigned countries correctly; consequently, the leader coordinated the group's decision-making, and the secretary wrote the answers.

One for All, All for One – Part 1 and 2

This workshop ([Annex 28](#)) was done as a mission to start going forward in the development of leadership, teamwork, and effective communication among students while reinforcing their ability to follow and give instructions in English. The two activities consisted of guiding peers using English commands, decoding instructions and doing total physical response tasks that required coordination and teamwork. The resources used were sheets with English commands (e.g., turn left, turn right, go straight ahead), blindfolds to cover students' eyes, classroom and soccer field space for group navigation challenges, sheets with encoded instructions in English, chalks to define start and end points, and a self-evaluation sheet that was held at the end of the session.

It began with some words about the importance of leadership and communication in teamwork and then, in the same groups, new leaders were chosen. And they needed to use those codes to guide their blindfolded group to the classroom from some random locations in the school. In the second phase, different leaders were assigned, and they received new commands in the form of sentences to organize. The conclusion of the workshop involved a reflection of self-evaluation where students needed to answer questions about their performance in the activity as leaders or team workers.

The Great Grocery Challenge

This workshop ([Annex 29](#)) was a role-play game that wanted to encourage the use of vocabulary related to food, grocery shopping, and basic conversational expressions in English, while also analyzing how they already conceived collaboration, leadership, and strategic thinking. In this space, the students were in their groups, each representing a grocery store. In the first class, the students were introduced to the vocabulary by receiving a black-and-white template of food items such as fruits, vegetables, snacks, and dairy products, which they colored and labeled in English with the aim of familiarizing the kids with the vocabulary and encouraging them into being organized and work in teams to prepare the products they would sell in the upcoming market simulation.

The second class focused on the core of the workshop, the simulation of a grocery store competition. The teams received role cards in which they were assigned positions such as store manager, cashier, or customer. Each group organized their products, set the prices and prepared their store space while they reviewed the key vocabulary. During the main simulation, students engaged in buying, selling, and negotiating entirely in English. This activity put emphasis on authentic interactions that made the students use the vocabulary and rehearse their interpersonal values.

The activity concluded with another reflection session and a friendly competition to choose the groups that earned points for the *contest board*. Success was measured based on four criteria: the number of products sold, the correct and frequent use of English phrases, the quality of customer service and collaboration, and the leadership demonstrated by the store manager. In the reflection time, students discussed the strategies that worked, the way they distributed roles, and how they could continue improving.

Order delivery masters

This workshop ([Annex 30](#)) was designed as a boardgame to reinforce the vocabulary related to food that was also used in previous activities. The goal was planned for students to apply their English knowledge in meaningful, real-life like exchanges as they acted out customer interactions in a restaurant or grocery delivery setting.

It began with a little review of vocabulary and communicative expressions such as *here is your order, here you go, anything else*. Students were in the same groups and were assigned with 4 specific orders to deliver. After the explanation, they received the 4 orders in the form of flashcards that indicated the ingredients of the orders they needed to deliver (fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, drinks, etc.) and order slips with written customer requests (recipes and shopping lists) and in the middle of the classroom, all the ingredients were located so that the students had to decode and assemble using their food cards. The workshop concluded by including a competition in which each group should deliver as many correct orders as possible within the time limit; as a result, they earned points for their performance and were added to the *contest board*.

Rescuing the teacher's memory

It was designed as a mission which had the intention of using vocabulary related to the daily routine as stated in the DBA. ([Annex 31](#)) The activity began with a little warm-up where the researcher mimed her daily routine asking students to guess and pronounce the corresponding actions in English. Then, the groups were told to become *Routine Agents* and needed to help the researcher remember her routine correctly.

Every group received four flashcards containing routine actions (wake up, eat breakfast, go to school). Their goal was to organize these actions into the routine the researcher acted in

the warm-up, assign roles among group members, and perform the entire sequence by miming and saying the full phrases in English. If the team had their part of the routine correctly organized and acted, they would earn a point.

Where's my stuff?

This workshop ([Annex 32](#)) was designed as a role-play activity with the objective of reinforcing the oral production in English by focusing on vocabulary related to personal belongings and the use of possessive adjectives and pronouns. The activity started with an introductory phase in which the researcher explained that a new *lost and found office* had opened in the school. Students were divided into groups (6 that were already arranged), each one was assigned a color and received a collection of lost items that belonged to other groups. The items included everyday objects like *notebooks, jackets, glasses, and bags* in the form of flashcards, as well as role cards for staff and customers, labels, and dialogue planner worksheets. Roles were distributed inside the groups, a manager to lead the office, a secretary to assist with organization, and the remaining students as customers who had to recover their belongings from other groups.

During the role play, customers had to visit different groups to find the item that matched their assigned color. Once they identified it, they were expected to use the target vocabulary and expressions like *Whose, is this? It's mine, and can you describe it?* To guide the conversation and claim ownership. Leaders within each group were responsible for organizing the process and ensuring their peers respected turns, stayed focused, and carried out their roles. The activity ended with a reflection about how the roles were executed, what teamwork challenges appeared, and who demonstrated the best use of English.

The Leaders' Logbook

The 8th workshop ([Annex 33](#)) of this implementation was a reflective activity that has main objective sought to encourage students to analyze their own roles, contributions and learning progress all along the implementation process while also strengthening their awareness of leadership and cooperation. The first session began with a warm-up activity called *Memory Lane*. The teacher-researcher displayed printed photos, posters, and key objects from previous workshops and also made questions aimed to activate memory and stimulate spontaneous storytelling, while at the same time connecting students' emotions and reflections to concrete learning experiences. Students were encouraged to recall the experiences by answering questions such as: *What do you remember about this workshop?* Or *Who helped the most in your group that day?*

Everything moved around the *Leaders' Logbook* worksheet. Each student received a personal sheet with sentence starters like *In Workshop 3, I helped by...* and *A good leader listens when...* Students were given some time to complete these reflections with the teacher researcher guiding them when they had questions or when it was necessary. Honesty and self-awareness were important, highlighting that recognizing mistakes was as valuable as celebrating success.

In the next phase, each group nominated a student who would speak and share their reflections with the rest of the class. To promote and have more peer evaluation, students received stickers and voted for the group they believed had shown the most growth in teamwork and leadership.

How We've Grown Together

This workshop ([Annex 34](#)) was also designed as a reflective activity, and it had the main goal of encouraging students to recognize and express their growth in leadership, cooperation, and engagement throughout the intervention. The session began with a *Mood Mapping* warm-up, where the teacher drew a large Mood Meter on the board. Students placed a sticker or symbol on the quadrant that best reflected their emotions at that moment, such as calm, frustrated, or energetic. This short dynamic opened the space for discussion with guiding questions which helped them connect their feelings to their classroom behavior. *Why do we sometimes feel frustrated in group work? Or how does your mood affect your group?*

The second stage introduced the *Emotional Backpack worksheet*. Each student wrote or drew three emotions they had felt across the workshops and explained what made them feel those emotions, how they reacted, and what strategies helped them regulate or respond with prompts such as *I felt... when... or Next time I could...*

Our Game, Our Rules

This was the last workshop ([Annex 35](#)) implemented in the pedagogical intervention and had the objective of consolidating all the learning from the previous sessions into a tangible product created by the students themselves. The process wanted students to design, construct, present, and finally apply their own games whether they chose missions, board games, or roleplays. Using all the English vocabulary and expressions practiced throughout the project and the importance of leadership as the core.

The first session wanted to activate the vocabulary kids would use in their own games, through a dynamic competition called *Vocabulary Race*, where students reviewed key categories such as *food, daily routines, countries and nationalities, classroom English, and*

directions. This activity not only tested their memory and accuracy but also created an enthusiastic atmosphere to set the tone for the design phase.

In the second session, groups had access to technology for the first time in the implementation. The teacher researcher created some games on *Wordwall* to settle the vocabulary and assure its understanding. Additionally, groups began to brainstorm and plan their own games, using a guide specifically designed to help them know exactly what each game needed to have. They selected one of the three game types and worked collaboratively to define rules, objectives, and the vocabulary that would be integrated. Students assumed specific roles such as leader, secretary, designer, and timekeeper, which reinforced teamwork and responsibility. By the end of the session, each group presented a draft idea to the class, including the game's name, theme, and intended learning purpose.

The third session focused on construction of their own games using the materials each group requested; students brought their games to life. During this phase, they had to ensure that English vocabulary and structures were clearly inside the mechanics of their games. They also tested their creations within their groups, identifying areas for improvement, and refining their rules.

The fourth session was dedicated to the presentations of the games and peer feedback; each group presented their game, explained the rules, and demonstrated a short round. Their peers provided structured feedback, highlighting clarity, creativity, and the integration of English. They also voted for their favorite one in a format that was provided by the teacher researcher; this step emphasized the ability to give and receive constructive feedback, fostering cooperative and reflective learning.

In the fifth and final session, the classroom became a space where all groups presented their completed games. After the demonstration rounds, the teacher-researcher provided final feedback, emphasizing the progress each group had made not only in linguistic performance but also in cooperation, leadership, and creativity. The best three groups were selected based on the evaluation rubric: the first place received the “Best Game Award,” the second place the “Creativity and Teamwork Award,” and the third place the “Innovation Award.” The remaining groups received a “Participation Award” acknowledging the value of their effort and commitment throughout the process.

This final moment became a symbolic closure for both the pedagogical intervention and the research process, as students reflected on their learning journey and shared what they had discovered about teamwork, respect, and communication in English.

The workshops presented in chapter constituted the practical application of the pedagogical proposal. Based on these experiences and the information collected during the process, the following chapter presents the analysis of the data and the main findings of the research.

5. Data Analysis and Findings

This section introduces the analysis of the data collected during pedagogical intervention. It examines how the findings align with the objectives of this qualitative action research which, in (Burns, 2010) ideas, allows continuous reflection and adaptation of teaching strategies based on real time observations and student responses. The analysis made here was structured around the categories and subcategories that emerged throughout the research, and they were shaped by the participants and the way they interacted with the workshops.

The pedagogical design of the ten workshops was based on the *Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lengua Extranjera* (MEN, 2006) to ensure coherence between the national framework and the pedagogical innovation proposed in this work. So, the inductive nature of this study guarantees that findings are also based on students' real experiences rather than predefined expectations. By analyzing patterns of *engagement, leadership and cooperation* within a *game-based* learning environment, this section has the objective of providing an interpretation of the results that will contribute to understanding the role of different methodologies as an option to enhance not only language acquisition but also the development of social and cognitive skills in 5th grade students.

Whitin the qualitative action research, data triangulation was applied as a strategy to enhance the validity and importance in depth of the findings, using field diary, the rubric of evaluation and the conceptual framework, it was possible to make this triangulation and as (Sampieri et al., 2014) indicate, contrasting the information that was obtained from different sources, methods or theoretical perspectives allows the researcher to achieve a more complete understanding of the phenomenon that is being studied.

Engagement and participation

Engagement and participation is one of the most dynamic and multidimensional categories throughout the pedagogical intervention. Rather than being always the same, students' engagement evolved across the ten workshops, moving through retreatism, strategic compliance, and authentic participation depending on the nature of the activity, the presence of authority figures, and the degree in which tasks connected with their interests and motivations.

From the very first board game workshop, *The Ultimate GeoBattle* (workshop 1), patterns of engagement became immediately visible. As recorded in the field diary ([Annex 5](#)) maintaining

students' attention during the initial explanation was challenging which was an example of what Schlechty (2001) defines as *retreatism*, when “students do not participate in the task and feel unable to do what is asked of them” (p. 2). However, when the interactive part of the activity began, approximately 90% of the class showed interest and wanted to participate since it was something different from what they were doing with their head teacher. This early shift, although not very substantial, suggested that the game-based format itself had the potential to move students from disengagement toward active participation. The rubric results confirmed these dynamics, showing higher scores in Leadership and Organization and Respect for Rules for the groups that maintained effective cooperation ([see Annex 6, rubric 1](#)).

This same pattern was observed in the first mission, *One for All, All for One* (W2), where according to the field diary ([Annex 8](#)), the session initially faced resistance from students who seemed to be distracted and unmotivated, showing impulsive reactions like those observed in the previous workshop. However, as the activity progressed, approximately 80% of students moved from *retreatism* (Schlechty, 2001) to *authentic engagement*, actively participating once the task became dynamic and tangible. Rubric results ([Annex 9](#)) confirmed these observations: 66% of teams performed positively, with groups 3 and 6 achieving 91% of the total score and securing first place on the contest board, while group 5 struggled the most with 33%, reflecting issues in rule-following and cooperation.

Something interesting in terms of engagement happened during the vocabulary presentation cycle of *The Great Grocery Challenge* (W3), when the absence of the head teacher created a really noticeable drop in participation. According to the field diary ([Annex 12](#)), only about 30% of participants demonstrated active engagement or interaction with the new vocabulary, suggesting that students' willingness to engage was partly dependent on the authority

figure present in the room. This revealed students' dependence on external authority figures that they have already assigned before like the head teacher, and as noted in the analysis of that session, the researcher was not perceived as an equally legitimate authority, which made motivation and respect toward the activity decrease. In the final simulation cycle of the same workshop, however, engagement recovered strongly: all groups participated in the role-play, organizing their stores, assigning roles, and showing excitement about competing to get points on the contest board ([Annex 14](#)).

This dependence on external authority was most explicit in the mission *Rescuing the Teacher's Memory* (W6). According to the field diary ([Annex 10](#)), students demonstrated a remarkable improvement in behavior and participation, with 100% of them engaged in the activity. The field diary recorded an important comment from one student: "Teacher, you know we only behaved today because she was here," referring to the presence of the thesis advisor. This statement confirms one of the central hypotheses of the research: students experience a tension between external authority and intrinsic motivation. Interpreting this through Freud's (1923) notion of the *superego*, it can be inferred that the group responded to an external figure perceived as higher authority. This observation raises an essential question: *Do students genuinely value respect, teamwork, and learning, or do they perform these values when someone they fear or admire is watching?*

The concept of *strategic compliance* (Schlechty, 2001) became relevant as the intervention progressed. In the role-play *Where's My Stuff?* (W7), rubric results ([Annex 15](#)) revealed that engagement scores were a little higher than those of other categories, but the field diary noted that this was because students were strategic rather than authentic, focused on winning points or finishing quickly instead of achieving communicative goals. Students chose to

skip the vocabulary objective by guessing and identifying items based on their colors rather than using the target expressions, and several groups ignored the rule of sending only one person, causing pushing and disorder. Likewise, in the reflective workshop *Leaders' Logbook* (W8), the use of candies as rewards generated a rush to complete the task that prioritized speed over reflection. Although game-based learning can initially rely on rewards to capture attention (Kapp, 2012), Workshop 8 demonstrated that excessive dependence on extrinsic rewards or motivation may limit *authentic engagement* if not gradually replaced by intrinsic motivation and meaningful reflection ([Annex 16](#)).

The tension between behavioral participation and deeper cognitive engagement was most clear in Workshop 8 as well, where many students struggled to remember previously studied vocabulary despite of being repeated during earlier game-based activities. This gap between participation and learning memory reaffirms Fredricks et al.'s (2004) conception of engagement, particularly the important difference between behavioral participation and deeper cognitive investment. Although students were physically active and willing to participate, their difficulty recalling vocabulary indicates that learning had not yet been internalized meaningfully. From a constructivist perspective, this shows that active participation alone is not enough if reflection and ownership of learning are not fully achieved (Vygotsky, 1978).

Nevertheless, the final workshops showed a gradual and uneven shift toward more authentic forms of engagement. In Workshop 9, *How We've Grown Together*, the Mood Mapping activity revealed that most students identified positive emotions such as happiness when reflecting on the workshops ([Annex 17](#)), which aligns with the hypothesis that framing learning as play would reduce rejection and improve motivation over time (Kapp, 2012). The Emotional Backpack task also confirmed that many students could identify and articulate the factors that had

affected their participation, demonstrating capacity for self-awareness that goes beyond mere behavioral compliance. Additionally, in the final workshop (W10), the game design and construction phases generated observable evidence of intrinsic motivation, creativity, and problem-solving, particularly in Group 4, whose organization and commitment stood out across all evaluation criteria, confirming that when kids are allowed to build and bring their own ideas to life, they support deeper engagement and ownership of learning from a constructivist perspective.

In conclusion, these findings confirm that engagement and participation in game-based learning environments cannot be reduced to presence or task completion. The intervention revealed that authentic engagement is a process built through development and context, influenced by the perceived legitimacy of authority, the nature of the task, the role of external rewards, and the degree in which students have internalized the values that structured collaboration and reflection require. As the rubric results across the workshops consistently showed, behavioral participation was the most accessible dimension of engagement, while cognitive and emotional engagement remained uneven, requiring not only well-designed activities but also sustained pedagogical scaffolding and continuous opportunities for reflection, but the goals can be achieved when the kids allow themselves to be guided.

Leadership, Cooperation and Students' Perceptions of Authority

Leadership, teamwork, and the ways students perceived and responded to authority were one of the most revealing dimensions of this pedagogical intervention. Across the ten workshops, these three elements proved to be deeply interconnected: the effectiveness of teamwork depended on how leadership roles were exercised, and both were shaped by students' understanding of authority as either a legitimate and cooperative structure or an imposed one.

From the very first workshop, The *Ultimate GeoBattle* (W1), the exercise of leadership revealed significant contrasts among groups. According to the field diary ([Annex 5](#)), while 65% of the students assigned as leaders demonstrated initiative and organizational skills, others struggled to exercise authority in a healthy way, possibly because they had never had such a role before. This finding supports Arendt's (1961) notion of authority as a legitimate and accepted form of influence rather than coercion because in groups where leaders guided peers through collaboration and respect, performance improved significantly, while in groups without clear role boundaries, conflicts and disorganization emerged, including complaints about leadership assignments and refusal to follow instructions. The rubric results confirmed these dynamics, showing higher scores in Leadership and Organization for groups that maintained effective cooperation ([Annex 6](#)).

This was also evident in the board game *Order Delivery Masters* (W5). According to the field diary, 67% of leaders successfully organized their peers, guiding them toward the collective goal despite presenting some challenges. Northouse (2018) defines effective leadership as guiding a team while fostering coordination and mutual support, and some leaders in this workshop began to demonstrate precisely that, approaching the type of legitimate authority proposed by Arendt (1961) and later categorized by Kojève (2014) as one based on recognition and respect rather than imposition, even if they were not doing so consciously. Although not all leaders succeeded in managing time or distributing tasks efficiently, their growing understanding of the role suggested a new awareness of authority as a cooperative dynamic. The rubric confirmed that four out of six groups achieved an Excellent score in Task Completion ([Annex 7](#)), which correlated directly with the groups that showed more effective leadership.

The missions offered evidence of the relationship between perceived authority and team performance. *In One for All, All for One* (W2), Kojève's (2014) view of authority as a recognized and freely accepted tool was evident in the groups that valued the leader's instructions, as they reached their objectives more efficiently. In an opposite way, those who resisted leadership reinforced the idea that authority must be constructed through respect and dialogue rather than imposed coercion, exactly as Arendt's (1961) perspective, although the children showed complications in doing so because culturally speaking, they had never had that conception in their social circles. Rubric results ([Annex 9](#)) reflected these contrasts clearly: group 3 and group 6 achieved 91% of the total score, while group 5 struggled the most with 33%, reflecting the direct impact of leadership in their performance.

In the mission (W4), although 75% of participants showed signs of authentic engagement, conflicts were observed in groups 4 and 5, where poor communication and lack of coordination did not allow performance to flow naturally. Some students (as aforementioned) fell into *strategic compliance*, participating only to complete the task, or minor *rebellion*, reflected in attempts to skip instructions or claim points they had not earned. According to the field diary ([see annex 13](#)), this decrease was related to the absence of the head teacher, which revealed students' dependence on external authority figures. Only about 30% of participants demonstrated active engagement or interaction with the new vocabulary. This suggests that the researcher was not perceived as an equal legitimate authority referring to Kojève's (2014) concept that authority needs to be recognized and legitimized to be effective.

Through teacher intervention and collective reflection, most groups eventually regulated their behavior, showing progress in self-control and collaborative responsibility compared to previous workshops. In groups where dialogue and respect were prioritized, performance

improved; in those lacking agreement, conflicts persisted, reaffirming that social dynamics and leadership acceptance were directly tied to learning outcomes.

The role-play workshops added a further layer of complexity to these dynamics. In *The Great Grocery Challenge* (W3/W4), the simulation showed that groups 1, 3, 4, and 6 stood out for their leadership, organization, and language use in almost real exchanges, while in Group 2 a student refused to participate, frustrating the group leader. This situation reflected a limited understanding of authority as a cooperative dynamic. As Arendt (1961) proposed, genuine authority is built through dialogue and mutual recognition, a notion only partially achieved in this case, revealing the need for continued work on emotional regulation and inclusion in group settings. Overall, 66% of the groups performed excellently in most of the rubric criteria ([Annex 14](#)).

By Workshop 7, *Where's My Stuff?* authority continued to be a challenge. Many students did not approve the leader's role; perceiving peers as equals rather than figures of coordination or guidance. Classroom hierarchies seemed already established in their social circle, as some students appeared to have more informal influence, thus conditioning how the class developed and complicating the implementation of structured leadership within cooperative groups. Only two groups achieved an *Excellent* score in *Leadership and Organization*, as they followed the manager's instructions and distributed tasks effectively, while the remaining groups obtained lower scores due to weak recognition of authority and lack of organization ([Annex 15](#)). This made an important question for the researcher: how can authority be directed and legitimized to become a healthy and constructive dynamic rather than a contested one?

Students' perceptions of authority took their most psychoanalytical form in the mission *Rescuing the Teacher's Memory* (W6). As analyzed in the previous category, the exceptional

participation recorded that day was directly associated with the presence of the thesis advisor, interpreted through Freud's (1923) notion of the *superego* as a response to a figure perceived as representing higher power. This episode was not only significant for what it revealed about engagement, but also for what it disclosed about leadership because the fact that discipline and cooperation appeared only in the presence of an external authority figure suggested that students' cooperative values and self-regulated leadership were still fragile. The workshop thus functioned as a mirror reflecting the gap between externally performed compliance and real authority structures.

A significant point in this category appeared in the final workshop (W10), where the researcher strategically assigned *JD*, one of the most disruptive students, the role of monitor. Surprisingly, he proved to be effective in the next sessions, demonstrating that leadership roles and responsibility can positively redirect disruptive behavior. This outcome supports Arendt's (1961) view of authority as a guiding structure and reveals that sometimes the students who disrupt the class the most only have energy, they do not know how to use and project. Rather than confirming fixed behavioral patterns, this finding suggested that leadership potential is present across different student profiles and can be activated through intentional pedagogical decisions.

This evidence in the ten workshops confirms that leadership and teamwork are not competencies that emerge spontaneously in game-based learning environments but require sustained scaffolding, explicit role assignment, and repeated opportunities for reflection. Students' perceptions of authority evolved gradually throughout the intervention, moving from resistance and contestation toward partial acceptance of cooperative leadership, though full internalization remained an ongoing process. As the rubric data and field diary observations consistently showed, the groups that performed best were those in which authority was

understood as a shared and dialogical dynamic, confirming Arendt's (1961) conception of legitimate power built through mutual respect rather than imposition.

pedagogical efforts to promote authentic socio-emotional growth beyond the game itself.

Confidence and Emotional Expression

Confidence and emotional expression were one of the most complex and humanizing dimensions of the pedagogical intervention. According to Fredricks et al. (2004), *emotional engagement* refers to the affective connection students develop toward their learning experiences and how it influences their enthusiasm, interest, and sense of belonging in the classroom. When this type of engagement is lacking, students may act without motivation through *ritual compliance* or disconnect from the learning process through *retreatism* (Schlechty, 2001). Both were present in the intervention, and tracing their evolution across the ten workshops reveals how confidence and emotional expression developed unevenly, because of interpersonal dynamics, the relationship students had with the English language, and the degree to which the classroom environment felt safe enough for authentic expression.

From the earliest workshops, differences in confidence were visible. In The (W1), the group that included the Pakistani student performed more efficiently than the others because of her existing fluency and knowledge of the language. While this created an imbalance in task completion, it also worked as a reference point for other students, some of whom responded with motivation and perseverance while others showed signs of frustration in competence. This dynamic anticipated the more challenges that would emerge in later workshops.

The tension between *emotional engagement* and *ritual compliance* became more evident in the mission *One for All, All for One* (W2), where the blindfolded navigation task first generated resistance among students who showed impulsive reactions and discomfort with vulnerability.

Being guided by a peer required a degree of trust that not all students were willing to have, and the groups in which this trust was absent performed significantly worse. This confirms Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural perspective, as students can reach higher levels of performance through peer interaction and guided participation, but only when the emotional conditions within the group allow for that collaboration to take place. The rubric results ([Annex 9](#)) reflected this directly: groups 3 and 6, where interpersonal trust was stronger, achieved 91% of the total score, while group 5, where one member refused to participate, reached only 33%.

The most direct evidence of language anxiety and its effect on confidence appeared in the mission *Rescuing the Teacher's Memory* (W6). According to the field diary ([Annex 10](#)), while 66% of groups produced complete and accurate English sentences and Group 3 stood out across all categories, groups 2 and 5 showed signs of language anxiety and avoidance, relying on gestures and incomplete sentences consistent with A1.1 performance. These results show that while game-based learning encourages contextualized language use, students with higher affective filters, those who are shy or anxious, may require additional support to achieve confidence. The rubric results ([Annex 11](#)) confirmed this pattern, as the groups that struggled most with oral production were precisely those in which interpersonal support within the team was weakest, suggesting that emotional safety influenced individual willingness to take communicative risks.

The most explicit space for emotional expression was Workshop 9, *How We've Grown Together*, designed specifically as a reflective and emotional regulation space aimed at helping students identify their emotions, understand their impact on group dynamics, and recognize respectful behaviors developed throughout the intervention. The initial Mood Mapping activity revealed that most students identified positive emotions such as happiness when reflecting on the

workshops ([Annex 17](#)), aligning with Kapp's (2012) hypothesis that framing learning as play reduces initial rejection and sustains emotional motivation over time. However, the presence of a significant group of students who selected negative emotions such as boredom, sadness, or anger demonstrated that emotional engagement was not homogeneous across the group. The researcher believes these emotions were felt due to the behavior of certain students who did not respect others, becoming an obstacle for them to complete tasks and affecting how they saw themselves within the activities. This finding supports Fredricks et al.'s (2004) multidimensional model of engagement, showing that emotional engagement can coexist with behavioral participation even when internal motivation varies, and also reveals the importance of group coexistence, since what some students do to others can completely affect their performance and how they see themselves in the activities.

During the Emotional Backpack task of the same workshop, students were asked to explain the emotions they experienced and the situations that triggered them. The field diary indicates that many students showed willingness to complete the activity and expressed themselves honestly. Interestingly, several students attributed their negative emotions not to the workshops themselves, but to external factors such as conflicts with teachers, personal issues, or difficulties within their working groups. This outcome also suggests that emotional regulation and cooperation are conscious processes rather than impulsive reactions, contradicting earlier assumptions that students' disengagement was purely instinctive or unreflective.

The respectful management of negative emotions by the researcher, without any type of judgment or obligation to only demonstrate positive emotions, played a key role in encouraging authenticity. This approach reflects Arendt's (1961) conception of authority as dialogical rather than punitive, allowing students to express resistance or discomfort safely. The case of the

student who openly expressed anger toward the head teacher illustrates that emotional transparency can coexist with classroom order when respect and listening are prioritized, and that creating space for honest expression is itself a pedagogical act with significant consequences for trust and participation. As Gee (2003) suggests, when learning environments are designed to feel safe and meaningful, students are more likely to invest emotionally in the process rather than retreating into compliance or disengagement. Rubric results ([Annex 18](#)) showed that three groups achieved Excellent in Self-Reflection and Learning Growth, suggesting that the emotional expression tasks generated genuine reflective capacity in at least half of the class, even when leadership and teamwork scores remained moderate.

By the final workshop (W10), evidence of growing confidence appeared in an unexpected form. The peer evaluation phase showed that participants adopted a serious and honest attitude toward the evaluation process, suggesting an emerging capacity for both giving and receiving feedback without defensiveness. Furthermore, the game design phase itself generated visible signs of confidence through creativity: students who had previously shown anxiety in structured language tasks engaged actively when given the freedom to build, invent, and present their own ideas. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) constructivist principle that ownership of learning fosters not only cognitive engagement but also the emotional security necessary for authentic participation.

Finally, findings across this category confirm that confidence and emotional expression are not separated to language learning but deeply central to it. The intervention revealed that students' willingness to communicate in English, take risks, and engage authentically was consistently mediated by their emotional state, their sense of safety within the group, and the degree to which the classroom environment permitted honest expression. As the progression from ritual

compliance and retreatism Schlechty, (2001) toward emerging self-awareness and reflective capacity demonstrated, confidence is not a fixed trait but a developmental capacity that responds to sustained pedagogical care, consistent emotional scaffolding, and a humanizing classroom culture.

English Communicative skills

English communicative functioned simultaneously as a learning objective and as an observable indicator of the social and emotional processes that shaped each workshop. Throughout the ten sessions, students' oral production, vocabulary use, and communicative confidence were assessed in relation to the descriptors established by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages CEFR, (2001) and the Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras MEN, (2006), which expect students at this level to understand and use simple expressions related to everyday contexts.

From the very first board game workshop, (W1), the linguistic goals were framed around vocabulary related to countries and nationalities, consistent with CEFR A1 descriptors for identifying and producing basic phrases describing nationalities and countries of origin CEFR, (2001). The group that included the Pakistani student performed more efficiently than the others because of her existing fluency and knowledge of the language, and while two additional groups also showed perseverance and motivation to finish the activity, the lower task completion in some teams highlighted the need to continue reinforcing these basic communicative functions, especially for students who showed resistance toward English learning. The rubric results ([Annex 6](#)) confirmed these disparities, showing that linguistic performance was directly tied to the degree of cooperative engagement within each group.

In the missions (W2 and W4), the activity required children to both follow and give oral commands, consistent with CEFR A1–A2 descriptors for understanding and responding to simple instructions. The use of the *Total Physical Response method* in the second part of the mission created an environment where physical movement was linked directly to language comprehension, reinforcing Vygotsky's (1978) argument that students can develop linguistic competences through collaboration and guided participation within their zone of proximal development. In average, 60% of students performed at the A1 level, successfully understanding and responding to simple instructions, while 40% demonstrated A2-level competence by producing short, functional phrases during the activity. These results reaffirm that movement-based tasks can promote functional language learning by linking communication with purposeful action, as Grande de Prado and Abella García (2010) suggest in their analysis of role-playing as an active learning methodology.

The role-play workshops offered some of the most significant evidence of communicative development throughout the intervention. In (W3/W4), the simulation phase demonstrated a strong recovery in language use: approximately 70% of the class used simple expressions related to buying and selling, and by the end of the workshop, 75% of students were able to use at least three complete English expressions related to commercial exchanges, meeting CEFR A1 goals ([Annex 14](#)). Groups 3 and 4 showed the highest consistency in oral production, while groups 2 and 5 continued to struggle with maintaining coherence in their roles. These findings confirm what Gee (2003) proposes through the concept of situated meaning: when language is used in engaging and contextually meaningful scenarios, vocabulary retention and oral production are both strengthened simultaneously.

In the board game (W5), approximately 70% of students used complete English phrases during the delivery phase, reflecting A1-level performance in basic exchanges according to the CEFR (2001). Phrases such as communicating order deliveries and asking about additional items demonstrated that students understood the task, tried to use the structures, and applied the linguistic content meaningfully. As Amr (2012) states, educational games effectively blend content and motivation, creating opportunities for learners to apply knowledge while staying engaged, and this workshop provided clear evidence of that dynamic.

The role-play (W7) presented a particularly revealing contrast between behavioral participation and genuine communicative engagement. Although all groups managed to deliver items to the Lost and Found Office, accuracy and language quality varied significantly because two groups used consistent English expressions, while others relied mainly on Spanish or gestures in the rush of earning points ([Annex 15](#)). It confirms that authentic communicative competence requires not only exposure to language but also conditions that make its use purposeful and meaningful rather than only instrumental.

The reflective workshop (W8) exposed a significant gap between participation and language retention. Many students struggled to remember previously studied vocabulary despite repeated exposure during earlier game-based activities, suggesting that learning had not yet been internalized meaningfully. This finding was pedagogically significant because it confirmed that communicative skills in a game-based environment depend not only on the quality of the activity design but also on the degree to which students are given structured opportunities to consolidate and reflect on the language they have used.

By the final workshop (W10), the integration of technology through *Wordwall* generated high levels of motivation and participation during the vocabulary activation phase, suggesting

that digital tools have the potential to complement game-based learning and reinforce communicative engagement in ways that other formats did not achieve. During the presentation and peer feedback phase, students used English, although not completely, to explain rules, describe materials, and demonstrate gameplay, confirming that the activity supported meaningful vocabulary use even if further work would be necessary to move beyond A1-level performance consistently. The peer evaluation process also promoted awareness of communicative precision, as students honestly assessed each other's use of English within the game presentations, demonstrating a growing metalinguistic awareness that had not been visible in earlier workshops.

Motivation Toward English Learning

Motivation toward English learning functioned throughout the intervention as both a precondition and a consequence of communicative engagement. It was rarely stable across sessions, fluctuating in response to the nature of the activity, the social dynamics within groups, the presence of external authority figures, and the degree to which students perceived the learning experience as meaningful, enjoyable, or relevant to their lives. Reading motivation as a subcategory of English communicative skills is analytically justified because, as the intervention consistently demonstrated, students' willingness to produce language in English was directly mediated by how motivated they felt in any given moment.

In the beginning, students' willingness to engage with English was largely tied to novelty, competitive rewards, and the presence of authority figures. While these elements were enough to generate initial participation, they proved to be not enough to create meaningful language production when conditions changed, confirming that the motivational foundation at the beginning of the intervention was largely strategic rather than genuine.

As the workshops progressed, the interplay between game design and motivational quality became more visible. Activities structured around narrative purpose, clear roles, and meaningful goals generated noticeably stronger communicative engagement than those driven primarily by competition or reward, supporting Kapp's (2012) argument that game-based learning must combine challenge, fantasy, and intrinsic satisfaction to move students beyond superficial participation. A particularly important point was the introduction of technology in the final workshop, where the field diary ([Annex 19](#)) recorded a clear shift in enthusiasm during the *Wordwall* activities, suggesting that digital tools resembling the games students enjoy outside school can lower affective filters and increase focus on language tasks. Nevertheless, as Annex 19 also notes, technology-based dynamics must be balanced with face-to-face formats to ensure that motivation translates into genuine communicative and interpersonal development, rather than remaining tied to the novelty of the tool.

By the final sessions, signs of a more internalized motivation began to emerge. The physical games created by the groups ([Annex 20](#)) are tangible evidence of this change since students designed their own rules, wrote instructions, and used English vocabulary into materials they built themselves, demonstrating that language use had moved from imitative toward creative and purposeful. This aligns with Gee's (2003) principle that learning environments generate authentic motivation when students are active agents within them. It suggests that while the intervention did not fully consolidate intrinsic motivation toward English learning within its timeframe, it created the affective and experiential conditions from which that motivation can continue to grow with more pedagogical support.

Final diagnosis and survey

It assessed the same four abilities as the first diagnostic exam did, in the reading section evaluated students' ability to identify specific information (daily routines, countries, food, emotions) and understand short narrative texts which part of the vocabulary was used in the games. 60% of the students correctly identified explicit information related to daily routines, food, countries, and emotions. Recognizing vocabulary was particularly strong in categories that had been consistently reinforced throughout the workshops, such as food and daily routines.

These results are coherent with the field diary records of the previous sessions, which repeatedly documented partial participation during the activities. Even if the results were not high, the final percentage of understanding is more solid than the initial evaluation. It is important to highlight that although the short time and frequency of the implementation the students' improvement in identifying explicit information indicates they are now able to grasp and deduce particularly in categories that were consistently practiced. While inferential comprehension and deeper text analysis still require further development, the data confirm that the intervention had a positive impact on students' ability to decode and understand familiar content in English.

The writing section required students to produce a short paragraph about their school week using vocabulary that had been worked from different workshops, including categories such as *countries, directions, food, and emotions*. (An example of a student's answer is in [annex 21](#)) This task aimed to assess not only vocabulary retention but also sentence construction and basic coherence. The results showed that 45% of the students were able to write a complete paragraph containing simple sentences, following the general structure provided in the example. Most students used repetitive sentence patterns such as *I go to school by..., I like..., and I feel...*

In terms of grammar, only 30% of the students used subject, verb, complement ideas, and spelling mistakes were present in nearly all the responses. Additionally, Sentence variety was limited, and only 20% attempted to combine ideas using connectors such as *and* or *because*. These results indicate little but existent improvement in the way students write compared to the initial diagnostic stage.

While students demonstrated to improve their use of vocabulary and a clearer understanding of basic sentence structure, writing remains an area that requires practice. The data suggest that lexical acquisition progressed more noticeably than structural development, confirming that vocabulary retention through game-based activities does not mean a better syntactic complexity. Overall, although the results were not outstanding, they reflect gradual development in written expression and confirm that students are beginning to transfer practiced vocabulary into short, meaningful texts.

The third ability that was assessed in the exam was the listening comprehension. It was planned as similar as the initial diagnosis, and it aimed to test students' ability to identify specific information (the same from the previous workshops) from a short oral text read twice at a slow pace. The results showed that 68% of the students correctly answered at least three out of the five questions, demonstrating an interestingly solid ability to recognize explicit information from the researcher's voice. The highest percentage of correct answers was observed in questions related to transportation and emotions (approximately 72%), suggesting that this vocabulary was more significant for them. Questions involving food items and locations obtained slightly lower accuracy rates (around 64%), possibly due to momentary confusion between similar options even if the answers were explicit and did not need inferential skills.

These results indicate that students performed somewhat better in listening than in writing and slightly above reading comprehension. However, the difference was not significantly higher. The performance suggests that the kids are now more familiar with the words that were used through all the implementation, and they have certainty of what they mean, but it does not necessarily mean advanced listening comprehension skills.

The findings are consistent with classroom observations where students often responded in a better way to oral repetition during game explanations. Listening was frequently supported by gestures, board instructions, and contextual cues, which may have strengthened vocabulary recognition. Although the results were not completely the desired ones, they reflect a noticeable development from the first diagnosis exam. Students demonstrated a growing ability to associate spoken language with meaning when the input was structured and familiar. Nevertheless, more exposure to different (and maybe technologic) listening conditions and spontaneous speech would be necessary to further develop autonomous listening comprehension.

The last section of the exam was the speaking one. It evaluated students' ability to respond orally to questions related to personal information, school routines, food preferences, and emotions or reflection. Unlike the written and listening sections, this part needed kids to answer without any visual support. The results showed that approximately 70% of them were able to answer questions related to personal information correctly, particularly those about name, age, nationality, and favorite food. These responses were generally short (*My name is ..., I am ten years old, I like pizza*), indicating their capacity to understand the questions but not really showing any real improvement as they did when playing the games.

The most significant difficulty appeared in the final section on emotions and reflection. Only 25% of the students were able to respond to reflective questions, such as what they learned

about teamwork or when they felt proud of themselves. Several students remained silent because they did not know what the questions meant or answered in Spanish when trying to answer. An important observation during the speaking assessment was that many students listened to their classmates' responses before answering. In multiple cases, students repeated or slightly modified answers previously given by peers, suggesting they'd rather copy what the others said even if it was wrong rather than autonomous production and taking some time to think about if they could understand the question. This behavior indicates the lack of self-assurance and a possible insecurity when expressing in English in situations that imply assessing.

So, it is proof that these results reflect partial progress. Students have consolidated basic communicative formulas but have not yet developed sufficient autonomy and understanding to answer more complex questions while also feeling secure of doing so even if they are about being evaluated or are outside the game style of interactions. (Rubric of an average of the results in [Annex 22](#))

As for the final survey, most results show interesting and positive results toward English classes compared to the beginning of the process ([Annex 23](#)). Approximately 65% of the students reported that they felt more motivated during the workshops, especially when activities included games, collaborative challenges, and problem-solving tasks. However, around 25% expressed that although they enjoyed some activities, they still found certain tasks difficult or confusing. A small percentage (10%) reported no significant change in their perception of the subject.

Regarding teamwork, 60% of the students stated that they learned to cooperate better with their classmates. Many mentioned that working in groups helped them feel more confident when participating. Nevertheless, 30% realized that collaboration was sometimes challenging due to disagreements or some partners working more than others. This suggests that while cooperative

learning strategies were generally effective, social dynamics continue to influence classroom interaction in not so positive ways.

Analyzing leadership, nearly 50% of the students recognized that they assumed leadership roles at least once during the intervention. They reported feeling proud when they had to guide their teams or help them to understand instructions. However, the remaining students preferred to follow rather than lead, which provides information about the fact that maybe not everyone wants to be a leader in an active way.

Concerning language learning, about 55% of the students perceived improvement in their vocabulary, particularly in topics such as countries, food, directions, and emotions. Fewer students (approximately 35%) felt that their grammar improved significantly. This perception aligns with the exam results, where vocabulary was more solid than structure.

The survey proves that while the outcomes were not the highest, they demonstrate that students experienced increased engagement, gradual confidence development, and greater awareness of collaborative skills. The intervention did not transform learning outcomes dramatically, but it contributed to a more dynamic classroom environment and set a foundation for next teachers and researchers if they want to continue in the seeking of continued linguistic and interpersonal growth for the group.

Conclusions and recommendations

To present the results of what the analysis of the investigation brought, it is necessary to recall that the main enquiry was to analyze whether the influence of game-based learning could improve the students' engagement in learning English at Colegio Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. In relation to the specific objectives, the workshops clearly offered opportunities for

interaction that had been limited in their previous classes, and it was maybe one of the reasons why their coexistence was not always smooth and kind. Maybe the children did not know how to interact in these types of situations before, and the rough treatment was part of their way of navigating the new experience since they only knew how to do it in the break spaces. Additionally, the evaluation of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement revealed little, gradual, but meaningful improvement and progress.

Now, even if it was not a core goal of the research, leadership, the conception of authority and the cooperative classroom dynamics were the basis and the foundations of the workshops. So, knowing that all throughout the process students were able to change the mindset in their relationship with authority figures, such as the researcher, in a positive way, which proved that assigning leadership roles to certain students conceived as problematic showing that they are actually able to be outstanding leaders thus improving their cooperation in the group is a valuable insight in what could be done with more time in groups like the ones in the research.

This study presents certain limitations that should be acknowledged, for instance, the time of the intervention was relatively limited, which may have restricted students' internalization of the values and areas of improvement; as a matter of fact, a longer implementation period may provide stronger evidence of structural development in writing and speaking.

So, based on the results and findings, several pedagogical and institutional recommendations can be proposed. On one hand, it is recommended that the institution gradually incorporates game-based learning strategies as a complementary methodological approach within the English curriculum and maybe in some other spaces where children do not feel engaged enough. While the curriculum is formally aligned with national standards such as the DBA and the CEFR, the results of this research suggest that methodological diversification is necessary to have

meaningful communicative practice. It is important to say that game-based activities should not replace structured instruction but rather function as a bridge between vocabulary acquisition and communicative application.

On the other hand, it is also advisable that engagement, cooperation, and leadership could be considered an evaluative dimension within classroom practice. Beyond measuring the typical areas, assessment instruments could include indicators of participation, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities, reinforcing the multidimensional nature of language learning.

For English teachers working in similar contexts, they are more than encouraged to scaffold productive skills more explicitly. Although the intervention strengthened vocabulary and participation, grammar remained limited, maybe because of the limited time of implementation, but it is still important to continue testing the efficacy of these types of methodologies in new generations. It is also recommended that future interventions expand the use of games, including digital or hybrid formats, when institutional resources are allowed. While this study focused primarily on physical and interactive classroom games, incorporating technology-based platforms could increase motivation even more.

Finally, this study, as a beautiful journey into children's behavior and interaction, allowing them to play and be themselves in a space they usually felt restricted, was a reward for the researcher. Getting to know each participant in their individuality and as a group is a prize that each teacher should make an effort to obtain; consequently, connecting with them not only in their learning process but accompanying them in their vision of the world was priceless. Inspired mostly by the reflections of Hannah Arendt, particularly her understanding of education as the space where one gets to know the importance of social interactions in an individualized society, this work wanted to underline the importance of healthy authority as the core of any human

interaction, making students feel they were also protagonists of their own path. The intervention demonstrated that when students are given structured opportunities to interact, collaborate, and experience learning as meaningful, engagement becomes possible, even in contexts marked by initial resistance or limited communicative confidence. Everyone can be a leader. Everyone must be able to play. A victory is only a victory when it is built with the people we all work with.

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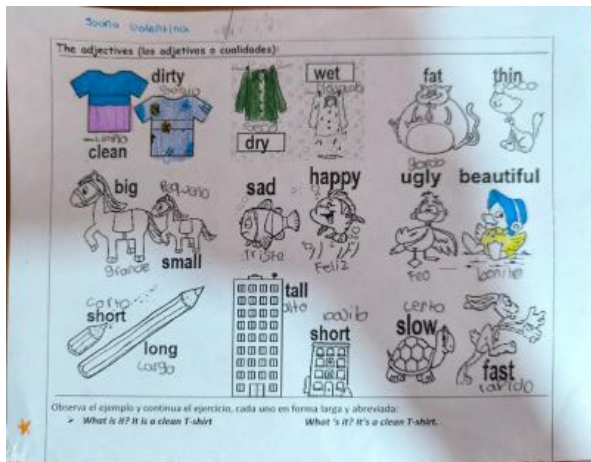
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Annex 1 (example of typical activity):



Annex 3 (diagnostic test):

Diagnostic test

My name is:

I am in the course:

The date of today is

miércoles 2 de octubre de 2024

¡Hola, muchachos! Hoy vamos a hacer una pequeña prueba para saber qué tantas cosas conocen en inglés. La prueba tiene 2 partes:

1. Lectura (Reading): Van a leer un texto corto y después responder algunas preguntas sencillas.
2. Escritura (Writing): Van a escribir algunas oraciones sobre ustedes mismos. Pueden colorear y dibujar en las preguntas que requieran.

No se preocupen, no tendrá ningún tipo de nota. ¡Hagan lo mejor que puedan y diviértanse!

Reading Section

1) Lee el siguiente texto. 2) Resalta con rojo las palabras que no conozcas. 3) Responde las preguntas.

My name is Ana. I live in a small town. Every day, I go to school with my brother. We have a big dog called Rex. After school, I like to play with Rex in the park. My favorite color is blue, and my favorite food is pizza.

Speaking Section

Quando Laura se acerca a tu puesto, contesta las preguntas que ella te haga. Puede ser cualquiera de estas. Recuerda, no sientas nervios. No pasa nada si no sabes cómo responderlas.

What's your name?

How old are you?

What is your favorite animal?

What is your favorite food?

What do you like to do in your free time?

Where do you live?

Do you have any brothers or sisters?

What is the name of your school?

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Section	5 points (Excellent)	4 points (Good)	3 points (Satisfactory)	2 points (Needs Improvement)	1 point (Poor)
Reading	All questions correct, highlights	1 mistake in comprehension, highlights	2 mistakes in comprehension, highlights	3+ mistakes in comprehension	4+ mistakes, does not

Annexes

Annex 2 (characterization survey):

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL

Facultad de Humanidades - Licenciatura en español y lenguas extranjeras
ED domingo Faustino Sarmiento
Encuesta de caracterización para estudiantes del grado cuarto (401)

Enmudos estudiantes y padres de familia, la presente encuesta tiene como finalidad la **caracterización de datos sobre sus hijos y sus conexiones con el aprendizaje del inglés** con el fin de elaborar un proyecto investigativo. Esto es completamente anónimo, por lo que pueden sentirse en libertad de contestar con plena tranquilidad y objetividad. Por favor, tómense el tiempo de responder esta encuesta en compañía de sus hijos.

Lugar de nacimiento del estudiante: _____ (¿Cómo llegan al colegio? Marca con x)

Edad: _____

Ciudad: _____

Barrio: _____

¿Con qué vive el estudiante? _____

¿Cómo llegan al colegio? (Marca con x)

• Ruta escolar • Hora • SITP • Caminando • Transmilenio • Taxi • Bicicleta • Otro

Marca con un ☒ y responde según sea tu caso.

1. ¿Te gusta aprender inglés?

☐ Sí, mucho. ¿Qué es lo que más te gusta del inglés?

☐ Poco. ¿Por qué?

2. Si la respuesta a la anterior pregunta fue o responde:

• Si la respuesta fue "Sí, mucho": ¿Te gustaría aprender inglés solo/a o en compañía?

☐ Solo/a. ¿Qué es lo que más te gusta del inglés?

☐ En compañía. ¿Qué es lo que más te gusta del inglés?

3. ¿Qué tan fácil o difícil te resulta aprender inglés?

1. Muy fácil
2. Fácil
3. Ni fácil ni difícil
4. Difícil
5. Muy difícil

4. ¿Usualmente en qué situaciones usas el inglés?

☐ En clase
☐ En casa
☐ Con amigos
☐ En juegos o aplicaciones
☐ Otro

5. ¿Tienes acceso a materiales en inglés en casa (libros, revistas, videos, etc.)?

☐ Sí
☐ No

6. ¿Te gustaría aprender inglés de una manera diferente a como lo haces ahora?

☐ Sí. ¿Cómo te gustaría aprender?

☐ No, pero me gustaría saber más.

☐ No, me gusta la forma en que aprendo.

7. ¿Qué es lo que más te cuesta al aprender inglés?

Puedes escoger varias opciones

☐ Vocabulario
☐ Gramática
☐ Pronunciación
☐ Comprensión auditiva
☐ Comprensión lectora
☐ Expresión escrita
☐ Expresión oral
☐ Otro

8. ¿Te gustaría poder hablar en inglés con más fluidez?

☐ Sí
☐ No
¿Por qué?

Has llegado al final de la encuesta
¡Muchas gracias por tu participación!

Annex 4 (authorizations):

Annex 5 (Field diary)

OBSERVACIÓN <u>Descripción/narración</u>	Tema, Concepto, Categoría	Análisis Causas / Consecuencias	Contribución al Proyecto <u>Preguntas / Decisiones</u>
The class began with the gratitude greeting that the teacher gives at the start of each session. Then, I proceeded to explain the activity related to her research project. During the explanation, capturing the students' attention was challenging, but once the activity instructions were given, most groups showed interest in completing the proposed task. The students <u>assigned</u> with leadership roles made their best effort to complete the challenges. However, some group members struggled with the activity as they disagreed with the leaders' instructions and chose to ignore them. Once the activity was completed, the corresponding points were assigned to each group, and the importance of following the rules set by me at the beginning of the session was emphasized.	- Student Engagement and Leadership in Game-Based Learning - Gamification and Classroom Management - Educational Strategies and Student Behavior	Analysis Initially, maintaining student attention during the explanation was difficult, suggesting that traditional instructional methods may not fully engage them. However, once the activity began, most groups demonstrated interest, indicating that interactive, task-based approaches effectively capture student motivation. The causes of engagement variation likely stem from differences in leadership dynamics and group collaboration skills. While some students embraced leadership roles and worked hard to complete the task, others struggled with following instructions, leading to conflict and disengagement. Consequently, group cohesion was weakened, and some students missed opportunities to practice essential skills such as teamwork and respect for authority. The emphasis on point assignment and rule-following at the end of the session helped reinforce classroom expectations, but the challenges observed suggest a need for strategies that strengthen student cooperation and accountability within gamified learning experiences.	It confirms that interactive activities increase motivation, as most groups showed interest once the task <u>began</u>. However, it also highlights the need for stronger strategies to manage leadership dynamics and ensure that all students respect and follow group roles. This raises key questions: How can leadership roles be structured to prevent conflicts? What strategies can be implemented to ensure all students respect group decisions? How can rule-following be reinforced without relying solely on teacher authority?

Annex 6 (rubric 1)

Group	Leadership and Organization (Authority - Leader)	Teamwork and Cooperation (Cooperation - Peer)	Behavioral Engagement (Authentic/Strategic)	Respect for Rules and Fair Play (Authority - Peer)	Task Completion
1	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
2	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)
3	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
4	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)
5	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)
6	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)

Annex 7 (rubric 2)

Group	Leadership and Organization	Teamwork and Cooperation	Behavioral Engagement	Respect for Rules	Self-Reflection	Task Completion
1	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)
2	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)
3	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
4	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)
5	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
6	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)

Annex 8 (Field diary)

OBSERVACIÓN <u>Descripción/narración</u>	Tema, <u>Concepto,</u> <u>Categoría</u>	Análisis <u>Causas / Consecuencias</u>	Contribución al Proyecto <u>Preguntas_ / Decisiones</u>
The class began with the teacher giving thanks for everything. After, he wrote the homework for the next classes on the board. The students needed to copy the info on the notebooks before I could implement my workshop. It took 20 minutes to begin. As soon as I started, I gave the instructions to the leaders, <u>the</u> groups were excited to know the activity. The leaders did their best to explain the topic. <u>The group</u> 5 presented problems in the first part of the dynamic since the leader didn't follow the instructions properly. After the explanation time was over, it was time to go to the soccer field to continue with the second part of the activity. There was a general mess at the beginning since the kids wanted to play and struggled to follow instructions. <u>The group</u> 3 was the fastest in organizing <u>thus</u>, it was the first one to complete the activity. <u>The</u> were groups with some technical problems since some partners punched others or didn't want to follow the instructions. At the end, due to the violent acts, a reflection was held where the leaders exposed how they felt and what to improve in future activities	• Commands of giving directions • Leadership • Cooperation	Analysis Most students are <u>begging</u> to understand the dynamics of the implementation and are showing signs of unconformity with the lack of discipline some of their partners have. One of the causes of the lack of organization in the activities could be related to <u>the timing</u>. I don't have enough time to control and pay attention to all the group at the same time and all of them want to have my attention	How <u>to</u> improve my performance <u>in</u> giving <u>the instructions</u> and organizing the group?

Annex 9 (Rubric)

Group	Leadership and Organization	Teamwork and Cooperation	Behavioral Engagement	Respect for Rules	Self-Reflection and Growth	Task Completion
1	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)
2	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)
3	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
4	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)
5	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)
6	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)

One for All, All for One. Part 1

Group	Leadership and Organization	Teamwork and Cooperation	Behavioral Engagement	Respect for Rules and Fair Play	Self-Reflection and Growth	Task Completion
1	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)
2	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)
3	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
4	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)
5	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)
6	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)

One for All, All for One (Second Part)

Annex 10 (field diary)

OBSERVACIÓN Descripción/narración	Tema, Concepto, Categoría	Análisis Causas / Consecuencias	Project Contribution Questions / Decisions
For the implementation of the sixth activity, the thesis advisor conducted an observation process of the teacher-researcher. One of the most important aspects to highlight is that when the students saw the advisor enter the classroom, they all agreed to collaborate and complete the workshop as instructed. This is curious because, although the students knew that the points they earned in Activity 5 depended on their performance in Activity 6, most of their good behavior was <u>actually due</u> to the presence of the thesis advisor. It is also important to mention that one of the students said verbatim: "Teacher, you know we only behaved today because she was here." This shows a clear awareness within the group regarding their own behavior. They are fully aware that they often act with disrespect, intolerance, and a lack of cooperation simply because they choose to. This raises the question: "Why?" What do they gain from a behavior they are consciously aware of? On the other hand, the activity consisted of organizing the routine that the teacher-researcher had "forgotten." First, they had to pay attention to the order of the routine <u>in order to</u> organize it correctly. Finally, each group had to act out the routine in front of the class according to the order they had arranged. In this activity, as previously mentioned, all groups worked exceptionally well, although Group 5 had some issues when performing the routine sequences because they felt embarrassed acting in front of the whole class. Groups like Group 3 stood out again because all members performed flawlessly. In Group 2, one student did not want to participate due to severe stage fright. At the end of the activity, the teacher-researcher asked reflective questions about how they perceived the changes in this activity. Many attributed the improvement to having listened and paid attention to the rules, while others, as mentioned before, attributed <u>the success</u> to the presence of the thesis advisor.	• Daily Routines Vocabulary • Listening Comprehension & Attention to Sequence • Oral Production • Stage Fright / Public Speaking Anxiety • Authority and External Motivation • Behavioral Awareness and Reflection • Cooperation and Team Performance	Analysis The students' sudden improvement in behavior due to the presence of the thesis advisor reveals a dependency on external authority rather than internalized discipline or intrinsic motivation. This implies that many students know how they are expected to behave but often choose not to follow those expectations unless a figure they perceive as having higher authority is present. The explicit comment "Teacher, you know we only behaved today because she was here" demonstrates that this is not a matter of misunderstanding the rules, but of consciously deciding <u>whether or not</u> to follow them based on perceived consequences or observation. This reveals a gap between behavioral awareness and behavioral regulation, suggesting the need for deeper emotional and ethical development within the group. From a socio-emotional perspective, the students' ability to behave well when they want to show that they are capable of respect, cooperation, and engagement, but these qualities are not yet consistent or self-driven. The presence of stage fright in Group 2 and performance anxiety in Group 5 also points to the need to further support emotional safety and confidence-building in the classroom, especially when tasks require public performance or exposure. On the other hand, the outstanding performance of Group 3 reinforces that in the right <u>conditions</u> clear expectations, team support, and an encouraging <u>environment</u> students can thrive both linguistically and socially. Overall, observation highlights both progress and remaining challenges: while students can engage with the content and collaborate successfully, many are still navigating the emotional maturity and internal motivation needed to act consistently and respectfully without supervision. This underscores the importance of continuing to build a classroom culture where values such as cooperation and tolerance are not only taught but lived and internalized.	• How can we transition students from external motivation (e.g., presence of an authority figure) to intrinsic motivation based on internalized values? • Should <u>the future</u> workshops include more structured reflective moments to reinforce behavioral awareness and emotional growth? • What strategies can help students who struggle with performance anxiety (e.g., in Group 2)? • How do we sustain the level of respect and participation observed during this session once the figure of external authority is removed? • Should the final stages of the intervention include peer-led routines to gradually shift leadership and self-regulation to the students themselves?

Annex 11 (rubric)

Group	Leadership & Organization	Teamwork & Cooperation	Engagement	Respect for Rules	Language Performance	Task Completion
1	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)
2	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)
3	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
4	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)
5	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)
6	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)

Annex 12 (field diary)

OBSERVACIÓN Descripción/narración	Tema, Concepto, Categoría	Análisis Causas / Consecuencias	Project Contribution Questions / Decisions
In this <u>class</u> was my opportunity to implement the first part or the first cycle of the fourth workshop entitled "<u>the great grocery challenge</u>". In this session, the teacher gave me one hour for implementation. In this <u>space</u> I told the students that they were to color the products that they will sell in their respective stores. The students showed enthusiasm to do their best to color their products. Groups 5, and 2 had trouble finishing their products on <u>time</u>, the rest of the groups were totally focused on the task. While they were finishing coloring, I asked them to assign prices to the products and groups 1, 3, 4 and 6, because they were close to finishing, <u>started</u> assigning prices. Group 3 pretended to put the prices in <u>millions</u> and I told them that they should keep it simple since these prices would be the ones they would use in the activity. At the end of the class, group 5 and group 2 who did not finish the drawings scored lower on the rubric, but <u>overall</u> the whole group did a good job.	• Coexistence • Dialogues • Personal Information	Analysis This session showed that most of the students were engaged and willing to participate in the first part of the fourth workshop called <i>The Great Grocery Challenge</i>. The activity was focused on coloring the food products that each group would later use in the main game. From the beginning, the students seemed excited and motivated to do their best, which shows how the idea of using games and creative tasks <u>actually helped</u> improve their attitude toward English. Groups 1, 3, 4, and 6 completed the task and even started assigning prices to their items before I asked, showing that they were organized and had a good group dynamic. This also reflects that they understood their roles and worked as a team. Group 3 made a funny comment about putting the prices in millions, which shows that they were really into the activity, even though I had to remind them to keep it realistic for the next class. On the other hand, Groups 2 and 5 had problems finishing on time, and that was reflected in the rubric. This may be connected to problems in teamwork or unclear group roles. Even though they participated, they didn't show the same level of organization or responsibility as the other groups. In general, the activity worked well to connect students with the vocabulary and to let them feel part of the preparation process. Most of them stayed focused, followed instructions, and completed the task, which proves that including creative and game-based activities improves participation and motivation in the classroom. It also helped me identify which groups need more support with time management and organization for the next cycle.	This activity showed that most of the students were engaged, motivated, and able to work collaboratively when presented with a creative and goal-driven task. The use of coloring and price assigning allowed students to connect with the vocabulary in a playful and purposeful way. It also helped establish an emotional and cognitive link to the upcoming simulation, making the language more meaningful. The activity contributed to the project by reinforcing the importance of cooperative roles and preparation phases in game-based learning. It also helped me identify which groups already show signs of leadership and organization, and which ones may need more support in the next sessions. How can I support groups that struggle with time management and organization like Group 2 and 5? □

Annex 13 (field diary)

OBSERVACIÓN Descripción/narración	Tema, Concepto, Categoría	Análisis Causas / Consecuencias	Project Contribution Questions / Decisions
After starting with the respective thank-you <u>greeting</u>, the teacher began to write a conversation on the board which, as in other sessions, the students were to write and then practice the pronunciation and then read it with another classmate. As usual, the students ignored the <u>instruction</u>. When the teacher considered, he told me that I could now start with my part of the implementation, for which he only gave me <u>20 minutes</u> which was not enough. When I stood in front of the room, as the students were ignoring the teacher's activity, they continued with the same dynamic in my explanation. As much as I tried to explain the second cycle of activity 4. Only a few people tried to pay attention to me. The others purposely ignored me, and the teacher did nothing about it to promote attention to me. The class ended with the bell indicating break and all the children running around <u>regardless of the fact</u> that I had not indicated that the end of my explanation had come. The next day, the teacher gave me the last 10 minutes of the space to finish the explanation from the last session but this time he left the room and was not present at any time which made the students think they had a free space and were not present in the room when I assigned the roles to those few who were there. In the end, space ended, and I could not conclude cycle 2 of the 4th activity successfully. The teacher entered the classroom, and I commented that it was not proper to leave me alone in the classroom, to which he commented that he never left me and was upset.	- Coexistence - Dialogues - Personal information	Analysis This session clearly showed that the implementation of the activity didn't go as planned due to both time limitations and classroom behavior. The moment I started to explain the second cycle of the fourth workshop, most of the students were still disengaged from the teacher's earlier activity and carried that same energy into my part of the session. Even though I tried to capture their attention, only a few students were listening and trying to follow. The rest were not paying attention and continued talking, ignoring what I was saying. The teacher gave me only 20 minutes, which was not enough to give proper instructions and ensure that all groups were clear on what they had to do. This lack of time, combined with the students' unwillingness to listen, made it impossible to carry on with the activity properly. The following day, I was given just 10 more minutes to finish explaining the activity, but the situation didn't improve. This time, the teacher left the room entirely, which sent the wrong message to the students. They assumed it was a free period and didn't take my presence or the activity seriously. Many of them were out of the classroom, and only a few stayed to listen. I tried to assign the roles, but not everyone was there, and the ones who were present weren't fully paying attention. As a result, I couldn't close the explanation or ensure that every student understood their role. This experience showed that without support from the main teacher and proper classroom conditions, it's very difficult to develop a learning activity successfully. Even though the workshop was well-prepared, the conditions in the classroom were not right, and the students weren't ready to receive the information. It also made clear how much influence the teacher's attitude and participation have on students' behavior and respect for the learning process. This class will affect how I plan the next steps and how much time I need to reinforce or reinforce the cycle with the group.	The session highlighted the importance of the teacher's presence and support during implementation. Without it, students do not take the activities seriously, which affects the development and outcomes of the workshop. How can I better prepare students to focus and follow instructions even when the teacher is not actively participating? Should I modify the workshop to make the instructions shorter and more direct in case I'm given limited time again?

Annex 14 (rubric)

Group	Leadership and Organization	Teamwork and Cooperation	Behavioral Engagement	Respect for Rules and Fair Play	Self-Reflection and Learning Growth	Task Completion
1	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)
2	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)
3	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
4	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
5	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)
6	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)

The Great Grocery Challenge (Cycles 1-3)

Annex 15 (rubric)

Group	Leadership and Organization	Teamwork and Cooperation	Engagement	Respect for Rules and Fair Play	Language Performance	Task Completion
1	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)
2	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)
3	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
4	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)
5	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)
6	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)

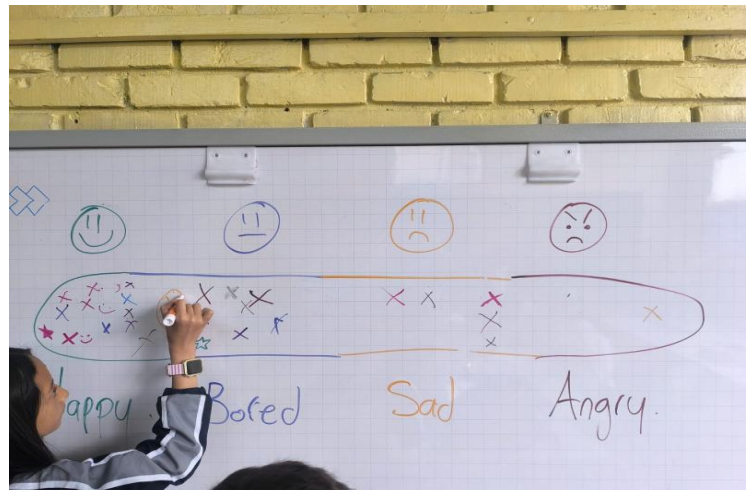
Workshop 7 "Where's My Stuff?"

Annex 16 (rubric)

Group	Leadership and Organization	Teamwork and Cooperation	Engagement in the Activity	Respect for Rules and Fair Play	Self-Reflection and Learning Growth	Task Completion
1	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)
2	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)
3	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
4	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)
5	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)
6	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)

Workshop 8 "The Leaders' Logbook"

Annex 17 (emotional mapping)



Annex 18 (rubric)

Group	Leadership and Organization	Teamwork and Cooperation	Engagement in the Activity	Respect for Rules and Fair Play	Self-Reflection and Learning Growth	Task Completion
1	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
2	Regular (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)
3	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
4	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
5	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)	Excellent (3)
6	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)	Regular (2)

Workshop 9 "How We've Grown Together"

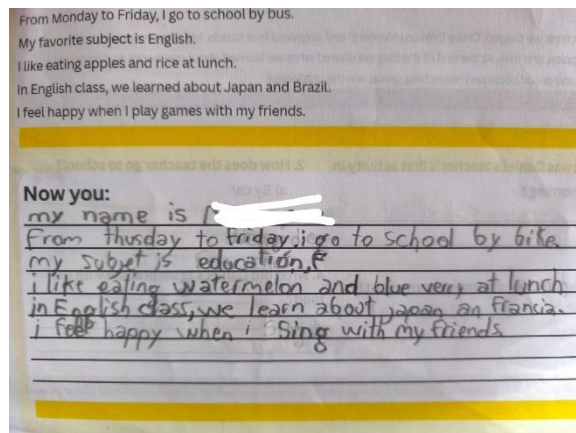
Annex 19 (field diary)

Observation	Topics, Categories	Analysis	Contribución al Proyecto Preguntas / Decisiones
The activity carried out on these dates corresponded to Workshop 10, the last activity of the intervention. The main objective of this application was to provide students with vocabulary that would be useful for creating the board games they had to design. Initially, the activity was scheduled for Monday, but since it required the use of technology, it had to be postponed to the following day, Tuesday, as that was when students had access to the computer lab. The activity began with the researcher-teacher sharing her screen and showing the vocabulary activation exercise related to daily routines. At this point, students had to guess and recall the vocabulary connected to routine actions. This activity was completed successfully. On Tuesday, once in the computer lab, students proceeded to work on the activities that had been previously planned in Wordwall. It is important to highlight that the students were enthusiastic about being able to carry out activities on the computer. It seems that most of them particularly enjoy virtual activities, especially those designed as games. Online games or computer-based games clearly draw their attention and increase their motivation. From the observation, it can be noted that the activity showed good indicators of participation and interest. Although, being merely a vocabulary activation exercise, it was not an extensive task, it is still relevant to underline that everything functioned properly and the activity unfolded smoothly.	- A1 vocabulary - Use of technology in the classroom - Vocabulary activation activities - Board game preparation (preliminary step)	Analysis The implementation of Workshop 10 showed a clear shift in student engagement when technology was introduced into the process. While the original plan to conduct the activity in the classroom was delayed due to lack of resources, the eventual use of the computer lab on Tuesday allowed the students to interact with the content in a more dynamic way. This revealed an important element for the research: students not only respond to the novelty of game-based learning but also to the integration of digital tools that resemble the types of games they enjoy outside of school. The high level of enthusiasm observed during the Wordwall exercises suggests that digital platforms may lower students' affective filters, allowing them to focus more on the task while enjoying the process. However, it is also necessary to point out that since the session focused mainly on vocabulary activation, the deeper socio-emotional categories of leadership, cooperation, and respect were less visible in this observation. The activity functioned more as preparation for the final product rather than as a direct opportunity to test interpersonal values. Nonetheless, its success highlights the importance of variety in methodological strategies and suggests that future implementations could benefit from a balance between physical workshops and technology-based dynamics.	How can the use of technology be balanced with face-to-face workshops to ensure that leadership, cooperation, and respect are still meaningfully developed?

Annex 20



Annex 21



Annex 22

Skill	Assessed Component	Evidence from Results	% of Students	Performance Level
Reading	Identification of explicit information (daily routines, food, countries, emotions)	Students correctly recognized reinforced vocabulary and explicit details from the text. Inferential comprehension remains limited.	60%	3 Satisfactory
Writing	Vocabulary Use	Students used familiar vocabulary from workshops, mostly repetitive patterns.	45%	3 Satisfactory
Writing	Sentence Structure (Subject–Verb–Complement)	Limited correct grammatical structure; frequent spelling mistakes.	30%	2 – Basic
Writing	Coherence and Connectors	Few students combined ideas using connectors such as <i>and</i> or <i>because</i> .	20%	2 – Basic
Listening	Recognition of explicit oral information	Students identified main information when read twice at slow pace; stronger performance in transportation and emotions vocabulary.	68%	3 Satisfactory
Speaking	Personal Information and Routines	Students answered short personal questions accurately using memorized formulas.	70%	3 Satisfactory
Speaking	Reflection and Emotional Expression	Students struggled with reflective questions; many relied on peers or Spanish.	25%	2 – Basic

Annex 23



Annex24



Annex 25

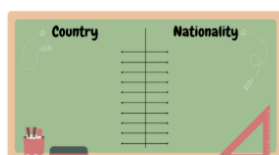
Field diary # 1
Date: _____
Purpose of the activity: _____
Name of the student: _____

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL
PROYECTOS DE INVESTIGACIÓN EN EL AULA
INSTITUCIÓN: _____

OBSERVATION Description/ narration	Topic Concept Category	Analysis Causes and consequences	Contribution to the Project questions

Annex 27 (Material Workshop 1)

Board to write down the pairs:



Annex 29 (Material Workshop 4)



Annex 28 (Material Workshop 2 and 3)



Commands

Coded messages

- **3 SPIN TIMES AROUND.**
- **HANDS 6 YOUR CLAP TIMES.**
- **FORWARD JUMP TIMES 2.**
- **SIT STAND TIMES AND UP DOWN 2.**
- **KNEES TOUCH 4 TIMES YOUR.**

Annex 30 (Material Workshop 5)



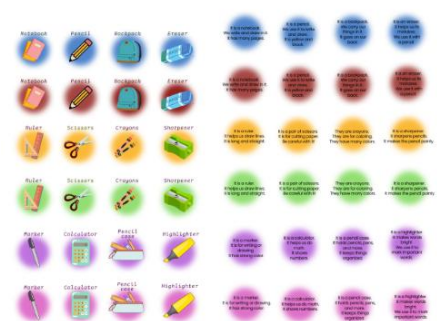
Annex 31 (Material Workshop 6)



Annex 32 (Material Workshop 7)

Lost Items:

Descriptions of the items to be found:



Dialogue planner worksheet:

Worksheet 1 Worksheet 1 Worksheet 1	Worksheet 2 Worksheet 2 Worksheet 2	Worksheet 3 Worksheet 3 Worksheet 3
Learning - Describe your group - Describe your group - Describe your group Ask for confirmation - Is this correct? - Is this correct? - Is this correct?	Learning - Describe your group - Describe your group - Describe your group Ask for confirmation - Is this correct? - Is this correct? - Is this correct?	Learning - Describe your group - Describe your group - Describe your group Ask for confirmation - Is this correct? - Is this correct? - Is this correct?

Annex 33 (Material Workshop 8)

The Leaders' Logbook

Name: _____
Date: _____
Group Number: _____

Think back to the activities we did today. Take a few minutes to reflect on your experience as a group member.

Recuerdo las actividades que hicimos yesterday hoy. Escribe unas minutos para reflexionar sobre tu experiencia como miembro del grupo.

1. Complete the following sentence:
In today's workshop, **I helped my group by** _____
Example: sharing ideas, organizing materials, reminding others of the rules.

2. **Our leader was successful because they...** _____
Example: listened to everyone, made a plan, encouraged us.

3. _____
Example: working quietly, taking turns, solving problems.

4. **I think we can improve our teamwork by...** _____
Example: talking less, helping each other more, staying focused.

Annex 34 (Material Workshop 9)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Group number: _____

1. Draw or write 3 emotions you've felt during the workshops.

👉 You can use words, emojis, or pictures.

Emotion 😊 / 😊 / 😊 / 😢 / 😢 / 😢	What made me feel this way? ¿Qué?	How did I react? ¿Cómo?	Next time I could... La próxima vez...

2. My most common emotion in group work is:

☐ Happy 😊

☐ Frustrated 😡

☐ Excited 🤩

☐ Nervous 😬

☐ Bored 😴

☐ Other: _____

3. When I feel this way, I usually...

Quando me sinto así, yo usualmente...

4. A strategy that helps me calm down or focus is...

Una estrategia que me ayuda a _____ (pregúntale a Laura para obtener más ideas)

5. My "Proud Moment" from all the workshops:

Mi momento _____ (pregúntale a Laura para obtener más ideas)

6. Color your "Emotional Backpack" and include symbols, colors, or objects that represent your emotions during the workshops. (pregúntale a Laura para obtener más ideas)



Annex 35 (Material Workshop 10)

1. Type of Game (choose one) Tipo de juego (selecciona uno)

- ☐ Board Game / Juego de mesa
- ☐ Roleplay / Juego de roles
- ☐ Mission / Misión

2. Theme of the Game (choose one) Tema del juego (selecciona uno)

- ☐ Food & Drinks / Comida y bebidas
- ☐ Daily Routines / Rutinas diarias
- ☐ Countries & Nationalities / Países y nacionalidades
- ☐ Classroom English / Inglés del salón (pueden ser útiles escolares)
- ☐ Directions & Places / Direcciones y lugares

3. Objective of the Game / Objetivo del juego

- What is the main goal of the game? ¿Cuál es la meta principal del juego?

4. Vocabulary to Use / Vocabulario a usar

Write at least 10 words or expressions from past workshops.
Escribe por lo menos 10 palabras o expresiones de los talleres anteriores.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

**7. Rules of the Game** / Reglas del juego

Write the rules clearly. Escribe las reglas de manera clara.

**8. Cooperation & Leadership** / Cooperación y liderazgo

- How will your group work together during the game? ¿Cómo trabajará tu grupo en equipo durante el juego?



- Who will be the leader/manager of your group when playing? ¿Quién será el líder/cargado del grupo durante el juego?

- _____
- _____
- _____

5. Characters or Roles / Personajes o roles

- Who are the characters or roles in your game? ¿Quiénes son los personajes o roles en tu juego?



- What does each role/character do? ¿Qué hace cada rol/personaje?

**6. Materials Needed** / Materiales necesarios

List all the materials your game requires (cards, dice, tokens, board, etc.).

Haz la lista de todos los materiales que tu juego necesita (cartas, dados, fichas, tablero, etc.).

**9. Creativity & Fun** / Creatividad y diversión

- What makes your game original or fun? ¿Qué hace que tu juego sea original o divertido?

Final Check / Revisión final:

✓ My game has a clear theme and goal / Mi juego tiene un tema y objetivo claros

✓ I used at least 10 vocabulary words / Usé por lo menos 10 palabras de vocabulario

✓ I included characters/roles / Incluí personajes/roles

✓ I listed the materials / Hice la lista de materiales

✓ I wrote the rules / Escribí las reglas

✓ I explained cooperation & leadership / Explicué la cooperación y el liderazgo

✓ I added something creative / Añadí algo creativo

