

Running head: CHALLENGES AN ENGLISH TEACHER FACES IN A SPECIAL  
EDUCATION CONTEXT

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AFFIDAVIT

We, Aura María Quintero Antolínez and Zenon Enrique Vellojín Otero, hereby declare that this master's thesis has not been previously presented as a degree requirement, either in the same style or with variations, in this or any other university.



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## **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to analyze the challenges an English teacher faces in a special education context and how those challenges influence her lesson plan and delivery. Inclusive education has led to new teaching defies which are encountered in any regular class and embraces the language learners' right to be part of a continuum practice that allows them to develop and be active participants in their learning process. The study was carried out through a qualitative case study method which involved nine elementary students with conditions such as short-term memory and Asperger in a private school in the Northern coast of Colombia. Data collection methods included teacher's interview, class observations, analysis of lesson plans, journal carried out by the teacher and document review provided by the school to have a better understanding of the school's philosophy, mission and vision within the educational system. The analysis of the information in data collection methods showed the importance of raising teachers' awareness about the topic and including in pre-service programs subjects that help teachers face variety of situations and challenges that could be found in these types of contexts. Besides, the analysis revealed the strategies, resources, and decisions the teacher implemented and made to cope with students' needs to achieve the goals set in the English curriculum of the school.

*Keywords: inclusive education, special education, learning disabilities, challenges, preparation.*

I dedicate this thesis to Almighty God and my lovely family. A feeling of gratitude and respect to my parents, Mr. Manuel Quintero and Mrs. Gloria Antolínez for their words of encouragement and relief when I needed it. To my sisters Silvia and Sonia for always believe in me, and to my dear husband Gabriel Goethe for his patience and understanding. I also dedicate this dissertation to my close friends who have being part of this process and have never left my side.

I also dedicate this achievement and give special thanks to my mater's supervisor M.A. Lourdes A. Rey, who has supported me throughout the process of growing academically and professionally for many years.

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To my family who has supported me in my process and Helena who I deeply love.

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## INTRODUCTION

*“If a child can’t learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.”*

*– Ignacio Estrada*

Education has overcome many boundaries over the last centuries. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) in article 6, states that all human beings are “equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law (p.3). Also, this document indicates in article 26 (p.7) that “everyone has the right to education” and that this “shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (p.7)”. Besides, education promotes progress and development on countries which is one of the strongest options to allow every person in the world to have the right to be educated no matter their conditions.

However, education has not been easily accessed by people with disabilities. Disability has been defined by the World Health Organization (2013, p.15) in its public policy as;

A generic term that includes: deficiency or alteration in body function or structure, limitations or difficulties in the ability to perform activities and participation restriction on activities that are vital to the person’s development (authors’ translation).

Children with disabilities have been the most excluded population from education. The World Bank (2003) has estimated that out of 115 million children in the world who are not part of the educational system, 30-40 per cent corresponds to children with disabilities. This situation calls for immediate action and there are international programs working towards inclusion of these children into the educational systems. That is why the topic of inclusion in education has become so pertinent. This topic, though, may require several actions from the schools, the

teachers, the parents and even the educational authorities. Historically, people with disabilities have had problems to access quality education. Even teacher educational programs did not prepare teachers-to-be to deal with the students' diversity and schools were not appropriately equipped (structured or educational) to support this population. It was then that in 1956, a group of blind students were placed in regular classes in a school in Bangkok and the situation started to take importance. According to Soontornwipast (2012), the Ministry of Education of this country expanded the project by putting students with hearing disabilities in regular classrooms too. In 1970, special education courses were first offered at an undergraduate level at Suan Dusit Teacher College in Bangkok.

Through years, this topic has become relevant and more people are interested in making it real for people with disabilities. In 2000, the World Education Forum, held in Dakar, Senegal. From this event, the Dakar Framework for Action was established. This document "makes reference to the groups of children who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged and calls for inclusive education practices to ensure that they are included in the education process and have access to schools." Unesco (2009, p. 1). The proposal to include more and more people with disabilities to the educational contexts grows every year. However, even this matter has been exposed for many years; it seems it is still on paper.

In Colombia, during the decades of 1920 to 1950, special education was known as education or pedagogy of abnormal. This pedagogical proposal proceeded from France, Belgium, Germany, and The United States of America, among others. Special education was "institutionalized" nationwide in 1968 with the creation of the Division of Special Education in the Ministry of Education. Its aim was to promote "special education programs and services for both undergraduates and outstanding students" (Salinas, 1990, p.48). It was defined as an

educational subsystem that catered to exceptional populations: limited, mentally retarded, blind and deaf-mute, with cerebral palsy, and outstanding learners, among others.

Since the 1960s, educational attention to children with mental retardation has been increased and special education institutes multiply. Also, the Division of Special Education, the INCI (National Institute of the Blind) and the INSOR (National Institute of the Deaf) were established. Furthermore, educational programs for teachers working with visually impaired and mentally retarded children were created and the Special Classrooms Program in Regular Schools was implemented in 1974. From the 1980s onwards, discourses, institutional practices, subjects, the instruments or techniques of educational integration, made special education look like an institutionalized, segregating, assistential type of education that failed to achieve its objectives. Academic, school or educational integration was "institutionalized" in the General Law of Education # 115 of 1994, and the decree 2082 of 1996 regulates it. The Ministerial Resolution 2565 of 2003 specifies and delineates the framework of special Education.

Based on the reality that students with learning disabilities are part of our society and educational contexts, teachers need to be educated to use the required tools to help them succeed in learning, to improve their performance and practices, especially because the Colombian government has strict laws that support people with disabilities. One of those laws is the 1618 from February 17th 2013, in which the regulations to guarantee the full exercise of rights on people with disabilities are established. Even though this law is current, there are some aspects that need to be considered in order to accomplish that goal.

In terms of studying what has been done in Colombia about this topic, there are not many studies related to either including children with disabilities into the regular educational context or identifying specific skills and strategies teachers in these contexts use when face challenges. In

fact, after a thorough review of the curricula of ten different teacher education programs in Colombia, only one program included a subject related to Psychology and Educational development, Neuropsychology, Psychopedagogy of special education, and scholar orientation in the curriculum. This implies that perhaps teacher education programs in Colombia do not see the importance of including psychological foundations into the teaching process and the relationship between Psychology and Education.

Therefore, there is a need to build policies and define strategies to help learners with disabilities take advantage of educational processes by studying teachers' decisions in these contexts. Hence, the aim of this study is to analyze the challenges an English teacher faces in a special education context and how those challenges influence her lesson plan and delivery.

### **1.1 Research context**

In this study, the participant population is a group of seventh-grade students and their English teacher from the Liceo Campestre School. This is a private institution located in Barranquilla, Atlántico that serves students with learning disabilities.

The main objective of Liceo Campestre School is to offer an integral formation of the student and ensure they achieve adequate development during the course of their education, worrying not only to transmit knowledge, but also to work in the acquisition of key values to live in society.

Liceo Campestre's methodology is based on the principles of participatory, constructive, active and repetitive learning, adjustable and flexible to the learning pace of each student, understanding that each one of them is unique and unrepeatable with strengths and weaknesses. This approach is strengthened by the implementation of a defined and consistent pedagogical model called Humanist Pedagogical Conceptual Model.

The philosophy of Liceo Campestre School is based on the concepts and principles of a humanistic philosophy with a holistic view and a model of personalized education, where the pace and learning style of the student is respected, taking into account the concept of a human being as a unique, unrepeatable and singular learner.

For this study, the participating students were 9 (2 females and 7 males) from high social classes whose average ages range from 8 to 14 years, but their cognitive level belongs to a third-grade student. That is why the subjects are graded at that level.

The English teacher is a young woman who holds a bachelor's degree in English and has two years of experience working with primary and secondary learners. An important aspect to highlight is the existing empathy between the teacher and the students. This has created a friendly learning environment.

The English program at the school aims to expose learners to five (5) hours of class per week to interact with their professor and classmates through simple questions and answers related to their immediate context. The goal of the course is for learners to understand words, numbers, simple phrases, and short sentences on familiar topics. Also, to communicate very basic personal information using a limited range of words and expressions. The methodology revolves around the recognition of the child in all its dimensions: cognitive, socio-affective, perceptual and motor, aesthetic, spiritual, and ethics, so that the teaching process of English can help with the integral formation of the child.

The contents and activities were taught to familiarize children with the language. In addition, children can interact with their peers, teachers, and media, a methodology based in bilingual experiences that allow them to listen, watch and play in a dynamic and real manner; the

child along with the educator can bring actions that link more closely the thematic content with their day-to-day reality.

## 1.2 Research questions and objectives

This research study intends to analyze the challenges an English teacher faces in an English classroom where students present different learning conditions and describe the decisions the teacher makes in the planning and delivery stages of the lesson to respond to those challenges. It is expected that this study enriches the discussion about what type of education is required in this type of context so English teachers can perform better. In the table below, both the research questions and objectives are presented.

<b>Research question</b>	<b>Research general objective</b>
How do the challenges an English teacher faces in a special education class influence her lesson planning to and delivery?	Analyze how the challenges an English teacher faces in a special education class influence her lesson planning to and delivery
<b>Research sub questions</b>	<b>Research specific objectives</b>
1. What challenges does the English teacher faces in a Special Educational context.	1. Identify the challenges an English teacher faces in a Special Educational context.
2. How do these challenges affect the lesson planning process?	2. Analyze the decisions the English teacher makes when planning the lesson as a result of the challenges encountered in class.
3. How do these challenges affect the delivery of the lesson?	3. Analyze the decisions the teacher made during the delivery of the lesson as a result of the challenges encountered in class.

*Table 1. Research questions and objectives.*

Considering the aforementioned objectives, a review of theoretical background is considered in this study to define the key concepts and controversies of the topic. Also, a Methodology section intends to provide information about the purpose of the research, the research questions, objectives and the type of study that will be carried out as well as a description of the data collection instruments and the procedure to gather data aiming to respond to the research question of this study. In addition, a chapter about findings will describe the main results of this study and their connection to the research question by incorporating evidences that illustrates the results that may lead to conclusions. Subsequently, a discussion section will examine, interpret, and infer from the findings of the study to explain, clarify, or contradict what other researchers have done in the past regarding this topic. Finally, the results section of this study aims to bring closure by reviewing the main arguments presented, pointing out the main gaps in knowledge and limitations of the study, discussing implications for teaching and research, and suggesting issues for further research.

### **1.3 Ethical Considerations**

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. The information collected will be confidential and will not be used for any purpose other than those of this research. If the teacher, administrators or parents have any doubts about this innovation, they can ask questions at any time during their participation in it. Likewise, they can withdraw from the study at any time without harming it in any way.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter aims to present the concepts that support this research by defining some key terms that constitute the foundations of this study: inclusive education, special education and learning disabilities.

### **2.1 Inclusive Education**

Through years, a number of research studies have defined inclusion in similar ways; an inclusive setting is defined as the meaningful participation of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Bateman & Bateman, 2002). Additionally, Idol and Griffith's (1998) claimed that inclusion refers to students with disabilities receive their entire academic program in the general education classroom. Similarly, Dixon (2005) reported that an inclusive setting is where all students are included, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. The practice of integrating or including learners with diverse leaning abilities and needs into mainstream schools is becoming more common nowadays. The term inclusion is understood as all students having the right to learn with either similar or different backgrounds in regular environments (Lim & Tan, 2004). Also, Guild (1997) and Snow (2001) agreed on the responsibility of including learners in all academic processes highlighting their strengths, not weaknesses, and bearing in mind that inclusion is a right of every learner instead of a privilege that has to be earned. The concept seems to be clear for teachers; however, when facing classroom challenges with learners and their learning disabilities (LD), it is evident that they lack of strategies to deal with them. Cook, Tankersley, Cook & Landrum, (2000) stated,

As students with disabilities present characteristics that typically place them outside of teacher tolerance, teacher concern for these students and the extra attention required appear necessary for students with disabilities to succeed in inclusive environments, although they in no

way guarantee success. It is therefore recommended that administrators take steps to encourage attitudes of concern by providing professional development and support so that inclusive teachers feel they can meet the needs of and be concerned about their students with disabilities. (p.132)

Pre service teachers must be prepared to offer a meaningful learning process in special education classrooms. Inclusion has become an educational trend that requires special attention from the teachers and administrators. As Keenan (1997) argues,

With a system that has communicated for 20 years that separate education is better and that special education personnel have some “special way” of dealing with children, general educators are reluctant to suddenly believe that their classrooms are the best place to educate all students. Additionally, many are reluctant to believe that they have or can be trained to have the necessary skills to make it work. (p.120)

The role of the school and parents when supporting teachers in those contexts is an aspect to be considered as both the school and the parents have a crucial role.

It is clear then that some conditions need to be considered in order to provide the necessary and appropriate support to language learners with LD. For English Language Learners (ELLs) with LD, the development of this language and the support they should get from their families and schools have to be a constant priority and continuous process. ELLs with LD may respond and benefit from the adequate services that teachers can offer to support their learning processes. (Klingner & Eppollito, 2014) proposes these following conditions:

“(1) culturally and linguistically responsive teachers; (2) culturally and linguistically responsive and relevant instruction; (3) a supportive learning environment; (4) assistance with English language acquisition (such as oral language, vocabulary, and academic

language development) and support with the home language; (5) help in the general education class- room with accessing the general education curriculum; and (6) Intensive research-based interventions designed to help improve academic and, possibly, behavioral skills in targeted areas”(p.2).

Salend (2011) distinguishes four key principles to embrace the philosophy of inclusion and put it into practice in the general education classroom:

1. To provide learners with challenging and flexible education;
2. To understand learners’ strengths and challenges as individuals;
3. To reflect on the teaching practice and instructions;
4. To collaborate among students, teachers, administrators, professionals, and families.

Additionally, this author provides the following definition of inclusive education:

Inclusion is a philosophy that brings students, families, educators and community members together to create schools based on acceptance, belonging and community.

Inclusionary schools welcome, acknowledge, affirm and celebrate the value of all learners by educating them together in high-quality, age-appropriate general education classrooms in their neighborhood schools (p.39).

To sum up, inclusive education refers to the recognition and acceptance of differences and diversity among learners sharing the same classroom and the consideration of their human rights to promote equity and justice. Education for learners with learning disabilities has gained the attention for educators, schools administrators and other members of the community.

Inclusive education becomes an alternative approach to facilitate learners their access to educational experiences and social-academic development.

## 2.2 Learning Disabilities

Another topic that requires our study is what learning disabilities are. Some definitions about this topic will be presented as a way to help us construct our comprehension of the concept. In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) defined the concept of learning disabilities as:

Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculation. It includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. On the contrary, it does not include a learning problem that is primarily the results of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. (p. 13)

The IDEA is a law that protects and supports the rights of learners of all ages in the United States (U.S.A) with learning disabilities to be part of the educational system in an inclusive environment. From about 1960 to 1975, the term learning disability started to be considered a formal category in the educational mainstream. Hence, different definitions originated. Kirk (1962,) defines a learning disability as:

a retardation, disorder, or delayed development in one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, writing, arithmetic, or other school subject resulting from a psychological handicap caused by a possible cerebral dysfunction and/or emotional or behavioral disturbances. It is not the result of mental retardation, sensory deprivation, or cultural and instructional factors (p.263).

Kirk (1962) is considered the first to mention the term learning disabilities, but in 1965, his student, Barbara Bateman, also offered a definition that presents a difference between achievement and potential as a way to identify students with learning disabilities. Bateman defines learning disabilities as:

Children who have learning disorder are those who manifest an educationally significant discrepancy between their estimated potential and actual level of performance related to basic disorders in the learning process, which may or may not be accompanied by demonstrable central nervous system dysfunction, and which are not secondary to generalized mental retardation, educational or cultural deprivation, severe emotional disturbance, or sensory loss. (p. 220)

Based on Kirk and Bateman's definitions, learning disabilities include physical and neurological causes that affect the learner's storage of information and its use for social and academic purposes. Once all these challenges became an area of concern among educators, the need to find the appropriate teaching strategies and educational management started to be a main point to discuss in among the agencies of the educational system.

In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), redefined the concept of learning disability as:

A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. (p. 70).

Besides, the concept of learning disability was originally conceived as a discrete classification where its parameters included, not generalized learning failure, but particular problems related to academic learning (Kavele & Forness, 1998; Wiederholt, 1974).

As aforementioned by several authors, it can be concluded that a learning disability is then, an existing condition that may be present in one way or another in various learners within the same classroom. Hence, it cannot remain isolated from the educational policies, the administration of schools, and most important, the methodology and approaches that take place in the teaching-learning process.

### **2.3 Special education**

The last concept that may help us lead our research is special education. It is important to establish the difference between this and inclusive education. Salend (2011) defines as follows:

Special education involves delivering and monitoring a specially designed and coordinated set of comprehensive, research-based instructional and assessment practices and related services to students with learning, behavioral, emotional, and physical, health or sensory disabilities. These instructional practices and services are tailored to identify and address the individual strengths and challenges of students; to enhance their educational, social, behavioral and physical development; and to foster equity and access to all aspects of schooling, the community and society (p.7).

Besides, the author indicates that assessment needs to be carefully assessed and planned. Also, he indicates that the goal-directed instruction learners receive should be specialized and intensive. Last, he considers that there is a need of collaborative partnerships and research-based instructional practices to learn about it. Taking into consideration the above mentioned aspects,

their implementation within the general education mainstream can have a positive impact on the learning processes of students with LD.

According to Lloyd et al. (1991), the special education movement has supported learners with different learning and physical conditions (e.g. deaf, blind, intellectual challenges) triggering teachers alerts and catching their attention towards variety of situations in the classroom.

In Colombia, the mission of the Ministry of Education (MEN) is to achieve a “Quality Education” to grow up better human beings, citizens with ethical values, competent, respectful of the public, who exercise human rights and fulfill their duties living together in peace. All children, from birth, have the same opportunities of access to education and a coverage with comprehensive quality care.

In 2006, the MEN established a Guide (No. 12) indicates that special educational needs refer to those individual educational needs that cannot be solved through the media and the methodological resources that the teacher usually uses to respond to the individual differences of his students and that require to be attended to adjustments, resources or special pedagogical measures or of extraordinary character, different from the ones that usually require the majority of the students.

The special educational needs refer to the greater difficulties that a student presents, in relation to the rest of the peers to access the learning that correspond to them by age, or that present lags in relation to the curriculum for various causes and that may require to thrive In their learning of: Means of access to the curriculum, adaptations in the curriculum, adjustments in the educational context and / or in the organization of the classroom and special support services. (MEN Conceptual basis for attention in the educational service to students with special

educational needs, 2006) Besides, Kauffman and Trent (1991) indicated that “special education should take the initiative in strengthening delivery of appropriate education in all of these service delivery models” (p. 471). All students deserve the opportunity to learn and count on effective instruction and education of quality.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the main difference regarding inclusive education and special education is that the concept of inclusive education has come to mean many things: from the very specific – for example, the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools – to a very broad notion of social inclusion as used by governments and the international community as a way of responding to diversity among learners (Ainscow, 2007). Hence, special education is part of the inclusion which is the umbrella term where all learners have the right to access education regardless of their abilities or disabilities. Considering this, our research will be focused on special education understood as the practice and services to students with learning, behavioral, emotional, and physical disabilities.

The modern view of special education is to offer and enhance the functioning, skills, tools, knowledge and development of learners with disabilities. Thus, changes have to be made in teacher education programs in order to raise awareness on the reality of special education and the rights of students with learning disabilities. Roberts (1982), claims that,

Probably the simplest and most direct step that can be taken is to add to these prospective teachers’ training programs a course in which they are taught about the different areas of exceptionality as well as about children’s learning problems, how to identify them, how to teach the children despite their deficits, and how to remediate their learning problems while teaching them academics through their strong learning modalities. (p. 404)

Subsequently, students with learning disabilities can have the opportunity to live rewarding experiences and feel adapted without labels, stigmas, or exclusion (Andrews et al., 2000). If the students with learning disabilities receive the education that makes them feel accepted in the society and their environments, then special education would be the helping profession it was created to be. This may require some attention as both the school and the parents have a crucial role. (Goss et al.) Suggest that school leaders should provide teachers with the time, tools and the professional learning needed to track progress of students and embed targeted teaching into their practice.

In summary, the review of theories considered in this study helped us define the key concepts and controversies of inclusive and special education in different scenarios. Continuing, a Methodology section intends to provide information about the purpose of the research, the research questions, objectives, and the type of study and a description of the data collection instruments along with the procedure to gather data aiming to respond to the research question of this study.

## METHODOLOGY

Educational research intends to “address questions or solve problems through the collection and analysis of primary data for the purpose of description, explanation, generalization and prediction (Anderson & Arsenault, 2004, p.6)”. In special language education, many questions have not been responded yet. Therefore conducting this study in an ethical and valid way will not only enrich the knowledge about this topic but will empower teachers experiencing similar conditions to share their knowledge and experiences. In this chapter, a description of the research process carried out in this study will be presented.

### **3.1 Research paradigm**

According to Hatch & Farhaday (1982) research is the “systematic approach to finding answers to questions”. In order to find answers to those questions, a variety of methods and techniques are used in classroom research and depending on the focus of the study, each one of those play an important role in collecting and analyzing data.

To decide which paradigm is the most appropriate to conduct and base this research study, it is of great importance to understand its concept, purpose and the characteristics each research paradigm comprises. According to Willis (2007), “A paradigm is thus a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field”.

For educational researchers, there is a variety of paradigms that carry out theories related to teaching, learning, curriculum, assessment, and more. These paradigms are classified into traditional and relatively new paradigms (Taylor & Medina, 2013).

On the one hand, the positivist and post-positivist paradigms represent the traditional paradigms. Even though both paradigms are apparently the same, there are specific characteristics that establish a difference between them.

First, the positivist paradigm is well-known worldwide among researchers; it involves qualitative methodology and experimental methods that allows measurement of gain scores in controlled groups and administration of pre and post tests. In this paradigm, the researcher is external to the research site and its focus is on the objectivity of the research process (Creswell, 2008).

Second, according to Willis (2007, p.2), the post-positivist paradigm is a “milder form of positivist” that allows more interaction between the researcher and his/her research. Besides, surveys, interviews, and participant-observation (Creswell, 2008) are part of the traditional qualitative methods of this paradigm that aims to produce objective and generalizable knowledge about social patterns. With the help of triangulation of data, methods and theories, the post-positivist paradigm allows quality standards such as objectivity, validity, and reliability to be modified.

On the other hand, the Interpretative, Postmodern, Multi-pragmatic, and Critical are known as the relatively new paradigms. As with the traditional ones, the new paradigms have some characteristics that make them unique in research processes.

The Interpretative paradigm is known as a humanistic paradigm and arrived in educational research during the late 1970s. Its basis is to understand from the inside leaving space for interaction and the researcher’s subjectivity. According to Lincoln (1989), this paradigm’s quality standards are: credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability. The interpretative researcher questions his/her methods of interaction and reflects on his/her

experience of being part of the target population. The Postmodern paradigm opens the door to other disciplines such as the Arts. (Literary genre (writing, poetry, storying, screenplay, fiction) Visual imagery (film, painting, dance and photography) and gives importance to the concept of “representation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 6). In this paradigm, the arts-based research provides many more quality standards for shaping the educative and literate quality. The Multi-pragmatic is a combination of methods and quality standards that allows the researcher to use newer paradigms as referents and frame the design of the research (Taylor, Taylor, & Luitel, 2012).

Finally, the Critical paradigm appears to be the most appropriate paradigm to conduct this research study. For educational research, it is of great importance to empower students and colleagues to become more critical thinkers and to enable the researcher to practice “deep democracy” (Kincheleo & McLaren, 2000, p.5). One of the main objectives of this paradigm is to raise teachers’ conscious awareness about established values and beliefs. Taylor (2008) adds that it promotes critical pedagogy, cultural inclusiveness, and social justice. The critical researcher enables the population to perceive the problematic, find the source, and identify the effects on their scenario.

This type of research requires not only a rigorous and critical understanding of social issues, but also to develop a vision of a better teaching practice, effective learning process and professional development. Since this research study focuses on describing the challenges an English teacher faces in an inclusive language education classroom, it is necessary to develop a critical understanding of the complexity of the educational issues that exist in inclusive classrooms. The researcher’s role in this paradigm, and for the purpose of this study, is to become an agent of change on the way to a fairer and equitable education that is student-

centered, inquiry oriented, culturally sensitive, community-oriented, and socially responsible (Taylor, 2008).

### **3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative research**

The qualitative research method intends to explore and understand specific issues by providing detailed and contextualized information that allows the researcher to interpret and describe as the same time how he/she copes with the opinions, beliefs and perspectives of the target population and how these interact with his or her own beliefs or practices. Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as according to Patton (2002 p.39) "real world setting [where] the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest". Comparatively, the quantitative research method provides a general overview of the research and seeks precise measurement, quantity, and generalization. This method, presents numbers to verify, predict and explain in a more objective and reliable way. According to Winter (2000 p, 6) a quantitative researcher attempts to fragment and delimit phenomena into measurable or common categories that can be applied to all of the subjects or wider and similar situations.

For qualitative and quantitative methods, data can be analyzed in particular ways. In the first place, qualitative data can be observed but not measured; its strength belongs to words, pictures, audios, and videos and most important, the objective of qualitative research method is to look at the whole context from the inside. While in the case of quantitative methods, data can be counted and measured, giving value to numbers and categories, looking for specific aspects from the outside.

To carry out this study, the qualitative research methods allow us to use inductive reasoning, to describe the meaning of the research findings from the perspective of the target

population and participants. Additionally, a process of categorizing and integrating data can take place after using observations and experiences as relevant to the development of the research. Methods such as individual and semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and a journal will help towards the collection of data. (See 3.4, data collection techniques).

### **3.3 Case study**

By using the case study as a qualitative method to carry out this research, it is expected to come out with findings that allow us to understand in a better way a particular process inside the classroom. According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000 p. 281), “Case studies can establish cause and effect, indeed one of their strengths is that they observe effects in real contexts, recognizing that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects”.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995 p. 322) suggest that “the case study approach is particularly valuable when the researcher has little control over events”. They consider that a case study has several hallmarks:

- It is concerned with a rich and vivid description of events relevant to the case.
- It provides a chronological narrative of events relevant to the case.
- It blends a description of events with the analysis of them.
- It focuses on individual actors or groups of actors, and seeks to understand their perceptions of events.
- It highlights specific events that are relevant to the case.
- The researcher is integrally involved in the case.
- An attempt is made to portray the richness of the case in writing up the report. (p. 317)

As the aforementioned information, we can state that a case study is essential for our research because it illustrates, in real life, the relationship between the reality and the participants' experiences. Considering that one of the main objectives of our research study is to find out the challenges an English language teacher faces in a special education classroom, and the strategies she implements to overcome those situations, the use of a case study approach will provide to us with chronological events, that can be described for further analysis. This analysis will be focused on the participants, perception of events, and richness of the information.

### **3.4 Data collection techniques**

As stated before, using a case study, which is a form of qualitative research that endeavors to discover meaning, to investigate processes, and to gain insights into and in-depth understanding of an individual, group, or situation, a number of instruments are used to collect useful information to carry out this research, the following instruments have been chosen to be analyzed;

First, one of the instruments to be used to collect information from students and their environment is a semi-structured interview applied to the participant teacher, from which it is expected to collect relevant information that guides the researchers to understand the challenges faced by the teacher in her classes. According to Stuckey (2013 p. 58), Semi-structured interviews allow questions to be prepared ahead of time, which allows the interviewer to be prepared, yet gives the participant freedom to express views with his/her own words. The teacher is required to answer open questions to express her opinion, perceptions of the context, her teaching practice and experience with her group from a personal and professional point of view.

Second, another data collection method to be used is a non-structured classroom observation; four (4) different lessons with the target group will be observed in order to identify the challenges the teacher faces in the English class with learners with learning disabilities. Holmes (1986) considers classroom observation to be the classic and traditional method to gather information in case studies. We found that the author emphasizes the important and vital information that can be collected when observing due to its variety and type of analysis (Holmes, 1986). Also, another advantage is the richness of the data that can be gathered by observing in real time the moments of the teaching-learning process. For this study, the observations will take place in four days and the researchers will go to the classes and tape them for further transcription in order to gather the required information needed to help us understand the challenges the teacher faces and the decisions she makes before and in a class with learners with LD.

Third, the teacher will be asked to keep a journal in which she reflects about the planning and delivery stages of the class. By using this data collection instrument, the researchers would have the opportunity to analyze the decisions the teacher made and identify strategies to cope with the challenges encountered and the rationale behind them. This reflective process will be held for a week, before and after each class. A rubric will be used to analyze the information gathered.

According to Dymont, & O'Connell, (2013), "Journals serve as a vehicle for reflection before, during, and after a learning experience." (p.233) this instrument allows researchers to understand in-depth the teacher's expectations in each one of the lessons and constrains that take place in their context for the appropriate development of classes. Besides, it helps the teacher to bear in mind two different perceptions (pre and after) about her classes which may lead to

overcome the challenges she faced while teaching the lesson and reflect on the aspects she might change or perform in other ways in order to help learners in their learning process. This instrument may help the teacher to identify the challenges faced in a special educational context and the decisions she makes to cope with those challenges and also analyze the decisions the teacher made during the delivery of the lesson as a result of the challenges encountered in class.

## **RESULTS**

The aim of this section is to present the results of the data collected. It is essential to highlight that data was collected through: four class observations in which lesson planning and delivery played an important role due to researchers took it as a guide to find the challenges the teacher faced during the development of her classes; also, a semi structured interview to check teacher's insights about teaching in an inclusive context and a journal the teacher wrote before and after each of her classes. The objective is to identify the challenges teacher faced during her classes and what strategies she used to overcome them.

The analysis of each instrument will be shown in this part as follows:

### **4.1 Classroom observation**

The first applied technique in this study was classroom observation combined with the lesson plan analysis. According to Allwright (2014; p.6), "Essentially what is involved in classroom observation is a procedure of keeping a record of classroom events such as a way that it can be later be studied, typically either for teacher training or for research purposes". During the application of this instrument, four classes were observed in order to gather data about how the teacher faced the challenges she encountered during her classes and how those challenges were related to her planning. Each lesson took approximately fifty (50) minutes. The weekly objectives of the classes stated that learners would name vocabulary related to toys; Students would identify prepositions of place; also, they would produce short sentences using toys vocabulary and prepositions of place (on-in-under) and finally, they would identify and use vocabulary related to toys and games. According to the lesson planning, the teacher's personal objectives were to increase learners' class participation and engagement and encourage learners

to use the target language more often. The material the educator used for her lessons were: tape recorder, the text book, flash cards, markers, and the board.

In order to analyze the information collected a rubric was created. This rubric included three categories that emerged from the analysis: what the teacher planned (lesson plan analysis); what the teacher did in class and what was the challenge identified. This analysis is completed per each of the four classes observed. The objective is to identify the challenges the teacher faced in the inclusive educational context, how the teacher handled it and if she planned the lesson taking into account those challenges.

#### 4.1.1 Class 1

In this part, the first class will be analyzed. During the delivery of the class, the teacher encouraged learners to identify vocabulary related to toys. At the beginning of the class, the teacher starts with the warm up by playing some songs (Good morning song, days of the week and my teddy bear) as can be seen in the lesson plan. See excerpts 1, 2 and 3.

##### Excerpt. 1. Song #1

---

TURN	SPEAKER	COMMENTS
1	T	Ok let's go! stand up!
5	SS	Good morning, good morning, good morning:::
6	SS and T	Clap your hands, clap, clap, clap, stomp your feet, stomp, stomp, stomp, spin around, spin, spin, spin, all right:::

---

##### Excerpt 2. Class 1. Song #2

---

TURN	SPEAKER	COMMENTS
20	T	Ok the days of the week:::
21	SS	XXX

---

22	SS and Teacher	Monday, tuesday, wednesday, thursday, friday, saturday, sunday::: ((students make some movements as the song plays))
23	SS	One two, one two three, four::: monday, tuesday, wednesday, thursday, friday, saturday, sunday:::

---

**Excerpt 3. Class 1 Song # 3**

---

TURN	SPEAKER	COMMENTS
42	T	My teddy bear has two eyes:::(students repeat))
43	SS and teacher	My teddy bear has two eyes, two eyes, two eyes, my teddy bear has two eyes, I love my teddy bear.
44	SS and teacher	My teddy bear has one nose, one nose, one nose. My teddy bear has one nose, I love my teddy bear.

Those songs helped to establish a good class environment. The beginning of a lesson is essential in learners' motivation. According to Allwright (2001) "warm up activities are designed to attract students' attention, to help them put aside distracting thoughts, and to get them ready to focus individually and as groups on whatever activities that follow" (p. 11). Class introductions were one of the most successful parts of each lesson and these worked out as planned. Specially, for this context that requires teachers to keep students attentive. However, no specific challenge related to the special education context was observed as students participated as expected. This may imply that the teacher know what students like and how to keep them motivated and engaged in the class. This is reflected in the lesson plan.

Another aspect identified was that the teacher did not make sure whether learners understood her instructions. This is not related only to special education contexts but rather to any educational setting. It is always useful to check if students understand what they have to do so they can complete tasks and activities accordingly. This also may favor class participation as students need to be attentive to the teacher's instructions. As this relates to class delivery, this was not included in the lesson plan.

A third aspect that deserved attention is that of the use of Spanish (L1) in the English (L2) class. Schweers says that using L1 can provide a sense of security allowing students to express themselves. This is supported by Pan (2010) who states that “when both L1 and target language (TL) are allowed as media for discussions, there is more participation and meaningful communication is sustained longer” (p. 89-90). In a special education context, this is important as students require methods that support their learning. Once more, as this relates to class delivery, this was not included in the lesson plan.

**Excerpt 4. Class 1. Use of L1 – Check if learners understand instructions.**

---

<b>TURN</b>	<b>SPEAKER</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
29	T	I am going to read the story about toys. When you listen to the vocabulary, peel off a sticker and paste it on the book...
30	S1	Quitamos los stickers Miss?
31	T	Yes! Peel off the sticker!
32	S5	Empezamos ya?
33	T	I am going to start... ready?
34	S5	Ready profe.
35	T	Ok!

---

In class 1, there were no challenges specifically related to the context of special education. Identified challenges related to aspects that can take place in any EF class in the world. The teacher implemented strategies that facilitated the attainment of the objectives proposed. She implemented what she planned. However, in the delivery phase, her adaptation to the context allowed observers to identify the strategies she uses: keeping students’ attention through songs, using L1 and L2. She may need to work on checking instructions more systematically.

#### 4.1.2 Class 2

In class two, the teacher started with the same warm-up as in the class before. The objective of this class was to identify and use some prepositions of place (on, in, under). The teacher implemented an activity to help learners identify the prepositions using their hands. Using their own body may help students make associations in a faster way and remember what they have learned. See excerpt 1 class 2 below. This activity took place as planned.

The teacher worked mainly on two activities; the warm up and the main activity related to reading the story and learner peeling off some stickers.

In class two, the teacher started with the warm up as the class before. The objective of this class was to identify some prepositions of place (on, in, under). The teacher implemented a strategy to help learners identify the prepositions using their hands.

#### **Excerpt 5. Class 2. Teacher using a strategy to help learners remember the prepositions.**

---

<b>TURN</b>	<b>SPEAKER</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
164	T	under, on, in, ok use your hands, show me your hands, now we are going to practice with our hands. Let's go. One, two, three.. on, in, under ((teacher creates some signs to identify the preposition and ask them to imitate her))
165	S1	es facil!
166	T & SS	on, in, under.
167	S6	no entendí.
168	T & SS	on, in, under.Laura let's go! sit down Mecino, XXX, sit down nestor.one two and three, so::: slow. on:::, in:::, under:::
169	S5 & T	On::: in::: under::: on::: in::: under::: ((making the movements))
170	T	Under is right here
171	T	Ok let's go one, two, three, so fast, so fast.

---

By having students act out the prepositions, the grasping of the vocabulary could go into their memory in an easier way. When doing the activity and as learners did not have enough

knowledge of this vocabulary, the teacher tries to facilitate their comprehension by giving an example. Again, this is not a challenge specific of special education settings.

### 4.1.3 Class 3

The teacher provided instructions once again; learners understood the instruction. However, when doing the activity, again learners did not have enough background knowledge of the vocabulary to answer the questions; therefore, the teacher gives the example. At this point, no challenge was found. Nonetheless, there is a span when learners get disrupted, start talking at the same time and the teacher seemed desperate as not having a strategy to make them be quiet and pay attention to her. As stated by Raid and Lienemann (2006 p.7-8) “Teachers who work with students with LD commonly note that “Things seem to go in one ear and out the other,” or they remark on the need to “jog” students back after their attention has wandered.”

#### Excerpt 6. Class 3. Learners lack of vocabulary.

---

Turn	Speaker	Comment
28	T	Look at my teddy bear, Mecino, look at my teddy bear. Where is my teddy, Mecino, sit down! This is my teddy bear. Where is my teddy bear?
29	S?	S?: si!
30	T	No! Where is my teddy bear?
31	S?	Where is my teddy bear:::
32	T	Is my teddy bear on the floor?
33	S?	No!
34	T	Where is my teddy...
35	S?	Bear!
36	T	Where? Is the teddy bear on the table?
37	SS	No:::
38	T	Where is the teddy bear?
39	SS	Está en la silla!
40	T	How do you say that in English? Repeat after me. Laura let's go. Ok Nestor where is the teddy bear?
41	S4	abcde no se:::

42 T It's on::  
 43 SS XXXX  
 44 T Under no. ON THE CHAIR.

---

In class three, the teacher stated as the class objective that learners would produce short sentences by using toys vocabulary and prepositions of place (on, in, under). The beginning of the class was as the other ones, the teacher plays the songs as warm up. The teacher repeated the exercise where learners use some hand movements to represent the prepositions (in, on, under) with the intention of reminding them of prepositions' use.

**Excerpt 7. Learners practicing the exercise.**

---

Turn	Speaker	Comment
28	T	Look at my teddy bear, Mecino, look at my teddy bear. Where is my teddy, Mecino, sit down! This is my teddy bear. Where is my teddy bear?
29	S?	S?: si!
30	T	No! Where is my teddy bear?
31	S?	Where is my teddy bear:: 
32	T	Is my teddy bear on the floor?
33	S?	No!
34	T	Where is my teddy.
35	S?	Bear!
36	T	Where? Is the teddy bear on the table?
37	SS	No:: 
38	T	Where is the teddy bear?
39	SS	Está en la silla!
40	T	How do you say that in English? Repeat after me. Laura let's go. Ok Nestor where is the teddy bear?
41	S4	abcde no se:: 
42	T	It's on:: 
43	SS	XXXX
44	T	Under no. ON THE CHAIR.

---

In this excerpt, it was observed that the teacher has to repeat the same question to help learners understand what they have to do. This is something that happens in regular EFL classes.

However, it is necessary to use repetition as a strategy quite frequently as for the next class most of the students would have forgotten what was practiced before. According to Reid and Lienemann (2006 p.7) “One common concern among teachers who work with students with LD is that one day the child can readily remember important information—they’ve “got it”—but the next day, for no apparent reason, it’s gone.”

This seems to be a real challenge related to the special education classroom and although the teacher did not mention this in the plan, she does implement in the practice.

#### 4.1.4 Class 4

In class 4, the teacher’s goal was to make learners identify and use vocabulary related to toys and games. The teacher continues with the warming up songs at the beginning, then using a dice, she encourages learners to identify the prepositions (on, in, under) by asking where to use those prepositions in sentences. The use of the dice kept students interested in the activity and willing to participate, many of them performed better when answering questions made by the teacher about prepositions.

#### Excerpt 8. Class 4. Learners identifying prepositions of place (on, in, under)

---

TURN	SPEAKER	COMMENTS
140	T	good... thank you.. now listen to me... I will pass the dice to each one of you.. you will roll the dice ((teacher models the instructions as she speaks))... you will get a preposition on the dice... then look at the cards around the classroom and point the toy that represents the word in the dice... (teacher keeps modeling the instructions)...
141	T	do you want to play?
142	SS	yes miss!
143	T	ok, look at me... I will roll the dice... ((dice rolling)) what is the word?
144	S2	Under miss!
145	T	Excellent! Now, look at the cards ((Ss look at the cards around the classroom)) what is the toy that represents under? Point at the card if you know...
146	S1	That miss! The doll
147	T	Great Miguel! The doll is UNDER the bed.. can you repeat please? The doll is
148		

---

149                    under the bed  
                          the doll is under the bed  
                          excellent sweetie!... now.. who wants to go first?

---

Then, the teacher asks a student to identify a word especially assigned to her due to she has a stronger short term memory condition. The teacher had assigned the word “airplane” so she could identify it and then, provide a new one. The student had not been able to do it until this class. Students with LD may lack or not use strategies that would help them remember information. Strategies for improving memory are commonly part of strategy instruction. (Reid and Lienemann, 2006 p.7)

**Excerpt 9. Learner identifies the word “airplane”**

---

TURN	SPEAKER	COMMENTS
129	T	great Mecino! The teddy bear::: can you tell me the complete sentence. The teddy bear is.... Can you complete it please?
130	S3	the teddy bear is::: In:::
131	T	the teddy bear is in... where Mecino?
132	S3	the box...
133	T	great! The teddy bear is in the box.. can you repeat?
134	S3	the teddy bear is in the box...
135	T	excellent! Laura do you want to try?
136	S6	((She nods her head from left to right indicating no))
137	T	ok Laura... can you tell me what this is?
138	S6	airplane? ((shy when she says it))
139	T	Yes Laura! Airplane! Excellent!
140	T	you did wonderful today! Thank you.. remember to study the vocabulary for next class

---

In general, the classroom observation allowed researchers to notice that there are no major differences between a regular EFL class and one in a special education context. Teachers face the same challenges and tend to use the same strategies: L1, audiovisual material, Total Physical Response (TPR). However, it was possible to identify that some strategies work better for these types of context. Strategies such as body use, repetition of words or sentences, establishing a routine, and the use of vivid and colorful material had a positive impact and response in the

students which was observed during their participation in the classes and the constant supervision of the teacher.

#### **4.2 Semi structured Interview**

The second instrument applied to this research was a four-question semi-structured interview with the purpose of knowing the teacher's insights regarding her teaching experience dealing with a special education context. The interview was done before the class observations in order to check the perceptions on her teaching development by working with this context.

The four questions related to her teaching experience in the context until then, the challenges she had faced in her classes, her needs to improve the teaching practice, the considerations for planning her lessons and the school services she could use to support her teaching. According to Seidman (2013 p.10) "if the researcher's goal is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing them provides a necessary avenue of inquiry". The objective of the interview is to identify the challenges an English teacher faces in a Special Educational context and the decisions she makes to cope with those challenges. Also, it is intended to analyze the decisions the English teacher makes when planning the lesson as a result of the challenges encountered in class. In order to analyze the answers she provided, we will analyze her responses immediately.

In this part we will state the questions, the teacher's response and the corresponding analysis to have a clearer idea on how teacher copes with the challenges she faces when teaching learners with learning disabilities. The questions will be labelled as Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4.

Q1 was about how the teacher considers her experience so far in the school, the teacher considers that although it has been hard, it has been a great learning experience implying that she has faced challenges in the context but has been able to overcome them. She highlights the

positive aspects in the process and the way she has to go over in her professional learning. However, she recognizes that she still has a long way to go to be ready to cope with the challenges she may encounter (see appendix #2).

The teacher also makes emphasis on the need to improve her teaching practice and she expressed that at the beginning she had problems when planning. Identifying the cognitive and linguistic demands of ELLs with LD is one the main responsibilities of the special educator. With the necessary information on the learners' challenges during their learning process, teachers may work on that basis to make the right pedagogical decisions when needed: changes in the content, motivation strategies, methods of assessment, and even number of new words in vocabulary. (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005).

Additionally, teachers have to work on finding new strategies to connect students with their real life, providing tools to complete tasks, access to resources and new information that supports their learning process, the use of supplementary material, textbooks, and the language used. According to Trumbull et al., (2001) the principles of good teaching cannot be assumed to be universalistic.

From the Q1, we can imply that even although the teacher feels that she still needs to be better prepared, she acknowledges the importance of learning and improving her teaching practice. This suggests that she may benefit not only from formal education in the field but also taking advantage of her own context and relate the decisions that she makes during the delivery of the lesson to the challenges encountered in class in order to make appropriate and informed decisions.

Q2 was about the challenges the teacher has faced in her teaching process, the teacher identified several challenges for herself. In her perspective, maintaining learners' attention is the

most difficult to handle. Loucks-Horsley & Roody (1990 p. 54) stated, “teachers may feel challenged, hopeful and desirous of what can be accomplished, but they may also feel frustration, burden, fear, lack of support, and inadequacies about their ability to teach children with different kinds of problems.”

Educators face a number of challenges in the classroom since having students with LD reaffirm the importance of making informed decisions and demands an appropriate level of teacher’s preparation to work on the concepts to be taught, and even the material to be chosen. According to different authors, ELLs with LD may experience frustration and difficulties along their learning process while decoding new vocabulary, visual or auditory processing, retaining information, or organizing ideas. (August & Shanahan, 2006; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Once teachers have identified the barriers ELLs with LD have in terms of English learning, they should evaluate their teaching, lesson planning and ways of assessing them.

Q3 was about what the teacher considers she needs to improve in her teaching practice for this specific context. She said that, after this experience, there are many aspects in her teaching that she needs to improve. One aspect she highlighted was her lesson planning skills.

**T: Planners: How to take advantage of the time we have to work.**

According to Garcia and Tyler (2010),

“the teacher must review the lesson content and instructional approaches to identify the cognitive and linguistic demands that will be placed on ELLs with LD as well a ways in which the lesson will (or will not) increase their motivation to engage with the content.”

(p. 117)

She also added that she would like to be able to identify the challenges she may encounter in this context ahead of time so she can make appropriate decisions to cope with them. According to Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, (as cited in Goldenberg, 2008 p. 13),

“There is considerable evidence that teaching students a variety of self-regulating strategies improves student learning and reading.” Whether the teacher wants to identify the challenges faced in a special education context, she may need to analyze the decisions she made during the delivery of the lesson as a result of the challenges encountered in class.

Timing when performing activities is another aspect to consider in a special education class and it is also related to lesson planning and instruction delivery. The simpler the expectations communicated to an LD student, the more likely she will comprehend and complete them in a timely and productive manner. (Pierangelo and Giuliani, 2008, p. 81)

Q4 was about what aspects of her class she considers when planning her lesson, the teacher said that she takes into account aspects such as children’s span of attention to the class and needs, time, and teaching methods. The teacher manifested she had difficulties when planning since she considered those aspects are hard to put together. It is then necessary to state that those aspects can be seen in a regular class but also in an inclusive one. In terms of lesson planning, Pierangelo and Giuliani (2008) say,

“students with LD learn best with a carefully structured academic lesson—one where the teacher explains what he or she wants students to learn in the current lesson and places these skills and knowledge in the context of previous lessons”. (p. 80)

### **4.3 Teacher Journal**

The third method applied was a teacher journal in which the teacher had to write her expectations about the class and her planning before teaching. Then, , she had to write a reflection on what happened in the class after the classes finished; whether the plan she made had worked or if she had to change any part of the class due to the learners' performance.

On this instrument, the teacher had to write her journal BEFORE and AFTER each class in order to check her expectations and what happened after each one. There were four classes observed which will be labeled as follows: C1 (class 1), C2 (class 2), C3 (class 3), C4 (class 4). Therefore, the analysis of the four classes will be contrasted one to each other.

#### **4.3.1 Class 1**

In C1, before the class, the teacher plans to sing songs in order to engage and motivate learners to the class as a warm up activity as she does in all her classes (see section 4.1). This could be seen in entry #1.

*T: - Today the class will start like always; we sing some songs that help students get familiar with English.*

Also, the teacher's main purpose was that learners identify vocabulary and increase their motivation and participation as she stated in entry #2 and as it can be seen, she did not plan for the learners' current disabilities.

*T- I expect that all students identify the vocabulary and the spelling of each word and also increase students' motivation and participation. I hope that with those activities, students could recognize toys vocabulary.*

However, after the class she manifested that learners did not recognize the vocabulary she intended that they identify during the class. This can be taken as a finding from the analysis of the observation.

*T: All activities were carried out; however, we couldn't finish the game since some of them don't recognize the vocabulary.*

Combining these two entries, it can be inferred that the teacher realizes students do not recognize the vocabulary presented and that she needs to work on ways to help them achieve the objective.

According to Pierangelo and Giuliani (200), students with learning disabilities often have difficulties with word recognition. Word recognition explores the student's ability with respect to vocabulary presented visually. The teacher realizes that she needs to work harder on helping learners identify the vocabulary she intends to teach them. As a result, the teacher reflected after the class and concluded that looking for a strategy is essential to help her learners.

*T: "I should look for a strategy that helps students to identify it".*

The aforementioned entry shows the teacher's interest to help students with the appropriate strategies and her willingness to do some research to find the ones that may be helpful in her context. As mentioned by Barton and Armstrong (2007 p. 138) "Even when inclusive education is adopted as a principle, teachers express apprehension at successfully educating all children in their classrooms. They often feel unprepared and at times inadequate for the task."

### **4.3.2 Class 2**

In C2, the teacher stated before the class that she would use different objects from the classroom to show examples of prepositions (on, in, under). See entry #1

*T: "After finishing with the daily routine, I will use different objects from the classroom to show examples of prepositions (on, in, under), for example, I use a table and a teddy bear."*

We can infer from this statement that the teacher is planning to use realia as a strategy to present new vocabulary and help learners to identify the words.

Besides, the teacher stated that she had found a strategy to help learners remember the prepositions (on, in, under) and she was pretty sure it would work. According to Pierangelo and Giuliani (2008 p. 84), "Effective teachers first identify areas in which each student requires extra assistance and then use special strategies to provide structured opportunities for the student to review and master an academic lesson that was previously presented to the entire class." See entry #2.

*T: "I also searched for a strategy that helps them to remember those prepositions of place whenever they forget it. It is: one hand is closed in a fist, to show ON, we put the other hand open on the fist for IN. We put the index finger inside the fist, and for UNDER, the opened hand under the fist."*

Moreover, the teacher expected that in that class, learners would be able to create or say short sentences in English and use the vocabulary they already know.

After the class, the teacher manifested that learners had liked the daily routine due to she took a recorder to the class. See entry #3

*T: "Students liked the "daily routine", maybe because today I brought a recorder."*

Furthermore, she explained that learners were excited with the strategy she used.

### 4.3.3 Class 3

In this class, the teacher wanted learners to use more the target language and help them to say what they wish. See entry #1.

*T: "For today I want my students to use more English, being a model and helping them to say what they wish in English".*

Also the teacher mentioned that she would use the same strategy from the previous class to practice the topic. See entry #2.

*T: "In this class, we are going to practice prepositions of place (on, in, under) with the same strategy that yesterday (the hands strategy)."*

Learners' internalization of the vocabulary has been a challenge the teacher has faced in the two previous classes. Repetition seems to be the tool she intends to use in order for learners not to forget the related vocabulary. If one word is introduced at a time, then that word should be repeated continually until the next is added, and then the new word along with the previous words should be repeated (Turley-Ames & Whitfield, 2003).

Furthermore, the teacher describes a key point considered as a main challenge about a particular learner who has a more severe short term memory condition. She stated that she would check whether that student would recognize a single given word (airplane). See entry #3.

*T: I will also check if Laura learnt the word from the vocabulary that I gave her yesterday (airplane).*

After the class however, the teacher expressed that she had to repeat everything they worked on the previous class; also, she mentioned it was normal to do it due to learners did not learn the lesson; therefore she expressed feeling frustrated about it. See entries #4-5-6

*T: "I had to repeat everything we did yesterday but they accomplished the activity at the end."*

*T: "It's normal to repeat them a topic many times, and sometimes they don't learn it."*

*T: "I felt frustrated because they forgot the prepositions we learnt yesterday."*

Moreover, the teacher commented that the specific learner she gave a word to learn did not recognize it. See entry #5

*T: "Laura doesn't identify the word (airplane), because of that I did not give her another word."*

In general, it can be said that the main challenge especially in this class is related to the teacher's planning of the lesson, from the implementation to delivery. Learners do not remember what they worked on the previous classes which make it more difficult to move on the process with them. Teacher's lack of new strategies makes it harder since she does not come up with different ideas. The hard work and uneasiness of the teacher is evident.

#### **4.3.4 Class 4**

In C4, before starting the class, the teacher stated that the class would be totally oral, and she expected learners to use toys vocabulary and prepositions to produce sentences. See entry #1.

*T: "The class will be totally oral, they won't write, and I expect they use toys vocabulary and the prepositions of place they learnt to produce sentences while playing a game."*

Besides, the teacher manifested she would check if the student with short-term memory condition recognized the word "airplane" given on the previous classes. See entry #2

*T: "I will check if Laura remembers the word "airplane"*

After the class, the teacher manifested that it is still difficult for learners to identify the vocabulary related and considered that more practice is required. See entry #3

*T: "It is still hard for the students to identify the prepositions of place. I think they need more time to get it"*

On the other hand, she expressed her happiness due to the specific learner identified the word "airplane" which is a major advance for her learner and her teaching practice therefore she assigns the word "doll" for next class. See entry #4. However, there was no specific strategy she mentioned to reach the identification of the word.

*T: I felt so happy because this is the first time that I hear Laura naming a word from the vocabulary without translating it. Because of that I gave her a new word: doll*

Considering what has been aforementioned, it is significant to sum up what the main findings from this instrument are:

1. It is evident that learners cannot fully identify the vocabulary related to toys and prepositions. The teacher stated in the four classes that it was the main problem; therefore, it is the most notable challenge. However, only one strategy was used to help learners recognize the vocabulary (the hand movements. See entry #2 in C2) which is evident that was not enough to fulfill her learners' needs. On the other hand, the strategy was not useful for all of the learners due to the learners with severe short term memory were not able to accomplish the goal of the activity.

2. One of the positive aspects of this instrument was the evidence that the teacher became aware of her teaching needs and even when it is not part of this study, the teacher's positive attitude to help her students made her to be encouraged to search a strategy to help them.

Unfortunately, only one strategy is never enough to achieve a targeted goal when working with learners with learning disabilities (LD). According to Florian & Linklater (2010, p. 371) "it is

helpful to view difficulties in learning as problems for teachers to solve rather than problems within learners.”

3. Another aspect to consider from this instrument is the student with the severe short term memory condition. In this case, even when the teacher was happy because the learner could say the word “airplane” (see Entry #4 in C4) there was not an evident strategy she used to help the learner to say the word. It means that as teachers, more strategies need to be considered and not just alone but with other teachers’ help in order to have a better teaching process and a successful teaching experience. As stated by Florian & Linklater (2010),

if the view is taken that the learning difficulties experienced by children are challenges for classroom teachers, then the expertise of colleagues who specialize in learning difficulties, and those from related disciplines can be used to support teaching and learning in the mainstream classroom. (p. 371).

In conclusion, teachers’ preparation is an essential aspect to be considered when dealing with learners with learning disabilities. Strategies ought to be found from people who have had experience on the field, even if a teacher is willing to work with them.

## DISCUSSION

This study attempts to analyze what happens in special education English classes which are a topic that has not been studied consistently in Colombia. It attempts to analyze the challenges/difficulties an English teacher faces in this setting in order to expand the existing knowledge about this topic in Colombia. In general, the results obtained indicate that this teacher is not well prepared to handle effectively the challenges that she faces taking into account the variety of learning disabilities. This could be generalizable to other teachers in similar contexts.

As in the case of the research question about what specific challenges the English teacher faced in this special educational class and how this affected the lesson planning and the delivery, it can be concluded that the teacher needed to do some research to have a better understanding of the strategies she could implement to help learners achieve the class objectives. Besides, her lack of preparation to work in this specific context, made her realize the importance of decision making from the planning to the delivery of the lesson.

We can identify a first challenge that is related to the teacher's lack of knowledge and preparation to deal with students' learning disabilities and conditions that include Asperger syndrome and short-term memory problems. The teacher seemed to have some limitations to prepare her classes and manage this specific context, the decisions she made in the planning and delivery needed some research and careful preparation to meet students' needs. In fact, the participant expressed her concerns about the lack of information and preparation she had in order to face this particular context. As Viera and Moreira (2008) state,

In Colombia teacher education programs focus on a technical instruction of how to teach and do things in a classroom instead of providing students teachers with the required

skills and perspectives to manage variety of situations and characteristics of educational contexts.

This is supported by Rinaldi's and Samson's work (2008) who argued that teachers are not prepared to face and handle students with LD in their specific contexts. According to the authors, they lack of necessary knowledge to participate and get involved with this particular population. If the teachers that work with English language learners with LD were aware of the process of second language acquisition for this specific population, they could have a better understanding of their cognitive processes. This may eventually help teachers in identifying if there is a real learning disability or simply limited English proficiency. Ortiz (2001). Hence, there is a need for professional development education for teachers working with ELLs with disabilities (Sanchez & Brisk, 2004).

The second challenge identified is that of classroom management. During the process, the teacher always had to work on attracting and maintaining students' attention and discipline. Working with students with learning disabilities can be a challenge, since there are numerous types of learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia, dyscalculia, visual-motor impairments). As a result, the teacher should be aware that not all techniques would work with all students. The goal of any adaptation is to increase the students' chances of understanding the material and increase the chances of completion and success.

Classroom management of student behavior and instructional delivery include core competencies of communication such as direct feedback to students and skills necessary to build positive learning environments. For many years teaching and managing behavior were viewed as separate entities in teacher preparation programs (Davis & Thomas, 1989). However, one of the most consistent findings concerning teaching is that effective teachers maintain a balance

between specific strategies designed to manage student behavior in the classroom, such as posting expectations in the classroom; and instructional strategies, such as calling for frequent student responses that result in positive student behavior (Davis & Thomas, 1989; Hofmeister & Lubke, 1990).

Some students learn better by seeing (visual learners), some by listening (auditory learners), some by feeling (tactile learners), and some by a combination of approaches. The teacher should make adjustments to determine the best functional system of learning for the children with learning disabilities. This will vary from child to child and is usually included in the child's evaluation. In this sense, the teacher planned a series of activities that were expected to lower students' affective filter. If students learn best through material that is presented through the auditory channel, then teachers may want to consider to alternate quiet and active time to maintain levels of interest and motivation. To have students drill aloud to themselves or to other students.

The teacher always started the lesson with a song, the level of motivation and interest towards the lesson was observed during the class, learners knew the routine and participated along with their peers and teacher.

The third challenge is that of students with a variety of short-term memory conditions. As seen in the classes, she focused on having students recognize new vocabulary. Students with these conditions gradually responded to the teacher's instructions and identification of words. In fact, she adapted the material to students' level which is a pedagogical recommendation for these types of contexts according to Dunning and Holmes (2014) "Training participants explicitly to use strategies facilitates increases in short-term and working memory performance (p.855)

Students took longer to learn and when the teacher understood this, she started to repeat and recycle the lesson without using a different strategy from the one implemented before.

In sum, English language learning in special education contexts cannot have the same standards as in regular education contexts. Let alone, the special educator cannot have the same perspectives towards teaching a learning processes in these particular contexts. Special education contexts are a reality and teachers need to be prepared to function in them. Teacher education programs need to bear this in mind and should revise their curricula in order to include subjects that help teacher learn how to handle these contexts. Furthermore, the schools need to provide teachers with systematic professional sessions that help teachers plan and deliver lessons that promote learning given the specific conditions of the students. Parents also have their responsibility in working along with the schools and the teachers to help their children learn.

As every child has the right to schooling and learning so they can develop their potential; it cannot be expected that traditional pedagogical procedures lead the education of ELLs with LD. There is the need to have appropriate and differentiated processes and tools for schools, teachers, students and parents so goals can be achieved.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this section is to provide a general description of this research study by previewing some specific topics which were discussed along this paper.

Some important aspects to start with in this part are the role of the research questions and objectives which led this research study. The aim of this study was to analyze how the challenges an English teacher faces in a special education class influence her lesson planning to and delivery. Also, it was essential to identify the challenges an English teacher faces in a Special Educational context. Besides, it was important to analyze the decisions the English teacher makes when planning the lesson as a result of the challenges encountered in class and also, analyze the decisions the teacher made during the delivery of the lesson as a result of the challenges encountered in class.

Based on the analysis of the information collected in the case study target group and the teacher's experience, she was rarely prepared to handle the challenges of teaching students with a learning disability and limited English proficiency. According to the teacher, she lacked the necessary knowledge needed to best serve this particular and special group of students. Being aware of the learners' needs requires knowledge to identify the difference between a natural second language learning process and a learning disorder.

After the aforementioned aspects were considered, it can be stated that teaching students with learning disabilities (LD) is not easy. The teaching-learning process requires understanding of the context and its characteristics, the preparation of appropriate activities and material to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities, and teacher education and development.

According to Rinaldi and Samson (2008), the lack of "appropriate professional development for personnel" should be an area of concern. Ortiz (2001) argues that teachers who

work with students with learning disabilities should be completely aware of not only of the knowledge on second language acquisition and development of English language proficiency, but also on the cognitive processes and particularities of the group . With this type of information, teachers may be able to recognize and understand the differences between a learning challenge and a learning disability.

Lack of understanding and knowledge about how to facilitate the learning of students with disabilities, especially the learning of English, is a major problem in the improvement of LD students learning process. To facilitate LD students in an inclusive environment, teachers need to be part of professional development programs that help them offer a better service and avoid emotional or social negative situations for the learners. (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008). The authors also argue that finding the right methods and with the appropriate professional development will contribute considerably to the improvement in the education system for students with learning disabilities.

One of the educational implications that can be concluded based on the research is to administer the necessary program modifications in universities and undergraduate pre-service and teachers' education programs. The teacher of the study expressed she does not feel prepared enough to face the challenges she encounters in her classes every day.

ESL teachers have openly said they do not feel prepared enough to help ELLs with LD, or to administer the necessary program, materials, or assessment modifications in these particular contexts. Florian & Linklater (2010, p. 371) argued that Teachers may feel uncertain about how respond to particular difficulties, or they may not feel confident in making adaptations. The role of the teacher in this specific learning process makes the difference between what the teachers are required to do and what they should do to meet ELLs with LED needs and a meaningful

learning process. One of the most important aspects teachers, student teachers, instructors or educators ought to pay close attention to, is the identification of the barriers special students find through their learning process. Some of the considerations we can infer from the results and findings in our case study include:

1. The material chosen and reading level should not interfere with students' attention and/or understanding.
2. ELLs with LD need to get familiar with the vocabulary presented for the first time with the help of variety of activities and approaches.
3. The teacher should maintain a positive attitude to keep a safe learning environment that embraces all learners no matter their differences.

According to Sanchez & Brisk (2004), educators must drive the inclusion of professional development in regards to understanding the different process and knowledge of students with learning disabilities starting from their formation in undergraduate programs. Research also indicates that teachers feel more prepared to deliver instructions and work with LD students when they have been prepared with the appropriate information and professional development.

All this aspects considered may be utilize as a tool to enrich teachers' learning process and contemplate the fact that student-teachers ought to be prepared as pre service teachers in order to help learners in developing their competencies in appropriate ways. Not only estimating general education but also the learners with learning disabilities that may encounter in their professional path.

Teachers' experience, learning about students with disabilities and teaching techniques ought to be key tools to facilitate learning and not only in second language acquisition but also in any related subject. In addition, being a reflective teacher plays an essential role in the

achievement of objectives within a special education context. Having the capacity to do research, look for information, spend time for pre and post reflection on the teaching practice makes a difference in the entire process of planning and delivery of lessons, from the strategies to be implemented to the material and eventually the results at the end of the class. There is also a powerful instrument that is essential for educators, this is the administrative personnel from schools and parents; their role is as important as the teachers' having the responsibility to provide the necessary implements educators may need to help learners.

This research study was developed in order to encourage readers to see the need educators have in terms of learning how to work on special education and how vulnerable teachers are at not empowering such essential matter as learning disabilities.

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## Appendix A

### QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW

**1. How has the teaching experience been in the school so far?**

This has been a little bit hard and different, but amazing. While working with children that have special needs I realize that there are still many things to learn about teaching, and especially about working with people that face this kind of cognitive challenges. The hardest part for me, maybe at the beginning, were the lesson plans; it is too difficult to try to plan a class for a group with these necessities, since you really have to plan an especial class for each one of them.

**2. What challenges in the class have you faced in your teaching?**

Grab the attention of kids; I have felt burdened when I do not reach to grab the attention of my students, and this happens not only with the little ones, but with the teenagers. Since I noticed I had to work hard with this, I started to search information and I have been implementing some tips I learnt during the time I was in the previous school, such as attention grabbers (short songs, pattern claps, tongue twisters) and some other things.

**3. What do you think you need as a teacher to improve your teaching practice for this specific context?**

I could say that I need to improve everything, since there are many things that I need to learn about working with these kinds of students.

**4. What things do you refer to?**

Planners; how to take advantage of the time we have to work; Be a “multitasking” teacher: be there for each one of them when they need me and answer all their questions; children’s behavior according to the disorder that they face and how can I teach them using different strategies.

**5. What aspects of your class do you consider when planning your lessons?**

I take into account some important features while planning my lessons, those are: children attention and needs, time, and teaching methods.

**Appendix B**  
**LESSON PLAN FORM**

	<b>LESSON PLAN FORM</b>	
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**Teacher: Malvis Ortega**

**Grade: Nivelación A**

**Unit/Topic: Unit 8/ Fun and Games.**

**Week: 30/ Date: October 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Term: 4th**

**Number of students: 7**

<b>WEEKLY OBJECTIVES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● By the end of the week, students will name vocabulary related to a toys.</li> <li>● By the end of the week, students will identify prepositions of places.</li> <li>● By the end of the week, students will produce short sentences using toys vocabulary and prepositions of places on, in, under.</li> <li>● By the end of the week, students will identify and use vocabulary related to toys and games.</li> </ul>
<b>PERSONAL OBJECTIVES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To Increase students´ participation</li> <li>● To increase students engagement in English class</li> <li>● To encourage students to use English more often</li> </ul>
<b>MATERIALS</b>
Books, computer, videos, videobeam, flashcards, worksheets.
<b>REMARKS</b>

<b>DATE</b>	<b>READING</b>	<b>WRITING</b>	<b>LISTENING</b>	<b>SPEAKING</b>	<b>GRAMMAR &amp; VOC</b>
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<b>Day 1</b>			<p>3. Before starting, students identify the shadows that are on page 98. Then, teacher tells a short story about toys, and when the teacher mentions the toys that they identified, students peel off the stickers and paste them on their corresponding shadow. (15 mn)</p>		<p>1. Daily routine: good morning song, days of the week song, my teddy bear song. (10 mn)  2. Recap: Memory game. There are some cards pasted on the board with numbers on the side that students can see, on the side that is hidden, there are pictures and names of toys. Students have to match each toy to its name. (20mn)</p>
<b>Day 2</b>		<p>3. Worksheet: look at each picture and write the preposition that each photo shows. (20 mn)</p>			<p>1. Daily routine: good morning song, days of the week song, my teddy bear</p>

					<p>song. (10 mn)</p> <p>2. Introduce prepositions: we use a box and three toys, we put the toys in different places (<b>in, on, under the box</b>) and ask students where the objects are. (15 mn)</p>
<b>Day 3</b>			<p>3. Listen to the teacher, look at the pictures on page 99 and tick the correct answer. (15 mn)</p>		<p>1. Daily routine: good moong song, my teddy bear song. (10 mn)</p> <p>2. Game: teacher draws on the board a table and a box, asks students to pass one by one and draw objects in different positions. (15 mn)</p>

<b>Day 4</b>				2. Game: make a circle, roll a die with prepositions. There are some pictures on the board, students choose the picture that match the preposition they obtain. (35 mn)	1. Daily routine: good morning song, days of the week song, my teddy bear song. (10 mn)
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**Appendix C**  
**CLASS OBSERVATION TRANSCRIPT (SAMPLE CLASS # 3)**

TURN	SPEAKER	COMMENTS
1	T	Ok let's go! stand up!
2	SS	Good morning, good morning, good morning:::
3	SS	Good morning, good morning, good morning:::
4	SS	Good morning, good morning, good morning:::
5	SS	Good morning, good morning, good morning:::
6	SS and T	Clap your hands, clap, clap, clap, stomp your feet, stomp, stomp, stomp, spin around, spin, spin, spin, all right:::
7	SS	Good morning, good morning, good morning:::
8	SS	Good morning, good morning, good morning:::
9	SS	Good morning, good morning, good morning:::
10	SS	Good morning, good morning, good morning:::
11	SS and T	Wash your hands, wash, wash, wash, shake your hands, shake, shake, shake, brush your teeth, brush, brush, brush, all right:::
12	T	Good morning
13	S1	Es good afternoon
14	T	Yes, actually is good afternoon. jajaja. Good morning is before twelve.
15	S1	Ya se pasó
16	T	Tomorrow I will bring, good afternoon, good afternoon, good afternoon ((some students follow the song))
17	S1	Menos mal que te corregí miss!
18	T	Yes Miguel excellent!
19	S1	Por nada miss.
20	T	Ok the days of the week:::
21	SS	XXX
22	SS and Teacher	Monday, tuesday, wednesday, thursday, friday, saturday, sunday::: ((students make some movements as the song plays))
23	SS	One two, one two three, four::: monday, tuesday, wednesday, thursday, friday, saturday, sunday:::
24	SS	Monday, tuesday, wednesday, thursday, friday, saturday, sunday::: lalala lalala monday, tuesday, wednesday, thursday, friday, saturday, sunday:::
25	SS	One two, one two three, four::: monday, tuesday, wednesday, thursday, friday, saturday, sunday:::
26	S2	Monday, tuesday, wednesday, thursday, friday, saturday, sunday:::
27	S?	Ay ya se acabó!
28	S?	Osito!
29	T	What did you say?
30	SS	Teddy bear!
31	S?	Se parece a ti Mecino
32	T	Nestor, Nestor, respect! This is Nestor!
33	S?	Nestor
34	S?	Si Nestor
35	T	Nestor que lindo!
36	SS	((students laugh))
37	T	This is a teddy bear.

38	S1	Sí, es muy grande.
39	S2	Miss eso que es? Como lo hice miss?
40	T	Excellent, good job Migue. Now, let's sing this song, what is the song? Who remember the song?
41	S1	Eh::: teddy bear.
42	T	My teddy bear has two eyes:::(students repeat)
43	SS and teacher	My teddy bear has two eyes, two eyes, two eyes, my teddy bear has two eyes, I love my teddy bear.
44	SS and teacher	My teddy bear has one nose, one nose, one nose. My teddy bear has one nose, I love my teddy bear.
45	T	One nose, and how many eyes?
46	SS	My teddy bear has two ears, two ears, two ears, my teddy bear has two ears, I love my teddy bear.
47	T	Two ears!
48	SS and teacher	My teddy bear has two arms, two arms, two arms, my teddy bear has two arms, I love my teddy bear.
49	T	I love my teddy bear! And now two?
50	SS	My teddy bear has two legs, two legs, to legs, my teddy bear has two legs, I love my teddy bear.
51	SS and teacher	My teddy bear has four paws, four paws, four paws, teddy bear has four paws, I love my teddy bear.
52	S?	Ese osito se llama Nestor.
53	S?	Si Abraham sí
54	S1	Otra vez repeat
55	T	No, again no sweetie, we have to begin with the class. Before starting the class I want you to review the vocabulary ok?
56	S1	Ok.
57	T	The vocabulary about toys.
58	S?	Miss una hoja
59	T	Open your book, Juan David open your book, Laura you go back to the vocabulary page. Please, this one. Toys vocabulary, let's go, Abraham, ninety five.
60	SS	XXX
61	T	95, 95
62	SS	XXX
63	T	Ok, remember that you have to put your little finger on the toy that I say, let's sing the song, one, two and three.
64	T and SS	One little finger, one little finger, wait, Valentina use the book. ((teacher helps the student))
65	T and SS	One little finger, one little finger, one little finger, tap, tap, tap, put your finger up, put your finger down. put it on the:::
66	S?	Airplane
67	T	On the airplane, Laura, what is this?
68	S2	Airplane
69	T	Vale?
70	S3	Airplane
71	T	Airplane, Mecino!
72	S4	Airplane
73	T	Ok
74	SS and T	One little finger, one little finger, one little finger, tap, tap, tap, put your finger up,

		put your finger down. put it on the:::
75	S?	Ball
76	T	Ball, this is a ball. Ball, XXX put your finger on the board. On the board. Is it number one? No it is number three. Mecino, put your little finger here. Excellent. ((teacher asks learners to point out the corresponding figure))
77	SS and Teacher	One little finger, one little finger, one little finger, tap, tap, tap, put your finger up, put your finger down. put it on the:::
78	S1	Bike ((mispronounced))
79	T	A Bike? ((mispronounced as well))
80	S1	Bike ((mispronounced again))
81	S?	A bike ((properly pronounced))
82	T	A bike ((well pronounced)), who is on the bike?
83	S2	XXX
84	T	Excellent Mecino! The bike, Juanda?
85	S	Profesora es verdad XXX
86	T	Yes, good
87	SS and T	One little finger, one little finger, one little finger, tap, tap, tap, put your finger up, put your finger down. put it on the:::
88	S?	Nose
89	S?	Game
90	T	A game! Like this one Mecino.
91	SS and T	One little finger, one little finger, one little finger, tap, tap, tap, put your finger up, put your finger down. put it on the:::
92	S1	Yo se otra, yo se otra
93	SS	Train
94	S1	Chu chu:::
95	T	Yes, a train. One little finger, ok we cannot sing because we don't have time. put your fingers on the :::
96	S?	Cards!
97	T	Cards! Cards! Your finger on the cards.
98	S1	One little finger, one little finger, one little finger, tap tap, tap, put your finger up, put your finger down. put it on the::: blocks ((the student sigs fast))
99	T	Out your finger on the blocks
100	S2	Miss no lo encuentro donde está?
101	T	Number five, right here. ok now, put your fingers on XXX animal.
102	S?	Mupet
103	T	Puppet no, stop animal like a stop animal, like a teddy, this is a teddy, stop animal. This is not a teddy bear, teddy bear is like that one.
104	S3	Pupet Malvis.
105	T	No, that is a stop animal, this is not a puppet.
106	SS	XXX
107	T	Now, out your finger on the:::
108	S?	Action figure.
109	T	Ok, action figure, here you have Superman, Batman, Flash, Wonder woman. Yes action figure here. Now your finger on::: what is this?
110	SS	Puppet
111	T	This is a puppet. Mecino, puppet. Now this, put your fingers on
112	S?	Skates
113	T	Skates, your finger on, excellent Laura. Skates, ((students repeat pronunciation))

		Nestor, your finger on the skates ((student repeats)) and finally, put your finger on::: what is this?
114	S?	Doll
115	T	This is a doll::: remember we have ball ((focuses on pronunciation)) and doll ((focuses on pronunciation)) ball::: and doll:::
116	SS	((repeat as teacher pronounces))
117	T	What is this?
118	SS	A box
119	T	A bus? mmmm ((saying no))
120	S?	A puppet?
121	T	A bed? is this a bed?
122	SS	no:::
123	T	What is this?
124	S?	No sabemos.
125	T	ta... ((expecting learners to complete the word))
126	SS	table
127	T	A table, now here I will draw a box.
128	S?	Box? Que es eso?
129	T	A box
130	S?	Eso que es?
131	S4	Que es un box malvis?
132	S?	XXX
133	T	Ahh viste que si sabes Nestor.
134	S4	Si.
135	S3	Es un juguete?
136	T	No.
137	S?	Para guardar juguetes.
138	T	A toy box.
139	SS	A toy box
140	T	Yes this is a box, but before that, please, let's make a XXX here with one hand, let's go.
141	S?	Puppet
142	T	We are going to practice. One, two and three.
143	SS and T	On, in, under ((making the movements like the previous class)). on in under, on in under.
144	T	Now by yourselves.
145	S?	Ok yo!
146	T	No. everybody here, let' go, one, two, three.
147	SS	On, in under ((making the movements like the previous class)) on in under.
148	T	One by one, Juan David. Let's go.
149	S5	On
150	T	In
151	S5	In
152	T	In, put your index finger here, in
153	S5	In
154	T	Under
155	S5	Under
156	T and SS	On in under.
157	T	Excellent. Valentina, let's go.

158	T	On
159	S6	On
160	T	In, but you have to repeat after me, ok. One two and three. on
161	S6	On
162	T	In
163	S6	In
164	T	Under
165	S6	Under
166	T	Excellent. Laura now you. On
167	S7	On
168	T	Now your finger. In
169	S7	In
170	T	Under
171	S7	Under
172	T	On, in under
173	T	Now Nestor then Migue.
174	T and S8	On, in, under ((teacher helps learner to do the movements))
175	T	Yes. It's Miguel's turn.
176	S7	On, in, under
177	T	On, in under ((helping with the movements))
178	T	Under under under.
179	SS	Under under under.
180	T	Abraham, ah no Migue, and the Abraham.
181	S?	Si abraham!
182	S1	On, in under
183	T	Excellent! abraham and then Mecino.
184	S3	Yo dije primero que él.
185	S7	Tu si gritas mucho Mecino!
186	S8	On in under
187	T	Excellent
188	S9	On in under
189	T	Bravo ((clap her hands other students do the same))
190	T	Let's go Laura.
191	S8	Again Laura. On in under ((teacher helps her))
192	SS	Valentina! Valentina! Valentina! ((happy because the student did a good job))
193	T	Now, you are going to pass one by one to the board and draw what you hear ok? What I say.
194	S1	Ok.
195	T	If I say a car, you draw a car, if I say the car is in the box, you try to draw a car in the box. remember that this is a box, repeat one two and three, box
196	SS	Box!
197	T	Box
198	SS	Box
199	T	Table
200	SS	Table
201	T	Table
202	SS	Table.
203	T	I will say a word and you have to draw what I say, you will use those toys that you have here in your books, and the first one is going to be Mecino.

204	S4	Yo?
205	T	Yes!
206	SS	Yes, bravo!
207	T	To make it easier, we are going to use this vocabulary
208	SS	Mecino, Mecino ((cheering him up))
209	T	Ok, no Mecino put it dare, Mecino paste the ball inside the box, the ball inside the box, no that is a game, the bus, sorry the ball, the ball, when you kick a ball ((mimics it)) Mecino, look at me, Mecino, Mecino, mjum, the ball.
210	Ss	XXX
211	T	Paste the ball in the box, in the box, in yes, que se vea como que está in.
212	SS	((laughing))
213	T	Excellent ((when S4 pastes it correctly))
214	T	Ok, Miguel then Nestor and then Juan David. Miguel paste XXX animal past the XXX animal on the table, on the table.
215	SS	((Talk about different things))
216	T	The XXX animal on::: on the table, on:: that's in, on in under ((reminds the learner the movements )), on yes! on the table.
217	S1	Acá, acá.
218	T	Excellent. Nestor. Nestor paste the Doll under the box. Under the box, that is in. on in under ((reminds the learner the movements)) under the box, under the box, look at me, hey Nestor.
219	S?	Nestor abajo, abajo.
220	T	Hey don't say that in Spanish, say under.
221	SS	Under:::
222	T	Under the box.
223	SS	XXX
224	T	Under Nestor, under the box.
225	S?	Le toca a Juan David.
226	T	Ok, Juan David Let's go, Juan David paste the blocks, paste the blocks under the table, under the table.
227	SS	Vamos Juan David! Juan David dale.
228	T	Hey look at the spelling of under is not with letter "o" is with letter "u". Excellent juanda, good job. Now, you are going to XXX on your books.
229	S?	Ahora quien viene
230	T	Abraham let's go. Abraham, paste the... Nestor, Abraham the skates are on the table, on in under ((reminds the learner the movements)). Ok, and Valentina.
231	SS	Valentina! Valentina!
232	T	Ok Valentina, past the cards under the table, under the table, look at me under no, on, under the table. Under the table. let's repeat, on in under ((reminds the learner the movements))
233	T	Ok let's open your books. Today we are going to work on this page, ninety nine.
234	SS	Noventa y nueve.
235	T	((Teacher asks students for their homework and to deliver notebooks, learners make comments about different things.))
236	T	Let's start listen to me, hey let's begin. Here I have two pictures per number, ok, I have number one, one and two, two pictures, number two, number three, and number four. I have one two three and four exercises. What you are going to do is to listen to me, what are you going to do?
237	S?	Oir!

238	SS	((clap their hands))
239	T	Listen to the teacher, and you have to tick what you hear, for example, here we have two pictures, if I say, ok, tick the doll that is on the table. What is the doll that is on the table? This or this? ((Pointing at the exercise)). Mecino? What is the doll that is on the table? This or this? One or two?
240	S4	Two!
241	T	This? On the table.
242	SS	Abajo
243	T	Yes, how do you say that in English?
244	T	You have two pictures here, ok
245	S?	Ok:::
246	T	You are going to listen to me and you have to tick he picture that I say
247	S4	Vamos a escuchar!
248	T	Yes.
249	S?	Teacher puedo ir al baño?
250	T	No, no no, let's finish the activity and then you go to the restroom, ok? one two and three, number one, number one, no you have to listen to me number one, number one, number one, listen to me, the doll is in the box, tick the doll that is in the box.
251	S4	Miss este?
252	T	Excellent! Laura, what doll is in the box?
253	SS	SS: XXX
254	T	Nestor, no, this is in the box. ((Teacher goes around to check)). Number two!
255	S?	Number two!
256	T	The action figure is under the desk. Under the table.
257	SS	Here, here ((pointing at the locations))
258	T	Ok number three! Let's go. the skates that are
259	S?	Abajo de la cama
260	T	In English. in English, the skates that are under the bed, no, no, no Migue
261	S?	Under, under, under
262	T	The skates that are under the bed, under the bed yes! Excellent, under the bed.
263	T	Nestor
264	S?	Ya se acabó!
265	T	No, eso es bachillerato, now here the skates are under the bed. Number four, number four. The cards that are on the table. Excellent! On the table not under.

Appendix D  
Teacher's Journal (Sample)

Before...

October 8th

For today I want my students to use more English, being a model and helping them to say what they wish, in English. In this class we are going to practice prepositions of place (in, on, under) with the same strategy than yesterday, and through a listening activity; with this I can see if they really understood the topic.

I will also check if Laura learnt the word from the vocabulary that I gave her yesterday. (airplane)

After...

October 8th.

Laura doesn't identify the word (airplane), because of that I did not give her another word. I felt frustrated because they forgot the prepositions we learnt yesterday, so I had to repeat everything we did yesterday but they accomplished the activity at the end. It's normal to repeat them a topic many times, and sometimes they don't learn it.

## AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHY

Aura Quintero Antolínez is an English teacher born in the city of Bucaramanga in the Eastern region of Colombia, where she obtained her high school degree with emphasis in pedagogy from the *Escuela Normal Superior de Bucaramanga* and her Bachelor of Arts degree in English Language from the *Universidad Industrial de Santander UIS*.

After graduation, Aura started to work with children, teenagers and adults in different cities in Colombia and the United States (USA) including, Tallahassee (FL), Fremont (MI), Bogotá (COL), Barrancabermeja, Bucaramanga, and Barranquilla where she got involved in educational and administrative projects and teaching practice in public and private universities, schools, and institutions counting the British Council, Ministry of Education in Colombia, and Secretaries of Education.

Aura holds a Specialist degree in English Language Teaching from *Universidad Del Norte* in Barranquilla and a M.A in Education with specialization in Management and Planning of Educational Centers from the *Fundación Universitaria Iberoamericana FUNIBER* in Puerto Rico.

Curriculum designer, supervisor, and editor, teacher's formation instructor, professorial development facilitator, academic coordinator and virtual tutor are some of the jobs to mention a few; she has been involved and performed during the past 7 years which have promoted her professional and academic growth in the field of education and English Language teaching.

Zenón Vellojín Otero is an English teacher born in the city of Montería in the north region of Colombia where he obtained his Highschool degree from Colegio Seminario Juan XXIII and his bachelor of arts degree in English Language Teaching from Universidad de Córdoba.

Before finishing his career, he started teaching teenagers from low economic status in a project called "ICARO" from the ministry of education and "Diócesis de montería" where he had the opportunity to begin his teaching experience.

After graduation, Zenón started to work with teenagers and adults in different institutions as coordinator, tutor and instructor. Zenón holds a Specialist degree in English Language Teaching from Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana in Montería.

Since 2013 he has worked for Universidad Del Norte where he has grown personal and professionally as a teacher, teacher coordinator and teacher-academic assistant. He has also taught different groups from the extension program and EAP program master level 1-2. During the last seven years, He has performed different academic roles which have encouraged his professional and academic growth in the field of education and English Language Teaching.

His personal goal is to learn and teach strategies from which pre service teachers can cope with the challenge of teaching learners with learning disabilities (LD).