

BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA



FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

**“PERSPECTIVES ON STRATEGIES TO TEACH EFL
ONE-TO-ONE”**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Languages for the Degree of

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Abstract

This descriptive study aims to explore the strategies used by some EFL teachers of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla to overcome the difficulties of the one-to-one model of education. The participants for this study are 5 pre-service and 5 in-service teachers from a public higher education institution in Puebla. Through questionnaires and interviews, this study aims to develop a fuller understanding of the challenges that teachers face in the one-to-one context. The findings suggest that there are three main challenges in the one-to-one context: no opportunities of interaction with other learners, the risk of monotony in the lessons and, the weight of responsibility that the teacher carries when teaching one-to-one. Another finding is that; building rapport with the student, varying the activities in the lessons and, performing a needs analysis were the most useful strategies to handle one-to-one classes.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Problem

The one-to-one tuition model is an alternative for students to get additional support in learning. It is our responsibility as teachers to ensure the right support in this context, as in any others teaching contexts, such as small groups or large groups. The languages faculty of the BUAP (Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla) is a specialized institution in forming competent foreign language teachers. However, current students of the LEI (Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés), recently graduated students, or even some experienced teachers from the BUAP might do not have the specific knowledge about how to handle individual classes. This is probably because the curricular programs of the institution have focused their attention mostly on group teaching, and have been paid minimal or even no attention to the one-to-one model of education. There is a huge difference between teaching individuals and teaching groups (Murphey, 1996); each one should be treated separately. As a finishing student, I believe there is the need for the faculty to focus the attention on the one-to-one teaching model straight away, in view of the fact that, teachers are frequently asked to teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in private classes. As Baker and LeTrende (2005) state, the use of private tutoring after school hours to complement the education of the students has become a trend among families around the world.

Teaching EFL in private classes is a great opportunity for teachers because of many factors: they have the freedom to adjust the schedules to their convenience, they do not have to deal with different learning styles; there is little classroom management required, and there is more flexibility in timing and pacing. Private tutoring gives teachers an

additional source of income and a higher social status. Indeed, Popa and Acedo (2006) found that Romanian teachers, who also work as private tutors, may have more respected social status and enjoy greater economic gratifications. However, teaching to just one student at a time can be a challenge for English teachers if they do not count with the strategies to address the several difficulties that can be found in this particular context of education. In order to have a look at the downside of the one-to-one scenery and provide ways that could help to minimize the possible one-to-one disadvantages, this research is specially designed to explore teaching strategies among five pre-service teachers and five in-service teachers of the BUAP, who have taught English as a foreign language in one-to-one sessions.

1.2 Research Purpose

In my dissertation I have several purposes; first I aim to explore the one-to-one teaching model in order to identify the challenges that teachers experience when managing lessons in individual settings. Secondly, I would like to recognize the teaching strategies that one-to-one teachers of the BUAP found useful to cope with those challenges. Finally, I would like to suggest some strategies that according to the participants in this research may support the improvement of EFL teachers in individual teaching. It is not my intention to come up with a new methodology for teaching EFL in one-to-one sessions, but it is to examine what is actually happening in private classes in order to inform teachers who are interested in this mode of teaching. In such manner English teachers who provide one-to-one tutoring can work easily, at the same time that they improve their classes in such teaching setting.

1.3 Research Questions

My dissertation addresses two main research questions:

1. What are the challenges that pre-service and in-service teachers of the BUAP experience when teaching EFL in one-to-one sessions?
2. Which strategies have been useful to overcome those challenges?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study will provide insight for teachers who are involved or wish to begin to teach EFL in one-to-one classes. It will also contribute to make the best of this potential context by providing teachers with strategies that will be helpful to improve the quality of teaching in one-to-one sessions. It can be helpful to minimize the factors affecting English teachers' performance in one-to-one classes in order to raise the effectiveness of teaching in such contexts. I also hope that this enterprise serves as a suggestion for program designers of this faculty to include a seminar on how to deal with individual teaching, which may be hugely advantageous for new generations of teachers who are about to face the current demand of individual tuition.

1.5 Key Terms

EFL.- (English as a Foreign Language) it is used to describe English language learning in countries where English is not an official first language (Wright, 2010).

Learning styles.- Keefe (1979, p.140-141) defines learning styles as the “composite of characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable

indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment.”

One-to-one.- The Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2016) provides the following definition for the term one-to-one, discussion or activity that involves two people talking directly, usually with one teaching or giving information to the other.

Private tutoring.- Bray (2006) defines private tutoring as a set of activities, supplementary to mainstream schooling, whose aim is to boost academic performance in exchange for monetary payment.

Strategy.- Stern (1983) provides a definition for the term Strategy, which refers to the general tendencies or overall characteristics of the approach employed by the language learner.

Teaching strategy- According to Strasser (1964), teaching strategy is a plan of action designed to attain certain instructional goals which can include multiple materials, techniques, and activities that are usually supported by an specific teaching method.

1.6 Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters:

A general overview of this dissertation, and related matters, such as (a) research purpose, (b) research questions, (c) significance of the study, (d) definition of the key terms, and (e) the organization of the chapters in this dissertation have been addressed in Chapter 1.

In Chapter 2, previous research regarding one-to-one instruction is reviewed as follows: (a) Strategies in English Language Teaching (b) Learning Styles and, (c) Different models of instruction.

In Chapter 3, the methodology employed in this dissertation is delineated in terms of (a) design of the study, (b) participants, (c) instruments, (d) data collection procedures, (f) data analysis, (g) limitations and, (d) a concluding note for the chapter.

In Chapter 4, the discussion of the results of each research question is described in the following order: (a) Challenges teachers experience when teaching EFL in one-to-one classes; (b) Strategies that have been useful to overcome challenges encountered in one-to-one settings; (c) Perceptions of the respondents regarding teaching principles and practices in one-to-one classes; as well as, (d) a concluding note to the chapter.

Chapter 5 presents (a) a restatement of the purposes, (b) the answers to the research questions, (c) some implications of the study, (d) Suggestions for further research and (e) the contribution of the study.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a critical review of the existing literature on the one-to-one model of education that will serve as a foundation and support for the new insight that I would like to contribute with. This chapter will define important concepts related to this research project. These concepts are strategy, learning styles, and instructional models as the main concepts that guide this paper. Also some comments will be included in order to make them more understandable, as well as a brief summary of each section.

2.2 Strategy as a fundamental concept in English Language Teaching

The inclusion of strategies is crucial for teachers to be more effective in their instructional interventions (Stern 1983) because strategies support and facilitate the teaching learning process. As teachers, we are not limited to use a reduced number of strategies: we are free to choose from several instructional strategies for just one lesson. For a more complete understanding of the term strategy next subsections will provide precise definitions related to this concept.

2.2.1 Definition of Strategy

An instructional or teaching strategy according to Smith (1969), serves as a pattern to guide teaching acts in order to reach certain outcomes. An instructional strategy is an action plan designed to accomplish several purposes. Similar to Smith, Strasser (1964) defines a teaching strategy as “A generalized behavior plan for a lesson(s) which includes

structure, desired learner behavior in terms of the goals of instruction, and an outline of tactics necessary to implement the strategy”. In other words, a strategy can be understood as a sketch that tells the teacher what should be taught, when should be taught and mainly how it should be taught.

Usually, techniques and strategies are words used interchangeably (Nunan 2000); however, there is an important distinction between these terms. Strategy is a wider term; according to Nunan one single teaching strategy may include different techniques of teaching and different techniques may be used within the same strategy. He also suggests that teaching strategies must be dynamic, and in accordance with the learners comprehension and stage of development. In next subsections it will be detailed the classification of strategies.

2.2.2 Language Teaching Strategies

Stern (1993) distinguishes teaching strategies into three main dimensions. These dimensions are the following: the intralingual crosslingual dimension, the objective subjective dimension, and the implicit explicit dimension.

Crosslingual versus Intralingual

The crosslingual intralingual dimension involves the use or non use of L1 (First Language or Mother Tongue) in L2 (Second Language or Foreign Language) learning. The key point behind the crosslingual strategy is that the new language is learned on the basis of a previously acquired language. Thus, this strategy allows the use of the L1 as a reference system. Translation is the principal technique derived from the crosslingual strategy. As Duff (1989) claims, translation is a helpful language learning activity, it promotes

speculation and discussion, it develops accuracy, clarity and flexibility; however, translation may act as a negative transfer or interference where there are differences (Lado 1957; Stockwell, Bowen, & Martin 1965).

On the other hand, the intralingual strategy does not allow the use of L1 in classroom instruction (Widdowson, 1978). This strategy encourages learners to think in the second language. All techniques derived from intralingual strategy attempt to provide opportunities for proficiency development in listening, reading and writing in the L2.

Stern (1992:285) claims that the inclusion of both, the crosslingual and the intralingual strategies would be more profitable: “neither the crosslingual nor the intralingual strategy is theoretically superior. Since each responds to different characteristics or phases of the learning process, they have complementary merits”. In other words, these two strategies help the learners in different ways and perhaps a combination of both the intralingual and the crosslingual could be more efficient for different conditions of language teaching depending on the goal of instruction.

Objective versus subjective

The objective subjective dimension according to Stern, (1993) concerns fluency and accuracy in language learning. He argues that the essence of the *objective strategy* is to give priority to accuracy and pays more attention to the language system which involves grammar, vocabulary, and notions and functions.

On the contrary, the *subjective strategy* focuses merely on fluency (Stern 1993), giving more importance to the message rather than any specific aspect of the language system. It incites the student to use the language for a purpose.

Stern (1992:344) suggests the integration of these two strategies in variable proportions according to the learners' needs and program objectives. An important consideration is to achieve balance between the two strategies and the extent to which the two teaching strategies will be emphasized and under what circumstance depends on the objectives of the course, the teacher's intentions, and assessment of the learners' needs.

Explicit versus implicit

The third strategic dimension according to Stern (1993) concerns the key issue of whether learning an L2 through conscious processes or through subconscious acquisition. The *explicit strategy* derives from cognitivism and seen as a cognitive process involves techniques such as conceptualization, deductive explanation and observation. These techniques imply the continuous of conscious procedures. Krashen (1988) claims that this strategy is mostly demanded by adult learners.

Otherwise, the *implicit strategy* comes from behaviorism and it is seen as a habit of formation involving exposure to language in use. For a clearer understanding of this dimension Stern (1992:327) lists some fundamental differences between the implicit explicit dimensions in Table 2.1.2:

Explicit	Implicit
Rational, formal and intellectual. Conscious learning through studial capabilities and rule learning. Analytic. Cognitive theory. Develop metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies. Rationalist approach.	Intuitive, subconscious. Exposure to language use and subconscious acquisition through spontaneous capabilities. More unreflective, informal, and incidental. Global understanding (Whole Language Theory). More behavioristic Develop communicative, social and affective strategies. Empiricist approach.

Table 2.1.2 Explicit versus implicit strategies (Stern 1992)

Stern advocates the incorporation of the two strategies “we conclude that both explicit and implicit knowledge sources exist, that they complement one another, and that both contribute to proficiency development” (1992: 334). Rephrasing Stern’s words, to improve academic progress the implementation of the two strategies is required.

2.2.3 Social Strategies in Language Teaching

The social aspect in teaching constitutes another divergence, the social strategies. Social strategies include teacher centered vs learner centered and the individual and large group strategic dimensions.

Learner centered versus teacher centered

In the *learner centeredness* the student becomes the nucleus of the teaching process. The learner centered strategy allows the students to participate actively in their learning instead of passively receiving information (Meece, 2003). The students take responsibility of their learning while the teacher mentors the students and enables them to construct new knowledge (Johassen, 1997).

In the *teacher centeredness* the teacher is the starting point of the teaching process. The teacher centered strategy is based upon the idea of an active teacher and a passive learner. The teacher functions as the primary source of knowledge in the classroom. The teacher imposes control over the students and often limits student’s participation (Freiberg, 1999). In the teacher centered classrooms, techniques that promote a focus on the teacher are commonly used, such as lectures, guided discussions, demonstrations and “cookbook” labs (Edwards, 2004).

Individual and large group

In the *individualized instruction* the teacher acts as the manager of the learning resources, he tutors and guides the student; this strategy embraces teaching modalities such as open learning, distance learning, and one-to-one teaching (Ellington & Race 1993).

In the case of *large groups* the teacher plays the traditional expository role; he becomes the dominator of the instruction process. Conventional lecture is the principal technique derived from the large group strategy. Good and Merkel (1959) describes that in lecturing the teacher presents an oral explanation of principles to the learners, while they are responsible for note taking, and usually are not allowed to participate actively.

2.2.4 Summary of Teaching Strategies in Language Teaching

A common error among teaching specialists is to refer to terms like strategy and technique as the same. A strategy is a blueprint designed by the teacher according to his or her unique teaching context in which are provided various alternatives to easily and effectively reach the desired outcomes in each lesson. According to Stern (1992) there are two divergences of strategies in language teaching, the language teaching and the social teaching. The first divergence makes reference to the way teachers must present the language to the learners, and the second divergence, refers to the optimums social distribution of the students according to the context.

2. 3 Learning Styles for Individualized Instruction

Reiff (1992) points out that each learner possesses individual attributes relating to their learning processes. In this way, the learning style of the student needs to be identified in order for the teacher to be in a better position to assist the student (Dunn, 1983).

Identifying the mode in which the student learn best, helps teachers to select and design teacher strategies that meet the students needs and maximizes the student understanding (Fairhust & Fairhust 1995). In order to have a clearer vision of the learning styles next subsections will define and describe the main characteristics of them.

2.3.1 Learning Style Definition

Keffe (1979:4) defines learning style as the “cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environments”. In other words, learning style refers to the way in which learners absorb new knowledge through their senses and how they process that knowledge. Another definition for learning style is provided by Felder and Henriques (1995:21), they conceive learning style as “the ways in which an individual characteristically acquires, retains and retrieves information”. This means that learning style is the manner in which humans persistently acquire, process, expresses and remember information. The above definitions asserted that even if all individuals are able to learn in any style, each one has a preferred way of learning.

2.3.2 Classification of Learning Styles

According to Leite, Sckinicki and Shi (2010), the dominant classification of Learning Styles is the VARK (Visual, Aural, Read or Write and Khinesthetic) model and also the Kolb’s model because of their recurrence and little questionability through the years, these two models will be described in this section.

2.3.2.1 VARK Model

The VARK model was proposed by Neil Fleming in 1987. This model categorizes the Learning Styles into four major styles; Visual, Aural, Read or Write and Khinesthetic.

Visual:

This style describes a preference for receiving knowledge via sight. Visual learners process the information preferably through the use of graphical tools, such as, diagrams, maps, charts or other graphs that teachers use to present information. However, it does not include the use of pictures, videos or demonstrations. This type of learners tends to structure knowledge in logical order (Fleming, 2001).

Auditory:

This preference refers to all the information that is best conceived in form of hearing and speech (Drago & Wagner, 2004). Auditory learners digest knowledge best when they are exposed to verbal discussions, tapes, lectures, tutorials or other strategies that also involve speaking (Miller, 2001).

Read or Write:

This style of learning involves reading and writing as the main medium to gain knowledge. Individuals that have preference for this style require the use of text based strategies such as mnemonics, open-ended questions, or paraphrasing in order to assimilate better the information given (Drago & Wagner, 2004).

Kinesthetic:

This mode of leaning, distinguishes an inclination for gaining knowledge by means of world interaction and performing. Kinesthetic learners learn best if they actively perform a task or if they transfer knew knowledge into real life situations. Some suggested strategies

for this type of learners are role playing, field tours, lectures with real life examples and experiments (Fleming, 2001).

2.3.2.2 Kolb's Model

The Experiential Learning Theory proposed by Kolb'(1984) divides the learning process into four stages. Concrete experience, reflection-observation, abstract-conceptualization and active experimentation. The Kolb learning style model was based on his experiential learning theory. In this model, Kolb defined learning style on a two-dimensional scale based on how a person perceived and processed information. The way people perceive information is seen as concrete experience or abstract conceptualization, and the way in which each student processes knowledge is seen as active experimentation or reflective observation (Simpson & Du, 2004)

These four stages combine to form four distinct learning styles, diverger, assimilator, converger and accomodator (Sirin & Guzel, 2010):

Diverger:

In the diverging style predominates the learning abilities of concrete experience and reflective observation. Divergent learners possess imaginative and creative abilities, and also the ability to understand and suit to others. Divergers perform best in situations that elicit many alternative ideas and implications, as is done in brainstorming (Kolb, 1984).

Assimilator:

In the assimilating style, the learning abilities of reflective observation and abstract conceptualization prevail. Assimilators have the ability to systematically plan, organize, analyze, create theoretical models, and engage in inductive reasoning. Those with this

learning style are the strongest at understanding a wide range of information and putting it into a concise, logical form (Kolb,1984).

Converger:

The converging style is characterized by the dominant learning abilities of abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. They often perceive new information abstractly and process or transform it actively. They are good in setting goals, solving problems, making decisions, and test out new ideas (Kolb, 1984).

Accommodator:

The accommodating style is characterized by the dominant learning abilities of active experimentation and concrete experiences. The greatest strengths of Accommodators are their ability to carry out plans and tasks, initiate activities and get involved in new experiences. They often take on leadership roles, are at ease in dealing with people, and are likely to be risk takers (Kolb, 1984).

2.3.3 Summary of Learning Styles

Learning style is an individual's natural or habitual pattern of acquiring and processing information in learning situations. This means that not all individuals in a class learn the same way, that is why teachers must recognize the learning styles of the students and adapt their teaching to the identified styles. Accordingly, when teaching in one-to-one settings, the identification of the specific way of learning of the student becomes essential.

According to (Leite, Sckinicki & Shi, 2010), there are two predominant models in the classification of Learning Styles, the VARK and the Kolb's Model.

Neil Fleming is the creator of the VARK learning styles model. VARK is an acronym for Visual, Aural, Read/write and Kinesthetic. Fleming claimed that visual learners have a preference for seeing (think in pictures; visual aids such as overhead slides, diagrams, handouts, etc.). Auditory learners best learn through listening (lectures, discussions, tapes, etc.). Read writers require the use of text based strategies such as mnemonics, open-ended questions, or paraphrasing. Kinesthetic learners prefer to learn via experience—moving, touching, and doing (active exploration of the world; science projects; experiments, etc.).

Kolb's learning theory sets out four distinct learning styles, which are based on a four-stage learning cycle of experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting. Immediate or concrete experiences lead to observations and reflections. Kolb's model therefore works on two levels - a four-stage cycle:

1. Concrete Experience - (CE)
2. Reflective Observation - (RO)
3. Abstract Conceptualization - (AC)
4. Active Experimentation - (AE)

and a four-type definition of learning styles, (each representing the combination of two preferred styles, for which Kolb used the terms:

1. Diverging (CE/RO)
2. Assimilating (AC/RO)
3. Converging (AC/AE)
4. Accommodating (CE/AE)

2.4 Instructional Models

Models pertain to the ways in which instructional experiences can be assembled, organized, or sequenced (Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan Brown, & Miller 2013). Teachers should become familiar of a variety of instructional models, in order to be able to provide effective instruction (Orlich et al., 2013). Instructional models are based on learning theories. Learning theories provide understanding about instructional components and the design of instruction, indicating which specific strategies are suitable within a given context and with specific learners (Keller, 1979). They also explain the relationship between knowledge we already know and the new knowledge we are in process to learn. The relevance and pertinence of a determined model depends on the specific instructional situation, problem or task (Siemens, 2002). This section will review literature related to instructional models, as well as increase the understanding of how the one-to-one model functions through private lessons. The review of literature will also discuss the learning benefits from the one-to-one model.

2.4.1 What is an instructional model?

Instructional models are basically sets of strategies based on teaching approaches that serve as an outline on how to organize appropriate learning environments to achieve certain instructional goals. “The very best teachers contemplate the manner in which they will present a topic and, through their teacher education programs, have a wide variety of instructional models at their disposal” (Orlich et al., 2013:4). In simple terms, truly effective teachers have the ability to manage different instructional models efficiently.

2.4.2 Types of instructional models

According to Orlich et al. (2013), instructional models are categorized in learning psychology models, classroom management models, and organizational models. Each category is explained below.

2.4.2.1 Learning psychology models

The main concepts that compose the learning psychology model are behaviorist, cognitive, constructivist and developmental.

According to Morrison, Ross, and Kemp (2004), behaviorism focuses on the relationship between stimulus and response, the reinforcement factor such as rewards and punishments, as well as on the effects of external conditions in determining future behaviors of students. In other words, behaviorists support that the external environment contributed to the modeling of an individual's behavior and whether the behavior occurs again is dependent upon how an individual is affected by the behavior.

The cognitivist view of instructional design is about constructing new knowledge through experiences. Learner should have the ability to think in order to solve problems (Bower & Hilgard, 1981). Learning is concerned not so much with what learners do but with what they already know and how that knowledge is received and stored into long term memory (Jonassen, 1991b). To store the information into long term memory, instructional activities are designed in the model. The role of the instructor is to design meaningful experiences in learning environments. Designed meaningful experiences should motivate students to construct new knowledge in their long term memory. The role of students is to join discussions and collaborative activities.

In the constructivist view, people construct their own knowledge through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences (Bednar, Cunningham, Duffy & Perry, 1991). In this way, learners are active creators of their own knowledge. Constructivism is interested in the use of cognitive activity to construct new knowledge. According to McGriff (2001), the learning process must be concerned with the experiences and contexts that make the student willing and enable to learn. During cognitive activity, learning environment should represent real life activities. Thus constructivist teachers encourage students to constantly assess how the activity is helping them gain understanding.

Developmental psychology examines the psychological processes of development; it describes the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, perceptual, and personality development (Hurlock 1978) because it relates these changes with the learner's behavior. This means that, as learners go through different stages of life, they approach learning in different ways. Developmental psychology equips the teacher in planning what to teach and how to teach so as to meet the needs of different categories of learners.

2.4.2.2 Classroom management models

The classroom management model consists of self discipline and imposed discipline. According to Rosen (1997), discipline implies voluntary obedience to rules that promote students' interest and protect the wellness of others; that is self discipline.

On the contrary imposed discipline suggests a student code of strict control to enforce obedience and treatment that controls or punishes and a system of rules and regulations prescribed by the teacher in the best interests of individual students and the

class as a whole. These norms include what the group conceives as a socially acceptable pattern of behavior expected of every individual in the group (Harris, 2005).

Good discipline is considered to be one of the major attributes of effective schools and many failing schools have been blamed for lack of discipline (Rosen, 1997).

2.4.2.3 Organizational models

The category of organizational models includes large groups, small groups, cooperative learning groups, learning communities and individualized instruction (Orlich et al. 2013).

Small groups often refer to teaching in a seminar, tutorial or a problem-based class. Seminars or tutorial sessions allow students to meet with small groups of peers or focus on the practical application of their studies in problem-based classes and project work. It allows more hands-on tasks to support the academic learning experience, and gives the chance to motivate and build student confidence. Students benefit from the small group environment by a much-valued contact with the teacher on a more individual scale within the broader context of the academic community (Harden & Laidlaw, 2012).

The small group teaching environment provides teachers with the opportunity to receive and give immediate feedback. With one-on-one and small-group instruction, teachers can also provide immediate and individualized feedback (Blumsack, 1996; Gillon, 2000; O'Connor and Jenkins, 1995). This educational intervention has many advantages when compared to other strategies such as large group lectures. Specifically, it encourages a more complete understanding of a subject rather than superficial learning where the emphasis is on memorization (Harden & Laidlaw, 2012). It does so by being interactive and it has been consistently shown to engage students in active discussion and critical thinking

(Edmunds & Brown, 2010). Furthermore, small group learning allows students to develop interpersonal, presentation and communication skills which are useful lifelong skills. These generic skills are difficult to develop in isolation without multisource feedback from teachers, peers and self-assessment (Crosby & Hesketh, 2004).

The large group is often seen as the lecture format in a room of more than one hundred students (Cooper & Robinson, 2000). In this way one of the most critical problems faced by instructors of large classes is that students feel isolated and are often anonymous to both the instructor and to one another (Svinicki & McKeachie, 2010).

“Collaborative learning” as its name suggests, refers to a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together, as opposed to competition. Usually, students are working in groups of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions, or meanings, or creating a product (Slavin1987). Collaborative learning is focused on developing learning environments that promote group identification and working with peers in a constructive and collaborative manner (Johnson & Johnson 1988).

In a learning-communities approach the goal is to foster a culture of learning, where both individuals and the community as a whole are learning how to learn. Further, members of the community share their individual efforts towards a deeper understanding of the subject matter under study. Students learn to synthesize multiple perspectives, to solve problems in a variety of ways, and to use each other's diverse knowledge and skills as resources to collaboratively solve problems and advance their understanding. The intent is for members to come to respect and value differences within the community.

Individualizing instruction offer practices of teaching which recognize the uniqueness of each student, in order to provide adequate tutorial guidance, and other

support services suited to bring about a wholesome development in the person. This method stresses presenting the content to students in such a way that is challenging, based on their past performances. Because it is called individualized instruction does not mean that all instruction has to be one-to-one (Bartz & Miller, 1991) however, this study reviews specifically the one-to-one instructional model.

2.4.3 The one-to-one teaching Model

Many students in developing countries are attending one-to-one classes and the trend is extending in most of the countries (Bray, 2007). Teaching one-to-one is not a scaled down version of whole class teaching, and it requires a different approach from that used in group work (Murphey, 1991). “In one-to-one teaching the emphasis is on the student providing the content, and the teacher providing the form. This means a basic paradigm radically different from the traditional present-practice-produce of much classroom language teaching” (Wilberg 1987, p.13). The one-to-one model pertains to attend the particular student’s needs, in order to help the learner to cope his weaknesses so that his success is consolidated. Dang and Rogers (2008) believe that one-to-one tutoring complements and reinforces what students have learned in formal programs and help them revise their school lessons deeply. This method stresses presenting the curriculum in such a way that is challenging for the student, based on his or her past performances (Bartz & Miller, 1991).

Private tutoring is defined as fee-based tutoring that provides supplementary instruction to students in academic subjects that they study in the mainstream education system (Dang & Rogers 2008). Bray and Kwok (2003) also define private tutoring as supplementary

tutoring in academic subjects which is provided by the tutors for financial gain and which is additional to the provision by mainstream schooling.

According to Davis (2004), private lessons are informal and more flexible; and are divided into two categories namely; face to face individual tutoring or group tutoring. Asankha (2011) suggests that the first type of private tuition education is one-to-one instruction in which teachers visit students or students visit teachers and the second type of private tuition is provided by qualified teachers to small groups of students.

Adaptive or individual instruction has the advantage of providing effectively for the specific needs of students. Research indicates that adaptive instruction has a strong positive impact on student learning (Walberg 1985). Another advantage of the individualized model is self-pacing with respect to presenting the content to the learner (Bartz & Miller, 1991).

2.4.4 Summary of instructional models

An instructional model is composed by a set of strategies that are convenient for a determined instructional situation. According to the psychological stages of the learners, the students' behavior, and the size of the class; Orlich et al (2013), classify the various instructional models into learning psychology models, classroom management models, and organizational models respectively. From this last category of models, derives the one-to-one teaching model. The main function of the one-to-one model of instruction is to improve the academic performance of a low-achieving student.

2.5 Concluding Note to the Chapter

In this chapter, I focused on presenting a general overview of the existing literature that revolves around one-to-one teaching. I first researched a definition of teaching strategy in terms of language teaching, and social teaching. My understanding is that a strategy in language teaching refers to the manner in which teachers present the language in their classes, and regards to social teaching, strategy is seen as the pertinent social distribution of the students according to the context.

Another relevant aspect in this literature review is the way in which individuals in a class learn. Some authors such as Fleming and Kolb propose that each student learns differently, and teachers must recognize the learning styles of their learners to help each student to achieve his or her full potential, which in one-to-one contexts becomes essential.

The last matter addressed in this literature refers to instructional models, particularly the one-to-one teaching model which is related to the complementary alternative tuition that pertains to attend the specific needs of one student.

It is important to mention that during the review of this literature I realized that there is no research that talks about the challenges faced by one-to-one language teachers of the BUAP and the strategies they have used to approach classes in one-to-one settings. Thus, I am interested in knowing if there are some specific practices that have been resulted profitable for teachers to manage one-to-one classes effectively and, if it is the case, this project could be able to add new insight to the existing body of knowledge in regards one-to-one teaching.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains detailed information about the research methodology used to collect and analyze data on teachers' strategies to teach EFL in one-to-one settings. It includes a description of the design of the study, the participants, the instruments, the data collection, the data analysis procedure and the limitations faced during the project.

3.2 Design of the Study

My aim in doing this study is to explore the one-to-one teaching model in terms of conditions, practices beliefs, processes, or trends from the experience of teachers. I conducted a qualitative study. This method was selected to identify teachers' strategies concerning to the one-to-one model of teaching since these strategies were developed from prior experiences during their professional careers. It includes teachers' perceptions, both emotionally and intellectually, about the challenges regarding one-to-one teaching. Hence, I chose a survey descriptive strategy for this study because according to Best and Kahn (2003) descriptive design is concerned with conditions or level of performance that exist, opinions that are held, process that are going on, effects that are evident or trends that are developing.

3.3 Participants

The participants were 10 teachers of the Faculty of Languages of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. The list of teachers who participate in this project consisted of five pre-service teachers and five in-service teachers.

The pre-service teachers are a group of mentors of this faculty who provide assistance to students that are facing problems in the target language. Their age range is from 22 to 24 years old.

The in-service teachers are teachers with 10 or more years of experience who have been given private English lessons at home. All of them are graduated from the languages faculty of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. Their age range is from 35 to 51 years old.

The criterion for teachers' selection is predominantly teachers that are currently teaching English in one-to-one classes. The intention was to keep the sample within one institution to eliminate as many variables as possible, for that reason I focused only in the Faculty of Languages BUAP. Another criterion to select these participants is accessibility. As a student of the faculty, I had immediate access to the institution. Despite this accessibility, all participants in this study were free to decide whether or not to take part in the research. Once they voluntarily agreed to participate, I went through ethical procedures that assured their anonymity.

3.4 Instruments

I used two types of instruments that enrich each other to ensure trustworthiness in my research. The first instrument was a questionnaire to identify some common teachers' practices in one-to-one teaching. The second instrument was an interview to explore participants' experiences and views on one-to-one teaching in greater depth. In the following subsections I will describe the functions that each instrument has in this study.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

For this research I designed my own questionnaire (see in Appendix A) which consists of two sections, a section of four likert questions about the student-centered view and a rating scale section, in which the respondents were asked to rate the importance of twenty eight items about one-to-one practices. I believe that the use of a questionnaire helped to bring together as much information as possible from the teachers in the faculty as they all were able to complete the questionnaire given at their own pace and time (Bryman, 2008). This questionnaire served to identify some trends in one-to-one teaching, summarize information about the sample, and obtain descriptive percentages that could serve to identify the following variables:

- a. Teacher's perceptions of one-to-one teaching.
- b. The used strategies to handle one-to-one classes.
- c. Effectiveness of the used strategies.

3.4.2 Interview

In addition to the questionnaire, I selected interviews, as a complementary tool. This instrument was suitable to obtain a more comprehensive descriptive understanding of teachers' perceptions on the challenges regarding to one-to-one teaching. According to Giorgi (2009), the face-to-face interview is often longer and thus richer in terms of depth. Indeed, through the interview process this study provided a wide-range of experiences and knowledge of in-service and pre-service teachers involved in one-to-one teaching. I designed the questions for the interview based on my research objective that is set to explore perceptions and attitudes towards one-to-one teaching. Broken into various

segments, the interviews contained the following themes: challenges experienced by pre-service and in-service teachers while teaching EFL in one-to-one classes, and strategies used by them to overcome the encountered challenges. This dissertation used the semi-structured interview process (see questions in Appendix B).

3.5 Data Collection

I conducted this research during the summer of 2016. I asked the selected teachers their permission to participate in my research project through face to-face contact and e-mails. Data for this study was collected by means of questionnaires and one-on-one interviews. All of the participants were asked to answer a questionnaire, some of them were administered via e-mail and some others were administered at my presence. Respondents' anonymity was ensured by asking the participants not to identify themselves anywhere in the questionnaire. I used the questionnaires to identify the participants who had indicated their willingness to be interviewed. The interviews focused on 2 pre-service teachers of this faculty and 2 in-service teachers of the same institution. Each participant was interviewed individually for approximately 25 minutes. The participants of the study were involved in interviews that occurred during or after school. Before an interview began, I informed the interviewee about the selection process and guaranteed confidentiality. These interviews focused on ten semi-structured questions. With consent from the participants, the interviews were recorded. Then, the recordings were transcribed into detailed conversations (which are available upon request) to maintain accurate findings. Each participant was assured that his or her responses to the interview questions would remain confidential. Next section presents the process in which data was analyzed.

3.6 Data Analysis

To do the data analysis, first I focused on the questionnaires, and then I analyzed the interviews. In the succeeding subsections, the analysis is explained.

As the questionnaires applied in this research were based on rating questions, they generated data that had to be analyzed using descriptive statistics. Thus, these questionnaires were processed by the software package Excel.

The interview data that was collected from the four teachers was recorded and transcribed before being identified and transformed into categories. The first step is that transcripts were read and re-read to start grouping them. The data from this study was categorized into two groups: challenges that teachers experience when teaching one-to-one, and strategies that teachers suggest to overcome the one-to-one teaching challenges. These groups were used to analysis the two main concepts that address the research questions. The main points of every interview for this study were summarized.

3.7 Limitations

In the course of conducting my dissertation, appeared two minor limitations. First, I would have liked to provide an additional perspective of this study by observing one-to-one teachers in action but that was not possible because it would break the one-to-one interaction. Also it would be helpful to survey the students of these particular teachers, to see if I can find correlation between teachers' actions and students' responses. Despite the above limitations, this research offers complete and reliable results.

3.8 Concluding Note to the Chapter

I conducted a survey study that sought to obtain the essence of the experience of teachers who have given one-to-one mentoring. The collected data reflected the actual perceptions of teachers who had experience in one-to-one classes. Teachers understood the questions as presented to them in the instruments, and gave appropriate and true responses based on their experience and knowledge which lead me to present reliable results on next chapter.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The present chapter attempts to discuss the findings that emerged from the 10 questionnaires and 4 interviews described in the methodology. The results are divided into four sections. The first section deals with presenting three different categories that emerged from the interviews and can reveal the challenges that one-to-one teaching implies. The second part shows the corresponding strategies applied by pre-service and experienced teachers to cope the challenges in one-to-one teaching. The third section is about the teaching principles and practices in one-to-one classes, as perceived by the participants in the questionnaires, which lead to triangulate the data in order to provide more accurate results. In the fourth section the significance of the findings is presented. Finally, the chapter conclusions are provided.

4.2 Most Common Challenges Teachers Experience when Teaching EFL in One-to-One Classes

Teaching students in one-to-one contexts may imply certain challenges for teachers. The participants in this study had provided different conceptions and understandings of the challenges they faced when teaching in one-to-one contexts. From the analysis, these challenges can be categorized according to experienced teachers and in-service teachers in three different ways:

4.2.1 No opportunities to interact with other learners.

The next extract illustrates that Experienced Teacher 1 believes that one of the most common challenges in her lessons was the fact of none or very few opportunities for student interaction, as a consequence of having just one student at a time.

Probably the main challenge I had to face when started giving classes in private lessons was not being able to interact solely with my student. At the beginning it does not seem to be a problem for both, but I remember that 2 or 3 lessons later my student become bored and even afraid of practicing the language only with me the entire hour, which made me feel a little frustrated for not knowing how to deal with this situation.

Experienced Teacher 1

In the above extract Experienced Teacher 1 avows that when he started giving one-to-one classes, he was not ready to interact “solely” with his student, he declares openly that he felt a bit frustrated because he and his learner missed the student-student interaction in class.

Experienced teacher 2 expressed the same idea by the following comment:

Mmmm, perhaps the main challenge is the lack of interaction, as we are accustomed to give classes to ten or more students and consequently we have the option of setting up a number of opportunities for interaction, for example: small groups of three to five students, or pair work, in which the entire all of the classmates interact with each other. However in one-to-one instruction, these opportunities are obviously reduced to student-teacher interaction, which can grow monotonous over the course if we do not count with the necessary strategies to deal with.

Experienced teacher 2

The opinion shared by Experienced teacher 2 suggests that teachers use to include activities that imply interaction with classmates in their lessons. Then, it may become difficult for teachers to carry out a lesson in which they have to omit the student-student

interaction. In addition to this limitation, teacher 2 makes explicit the need of strategies to deal with the lack of student-student interaction.

Also pre-service teacher 2 mentioned something similar:

When we teach classes, we typically plan our lessons to incorporate group work. It's easier for some students to work with their peers than to participate individually, and they're able to learn from each other. Unfortunately, this isn't something that can be done in a single student class.

Pre-service teacher 2

Pre-service teacher 2 also manifests that is complicated for one-to-one teachers to find a way of providing effective instruction without including peers interaction in their classes. He considers that students in one-to-one classes lose the benefit of learning from classmates' opinions.

As can be seen in the responses of three of the four participants, they are habituated to group interaction. In addition, two of the interviewed teachers emphasize that they are more familiarized with group teaching, when they expressed that they are “accustomed” to give classes to more than ten students or that they “typically” plan their lessons incorporating group work. Hence, the fact that both, teacher and learner are alone together for the duration of the class means a challenge for experienced teachers, as well as for in-service teachers and can cause the challenge, that is going to be presented in the next subdivision.

4.2.2 The lesson can become monotonous

According to Pre-service Teacher 1, monotony which refers to any situation in which stimulation does not happen or happens within a predictable range (Thiffault and

Bergeron 1997), is also seen as a challenge when giving classes in one-to-one settings. He expresses the following idea:

To be honest, you might find the time going by rather slowly in one-to-one lessons. Sometimes the activities that the two of you settle into, become too boring, and you have to be really creative if you do not want your class to be a total failure.

Pre-service teacher 1

From this comment, it seems that one-to-one classes can be boring for learner and teacher because there are no opportunities to interact with other learners and develop a group dynamic. Moreover one-to-one teaching may demand a lot of wit on the part of the teacher in order to do not fall in the tedious repetition of the same activities every lesson. .

4.2.3 The weight of responsibility in one-to-one teaching

The subsequent opinion provided by pre-service Teacher 2 shows that an additional challenge is that the teacher carries considerable responsibility when teaching to just one student at a time. Students in one-to-one settings have undivided attention, then, it is expected from one-to-one teachers to get their learners quick and impressive advance.

Normally, a “mentor” will help a student who is struggling in the target language class. Since that student is having difficulty in his/her course he or she often has other problems. That’s for me a really big challenge, because we have to ensure learning as we are the only responsible of the student’s progress. However this progress is not always as accelerated as expected because first we have to deal with external factors affecting the student’s learning.

Pre-service teacher 2

It is evident from Pre-service teacher’s viewpoint that “mentoring” a student in one-to-one classes is not that easy. It can mean a big responsibility for the teacher in charge, owing to he or she has to cope with additional issues that interfere with the student’s advance in learning.

Participants in this study shared their knowledge but most importantly, they all opened their feelings to reveal some challenges that exist in one-to-one contexts. Sometimes it is easy to think that providing classes to just one student becomes easy for the teacher, but every business has unique challenges and the one-to-one teaching context is not the exception. In addition, the lack of training in individual teaching complicates the path of a teacher who provides one-to-one assistance.

This section shows the challenges found in the participants' responses; however, to have a deeper insight into the current situation of teachers who manage one-to-one classes it is also necessary to know the strategies that these teachers used to overcome the encountered challenges. These strategies are presented in the succeeding subsection.

4.3 Strategies to Overcome Challenges in One-to-One Classes

Teachers may use some strategies to deal with the challenges that exist in one-to-one contexts. The following strategies emerged from the interviews with the pre-service and experienced teachers:

4.3.1 Building rapport

Rapport was seen as a key strategy by one-to-one teachers, to deal with the solely student/teacher interaction. The next extract took from the answer of experienced Teacher 2 illustrates this assumption.

It is important to build confidence from the very beginning, because students perform best when they have a good relationship with the

teacher, it can be really uncomfortable if there is no empathy between the student and the teacher, and I feel that the responsibility for building this empathy lies with the teacher. I definitely suggest creating a safe and supportive environment since the first class, keeping the relationship as professional as possible.

Experienced Teacher 2

The above opinion suggests that teachers must work harder in building rapport in the one-to-one environment because rapport seems to increase the productivity of the student. For experienced teacher 2, empathy is a central component in his teaching; he upholds the idea of having sensitivity to the students, especially in one-to-one contexts, as teachers and students are a team that work together to build knowledge.

4.3.2 Varying Activities

Through the following comment, Pre-service Teacher 1 argues that varying activities in one-to-one classes is useful to battle the boredom caused for the lack of group interaction.

Many students feel uncomfortable at first; they may not be used to being the center of attention! And although they learn a lot faster, they may also get tired faster. So, variety is the key. Using a variety of techniques and practicing different skills, helps to give a successful class.

Pre-service Teacher 1

From the above argument, it may be realized that students could feel pressured about having the entire heed of the teacher during the whole class. Along with, students in one-to-one contexts get bored easily in the absence of a wide repertoire of activities. Pre-service teacher 1 advises varying the activities as much as possible within the one-to-one context in order to facilitate learning and avoid the presence of tiredness or boredom in one-to-one classes. By incorporating different activities in the one-to-one teaching setting,

the student will never know what to expect in that day's lesson, so that he or she will stay fresh and enthusiastic about starting next class.

4.3.3 Doing a needs Analysis

Experienced Teacher 1 suggests the performing of a needs analysis to a more effective intervention in one to-one classes through the coming statement:

Before you begin teaching one-to-one is advisable to do a needs analysis. Performing a needs analysis for a new student can be as simple as having a conversation about what the student would like to cover, but sometimes results better to ask the student to fill out a questionnaire, because many students don't necessarily know what their needs are. It is all up to you.

Experienced Teacher 1

According to this respondent, a good understanding of the student's needs, can contribute to an effective one-to-one teaching. This needs analysis could be done as a first step in order to attend the learner appropriately. Sometimes students do not know how to express their real learning needs, if it is the case, teachers should resort to some technique to find out the needs of the students.

In this section, some useful strategies to handle one-to-one classes have been made available. Obtaining these strategies was possible because the participants were very accessible to me in regards to their thoughts and feelings, which enable me to have a clearer understanding of the meaning that teachers ascribe to their experiences in the one-to-one setting.

Now, the results obtained in the questionnaires will be presented to complement the previous information.

4.4 Perceptions Regarding Teaching Principles and Practices in One-to-One Classes

To know the perceptions of the participants in regard to teaching principles and practices in the one-to-one context, a questionnaire composed by two sections was applied. In the first section of this questionnaire respondents were asked to rate 4 perception statements dealing with the student/teacher centeredness in one-to-one settings. The scale used was a 1 to 5 to agreement scale with each of the perception statements. The scale descriptors were: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Teachers assigned higher ratings to statement “a) *In one-to-one teaching the emphasis is on the student providing the content*”, can’t see figure 4.1 which suggests that a one-to-one setting should operate with student-centered instruction. The ratings to statement “b) *In one-to-one teaching the emphasis is on the teacher providing the content*” reaffirm that a teacher-centered instruction is not advisable in one-to-one contexts, as participants used the low scale descriptors to rate this statement. In statement “c)”, most of the participants were disagree with the statement “*The emphasis is on the student providing the form*”, which was confirmed in statement “d)”, where a large part of the respondents recommend that in one-to-one teaching “*The emphasis is on the teacher providing the form*”. In this way it is demonstrated the learner centeredness as a useful strategy as reviewed in the Literature provided in subsection 2.2.3 of chapter II.

The participants gave low scores to the two statements related to teacher centeredness and high scores to the statements that concern to student centeredness. These results in the first part of the questionnaire show that in a one-to-one setting, the student is

the nucleus of the teaching process and that the teacher is the responsible of providing the form.

In the second part of the questionnaire, participants were asked to rate the importance of some practices within the one-to-one settings. Broken into various categories, the questionnaires contained the following content: 1).Student Centeredness, 2) The four macroskills, 3) The Use Of Target Language in class, 4) Rapport, 5) Trying different Methods and varying activities, 6) Inclusion of strategies,7) Monitoring Student Progress, 8)Student Needs, 9) Learning Styles, 10)The Use of Technology.

1) The first category addresses Student Centeredness through the following statements:

- “19 Encouraging my student to assess his/her own progress is...”
- “20 Using mainly student-centered activities (e.g. generating examples, solving problems) is...”
- “24 Engaging my student in active discussion and critical thinking is...”

The majority of participants consider Student centeredness as very important or important in one-to-one contexts, this means that the student is first presented with challenges (questions or problems) and learns through the acquisition of critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills. It seems to be advisable to place the student in the center of the learning process in one-to-one settings, by letting him/her choose the content, activities, materials, and pace of learning. In that way, the learner would be fully engaged, and could have more opportunities to think creatively and develop independence skills. Properly implemented the student centered strategies in one-to-one teaching can lead to more positive attitudes towards learning EFL.

2) The second category deals with the inclusion of the Four macro skills. Most teachers coincide that the inclusion of the four strategies is beneficial in one-to-one teaching, as they agree to some extent with the statement:

- “18 *Devoting time to the four macro skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) is...*”.

As a deduction of this tendency, it could be said that the one-to-one teacher language teacher should give the proper emphasis to the specific ability that is being studied, but combining it with the others in order to engage the student to improve his/ her communicative competence in English. Integrating the four skills in the one-to-one teaching might allow the teacher to build in more variety into the lesson because the range of activities could be wider. Instead of just having listening, the student can have speaking, reading and writing practice. This can raise the student’s motivation to learn English.

3) The below statements are related to the Use of Target Language in class.

- “15 *Exposing my student to real life language is...*”,
- “16 *Using authentic materials to support my teaching is...*”,
- “17 *Providing meaningful, purposeful opportunities for my student to communicate with me in the target language is...*”and
- “26 *Using Gestures and Non Verbal Cues is...*”

Based on the responses of the participants, because most of them indicate agreement with the statements, it can be suggested that one-to-one teachers should support their teaching with the use of authentic materials that allow the student to be exposed to real life language situations. In that way, the target language might be easily adopted as a language

of instruction in the one-to-one class at the same time that the student is quick at understanding real spoken English and is more likely to acquire fluency in speech.

4) The following statements make reference to the importance of Rapport when teaching one-to one:

- “8 *Giving my student constructive feedback constantly is ...*”,
- “12 *Providing a supportive and safe environment in my classes is...*”,
- “14 *Encouraging my student to ask questions when difficulties or misunderstandings arise is...*”,
- “21 *Rewarding my student’s progress is...*” and
- “23 *Motivating my student to learn is...*”

All participants express high agreement in their answers. I take these agreements as an indication that teachers care about their students and establish positive relationship with them. These positive relationships can contribute positively to learning. Building rapport with the student through mutual trust and respect, and getting to know the student beyond the class can help to better understand the background of the student whereby the teacher is able to know how the student learns, and how they both, student and teacher might work effectively. Teaching in a one-to-one setting involves much more than just teaching the student language skills. It provides a model of communicating for the student to follow. It also facilitates the process of providing feedback, which in my opinion as a researcher is essential to any teaching relationship.

5) Another important aspect in one-to-one settings is trying different Methods and varying activities, as shown in the next statements:

- “9 *Including a variety of activities in each lesson is ...*”,

- “11 *Trying different teaching methods (e.g. The Direct Method, The Audio-Lingual Method, The Communicative Approach, etc.) is...*” and
- “27 *Including games in my classes to practice language is...*”,

Most of the respondents qualify this particularity as important or very important when teaching one-to-one. In accordance with the responses, it is advisable to vary the teaching methods and activities when teaching one-to-one. Providing varied tasks could enrich class work in one-to-one settings and make learning more enjoyable for the student by tapping into his/her individual talents, ideas and thoughts. Variety could generate learner interest and motivation. Moreover trying different methods and activities in the one-to-one setting offer the student various possibilities to discover and develop all their abilities in learning EFL.

6) The importance of the inclusion of strategies in one-to-one classes was addressed through the following statements:

- “5 *Identifying strategies for achieving the goals of my student is...*”
- “7 *Modifying or adapting strategies that are unsuccessful is...*”

Almost all the participants rate this aspect as very important, which could signify that selecting and using pertinent strategies to teach EFL one-to-one is advisable to give the student a chance to actively engage with the content and achieve their learning goals easily. One-to-one teachers can use different teaching strategies to achieve the different purposes of learning and to suit the learning style, abilities, interests and needs of the student. As mentioned in section 2.2 of the literature review chapter, there is no fixed rule regarding which strategy is the best. Teachers can develop the repertoire which is the most effective for them to enhance the independent learning capabilities of the student.

7) Another category present in the questionnaires is about the importance of Monitoring the student's Progress in the one-to-one teaching, this category was approached through the following statements:

- “6 *Monitoring the progress of my student towards achieving goals is...*”,
- “13 *Assigning homework is...*”,
- “25 *Presenting the curriculum to the student in such a way that is challenging is...*”

In this category some participants expressed that they consider this aspect as important, while some others as very important. Then, it is recommendable for the one-to-one teacher to monitor the student's progress in order to make better decisions about the type of instruction that will work best with that particular student. Monitoring the student progress in one-to-one teaching enables the teacher to identify the student's level of performance for a specific skill. As a result, teachers might provide the student with more assertive assistance in achieving his/her personal academic goals. With ongoing monitoring of the student, the teacher could also provide the student with valuable feedback.

8) The following statements are part of the Student Needs category:

- “3 *Setting the learning goals of my student (e.g. determine what they need to learn) is...*”,
- “4 *Setting the process goals of my student (e.g. determine what tasks are required to achieve the learning goals of the learner) is...*”
- “22 *Analyzing my student's needs is...*”

The answers provided in these questions shows that most teachers suggest to determine the student needs before any one-to-one intervention. Identifying the needs of the

learner could give the teacher and the student a clear vision of where to focus their time and attention. It seems that in a one-to-one setting becomes essential to see the student as a unique individual and to be flexible and responsive to his/her unique strengths, needs and learning preferences. It might be helpful to find out about the student's motivation, his/her prior learning experiences, the situations he/she is likely to use English in and which skills he/she needs to extra practice with. Armed with this information, the one-to-one teacher can select and create the most appropriate and useful learning materials and activities.

9) The next statement addresses the importance of taking into consideration the Learning Style of the student in one-to-one settings

- “2 *Recognizing the learning style of my student is...*”

According to the responses; if one-to-one teaching is tailored to match the preferred style of the student, learning may be easy and high on quality. Sometimes it can be difficult to match every learning style in a large class but in the one-to-one context matching the preferred way of learning of the student could become easier. As a researcher I believe that, one-to-one teachers should identify the learning style of the student and design their instruction accordingly to let the student gain knowledge easily, and perform better in the one-to-one class.

10) Finally the Use of Technology was another aspect addressed in the questionnaire through the statements:

- “1 *Integrating technology in my class is...*”
- “10 *Improving my proficiency with technology is...*”

However, most of the respondents indicate disagreement with the statements related to this category, which leads me to think that they do not consider this affair as important when teaching one-to-one.

4.5 Findings and their significance

An important finding is about the challenges that experienced and pre-service teachers have faced in their teaching experience in one-to-one settings. From this, it was found that both experienced teachers and pre-service teachers have had to deal with the fact that there is no learner-learner “dynamic”; consequently the interaction is reduced to teacher-student, which can lead to monotony. Besides that fact, it is important to mention that the strategies they used to deal with the lack of interaction with other learners were good in the sense, they accomplish that problem when they used strategies such as creating a good relationship with the student, in other words, they suggest to build rapport with the student since the very beginning of the course. Another quite important strategy mentioned was to have a catchy lesson plan and use a variety of activities to suit the needs and interests of the learners because teachers stated that this can be an important factor that can affects student’s learning and it may be the origin of monotonous in one-to-one settings. On the other hand, considering strategies from pre-service teachers, serve to notice that they also used almost the same strategies as experienced teachers, so these findings lead us to conclude that there is consistency in the challenges faced in one-to-one contexts and that the strategies that they have been used, have been useful to battle these concerns.

Moreover, it was interesting to notice that for most of pre-service and in-service teachers they illustrated in the questionnaire that the use of technology in one-to-one

teaching is not really relevant. On the contrary side, the most used strategies in one-to-one teaching included the use of target language in class, building rapport, varying activities, monitoring student progress, performing a needs analysis, and recognizing the learning style of the student.

4.6 Concluding note to the chapter

Three different categories emerged from an in-depth analysis of the data provided by pre-service and in-service teachers through the responses shown in the questionnaires and in the interviews. These categories address the main challenges that teachers in this research experienced when managing lessons in one-to-one settings, the teaching strategies that according to these teachers were helpful to cope the challenges faced in the one-to-one settings and the teachers' perceptions regarding some teaching principles and practices in one-to-one classes. Teachers perceive that these strategies and practices make a significant difference when teaching EFL to just one student at a time. The teachers that participate in this study informed the research questions by providing insight into the ways in which they have personally experienced one-to-one teaching. They showed an excellent attitude, disposition and openness to share their insights and made reflection on their past experiences in one-to-one teaching.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction to the Chapter

The conclusions of this dissertation are presented in this chapter. First, the purpose of the study and the way it was aimed will be described. Moreover the answers to the research questions will be illustrated. Then, some pedagogical implications arising from the results of this project, they will be discussed. As a final step, suggestions for further research will be provided.

5.2 Restatement of the Research Purpose

The first purpose of this study was to explore the challenges that pre-service and in-service teachers in the faculty of languages BUAP have experienced when teaching one-to-one. This purpose was achieved through the analysis of interviews with participants. It was possible to observe in their responses that both experienced and pre-service teachers have faced various challenges in one-to-one settings. Also, it was found that most of the participants had illustrated through their comments that after applying the following strategies: a) building rapport with the student, b) varying activities to overcome monotony and, c) doing an analysis to attend the particular needs of the student, the changes that showed learners were absolutely positive due to most of the learners work better in a safe environment, they enjoyed the variation of activities and had considerable improvements in their courses by being involved in active learning.

The second objective of this paper was to extract the strategies suggested for pre-service and in-service teachers in order to share them with teachers who are involved or wish to begin giving classes in one-to-one contexts. This aim was achieved through the

analysis of comments stated in the interviews illustrated by pre-service and experienced teachers, and through the statistical analysis of the questionnaires. The emerging categories from the questionnaires: 1) student centeredness, 2) the four macro skills, 3) the use of target language in class, 4) rapport, 5) trying different methods and varying activities, 6) inclusion of strategies, 7) monitoring student progress, 8) student needs, 9) learning styles, 10) the use of technology, were so closely related to the literature review stated in chapter two. Also it is interesting to notice that most of the teachers agree about the benefits of the inclusion of the practices mentioned in the ten categories previous mentioned. Analogously, building rapport, varying activities, and performing a needs analysis were seen as helpful strategies in one-to-one teaching. From these assumptions it is possible to say that armed with those strategies, it is possible to overcome the challenges of teaching English one-to-one and for both teacher and student to enjoy the one-to-one teaching experience.

As an additional comment, it was interesting to see that pre-service and in-service teachers used similar strategies to deal with the challenges that were found in one-to-one teaching. This finding was a surprising fact due to the factor of years of experience, because it seems that this factor does not necessarily have a great impact on the teaching strategies teachers use when they face a difficult situation while teaching English in one-to-one classes.

5.3 Answers to Research Questions

The two research questions that guided this study were answered through the data collected. In each research question different categories emerged as a result of the analysis of data, making important and relevant contributions to this study.

In the first research question, *“What are the most common challenges that teachers of the Faculty of Languages of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla face when teaching EFL in one-to-one classes?”* the emerging categories indicated different challenges faced by pre-service and in-service teachers when teaching with just one student at a time, so they were the following:

a) No opportunities of interaction with other learners, from this, it was found that both experienced teachers and pre-service teachers have had to deal with the fact that there is no learner-learner “dynamic”; consequently the interaction is reduced to teacher-student, which can lead to monotony which is the next challenge encountered

b) Lessons can become monotonous; It can become boring for both the teacher and the student if the teacher does not constantly initiate new activities and drive the teaching sessions with the strength of his creativity.

c) Teachers are more compromised to achieve results quickly. An additional challenge on the teacher who teaches EFL individually is that he is expected to get the student quick results due to the fact that he or she is only responsible for the learning of just one single student.

In the second research question, *“Which teaching strategies used by teachers of the languages faculty of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla were useful to overcome the challenges they faced when teaching in one-to-one settings?”* other categories emerged, reflecting the strategies used to cope the challenges mentioned previously, considering the assumptions made by the teachers, these categories were: **a) Building Rapport,** when teachers used strategies such as creating a good relationship with the student, since the very beginning of the course they are promoting the right environment for the student. **b) Varying activities,** another quite important strategy

mentioned was to have a catchy lesson plan and use a variety of activities to suit the needs and interests of the learners because teachers stated that this can be an important factor that can affects student's learning and it may be the origin of monotonous in one-to-one settings

c) **performing a needs analysis**, the identification of the needs of the student to be assisted is a process that will hugely help to provide possible solutions to the difficulties faced by him or herself in his/her learning.

It is important to mention that the strategies they used to deal with the obstacles regarding to one-to-one teaching were good in the sense, they accomplish those difficulties.

Now that we finally have an answer to each research question, we can move to the implications that come into sight after this research.

5.4 Implications

Some pedagogical implications arise from this project regarding the implementation of strategies by experienced and pre-service teachers. In specific situations, those strategies were considered the best solution to deal with the difficulties encountered in one-to-one teaching for most of the participants due to after they applied those strategies on classes they commented that students have changed their attitude to work actively during the class. This assumption may raise awareness from the participants that these strategies cannot be generalized. So, these strategies can vary according to the participant's professional development but also learner's background. As teachers it is important to know the dynamic of a one-to-one context before giving classes within in order to avoid wrong teaching in it.

As teachers we must encourage students in learning a new language, also their social and moral growth to have a better human being who cares about the rest of the

people. Consequently, teachers may have a relationship with the pupils to know their problems at home or other kind of puzzles they may have in their minds in order to yield and foster better results in their learning. Furthermore, to be an educator implies more than the transmission of knowledge to the students and guide them in their learning. Teachers should not worry only about pupil's notes due to these ones depend on each learner, in other words, pupils do not have to be regarded such as a sponge that absorbs everything. Pupils are human beings that feel several emotions at the same time or even that have different problems in their life so these points can strongly affect their learning and as one-to-one mentors we must try to help them to overcome those situations that are uncomfortable for them.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

A wider variety of teaching contexts such as private institutions would be necessary in order to analyze and compare different manifestations from teachers when regarding one-to-one teaching and their respective teaching strategies in order to overcome the challenges that one-to-one contexts can have.

Furthermore, there is the possibility to focus this study in a particular age of learners; thus, a study which investigates the strategies suggested by teachers who teach EFL specifically to children, or teenagers or adults would be very useful.

As the consequences of one-to one teaching strategies on pupil's learning were not the main topic of this paper, another possible direction of investigation would be to explore the different changes that students showed after educators applied any teaching strategy in order to verify the effectiveness of that specific strategy in learner's learning. This can be

very useful in order to know the opinions, ideas, concerns and worries from students about the implementation of one-to-one teaching strategies and the origin of their fears or concerns in one-to-one contexts. In other words, it would be quite important to explore if the implementation of one-to-one teaching strategies can provoke benefits among learners, especially in the EFL Mexican context.

5.6 Contribution

I hope that this particular study can make a little but significant contribution in the following aspects: first, in helping future English teachers comprehend and be conscious about the complexity that means to give classes in one-to-one contexts, Moreover, it is quite important to highlight the fact that some teachers at any time of their career are asked to provide private tutoring and they may feel frustrated when they have no experience in handle individual classes and the only solution that they sadly find is to stop providing one-to-one guidance to students who need it.

Furthermore, there is the possibility that teachers may not develop enough abilities and skills to handle one-to-one classes as they wished during their careers. This instance is due to sometimes, the lack of subjects to manage one-to-one classes is not established in the curriculum design of the degree you are studying in that moment. However, even if these strategies are not learned in class or in a book as a magic recipe, a subject or seminar on one-to-one teaching would be very useful.

Providing the right support to students in one-to-one settings could take a lot of time and skills but as future teachers we have to be aware that all the time we will face these kind of situations and in our hands it is the future that we want for our pupils. In order to have a better world it is necessary first to change our mind, ideas and misconceptions about

several things that interfere with our teaching. This calls to open an unknown door that is waiting to be opened and show many opportunities for us.

Challenges always are part of our life, and as educators we will find a huge variety of them, but we must try to overcome those obstacles to win great battles... one teacher can make a little difference but very significant to one student in terms of learning.

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Appendix A: Interview

The purpose of this open ended, semi-structured interview is to explore on some of the main strategies used by pre-service and in-service teachers in order to compare them to get the best of them.

Questions

- 1) Do you think that one-to-one guidance is beneficial to assist students experiencing difficulties in target language?
- 2) What are the most common challenges you have faced teaching one-to-one?
- 3) Was difficult for you to overcome those challenges?
- 4) Which strategies were helpful to overcome the challenges encountered?
- 5) In your opinion, comparing group teaching versus individual teaching, which is most challenging?
- 6.) Can you mention some advantages of teaching in one-to-one settings?
- 7) Which are the main disadvantages of conducting one-to-one lessons?
- 8) What should be the role of the teacher according to you for effective handle of one-to-one classes?
- 9) Do you think that pre-service training is necessary to conduct one-to-one classes?
- 10) Which are your suggestions for teachers who begin or wish to begin giving classes one-to-one?

Appendix B: Questionnaire on Strategies to Teach EFL in One-to-one Classes

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information about the strategies you use when teaching one-to-one, this means teaching just one student at a time. The information collected will be used to carry out a dissertation project.

- 1. Instructions: Please read the statements and indicate how much you agree or disagree by circling the appropriate option. Use the following scale:**

Strongly Disagree (SD) =1 Disagree (D) =2 Uncertain (U) =3 Agree (A) =4
Strongly Agree (SA) =5

In one-to-one teaching...	SD	D	U	A	SA
a) The emphasis is on the student providing the content.	1	2	3	4	5
b) The emphasis is on the teacher providing the content.	1	2	3	4	5
c) The emphasis is on the student providing the form.	1	2	3	4	5
d. The emphasis is on the teacher providing the form.	1	2	3	4	5

- 2. Please read through the items below, and then put a circle around the number which most closely coincides with your opinion. The lower the number you choose, the less important you think it is, while the higher the number you choose, the more important you think it is. Use the following scale:**

Not Important (NI) =1 Some Important (SI) =2 Important (I) =3
Very Important (VI) =4

<i>In my opinion...</i>	NI	SI	I	VI
1. Integrating technology in my class is...	1	2	3	4
2. Recognizing the learning style of my student is...	1	2	3	4
3. Setting the learning goals of my student (e.g. determine what they need to learn) is...	1	2	3	4
4. Setting the process goals of my student (e.g. determine what tasks are required to achieve the learning goals of the learner) is...	1	2	3	4
5. Identifying strategies for achieving the goals of my student is...	1	2	3	4
6. Monitoring the progress of my student towards achieving goals is...	1	2	3	4
7. Modifying or adapting strategies that are unsuccessful is...	1	2	3	4
8. Giving my student constructive feedback constantly is ...	1	2	3	4
9. Including a variety of activities in each lesson is ...	1	2	3	4
10. Improving my proficiency with technology is...	1	2	3	4

<i>In my opinion...</i>	NI	SI	I	VI
11. Trying different teaching methods (e.g. The Direct Method, The Audio-Lingual Method, The Communicative Approach, etc.) is...	1	2	3	4
12. Providing a supportive and safe environment in my classes is...	1	2	3	4
13. Assigning homework is...	1	2	3	4
14. Encouraging my student to ask questions when difficulties or misunderstandings arise is...	1	2	3	4
15. Exposing my student to real life language is...	1	2	3	4
16. Using authentic materials to support my teaching is...	1	2	3	4
17. Providing meaningful, purposeful opportunities for my student to communicate with me in the target language is...	1	2	3	4
18. Devoting time to the four macro skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) is...	1	2	3	4
19. Encouraging my student to assess his/her own progress is...	1	2	3	4
20. Using mainly student-centered activities (e.g. generating examples, solving problems) is...	1	2	3	4
21. Rewarding my student's progress is...	1	2	3	4
22. Analyzing my student's needs is...	1	2	3	4
23. Motivating my student to learn is...	1	2	3	4
24. Engaging my student in active discussion and critical thinking is...	1	2	3	4
25. Presenting the curriculum to the student in such a way that is challenging is...	1	2	3	4
26. Using Gestures and Non Verbal Cues is...	1	2	3	4
27. Including games in my classes to practice language is...	1	2	3	4

Thanks for your participation. 😊