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Integration and Implementation of Mindfulness Techniques in the  
Acquisition of Communicative Competence in Intermediate Level  
Students at Alcanza Language Center during the First Quarter of 2019

**Thesis Submitted to Obtain the Bachelor in English with Concentration in Teaching**

**Thesis Submitted to Obtain the Bachelor in English**

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## **Dedication**

Dedication:

To my students who have given sense to all these years of continuous studying and whom have brought one of the most life changing gifts; presence.

To my beloved ones who have taught me endless lessons in life as I am reminded of all of them every time my heart melts in the memory of the sky.

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To my professors whom have influenced me not only by generously sharing their knowledge and true essence with me but by walking the walk with me on my way to become not a professor but a facilitator who is continuously taught by actions and other ways of thinking behind amazing people who have given a global sense and inspiration to the word teacher.

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research is to describe what mindfulness benefits are by exploring different techniques and evaluating them to determine how their implementation is linked to the improvement of communicative competence in students.

Also it is an extended invitation for professors to enhanced theories and teaching best practices that once were proposed by L Vigostsky, S Krashen, P. Freire and D. Ausubel and to become active facilitators of a new social and global literacy which seeks to nurture and renew Costa Rican models of teaching.

## **Resumen**

El propósito de esta investigación es el describir cuales son los beneficios de la atención plena (mindfulness) por medio de la exploración y la evaluación de diferentes técnicas para determinar cómo su implementación está ligada en la mejora de la competencia comunicativa en estudiantes.

También es una invitación que se extiende para profesores para la mejora de las teorías y las mejores prácticas en la enseñanza que alguna vez fueron propuestas por L Vigostsky, S Krashen, P. Freire and D. Ausubel para llegar a ser facilitadores de una nueva educación y global las cuales para nutrir y renovar los modelos educativos costarricense.

## Chapter I

### Introductory Framework

The value that the scientific community has given to Mindfulness has a significant impact around the world during the last years. Scientific publications on mindfulness began to appear in the decade of the seventies and since then, their number has not stopped increasing. There has been an accelerated growth in the nineties and today we are facing an exponential growth in publications (Black, 2009).

This research is intended to describe the benefits of mindfulness by exploring techniques and evaluating them to determine how their implementation is linked to the improvement of communicative competence in students. Mindfulness techniques are not only being tested in fields such as Neurophysiology, but also in education. Its contribution to a grounded education has been acknowledged since years ago.

James (1950) stated that the development of mindfulness will be “the education per excellence.” Fortunately, this statement has come to the attention of thousands of teachers, as many of them have experienced Mindfulness as an opportunity to non based curriculums reforms, a step to meet organic and committed groups of conscious individuals cultivating their own compassion and presence, slowly and unstoppably rippling into the world a gentle way to go from the function of language to its value (Rechtschaffen, 2016).

When we study human language, we are approaching what some might call the "human essence," the distinctive qualities of mind (Chomsky, 1972). According to the Oxford dictionary (2019), language is defined as the method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way. Certainly, oral production of language is one of the most common structured means of communication in

humankind. Its use has become so common among people that it has been forgotten that language itself is continuously performing how an individual constructs culture, perceives of life, the world, and therefore; himself. Many have seen language as an external agent; not intrinsically related to humankind. “The flat vision of the world leads us to perceive life as fragmented, shared, and divided into many parts; all of them, supposedly, unrelated to the observer who remains undifferentiated by not being included in the vision, as the true agent of the panorama that he contemplates” (Jimenez, 2018).

Language is essential to human expression; since, expressing in life is existing; showing up in it. Language promotes spaces to exchange experiences and knowledge with others and oneself. It unfolds communication, builds relationships and creates community (Obando, 2016). In order to create sustainable and evolved communities, there must exist quality of communication and in consequence a development of a strong communicative competence.

The Communicative competence was conceived by Dell Hymes in 1966, as a response to Noam Chomsky’s concept of “linguistic competence” presented in 1965. As Hymes (1972) remarks, the communicative competence is the intuitive functional knowledge and control of the principles of language usage,

“... A normal child acquires knowledge of sentences not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others.” (Hymes 1972, p. 277)

During this decade, in Latin America, the communicative competence in English is seen as part of the core skills that an individual must command in order for him or her to be

guaranteed a successful and profitable career or an employment with an excellent payment in the future. English is no longer a matter of preference, but a necessity (Hengsadeekul, Hengsadeekul, Koul, & Keawkuekool, 2010).

Because interactions held in the English language have become a necessity to connect countries to a world that is continuously developing, the shape of the communicative competence skills within English speakers facilitate to mindfully address people, expose ideas, save time, illustrate projects, etc. It is a valuable skill in non-English-speaking countries, especially in the Latin American community; because it implies success for several nations, as English is the main language used in industries, businesses, and many markets around the world. By stating this idea, it is clear that the communicative competence in the English language must be shaped and polished within students of English.

In accordance to Savignon (1972) and many other theoreticians (e.g. Canale and Swain, 1980; Skehan, 1995, 1998; Bachman and Palmer, 1996 etc.), the nature of the communicative competence is not static but dynamic, it is more interpersonal than intrapersonal, and relative rather than absolute. It is also largely defined by context. Therefore, language is always positioning human beings in experiences that are interdependent to their surroundings, environments, and inner experiences. Consequently, helping people to acknowledge the world that surrounds them and help them access their intrinsic strengths will definitely make a positive impact in their way of communicating. It is more likely that they will translate this new view of the world in their dynamics to establish bonds with others.

As English teachers, finding mindful ways to make the English language 100% functional to students in class will help them observe how opportunities arise in their lives, if

they decide to use the English language as a tool to communicate mindfully; with purpose, in order for them to simply go beyond words, to add value to it, and connect language with the heart of the mind.

The way the language is used is as important as knowing it (Thornbury, 2013). Being mindful in a language means to open up to an honest view of oneself and others; to observe that nothing is independent in the world, everything is related to everything. Mindful teaching shares with students tools to help them relate to their surroundings and inner world by experiencing life as Zen Master Zenji (1243 a.c.) explains as living with “a vertical nose and a horizontal glance.” In other words, a vertical nose is observing humankind in the here and now and a horizontal glance by setting up a goal and going towards it- through self –observation- from a loving place; a place of acceptance of inner emotions.

This grants language a deeper function; therefore meaning, which is understood by cognition but remembered by recognition. Taking these steps from cognition to recognition helps to recall inner gifts and reconnect to human kind’s uniqueness in a diversified world; a world that is continuously teaching us about communication through creation; life. Consequently, a mindful experience of life will allow students to see mindfulness as the basic universal and human capacity that consists on the possibility to be conscious of the contents of the mind from moment to moment (Simón, 2007).

In this sense, students can develop the capacity to connect to each moment, recognize each thought, observe and direct attention back to what they are doing, to feel emotions, to release them and again focus on what they are doing; one task at the time. In other words, to connect with the here and now and with what they are doing. As David Allen (2019) once said: “The mind is for having ideas, not for holding them.”

Consequently, learning to observe any idea and then release it from a non-judgmental perspective definitely brings mind to a place where everything happens, and at the same time nothing is happening, the present moment. “If you are depressed you are living in the past. If you are anxious you are living in the future. If you are at peace you are living in the present” (Lao Tzu, 1868).

Mindfulness in education is still taking its first steps; however, the research is already corroborating what many students and professors are learning. For teachers, mindfulness reduces stress, helps them focus, and makes them happier (Roeser et al., 2013). When young students have the chance to explore this reality, they have the opportunity to resignify concepts such as overwhelming, tiredness, anxiety, judgment, stress because none of them can exist if the mind is focused; first on the reality (person, object), on just one task at the time (Kabat- Zinn, 2017). That being the case, students in class will be just listening to a classmate or to a teacher, writing an essay or reading a story, focusing their attention in just one task at the time, therefore, being present in each activity performed in class by not being a multi-tasked student but a one task-student.

One might not be able to change certain things in life, at work or at home, but one can change *how* you experience those immutable aspects of life, work, home (Schoeberlin and Sheth, 2009). When students integrate Mindfulness techniques, they appreciate and connect with true recognition of themselves and their surroundings from a non judgmental position. Mindfulness techniques encourage students to focus on their strengths and acknowledge that these gifts, these talents have been part of them always (Kabat- Zinn, 2013). The integration of a mindful way of communicating with others certainly builds more conscious relationships in the student’s surroundings in class. Students are more emotionally regulated and attentive, and

their learning improves. The classrooms are more peaceful, there are fewer school conflicts, and kids like each other more (Zoogman et al., 2014). These are early results seen in children and youngsters. Mindfulness applies to any every age, mindfulness in adults is well-established as well. For adults practicing mindfulness has been shown to positively transform everything from brain structure to immune function, positive affect, and even gene expression (Tang et al, 2015).

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

Our society is being deeply affected by continuous changes in lifestyles, challenges, and distress in several spheres in a diverse nation. Unfortunately, this reality is brought to class by students. They experience a large number of stressors and this is when anxiety emerges in areas such as school, family, and relationships. Student's poor performance in class is a growing concern to teachers and it is crucial for many professionals in the educational field to understand the difficulties experienced by students.

Schools across the world are turning their attention to mindfulness, as it is an excellent tool to decrease stress, emotional dysregulation, and lack of attention. Researching the school systems that have adopted mindfulness, we are learning that students and teachers are happier, more focused, emotionally regulated, and less affected by stress (Zenner et al., 2014). Certainly, becoming sensitive towards student's realities rather than just focusing on curriculum delivery will bring positive adjustments to a student's development and performance in class and in life. By teaching them how to stay present and focused in class, it will be possible to bring both; teachers and students to a new understanding of their role in class and daily living as their own creators of their knowledge and relationships with

classmates, teachers and themselves. As stated in the words of some Elementary students, in San Francisco (Rechtschaffen, 2016), “Mindfulness is being really aware. You can even hear ants moving and you can feel blood moving in your body!” “Mindfulness is a tool to use when you’re fighting with someone and you can just take some vacuum cleaner breaths and then get on what you are doing.”

Being reactive to emotions or situations instead of just managing them is a very common position assumed by many students or teachers. Taking a mental step back and noticing what is happening without engaging with intense reactions, provides a broader perspective and prevent students from unconstructive responses or poor communication. By taking this into account, there is a question that needs to be answered, how the communicative competence of intermediate level students is affected in the oral production of the English Language during the first quarter in Alcanza Language Center?

## **1.2 Objectives of the investigation**

### **1.2.1 General Objective**

To analyze the impact of mindfulness techniques in intermediate students when developing the communicative competence at Alcanza Language Center during the first quarter of 2019.

### **1.2.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To identify the challenges intermediate students experience when developing the communicative competence at Alcanza Language Center during the first quarter of 2019.
2. To apply mindfulness techniques to improve student’s communicative competence at Alcanza Language Center during the first quarter of 2019.

3. To evaluate the outcomes of mindfulness techniques applied to improve the student's communicative competence at Alcanza Language Center during the first quarter of 2019.

### 1.3 Justification of the Study

Since some years ago, the communicative skills in the English language are basic to earn a competitive salary and have a better job position in Costa Rica. Therefore, many Costa Ricans are in search of new educational opportunities in this field. Students at Alcanza Language Center, San José –where this study takes place- come from different backgrounds and realities. The majority are adults who come after a long day of work and join an English class in hope-of improving their skills and their oral production.

Suffering from burn-out syndrome, the difficulty of focusing during class, shyness, boredom, and misconceptions about themselves, certainly affect student's performance in the oral production of a language. As Newton said, "For every *action* there is a *reaction*." An example of this, it is seen in the increase of school drop outs and how students end up frustrated with education itself.

Teachers commonly believe that it takes really especial people to become coaches or teachers in mindfulness. Zinn (2017) explains that mindfulness is not only about becoming aware of how limitless and unique a person already is. It is about reminding students the concept that there is nothing to be fixed or found because everything that makes a person especial, whole, and well-grounded already is within him. "Maybe the fear is that we are less than we think we are, when the actuality of it is that we are much more" (Hyperion, 2007).

The main challenge for educators is to make students aware that an individual can and must form himself rather than taking a passive life by waiting for others to do it for them.

Encouraging them to make their own choices, be creative, and have the will to take responsibility for their education is crucial. Once again, to be present in a class; therefore, being present in life is the goal that mindfulness in education seeks to achieve. Education happens in a daily basis and real freedom for a student comes when they are provided with a more humanized classroom environment. This is a way to dignify different ways of thinking. Indeed, students will see that there is also dignity in difference and will be able to cope with non-judgmental ways of thinking and acting. Clearly, students will be able to establish better relationships among other classmates and to cooperate to the learning of others within a same group of study.

This freedom of mind definitely allows students to experience language/communication and a deeper identification with either his teacher or classmates, and a sense of real attachment and engaging to a class and themselves. Very often, students need to learn how to rely on themselves and how to really believe that their skills are not limited. They need their teacher to remind them- by using significant means- that they are capable of doing everything that they can think of and that they can be able to complete a whole school year or educational program if they focus on it, taking small steps every day in class.

Sometimes, students feel that they are not taken seriously or that they do not matter to a professor or even worst, to the educational system. This is commonly seen in high schools and much more often in institutes. Students from institutes give up on themselves much easier than students from regular schools, as they lack encouragement from their surroundings. Also, they struggle with self-confidence because they have had previous difficult situations and educational battles which they have lost.

Certainly, there is a behavioral pattern learned and it seems that it has taught them that they will not be able to succeed at anything they intend to in the educational field. Definitely, minds and ways of thinking need to be changed. Indeed, learning how to manage emotions, think differently about daily tasks, and to always be reminded about that special something that every student possesses inside, can be agents of empowerment in their identity and could lead students to feel really responsible for their own learning process by really engaging to a class and enjoying it without feeling afraid or anxious about it. Mindfulness is something that needs to be built up in layers by an assertive leader (Kabat-Zinn, 2016 ). There can be those ones that will acquire or develop it much easier than other ones and there will be others that will find this challenging to achieve.

Mindfulness can help individuals find other ways to restructure their brains to learn how to focus and re-learn about themselves and their surroundings. When scientists scan the brains of people who have been practicing mindfulness intensively for many years, they see a profound integration of brain regions (Vestergaard- Poulsen et al., 2009). Now, there is a growing research showing that in only –eight weeks, beginning mindfulness practitioners had positive transformations in the brain correlated with learning emotion regulation and self-awareness (Holzel et al., 2011). These changes in brain structure will lead to more sophisticated ways of thinking and learning in children, youngsters and adults. It is expected that by supporting mindful ways of learning, many students will have a better vision of themselves and develop a much better communicative competence by reinforcing intrinsic talents within alumni at Alcanza Language Center.

## 1.4 Antecedents

Mindfulness most important influence is Siddharta Gautama's life. He was also called the "awaken one." When recalling the beginnings of meditation, the Buddhism organization known as The Diamond way (2019, p1-2) says that,

Buddha chose to leave his royal responsibilities and his family in order to realize full enlightenment. He left the palace secretly and set off alone into the forest. Over the next six years, he met many talented meditation teachers and mastered their techniques. Always he found that they showed him mind's potential but not mind itself. Finally, at a place called Bodhgaya, the future Buddha decided to remain in meditation until he knew mind's true nature and could benefit all beings. After spending six days and nights cutting through mind's most subtle obstacles, he reached enlightenment on the full moon morning of May, a week before he turned thirty-five.

At the moment of full realization, all veils of mixed feelings and stiff ideas dissolved and Buddha experienced the all-encompassing here and now. All separation in time and space disappeared. Past, present, and future, near and far, melted into one radiant state of intuitive bliss. He became timeless, all-pervading awareness. Through every cell in his body he knew and was everything. He became *Buddha*, the Awakened One.

After his enlightenment, Buddha traveled on foot throughout northern India. He taught constantly for forty-five years. People of all castes and professions, from

kings to courtesans, were drawn to him. He answered their questions, always pointing towards that which is ultimately real.

The very first records of Mindfulness are found around the year 2500 A.C. in what universal history has called the sutras. Taoism, Sufism and yoga philosophies have deeply influenced it as well. The book *The Miracle of Mindfulness* written by the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hann is the first important document written on this matter and brought to life in Europe. He has written down more than 100 books and travelled the world with his mindful teachings.

Mindfulness has been known for quite a long time in the American continent. It is believed that its origins were rooted in indigenous cultures and spread out to other geographies in the world. In many tribes, meditation has been meant to reset the mind. John Kabat-Zinn is the pioneer in mindfulness in the medicine field. He is a well-known molecular biologist interested in Buddhism and he decided to integrate Science with both Zen and Vipassana meditations. In 1979, he left his successful scientific career to open a clinic focused in stress reduction at the University of Massachusetts which had great success and excellent results in the patients that were treated (Collard, 2015).

In accordance to Kabat-Zinn (2016), Mindfulness allows people to find a door that will lead them to the encounter with their inner teacher and therefore, awake him or her. In other words, help them to see not to their exterior, but also their interior and acknowledge it. We befriend ourselves as we are. We live "the Buddha nature"; the one that is moment to moment experiencing life (Kabat-Zinn, 2016).

According to Collard (Collard, 2016), in the 40's psychologists such as Wilhelm Reich and Fritz Perls –the creator of the Gestalt therapy- already integrated mindfulness aspects in their treatments. This allowed people to understand about freedom and individual responsibilities. In accordance to a research run by the Garrison's institute (2014), "The practice of mindfulness reduces stress and enlivens teaching by promoting awareness, presence, compassion, reflection, and inspiration – the inner resources students need to flourish, socially, emotionally, and academically. Also, it facilitates awareness and self-regulation and develops the capacity for a calm, focused mind — a mind with the openness, responsiveness and sensitivity for optimal teaching, guiding, and learning. Dr. Lazar (2011) states that a daily practice of mindfulness for about 27 minutes reduces the density of gray material in the amygdala –which was believed that was an unalterable organ- and that can be modified in just 8 weeks.

### **1.5 Scope**

In order to reestablish student's attention to tasks seen and explained in class, different mindfulness techniques will be applied. All of them will be developed following an order and a sequence of sessions. They will be applied as follows, conscious breathing, conscious body movement, and visual & auditory meditations. In consequence, their implementation is expected to improve the listening and speaking skills, release anxiety, and develop a mindful memory within alumni.

## Chapter II

### Theoretical Framework

In the words of Freire (1992),

A man who views history as a time of possibilities must necessarily understand the aspect of subjectivity confronting objectivity in the historic endeavor. This means that he has to recognize the special role of subjectivity or consciousness, for even while not being aware of his subjectivity, the owner of objective reality is not a mere reflection of this objective reality. For the same reason history, being a time of possibilities, demands the growth of responsibility in all men and women. For me, to make history means to re-invent the world within history, and the historical challenge of re-inventing the world subjectively is the very process of reinvention. It means to plan, to project, to dream; it means to love, to become involved in the process of transformation.

On count of this, education goes beyond just verbalizing concepts and solving exercises. Indeed, it is engaging students to never lose curiosity about themselves and the world around them, to be really aware of whom they are, and their role in life's dynamics; which Freire referred as the responsibility of making history. "It is curiosity regarding our history, this possibility I have of being myself and not being myself tomorrow, this possibility I have of maturation, growth, change. Curiosity is one of the bases of educational practice" (Freire, 1992, p. 2).

Obando (2016) talks about the outcomes of providing an ethical vision of language and all the possibilities that a single word has, because thoughts are formed by words. She

says that, “In an ethical vision, a person does not speak to be the center of attention but because he or she lives in a community and it is needed to exist and in order for that to happen a consensus is needed.” Therefore, to understand the value of words expressed in a community it is crucial, because words also dignify a person (Thornbury, 2018). Nowadays, in the Costa Rican educational system, seeing the teacher as the one who masters all knowledge and the one who is continuously asking questions to conduct a lesson is extremely common.

Sharp and Lipman (2006) explain the importance of humbleness in the teaching environment. They say this process goes both ways. First, the teacher does not have to know everything and second, students do not have to know everything that the teacher knows because this could lead to minimize students. Sometimes, it seems that teaching and speaking to a group is left for someone who knows it all. Accordingly, the role of invisibility in class is left for the one who stays quiet because he or she does not know anything; therefore, he/she cannot raise questions or comments. As a result, a fear of speaking and a lack of self confidence prevent students from speaking their minds by asking whatever they want and need during their learning process. They prefer to refrain from helping others or being noticed in class rather than being the one who asks silly questions or thinks unusual things.

Inquiry is a collaborative enterprise, in which each child or young person has the hope that he can give reasons, offer evidence and counterexamples, examine the assumptions of what is said or done, be critical of analogies failed and invalid inferences that are used in a discussion, etc. As you practice and internalize these practices, you can reach eventually to realize that he identifies himself with the work that it is done in the group (Sharp and Lipman, 2006, p.3).

Inquiry has been a key part to human evolution, the evolution of the “Homo Sapiens Sapiens.” *Homo* comes from the Latin word “human” and *Sapiens* comes from Latin and means wise or astute (Cambridge, 2019). This reflects the human who thinks and has is aware that he or she thinks. It is necessary to pay close attention to how the word is build, to notice that the term wise is used twice and this exemplifies the ability to step out of ourselves and have in mind our mind. The action of observing thoughts with no judgment and in tranquility is what always makes humans out of the ordinary. Being flexible about what you think and being careful of your thoughts is what opens the opportunity to experience what careful thinking is (Lipman, 2006).

Careful thinking is a fusion between cognitive and emotional thinking, which expresses itself through activities such as appreciation, esteem, respect, care, empathy, compassion, and assessment. It is that kind of thinking that cultivates in children and young people a relational conscience, the ability to look at the relationships between people and things, and between people with each other. It is based on interdependence between people and the need we have for each one and of others to grow in understanding and autonomy. It makes children and young people enter to the world of others and to understand it and empathize with them; and, in this sense, allows us to get to know each other better and to know ourselves.

Careful thinking is related to the education of emotions in three senses: insofar as it implies taking care of ourselves and the others; as soon as children and young people learn how to identify their emotions discovering the implicit beliefs that underlie these, and, by analyzing carefully with others those beliefs, they become more solid and finally, as soon as careful thought makes us capable of giving us ourselves and others the reasons why we are

feeling what we feel (Sharp and Lipman, 2006, p.7). In this sense, careful thinking is paying close attention to thoughts and emotions; it is being mindful in the way the world is perceived. Indeed, mindful practices conduct people to be in the here and now with kindness and curiosity.

Everyone possesses the capacity to be mindful because it involves nurturing the ability to pay attention to what is happening in the present time. This grants the permission to disentangle from mental chaos and to have a clear mind. It helps to respond instead of reacting to daily situations; therefore, it improves the student's decision-making processes and gives an important input in mental relaxation and openness to non judgmental criteria within an educational environment (Schoeberlein, 2009).

This document provides an explanation of what being mindful signifies and what mindfulness is. It gives an overview of scientific basis for offering mindfulness techniques to children, adolescents, and senior citizens to help them enhance their educational process. It considers professional and personal advantages of practicing a mindful education. In addition, it gives specific suggestions for developing the mindfulness practice among students with the articulation of mindful practices and different learning theories. Also, it exemplifies mindful practices that can be used in classroom.

According to Thompson (2015), mindfulness is a time-honored way of improving your well-being, happiness, and sense of fulfillment. Mindful thinking has proved that it can reduce depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and even pain. Kabat (2016)- the godfather of modern mindfulness- defines mindfulness as Kabat-Zinn has defined mindfulness meditation; that is, as "The awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the

present moment and non-judgmentally.” Thanks to the focus of attention to breath, people can improve skills to bring attention to the body and mind and to do it moment by moment. This helps with physical and emotional pain.

Thoughts can be compared to a rainy afternoon in which each drop that falls down can signify a thought of the mind. These thoughts are usually filled with the words me, me, me. Mindfulness allows stepping away from that shower of thoughts (rain) and observe the content of those drops (ideas) from a distance in which thoughts are not categorized; not labeled.

Mindfulness does not pretend to make non reactive people, but to teach about a pragmatic brightness and optimism by just starting with three simple steps. First, to find a place where you can sit and feel comfortable with your back upright; second, to concentrate all your attention on the feeling of the breath coming in and out of you; and third, to always keep your attention in your breath. If you get distracted and lose yourself to your thoughts is just fine you can always come back. It’s not about an empty mind, is about knowing how to always come back (Rechtschaffer, 2016).

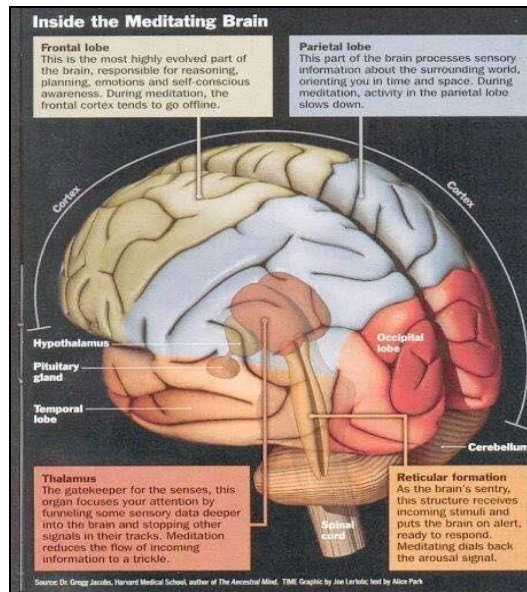
The practice of mindfulness was developed in India over 2500 years ago. It was part of a path to enlightenment and awakening as most religions including Hindu, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam have meditation traditions. These ancient techniques of meditation have recently been adapted to address twenty first century pressures of modern living. The founder of the current mindfulness techniques is Jon Kabat-Zinn. He created the Stress reduction clinic hand to hand with the University of Massachusetts medical school in the late 1970’s. He developed a program called mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) and it has helped over 18,000 people to reduce their stress and anxieties. Also, to treat conditions such as

chronic pain, heart disease, anxiety, psoriasis, sleep problems and depression. Current data have shown that Mindfulness Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) is clinically approved in the UK by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) as a treatment for recurrent depression (Collard, 2015)

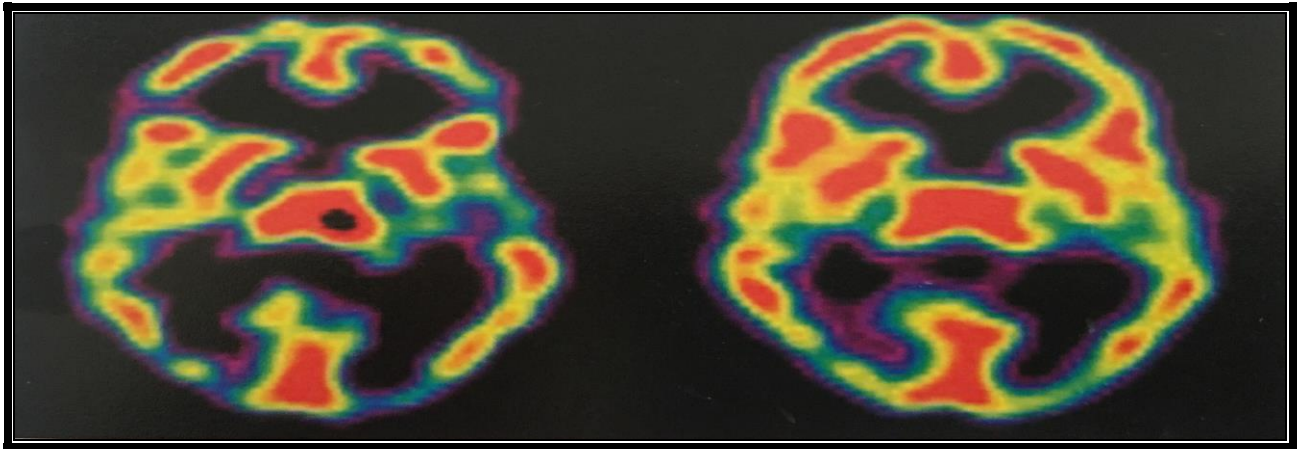
During the 40's, psychologists and doctors such as Wilhelm Reich – psychoanalyst - combined mindfulness with their therapies. Mindful techniques captured Fritz Pearl's attention, as well. Pearl was the creator of the Gestalt therapy and he applied the teaching that he received from Zen masters, while he was at a Buddhist monastery in the 60s. After earning a degree in Molecular Biology, a French Buddhist monk, named Matthieu Ricard, decided to go and live in Nepal. He spent several years practicing meditation and opening up his conscious; therefore, he learned how to clear his mind (Collard, 2015).

In time, his amygdala went from an almond seed size to the size of a grape. He is believed to be the happiest man on Earth. This is why scientists from Wisconsin University have run IMRF (Functional magnetic imaging resonance) tests on his brain. They discovered high levels of Gamma waves, while he was practicing mindfulness. According to the Mind Valley Magazine (2019), the gamma wave originates in the thalamus and moves from the back of the brain to the front and back again 40 times per second. This rapid “full sweep” action makes the gamma state one of peak mental and physical performance. Gamma is the brainwave state of being “in the Zone,” that feeling that you can do anything. Also, it states that gamma brain waves are the fastest brainwave frequency with the smallest amplitude. Research has shown that low gamma brainwave activities are associated to a lack of memory, learning challenges and impaired mental processing (Diaz, 2019).

People who have very high levels of gamma activity in their brains are remarkably sharp, bright, compassionate, content, and possess very good memories and a strong intelligence. They are compassionate, happy, and have excellent memories and strong self-control. People with high gamma wave activities usually test high scores in regard to their IQ. Therefore, they are in the state of peak performance in their lives (Diaz, 2019).



Neuroscience states that the brain's neocortex is not wired in advance, but it is the neocortex that wires itself by every thought that our mind has. We are what we think and our thoughts shape who we are. Therefore, it makes complete sense to be mindful about activities because they can certainly bring peace, compassion and clarity to mind.



Dr. Baime, in his Mindfulness Pen Program, scanned brains before and after Mindfulness techniques were applied. These tests also revealed that a regular practice of mindfulness produces functional and structural changes that are of great benefit to the brain. During meditation, the brain shows to be less active and more calmed (Collard, 2015).



Oxytocin observed at Mindful Pen program (Collard, 2015)

The amounts of oxytocin increased in a brain, when mindfulness techniques are continuously applied. It has to be stated that cortisol – the stress hormone- results to be highly toxic for the brain and oxytocin - the compassion hormone- extremely beneficial (Collard, 2015) In this light, Dr. Chambers – a clinical psychologist at Monash University- ran some studies to demonstrate the importance of having mindful schools and universities. He conducted a study that sought to measure the outcomes of meditation in the classroom right before the lessons started. It shown that 6 mins of mindful meditation improved test performance and that the effect is stronger in younger students (Ramsburg& Youmans, 2013). In addition, 10 mins four times a week decreased distraction, improved comprehension in reading, and endured short term memory. Also, this study was focused on academic success in students, and it found out that this helped to relieve procrastination as a habit within alumni, removed labels or judgments, increased group discussion and unitasking behaviors (Mrazek et al., 2013).

It seems that the term unitasking sounds kind of unrealistic to students and professors. Multitasking is a more standardized term, and it is often related to many activities and stress. However, it is important to remember that stress can also be healthy, and it is a natural part of life. Indeed, for the evolution of human beings' movement and challenges are required, as this will assure progress in life. Nevertheless, in the current education system, healthy stress is turned into toxic stress. This happens when life's demands, dynamics, and tasks surpasses the ability to manage all these demands (Schoeberlein, 2009). This is to say that when students are immersed in toxic dynamics, they usually experience inability to pay attention, lack of emotional management and mood regulation, difficulty sleeping, and learning impairments, among other challenges. Furthermore, losing social abilities leads a person to be

a potential bully, be victimized by others, or suffer from lifelong impacts on mental and physical health.

Research has shown that when students are exposed to toxic stress for long periods of time, they usually suffer from anxiety, stress burn out syndrome, disappointment, and school drop outs. Nowadays, students are exposed to society's wrong messages, such as the more productive a person is, the more "value in the market" he or she has. Life becomes a list of tasks to be completed, a sort of a check list. Indeed, statements like "I feel that because of this test I will pass out" are the utter truth to a student. These messages sent by students must be heard. The human body listens to every thought generated and usually these kinds of statements are harmful to health, as they are of huge impact to the autonomic nervous system. It is because of this reason that Mindfulness techniques are an excellent relief to this stress factor.

Teachers have realized that this kind of feelings, thoughts, and anxieties among students are factors that affect their performance in class, particularly their communicative competence. This has led them to seek educational resources, in which they can stimulate other sensations, ideas, and thoughts within the alumni. From that point of view, the number of teachers applying mindfulness techniques has increased in the last decade, especially in the last 5 years.

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2019), a technique is defined as a way of carrying out a particular task, especially the execution or performance of an artistic work or a scientific procedure. Mindfulness consists of several techniques that help students to pay attention to one task at the time, and to be aware of the present moment they are experiencing. Another

way to define Mindfulness is as “The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and no judgmentally to the unfolding of experiences moment by moment” (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145). This is to show someone how to develop a full conscious of the present time with no judgments of the experiences that are lived. In other words, to enrich life by experiencing it fully. It is very important to highlight the fact that when mindfulness is introduced to a classroom environment, it is not focused on changing the students; but it is a tool that will help them assume life from a different point of view, a view of self compassion, acceptance of situations, responsibility and empowerment, and because of that, to move forward in life by facing challenges from these different perspectives.

Mindfulness techniques have been developed not only by monks in Asia, but by indigenous tribes along the American continent. It has been known since the 60's in Asia and around the 80's in Occident. The book named the *Miracle of Mindfulness*, written by the Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Hann, has been the first important text translated to English in the XX century. In fact, this was a letter that he wrote to his brothers in Vietnam, while he was exiled in France (Collard, 2015). The purpose of this letter was to remind his brothers about the importance of the practice of mindfulness, despite the horrible or adverse circumstances they were going through.

Since then, mindfulness techniques have been studied and adapted to our society's by scientists, psychologists, doctors, teachers, etc. Thanks to the numerous brain tests done via the Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI), professionals have noticed how this increased in consciousness, and how it has also subconsciously increased gratitude and compassion with people (Collard, 2015) Mindfulness offers marvelous techniques, since there is always a new resource to be used. Some of these techniques are: conscious breathing, body

scan, mindful seeing, mindfulness of breath, sounds, and thoughts, acceptance of thoughts and feelings exercise, acceptance of anxiety, mountain meditation, lake meditation, etc. The value to these techniques is that students can find their own ways to access a mindful mind.

Mindfulness motivates students to intentionally disengage from automatic pilot and fully bring themselves back to the here and now. Students, by allowing this opportunity, offer themselves a range of possibilities in the present time. Therefore, this study will focus on the core mindfulness techniques, which are mindfulness of the breath, sounds and thoughts, acceptance of anxiety and body scan. These techniques will be developed as follows.

### **The Body Scan**

It begins with the students sitting down on their chairs with their palms facing up and their feet resting on the floor. Body parts must remain uncrossed. Next, the facilitator begins guiding the body scan. Students begin by bringing awareness to breath, noticing the rhythm, and the temperature of the air they inhale and then exhale. They pay attention to their surroundings and step by step they become aware of each part of their body and how it feels.

Also, a portion of the exercise focuses on the five senses. This exercise helps students to tune up with themselves. There is an increased sensory perception because senses are heightened by following each exercise given. In time, students will notice how their vision and hearing sharpen; the sense of smell is more powerful, and their brain becomes highly sensitive to sensory input and the perception of reality (Fleming & Kocovski , 2007).

**Mindful Listening**

It is an exercise that lets students to experience how any person thrives when they are fully heard and seen. Each student will be invited to bring to mind one event that they are stressed about and one thing they look forward to. Once the guidance in this meditation is over, each student takes their turn in sharing their event with the group. The teacher encourages each participant to pay close attention to how it feels to talk about it, while scanning body sensations. Mindful listening helps to be fully aware of the thoughts that come to mind, while the focus on the self is outside. It helps just to observe ideas, opinions, and experience sensations, and then gently let them go with no judgments. Students will be naturally calmer and will be reminded about the value of everything they say and express (Alafair, 2017)

**Acceptance of anxiety**

Students will perform a series of activities to start noticing their mindsets, and then they will talk about their thoughts and the sensations that arised in their body. Thanks to this method, students will acknowledge their thoughts and see that they are not true, so they can let them go. This will help them to concentrate on sensations that arise in the body, be present in the moment, and allow themselves to feel anxious thoughts and not fight and manage them (Fleming & Kocovski , 2007).

Indeed, mindfulness techniques are easy to practice and can be used in various populations. It motivates students to participate regardless of their budget, diagnoses, or age. Certainly, it inserts students in the spaces where they develop themselves as human beings, because adding value to the students´ social cultural contexts is pivotal to mindfulness. This

essence was essential to various philosophers, psychologist, scientists, and teachers, such as Lev Vigotysky, Jean Piaget, Stephen Krashen, David Ausubel, and Joseph Novak, among others .

Lev Semionovich Vygotsky (1885-1934), -a Russian psychologist and teacher, was interested in exploring memory, voluntary attention, analysis, problem solving, learning difficulties, and educational processes in human beings. He explained the importance of society, culture, and history, and how they are profoundly linked to human development. As a result, Vygotsky formulated the "general genetic law of cultural development." He observed students' learning processes and compared the performance of students who had learning challenges with the ones who did not. In addition, he believed that schools and other informal settings were cultural laboratories, in which mind could be modified by the dynamics between people regardless of their age (Chaves, 2001).

Vygotsky stated that teaching is a key factor to a cognitive and cultural development. In his vision, education humanizes humans. Rivière indicates that,

For higher functions were the result of the cultural influence in learning and development, and could only be explained in their genesis, by their history, placing them in their originating context. Therefore, humanization was a product of formal and informal education, conceived in terms of interaction (...) At the same time, I felt that the essential pragmatic goal of Psychology itself was the improvement and improvement of real education, which was how to say the improvement and perfection of man himself. (1988, p. 18).

In addition, Vygotsky had a tremendous impact the educational field with the concept of what he defined as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This view intended

to explain the ability that a person has to perform actions that at the beginning go along with companionship, interaction, and the hand of others; but later on, it is executed without the help of others; in a voluntary way (Aguilar, 2006).

As stated by Vigotsky (1977) for every learning process, human development occurs. Between learning and development, there is a dialectical relationship. Proper education helps create zones of proximal development, that is,

It will serve as a magnet to make the potential level of development of the student integrate with the current one. These modifications, in turn, can promote progress in general cognitive development. As some have pointed out, the ZPD is a dialogue between the child and his future, between what he is capable of doing today and what he will be able to do tomorrow and not between the child and his past. (Chaves, 2000, pg 62).

This is to encourage a human being to always move forward in life. The way that mindfulness approaches this concept is by always reminding students the power that staying tuned to the present time adds to their life. It also turns out that when we practice open-monitoring meditations, our creativity and insightful problem solving capacity expands (Colzato et al., 2012). This will be engaging to the best version possible of someone, who is always linked to the present time, and not to the past.

This socio-cultural theory calls especial attention to social interrelations. In school environments, according to his view, the relationship among students and teachers is fundamental. Also, it is important to expand the kind of activities shared in a class and let students lead more by making it possible for them to choose tasks, too. Knowledge is not just a transmission of what a teacher has read or studied and then passes on to students, it is

something that is constructed by social interactions. The learning process starts first with social interactions, and then it is followed by individual experience, internalization.

Piaget and Vigotsky considered that the process of learning a language occurs in two planes; an external plane, which will be society and an internal plane, which will be a psychological one, intrinsic. Mindfulness highlights the value of society and to be mindful about it. Mindfulness involves having a "social mind," which realizes the needs, thoughts, and wishes that people in the present time have (Lange & Doesum, 2015).

The social cultural theory offers useful concepts involved with education. Not long ago, Joseph Novak supported the concept called the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is explained by Newman, Griffin and Cole (2003) as follows,

The concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is central to the theory's contribution to the analysis of practical educative activities and to the design of teaching strategies. Two levels can be considered in a student's capability, one is the limit of what he/she can achieve alone, called the actual development level and the other is the limit of what can be achieved with help, called the potential development level. This notion of interdependency is known in Mindfulness as social literacy which each student develops thanks to the practice of kindness and emotional regulation. In fact, students bring these skills to their social dynamics by communicating with authenticity and understanding. They put into practice self check in regards to their assumptions and understand others with a much more clarity and care. They are open up to suggest their ideas and also apply recommendations given to them.

Another important view in how language is acquired has been explained by Krashen since the 80s up to day. His theory of the second language acquisition has had a large impact. He stated that language acquisition is a subconscious process. Language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language. "We are generally not consciously aware of the rules of the languages we have acquired. Instead, we have a "feel" for correctness. Grammatical sentences "sound" right, or "feel" right, and errors feel wrong" (Krashen, 2009, p.17).

Krashen used the monitor model (1977, 1982, 1985) to explain the hypothesis of the difference between acquisition and learning of a foreign language. He said that acquisition is a spontaneous process; it is a natural and an unconscious interiorization process, as a consequence of the exposition to a language and the natural use of it. There is no conscious effort on behalf of an individual to know the formal use of it; the attention is focused on the communicative aspect of the language (Oliveira, 2007). For acquisition to happen, the individual must be exposed to high level inputs in the language that he/she is intended to learn. They must be above his/her level of competence. This is known as the input hypothesis.

Krashen also talked about the monitor hypothesis, which explains the relation between acquisition and learning. For Krashen, the ability to produce phrases in a foreign language is a result of the acquisition of communicative competence. People who are exposed to higher levels of the language that they are intended to learn, gain this characteristic easier. For instance, the students that go abroad to learn English to an English speaking country show much more communicative competence than the students that have not taken this chance. It stands to the

reason that they require to communicate in English, they acquire the language no matter if their previous knowledge of it, is high or low.

According to Krashen (1982), learning is a conscious process, as is the result of a formal study of a language. The English learners are capable to explain the rules of the language learned. Therefore, the acquisition of a language will never be related to the learning of it, and the communicative competence will always be higher in native speakers. In regards to the monitor hypothesis, it explained mindfulness is a path of self inquiry, self observation, and insight. Students are given important steps to understand themselves and asses themselves, as well. When students are aware that they are companions of learning to others and that they have both rules in class, they are granted access to the responsibility of their own learning process. In addition, this grants the teachers the freedom of not being the ones who knows it all. In mindfulness, the best thing we know is that we do not know. In Krashen's review (1981) of the affective filter hypothesis exposed by Dulay and Burt (1977), he came to the conclusion that in order for an individual to be successful in the acquisition of a language and have a high competence in it , three affective variables must be experienced: First, there is-motivation Most of the time, students with high motivation generally do better in second language acquisition. Second, self-confidence, which the Psychology Dictionary Online (2019) defines as an individual's trust in his or her own abilities, capacities, and judgments, or belief that he or she can successfully face day to day challenges and demands. When people have self-confidence about themselves, they show more excitement and happiness to the daily routines performed by them. They usually accomplish their goals. Finally, there is anxiety that the American Psychological Association (APA) defines as "An emotion characterized by feelings

of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure." Low anxiety levels are related to a successful communicative competence and language acquisition.

Mindfulness is reaching out many scientific and therapeutic areas. The US health department and the North American Institute for the clinic excellence are institutions that support mindfulness techniques. Since 4 years ago, more and more Costa Rican teachers have chosen to be part of this educational wave because many of them consider mindfulness techniques an easy, effective, and cheap way to help students reconnect to their lives and to place them face to face to their gifts.

Also, this is an important skill that if integrated to daily life will prevent sicknesses or emotional breakdowns, as these techniques help people finding their capacity to remain calm and relax, experience higher levels of energy and desire to live, less risk to suffer from stress, depression, anxiety, chronic pain, a low immunology system, and to experience more compassion for themselves, others, and the planet. Krashen (2009) explained that the reduction of the affective filter, while using a language, results in a better communicative performance. In accordance to Krashen, the best methods are, therefore, those that supply 'comprehensible input' in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are 'ready' (Krashen, 2009).

Mindful best practices through techniques emphasize on what many professionals in education and science have highlighted along decades and present time. Teachers and students can be creative as possible when bringing it to school. Every person and each teacher can practice mindfulness differently, as some might prefer to have opening mindful moments in

class, to have experiential practices like harmonizing the breath to the body movements, sharing dialogues, visualizations, or just journaling.

Certainly, a mindful student or teacher knows that relaxation, composure, and clarity are just one breath away. They learn to become their best supporters and also learn how to be there for others in class by establishing compassionate bounding. There are several literacies that are common to mindfulness techniques and educational theories. These are physical, mental, emotional, social, and global literacies. The success in teaching mindfulness is to allow students to be tuned to what is happening in the present moment, and more importantly to what is happening inside and around them. Mindfulness is not centered only on the mind, but also in social interactions, self nurturing, and capability to share knowledge in mindful ways with others, while they appreciate and construct same – level relationships with others in class. It is about promoting spaces in which students´ bodies can feel relaxed, open their hearts, and be aware of the role and place they have in their micro society (classroom) and macro society ( country and world).

In higher levels, it is often forgotten to continue instructing students in emotions, being educated in the heart, as emotions will certainly create an impact on the student´s life, families, communities, and countries. Since mindfulness benefits are measurable, teaching mindfulness will make classes much easier. Research has shown how violent events and school conflicts decrease when mindfulness is part of an educational source in schools (Schoeberlein, 2009). Students are educated in a much more grounded way and mental and physical balance are enhanced. Worrying about grades and life have caused emotional problems to many students, so relaxation is a key to let go stress and find balance.

Stress can deeply affect student's capacities to learn and socialize; these practices are intended to allow students to experience happiness, motivation, and a physiological homeostasis. Also, it regulates executive functioning. Studies found out that students practicing mindfulness are calmer, relaxed, and have greater self-acceptance (Broderick and Metz, 2009). Mindfulness is directly related to student's constructive and conscious choices.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodological Framework**

In this chapter, it is going to be found a plan to conduct the data collection. In addition, it will be developed the implementation of instruments focused on different methodologies. They will be applied to measure the communicative competence within students at an intermediate level in Alcanza Language Center in the first quarter of 2019. First, a class will be taught without using Mindfulness techniques and then, the following classes will be taught implementing mindfulness techniques. Also, in this chapter, it will be reviewed the process of data collection and the integration of different disciplines involving mindfulness techniques to enhance the communicative competence in students at this language center.

#### **3.1 Research Approach**

Researchers of multiple disciplines are aware of how important decision-making is when an investigation is being conducted; as they know that a research can be interpreted and analyzed from a social perspective and from an individual one. Both of them use two major approaches which are the quantitative and the qualitative research.

In regards to the quantitative research, from a broader perspective, it can be defined as a type of empirical research into a social phenomenon or human problem, testing a theory consisting of variables which are measured with numbers and analyzed with statistics in order to determine if the theory explains or predicts phenomena of interest (Creswell, 1994; Gay & Airasian, 2000). On the other hand, Gay and Airasian (2000, p. 627) define the qualitative research as, ‘The collection of extensive data on many variables over an extended period of time, in a naturalistic setting, in order to gain insights not possible using other types of

research.’ Therefore, the difference between the two approaches is evident; since quantitative researches use variables, statistics, and systemic measurements to examine and interpret data, and the qualitative research uses observation, experiences, and analyzes data from a social dynamic perspective and the outcomes of it.

The qualitative methods are especially effective to study a highly individualized, program in which the learners who have different abilities, needs, goals, and interests proceed at their own pace. In this case, the quantitative methods can provide parsimonious statistical data through mean achievement scores and hours of instruction. But, in order to understand the meaning of the program for individual participants, their points of view and experiences should be illustrated with their own words, via qualitative methods and techniques as case studies and interviews, which provide the detailed, descriptive data needed to deepen understanding of individual variation (Yilmaz, 2013).

Because the qualitative research is focused on people’s experiences, it once again acknowledges how the individual is interwoven and it cannot be reduced as an isolated variable. The qualitative research can help to create new theories. Because interdependency and social phenomena also happen in a classroom, the method used to carry out this investigation is the qualitative research method. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.3), the qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, the qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means

that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

The methods of the quantitative research are used to determine numbers between variables, for example the rate of literacy and illiteracy in a specific area. On the contrary, the qualitative research is associated to the interpretation that people give to behaviors, actions, or interactions with others. Also, different tools are used; for example, the direct observation, which is focused on how people interact with each other and no interference is done; surveys, a tool designed to analyze not only qualitative data but to investigate people's opinion in regards different subjects; focus groups, small group of participants from 5-15 people in which an specific trend is examined within the group; interviews, the research guides a discussion with a participant by using a set of questions previously formulated, the participant will always guide the conversation; participant observation, the researcher also participates from the activities performed by the focus group of study as he or she gets to have first-hand experiences within the group. This study will include a wide variety of the tools previously described.

### **3.2 Research Design**

In accordance to Oxford Dictionary (2019), a method can be defined as, "A particular procedure for accomplishing or approaching something, especially a systematic or established one." Research methods often depend on the sources from where information is gathered, and the instruments used for this purpose. The research method used in this project is the action research. Sagor (2000) states that, "An action research is defined as a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action. He explains that one of the main reasons

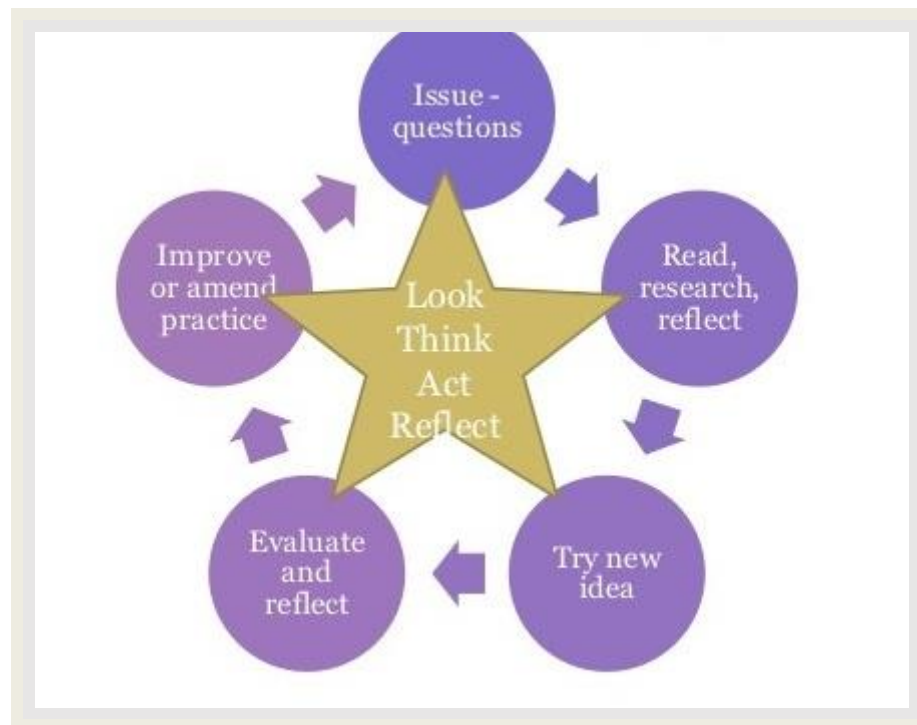
to engage with it is to provide assistance to the “actor” by helping him or her to shape and improve his or her actions.”

There is an increase in the number of schools who are going from simple institutional learning to communities of learners. Sange (1990) referred to this as team learning. These types of schools motivates colleagues, who are passionate about education to direct investigations in this field and then share the results found with the rest of the school community. They understand that this is an important contribution to everyone in the school community because it helps to update the teaching methods. Therefore, education will be more competitive and effective because it addresses students’ differences and constantly increases needs in a more professional way.

Since these improvements are scientifically proven, they provide institutions with a set of standardized resources. It can be performed by a teacher, a group of co-workers, or an institution. who share the same attention in a common matter. The action research always involves steps such as, selecting a focus, clarifying theories, identifying research questions, collecting data, analyzing data and reporting results. In other words, the “Action research is a systematic process that allows you to try out different ways of doing things in your classroom or in your school, until you find something that really works for you and your students” (Laycock & Long, 2009)

**Image 3**

## Action research cycle



*Image 3. The Action research is a cycle (Laycock & Long, 2009)*

**3.3 Information Sources**

In order to count on the information provided in this study, different sources were used. In accordance to Harvard Library (2018), we can find different types of sources. Primary sources provide first-hand testimony or direct evidence concerning a topic under investigation. They are created by witnesses or recorders, who experienced the events or conditions being documented (Library Research Guide for the History of Science, 2018). Also, books and scientific articles are classified as primary sources, as well.

Secondary sources usually use primary sources and offer interpretation, analysis, or commentaries. These resources often present primary sources of information with the addition of hindsight or historical perspective. Common examples include criticisms, histories and magazines, journals, or newspaper articles written after the fact. Some secondary sources may also be considered primary or tertiary sources - the definition of this term is not set in stone (Library Research Guide for the History of Science, 2018).

In this investigation, both; primary and secondary sources will be used. First students will be introduced to concepts in regard to Mindfulness. They will construct their own definition of mindfulness as classes pass by. The primary main resources to this introduction to students to mindfulness are

- Schoeberlein, D (2009) *Mindful teaching and teaching mindfulness*. Sommerville MA Wisdom publications
- Collard, P. (2015). *The Bible of mindfulness*. Londres Godsfield Press
- Rechtschaffen, D (2016). *The mindful education workbook; Lessons for teaching mindfulness to students*. New York, NY 101: W.W. Norton & Company.

The core secondary sources are

- Krashen, S. (2009). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition* (First internet edition )
- Aguiar, M. (2006). *El mapa conceptual y la teoría sociocultural* (Second Int. Conference on Concept Mapping) San Jose, CR.

- Diaz, B (2019) *The Marvelous Properties of Gamma Brain Waves* [Blog Post]

Retrieved from: [https://blog.mindvalley.com/gamma-brainwaves/?utm\\_source=google](https://blog.mindvalley.com/gamma-brainwaves/?utm_source=google)

Mindfulness concepts are brand new to the Costa Rican educational system. Therefore, different book activities, magazines, and audio tools will be implemented in the teaching of mindfulness concepts and techniques to students. Even though, these techniques are applied in schools in the US and Europe, it is just emerging in Costa Rica's educational system. Studies have not been run yet in the country. However, it is expected to count on it -in a near future.

### **3.4 Analysis Categories**

As Socrates states, "The perfect human being is all human beings put together, it is a collective, it is all of us together that make perfection." In countries like China, the words "integrated" and "integration" mean putting different thoughts or cultures together. This concept applied to education results in the type of educational system that implements various methods in which students are seen as a whole- mind, body, emotion, and spirit.

Plum Village place located in France, is devoted to the practice of Mindfulness, which is defined as, " the energy of being aware and awake to the present moment. It is the continuous practice of touching life deeply in every moment of daily life." Truth is that mindfulness is in everyone and it can be taught by anybody. Mindfulness offers a variety of tools that opens doors to new discoveries in small details experienced by many, but lived by just a few. It improves brain function and modifies its structure. This is why many skills can be enhanced, for example the ones involved with the acquisition of the communicative competence. According to the British Council (2019), the communicative competence refers to a learner's ability to use language to communicate successfully. This means that students

are able to communicate properly with others. In terms of acquisition, it refers to the ability of a student to integrate language and communicate in a more natural and organic way.

Students, who study at Alcanza Language Center, are individuals who work, are in charge of their families, and lack time to study. Moreover, there is a characteristic that is common to all of them; they would like to become professionals who command the English language, so they would have more opportunities in the near future. Consequently, Mindfulness is a tool that helps students to observe themselves in their overall. It encourages them to appreciate the gifts that they already have and to develop more patience and compassion in their learning process and, thus, to acquire the English language in intermediate levels at Alcanza Language Center.

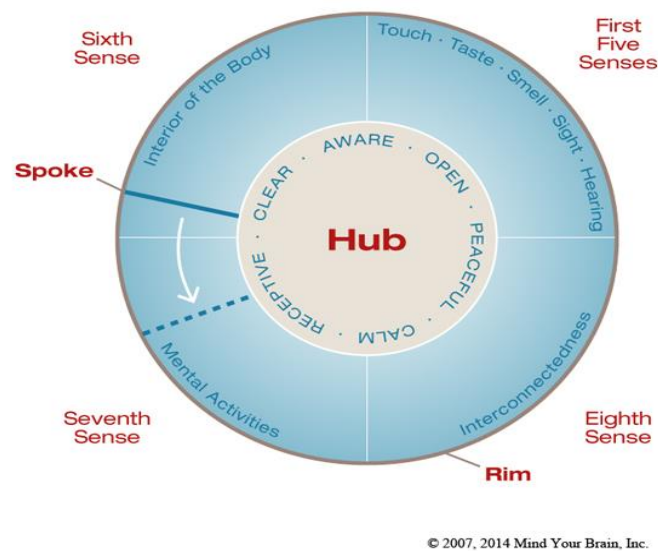
### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

The instruments selected for this research are task-based oriented, as there is a need to identify students' communicative competence areas of improvement at Alcanza Language Center in the first quarter of 2019. The researcher will identify those competences by applying a pre-test to students. This will be an impromptu speech to identify how factors, as anxiety and stress, affect students while performing these tasks.

First, the researcher will ask students to write down an outline to produce a small speech referring to things that they can or cannot do, things they have, likes and dislikes. They will be given 5 minutes to do it and 4-5 minutes to deliver their speech. Before performing this impromptu speech, students will complete a survey given by the researcher to measure their anxiety and stress before the oral performance in the English Language. Then, the researcher will evaluate the students' performance by grading them with two different charts, one

provided by Alcanza Language Institute and the other one designed by the researcher. The researcher will use these rubrics to evaluate the English oral skills of from each student, while they perform their speech. Also, students will be able to monitor anxiety and stress by themselves after performing activities. They will use "The wheel of awareness" for this purpose.

**Image 4**



*"The wheel of awareness" by Dr. Dan Siegel (2007)*

Based on these oral presentations, the teacher will identify the areas to be improved by each student. The researcher will prepare a class based on these needs. In addition, the researcher will apply mindfulness techniques to reinforce students' communicative competence in oral production tasks by assigning them a task divided in 3 different activities: making reservations at restaurant, order food in a restaurant, pay the bill at the restaurant.

The researcher will apply a mindful setting to the class. The desks and chairs will be set up in a semi circle in the center of the class, essential oils will be placed in a diffuser and, also, the oils will be handed to the students so they can apply them in the palm of their hands, forehead, or neck if they want to. The researcher will encourage each student to choose the oil of their preference, since all odors are meant to refresh memory and energize students. Moreover, the researcher will monitor the students' state of mind by asking them to use the Wheel of Awareness; and will observe their body postures.

The researcher will previously ask students to bring comfortable clothes, a yoga mat or towel and a blanket or personal belongings that help them feel relaxed in class. Methods of mindful communication will be applied to students; therefore, the researcher will ask one of her students to light up a candle, which will be located in the middle of the class. Then, she will ask students to greet each other with their eyes. No words are used, just a kind stare at each other will do.

Then, the researcher will apply another mindfulness technique, which is mindful attention combined with mindful breathing. She will ask students to concentrate their attention on the candle that has just been lighted up and to connect to their breath. She will guide students to feel the temperature of the air in their nose to really be aware of the temperature that air has when it gets in and how the temperature is when it gets out of the nose. This will be practiced for about 1 to 2 minutes. Then, she will ask students to follow a guided meditation. The researcher will join the semi-circle to start a 10 minute meditation along with her students. The name of it is, I am worthy by Susana Majul, which is an audio.

Afterwards, the researcher will continue to assess the students by encouraging them to monitor themselves through the Wheel of Awareness to check on their anxiety and stress levels and by sharing their experiences and comments with the group. At this point, students become their own monitors regarding their role in class and with others. Next, the researcher will show students a menu with different photos of meals and will talk about likes and dislikes in regards to food. The teacher will make a circle and assign each student the name of a meal. She will ask to each one to relate the meal to a movement and say his or her meal. The class repeats the word and matches the movement to it. Then, the researcher will request the students to ask their classmate-all at once, “Do you like plantains? Or Do you like meat pot?” The last word to this question changes depending on the meal assigned. Each student will answer “yes, I do or no, I do not.” The activity is completed when all students recall their classmates’ movements and words.

Afterwards, the researcher will ask students to open their books and read a text in relation to food. Also, new vocabulary and verbs will be added by students. The researcher will assign a practice to address grammar, as well. After the break, the researcher will ask students to role play a situation at a scenario given. The researcher will have a rubric to write down observations about the students’ communicative competence, at this point of the class.

Then, the researcher will ask to a previously assigned student to direct the second mindfulness technique, which is mindful body movement. The student will lead different stretches and will focus on the head, neck, shoulders, and back. She will mindfully guide the exercises, so that each student can tune to each part of the body that is being worked. After the 5-minute exercise, the researcher will add new words. This will be divided in two segments of 7 words each one to make a total of 14. One segment will contain new vocabulary in regard to

meals, and the other one will deal with adverbs of frequency and two modal verbs. The researcher will apply the mindfulness technique, called the mindful breathing technique, for 2 minutes.

Afterwards, the researcher will ask the students to perform again the tasks previously seen in class. Therefore, the researcher will grade students with the same rubric used in the before activity. As a wrap-up activity, researcher will continue to monitor the student's communicative competence by observing their performance, while they play Taboo. For this purpose, the researcher will divide the class in 2 different groups. The task given is to describe a word on a card without saying it. In order for students to complete this task, they will need to communicate as much as possible to make the other team guess the word. At the end of the class, there will be a mindful minute of gratitude for the lesson learned together. These techniques are to be applied on Saturday March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 in the intermediate level group 1 in the class that starts at 8am in Alcanza Language Institute in San Rafael de Arriba, Desamparados.

The researcher will make sure to have students' feedback about the difference of the classes taught. She will motivate them to talk about the advantages found in the class with mindfulness techniques. Also, the researcher will continue identifying the opportunities that students have to improve their skills.

### **3.6 Collection Data Process and Data Analysis**

The data collection will be done in 3 different days. The first one will take place on March 9<sup>th</sup> at 8am at Alcanza Language Center in Desamparados. Primary, the researcher gathered information on class dynamics and will measure student's communicative

competence by using a check list and a rubric when a pre-test is being applied, impromptu speech. On March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 8am at Alcanza Language Center students received a survey in which they will grade a total of 10 different questions in regard to their state of mind, stress, and anxiety. They answered this survey twice. The first time before beginning the class and the second, after applying mindfulness techniques.

In addition, a third class supported data collection. It was on March 30<sup>th</sup> at 8am at Alcanza Language center. The researcher applied a post test by applying an impromptu speech and reviewing a check list, the data was analyzed and interpreted through different figures and descriptions of the outcomes observed in class. The results will ensure if the techniques applied are working for the students or if there are changes to be made if any.

## Chapter IV

### Data Analysis

According to the University of Pretoria (2019), the data analysis is, “The most crucial part of any research. Data analysis summarizes collected data. It involves the interpretation of data gathered through the use of analytical and logical reasoning to determine patterns, relationships, or trends.” Indeed, investigation credibility and conclusions will be determined in the data collection and how they are managed and analyzed. One of the main things to do is to get insights out of the research. In this sense, the researcher will be able to provide either to an institution or an individual with tools in order for them to make better decisions. Their choices will be supported by data that has been closely examined. This means that decisions are taken in less time and they will be accurate and professional.

Madisha (2018) says that “Qualitative analysis methodology is exploratory where the analysis seeks to get a deeper understanding of why a certain phenomenon occurs..., quantitative analysis can be conclusive, such as how much or how many times a certain phenomenon occurs not why it does occurs.” As mentioned before, the type of research is a qualitative one as this type of “analysis seeks to get a deeper understanding into social interactions” (Madisha, 2018). This will allow to explore how mindfulness techniques impact the students’ dynamics within their surroundings and their communicative skills, and more specifically, their communicative competence in English. In order to provide the reader with a better understanding of data collection, figures and their interpretation will be included.

#### **4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Results**

One of the purposes of conducting this analysis on Mindfulness techniques was the interest of the researcher of expanding her understanding and knowledge regarding the teaching of English in Costa Rican schools regardless of age, gender, and economic or social backgrounds. Therefore, a neutral area in Desamparados was selected.

The name of the institution chosen was Alcanza Language Center, which is linked with the Universidad de Costa Rica and the government of Costa Rica. Together, they have articulated a successful English program that is focused on educating Costa Rican people who lack opportunities. Usually, the students that attend this institute come from families who struggle to afford a full English program. Most of the students, in this study, were part of the regular public education from within the Desamparados area.

In this study, a group of 19 participants was selected. There were 5 males and 14 females ranging from 15 years old to 65 years old. Most of them were middle class students. Also, 3 of them were women who are the head of their household. Moreover, the level of English of this group was intermediate I. At the beginning, students did not reflect the English level under which they were labeled. They were willing to polish their English skills and continue to develop their communicative competence in English. In addition, while the students introduced themselves to the researcher, six of them reported that they found English difficult and that it was not appealing for them. In addition, they had school drop offs before. They said that their hope was to successfully complete the English level they were at.

### 4.1.1 Observations

The first observation was addressed to the teacher (see Appendix 1). The intention of this study was to reach the teacher that shows that no matter his/her age, there are always important pieces to his or her personality that are present during a class. It might be the scared kindergarten child, the indifferent teen, the insecure middle school student, or even the perfectionist college student. It is important for teachers to acknowledge this, and to reflect about it during his/her classes, maybe certain parts more than others. The teen parts can be expressed while being in front of a class talking about a topic. Indeed, this can challenge the teacher's self-confidence when talking to a group of adolescents.

Also, the teacher may notice the perfectionist adult coming out to address the class when making a student aware of something that in his or her mind might help this student in his/her educational development or in the "correction" of a specific mistake. This assessment for the teacher was designed by Daniel J. Rechtschaffen.

This self-assessment helped the teacher to be really present in class by having an honest insight of the students' developmental stages and to help build steps to address students' needs during these stages. In addition, it guided the teacher to gain empathy with the -students by recalling what it was like when he was experiencing these same stages. It helped to create instruments for the class based on the answers that he identified in himself. As stated by the teacher, it helped him to have important insights about the students' developmental areas and to be there for students in class, by easily identifying the areas that he wanted to work with them.

The second observation gave the researcher a closer look to the class in terms of organization and the interaction among students and with the teacher (See Appendix 2). This

observation was designed with the purpose of closely checking on specific details in the class environment and population in which Mindfulness techniques wanted to be applied.

Although the students were registered in an Intermediate level, the majority still had advanced beginner gaps in English. In the group, there were a total of 19 students. There were 15 females and 4 males. Students were organized in a semicircle and the teacher was right in front of them. This helped the teacher to catch the students' attention. However, it was observed that the students' attention was not totally focused on the teacher and the topics that were explained. In several times, students were observed looking at other parts of the classroom, drawing in their notebooks, etc. Some of them even lost track of what they were talking about in the class. This happened several times in different moments to the 19 students observed.

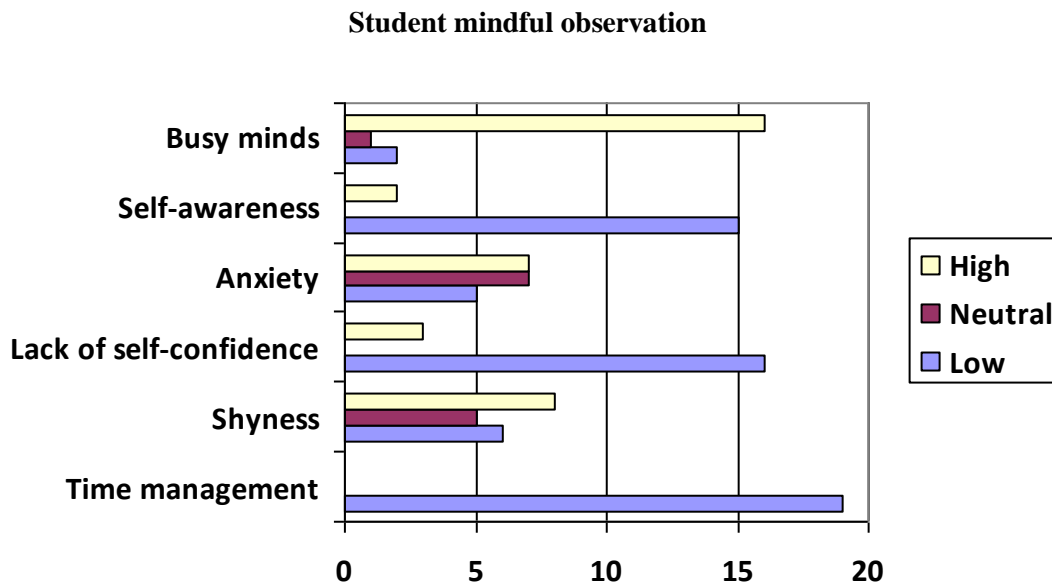
The participation in class of the students that had a lower communicative competence level, was very low in comparison to the students who were sure that they had better communicative skills. The students' ability to focus on the subjects was difficult; since, as it was observed, when the teacher asked questions about specific vocabulary learned in class just a few minutes before, some students barely recalled when to the context when of use those words. Some students' gaze was lost in the background of the class and others were writing or drawing their notebooks.

In addition, the students who that had a less proficient level in relation to the rest of the class, showed other signs of anxiety while talking in class. When the teacher asked students to perform a specific task or to answer to specific items, some signs were -noticed in the students in different moments-of their participation, such as, stuttering while speaking, rushing of speech to end participation quickly, refusing to participate, accelerated feet moving, tapping

with fingers on the desk, low tone of voice, seeking continuous approval from the teacher in the process of answering a question or request.

The third observation made was meant to encourage students to experience self-observation, to monitor themselves and from a nonjudgmental place by looking at their role in class (See Appendix 3). The researcher guided the 19 students through a 7 minute meditation to direct them to find the root the challenges experienced by them during their English learning process and also to easily access their intrinsic motivation to learn English by means of two specific questions given during the meditation; What has held me back from learning English? And What has been my role towards my teacher and classmates during an English class?

Given that students are usually influenced by someone else's opinion, it is expected to observe these opinions reflected on-the role assumed by them in class. Both, students and teacher, found that this mindful technique allowed them to identify different areas of self-improvement without receiving direct feedback from the teacher. Most of the times, direct feedback is a mixture of the teacher's own opinions and observable traits of students and their dynamics in class. All the 19 students in class were able to observe their dynamics in class by recalling different experiences and by truly identifying their role in their learning process. By talking about their experiences with the rest of the group, students talked about the impact that this role has had in their experience as students. In addition, regarding to the second question, students expressed that it allowed them to be aware of the different reasons that held them back from succeeding in class. See below,

**Figure 1**

*Figure 1 shows the student mindful observation.  
Created by the researcher by using check list results.*

Thanks to this rubric, the following challenges were identified by students. Lack of effective time management. 100 % of the students reported that they did not realize they were giving more time than usual to activities of less importance or giving more time than required to some family members instead of prioritizing tasks related to English. Three students from ages 32- 38 years old expressed that they had school drop offs because of this reason.

Remain in silent in class or feel shyness. 8 students out of 19 reported that the fear of not knowing how to pronounce well or making a mistake and feeling scared about public speaking refrained them from participating more in class or even from participating in class.

Lack of self-confidence. 16 out of 19 students reported they did not trust themselves when communicating in English. They said they doubted their English skills and that this was one of the reasons why they barely answered questions or interacted with other students.

Signs of anxiety and stress. 7 students out of 19 reported that body signs, such as sweating, hand shaking, or speech blocks distracted them when communicating in English and made them feel uncomfortable, and caused them to make more mistakes while speaking in English.

Self awareness. 15 students out of 19 expressed that before this observation they placed their whole learning responsibility on the teacher and did not fully acknowledge their own responsibility to ask, review at home, or do some personal research in regards to a specific topic seen in class. Most of the students could identify that they had a passive role in class and in their learning process.

Busy minds. 17 students out of 19 stated that they were caught up into many activities at the time. For instance, the ones who attended high school said they had much homework to do and had to catch on the different courses they were taking, and that sometimes they could not concentrate on the most important things to be done. The heads of households stated that they had to clean the house, pay attention to home chores, and that they were not able to have a clear mind most of the time.

The researcher took advantage of these observations and confirmed with students and their teacher, their willingness to apply Mindfulness techniques to develop their communicative competence in English. Students were explained the meaning and purpose of Mindfulness and how it was a tool for them organize their thoughts, manage emotions, and focus much better in class. Also, how their brain functioning would be shaped by their own individual practice of Mindfulness not only in class, but also in their spare time. The 98% of the class said that because of the results of the previous instrument used, they were fully open to learn how to apply these techniques in their daily studying because they have not heard about this technique before. 2% said that they were already meditating and that they applied meditation techniques several times in their routines.

#### **4.1.2. Rubrics**

One of Mindfulness principles is to turn any obstacle into a learning opportunity. Therefore, it was crucial for this study to identify the challenges intermediate students experienced when developing their communicative competence to precisely turn these challenges into tools of growth during their learning process. Consequently, to assess these areas of growth, two rubrics were applied to the 19 students in two different moments (See Appendix 5). Moreover, it is fundamental to state that these two rubrics are the same, but they were applied at different moments.

The first rubric was carried out at the very beginning of the research, when students were not introduced to mindfulness techniques, yet. This type of rubric was designed by Alcanza Language Center to grade students while having an oral presentation; therefore, it is a requirement to test students with this instrument. It was applied to students while delivering an impromptu speech on March 9<sup>th</sup> 20019 at 8 am.

The first rubric was used as a pre-test to identify areas of development in students. The areas that it tested were knowledge of content, posture and body language, and language and grammar. The grading went from the minimum grade, that is 1, noted in color blue; 2 points in color purple, and the maximum (three points) in light-brown color.

On the other hand, the second. The other rubric was applied at the end of the research and was used as the post test. The same grading and color category, was used in the same way as the first rubric.

### Knowledge of contents

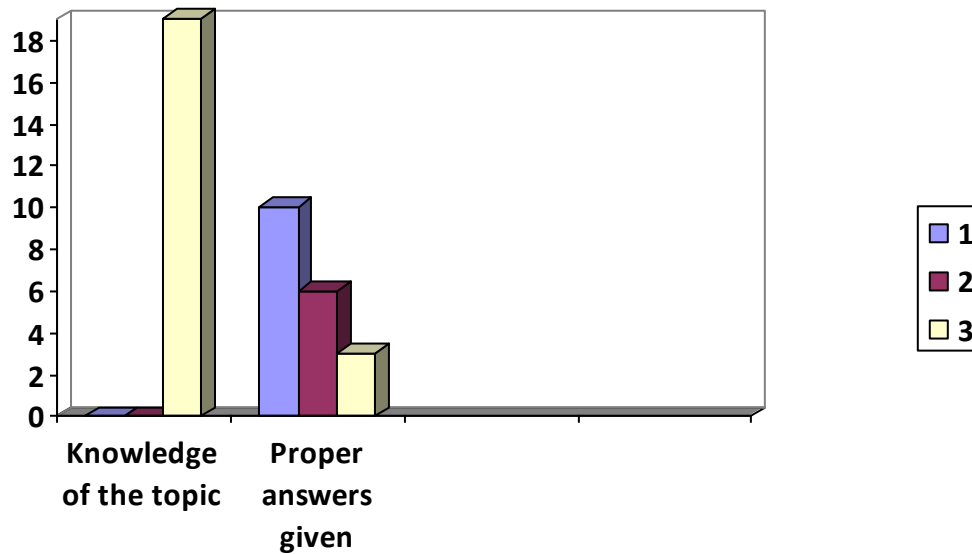


Figure 2. Rubric results on oral presentation evaluations at Alcanza Language Center.

In terms of knowledge of the topic, students were evaluated by checking if they answered questions properly; meaning if the content matched what the teacher asked to be developed during the presentation. The total of students that showed full knowledge of it was 19 out of 19, which illustrates that students fully comprehended what was expected from them to talk about. Also, a full coverage of the content was evaluated. 10 students out of 19 successfully completed this task by obtaining a grade of 3; 6 out of 19 obtained a grade of 2; and 3 students out of 19 got the maximum score which was a 3, while delivering their presentation.

### Posture and Body Language

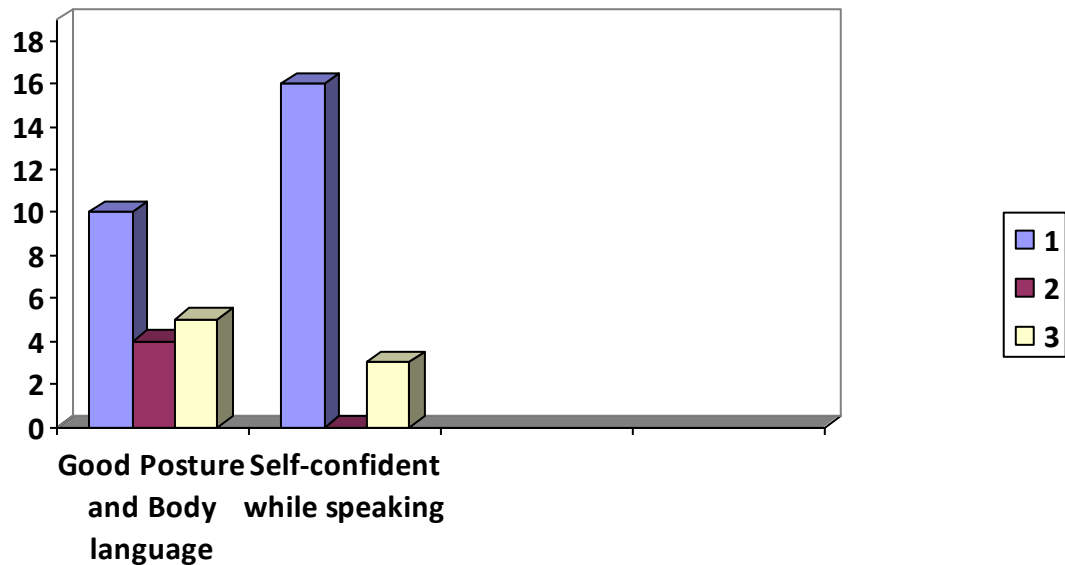
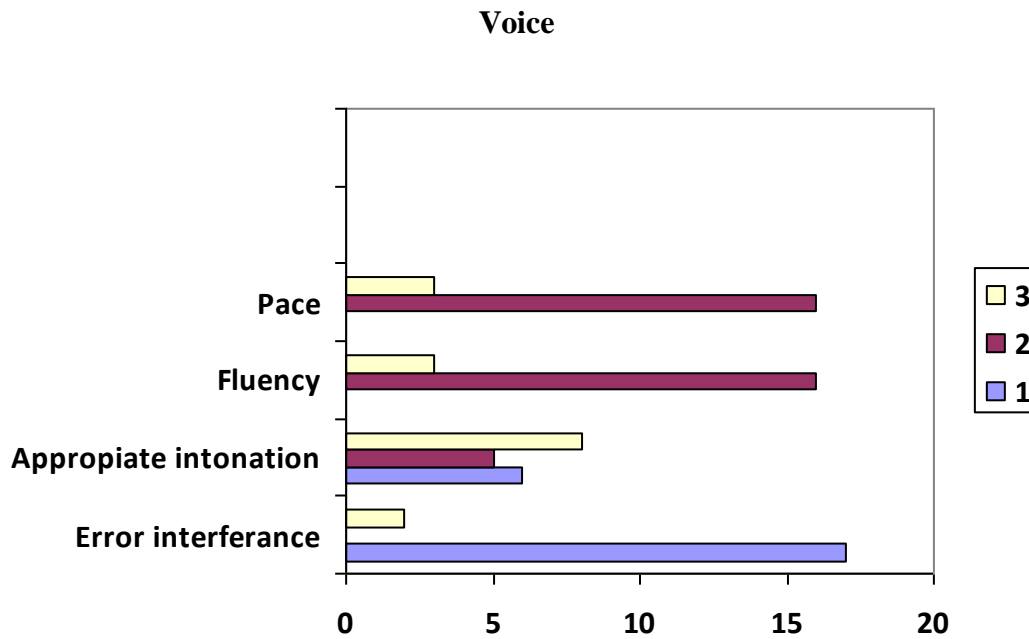


Figure 3. Rubric results on oral presentation evaluations at Alcanza Language Center.

Accordingly, students were also evaluated regarding the messages sent by their body language and self-confidence in their performance. It was observed that 16 out of 19 students - more than the 90% of the class- lacked self confidence and good body posture while delivering their presentation; for example, their backs were hunched, legs crossed, and the orientation of their body was either facing the door or facing just one portion of the class. There was a poor eye contact with the recipients of the message. Also, some signs of anxiety were observed, such as breathing difficulties, noticeable perspiration, feeling of shakiness or trembling (See appendix 7).

Next, it can be found different criteria in regard to voice, that was also-evaluated by the researcher:



*Figure 4. Rubric results on oral presentation evaluations at Alcanza Language Center*

The evaluation included the assessment of pronunciation and their impact in the students' speech; for example, interference with the message due to errors in pronunciation, which affected 17 out of 19 students. In regard to appropriate intonation and volume of voice, 6 students could not be understood properly because the production of certain syllables made final pronunciations not fluent or audible, 5 of them had an average performance in this criteria, and 8 of them had an excellent performance. To continue, 16 students showed an average fluency and 3 of them obtained the highest score, which was a three. The last criteria reviewed was the pace at which each student spoke, 16 students had an average performance in this area, and 3 of them had no difficulty at all.

### Language and Grammar

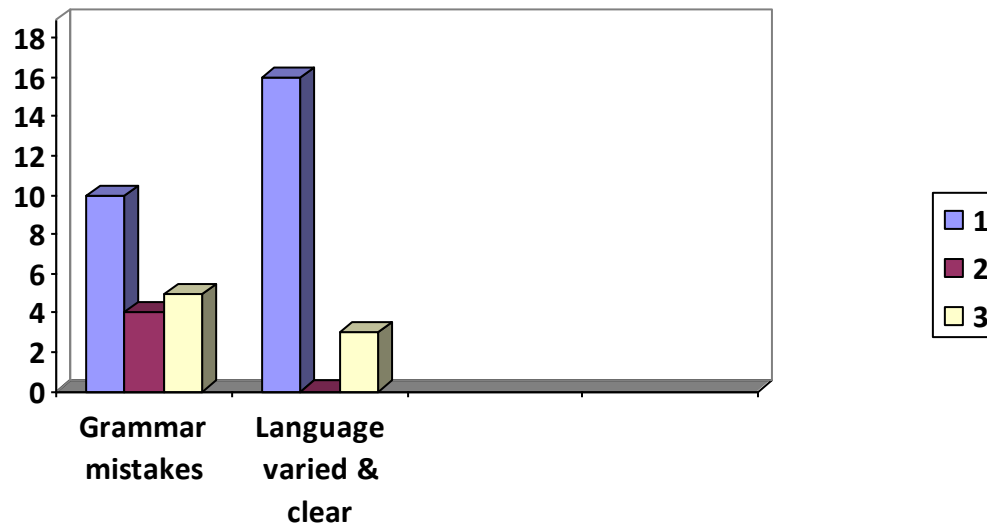
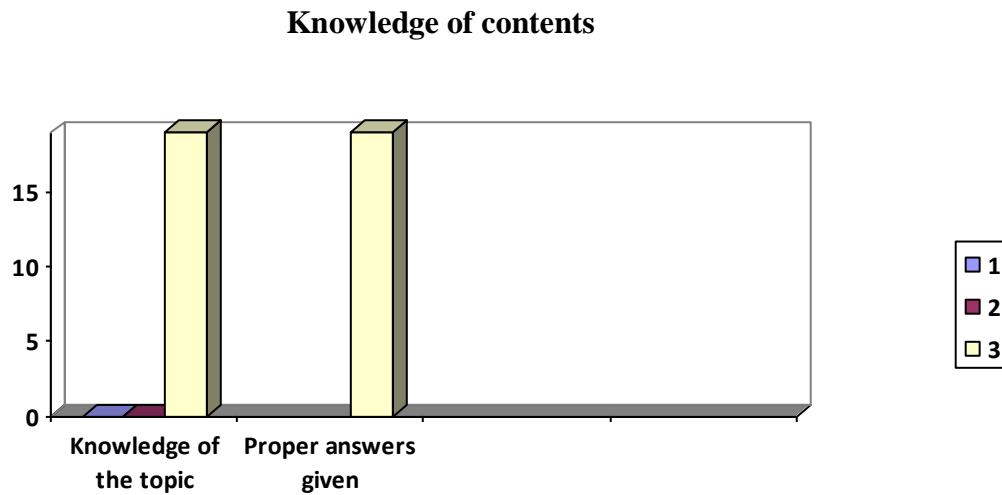


Figure 5. Rubric results on oral presentation evaluations at Alcanza Language Center

The last criteria evaluated was related to grammar mistakes. The rubric identified how complicated it was to comprehend the message when mistakes were done; however, it has to be stated that neither of the 20 students lacked communicability due to grammar mistakes. The language was varied and clear enough to understand at the highest level in 3 cases and at an average level regarding the remaining 16 students. In this specific task, 16 students were affected by affective filters, which caused them to not focus on what it was expressed. Also, in some occasions these same groups of students lost track of what they wanted to share with the class and, consequently, they were not clearly understood.

As soon as the areas of development were found, a set of Mindfulness techniques were developed to help students to reduce the affective filters shown in class. After the Mindfulness techniques were applied, the same rubric used at the beginning, was used to

identify the improvement made by students at the end of this process. The following are the results found.



*Figure 6. Rubric results on oral presentation evaluations at Alcanza Language Center*

In terms of knowledge of the topic, the students' capability of answering questions properly and demonstrating knowledge of the topic in their presentations remained the same, as the total of the students showed full knowledge on the topic; in other words, students fully comprehended what they were expected to talk about. Also, proper and full coverage of content was evaluated; the results demonstrated an increase of 85% of students who achieved the highest performance in this area. In this case, the total of students who obtained a 3 was 19 out of 19 students.

### Posture and Body Language

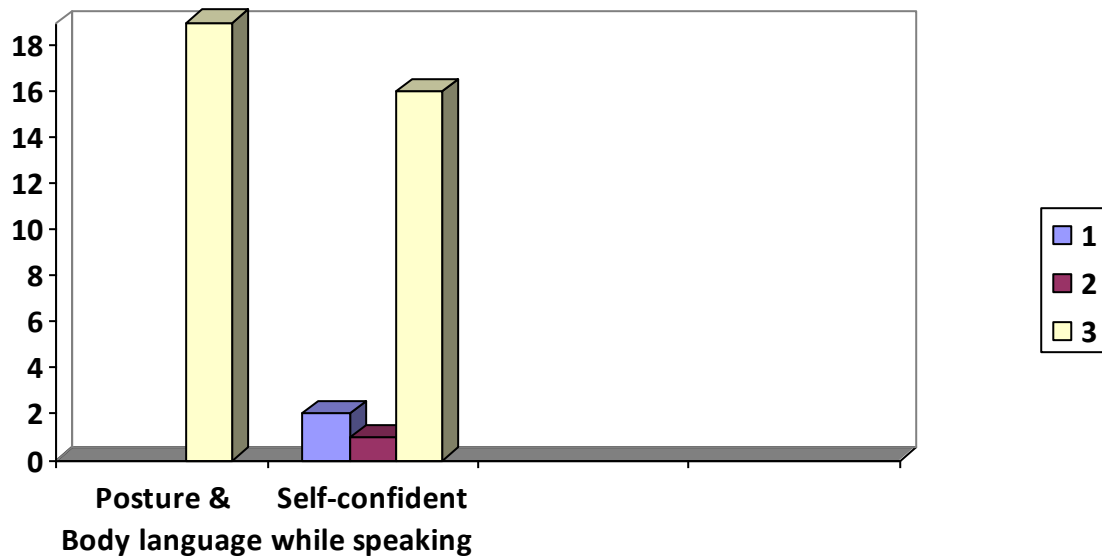
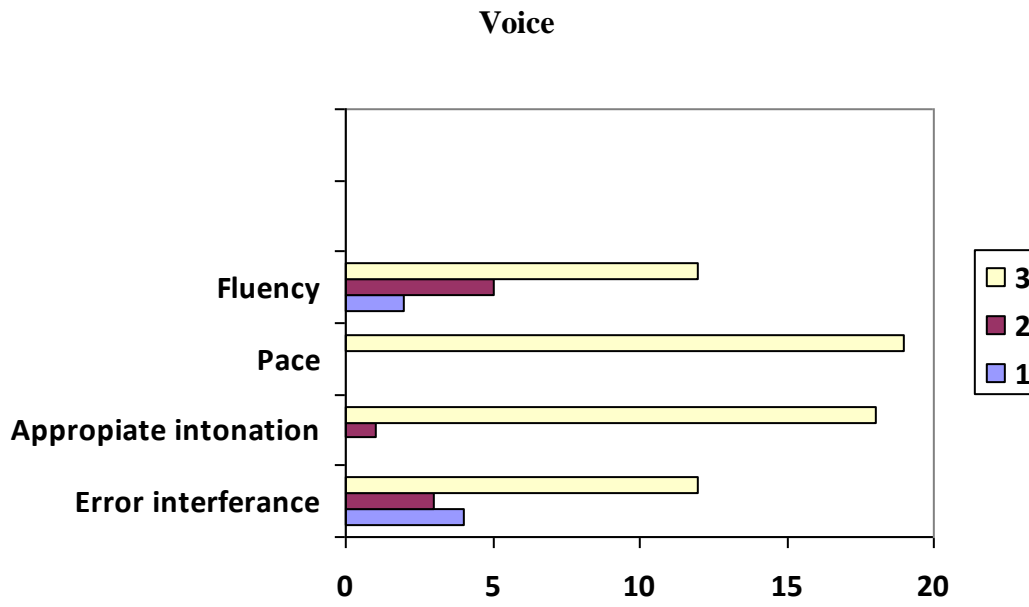


Figure 7. Rubric results on oral presentation evaluations at Alcanza Language Center

As a result of the Mindfulness techniques, students had a noticeable change in their body posture and how it was projected to the audience when delivering the speech. The results demonstrated that 19 out of 19 students successfully improved their body posture, achieving the highest grade in performance, which was a 3. This time their backs were straighter, shoulders and chest less contracted, and they facing their classmates. Also, 16 out of 19 students showed self-confidence while delivering their presentation, reaching a score of 3. A much more confident eye contact was shared their classmates when speaking. As for signs of anxiety, there was an important reduction of stuttering, noticeable perspiration, and trembling in hands, as 2 students remained in the average grade and 1 student reached the lowest performance. This means, that a 100% of the class could change body posture and more than 90% of the class improved self-confidence.

To continue, voice was graded during the students' performance; the results can be found below.



*Figure 8. Rubric results on oral presentation evaluations at Alcanza Language Center*

In terms of the interference of the message due to errors, 12 out of 19 students achieved the highest grade in performance, which is a 3, 3 students reached 2 points, and 4 of them, 1 point which was the lowest grade. When observing and grading appropriate intonation and volume of voice, 18 out of 19 students were capable of properly intonate, so they scored a total of 3 points and just 1 out of 19 students scored 2 points. To continue, 19 students showed a good pace in conversation. In terms of fluency, 12 out of 19 students were reported with a grade of 3, 5 out of 19 students got an average grade of 2, and 2 out of 19 students obtained a grade of 1 point.

### Language and Grammar

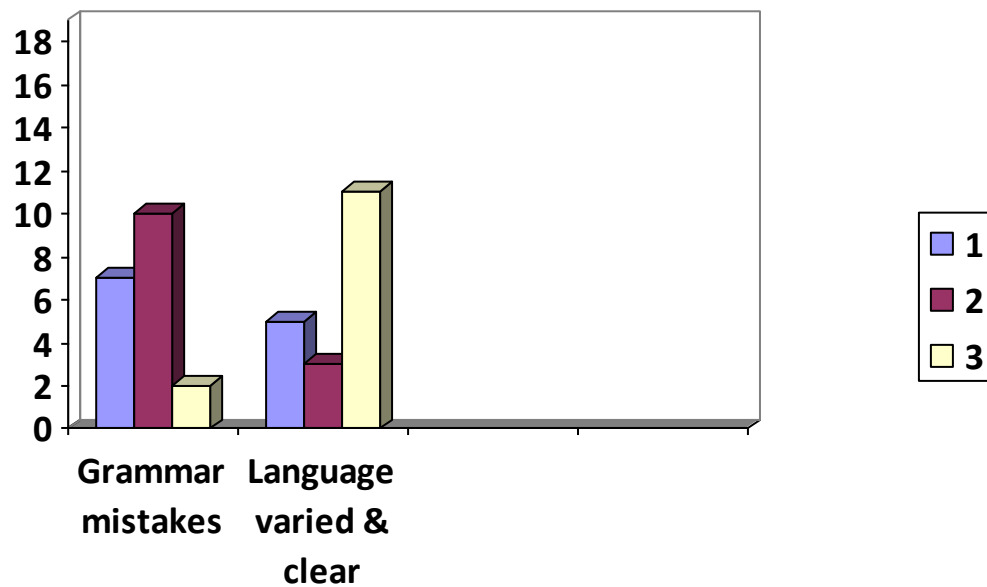


Figure 9. Rubric results on oral presentation evaluations at Alcanza Language Center

Grammar mistakes were evaluated once again, and it could be identified how complicated was the comprehension of the message when mistakes were done. Therefore, it can be said that 2 out of 19 students did not have difficulties to deliver the message in a clear way due to grammar mistakes and achieved the highest grade, which was 3 points of 3; 10 out of 19 students achieved 2 points; and 7 out of 19 students had a low performance in this field, as they only obtained 1 point. Lastly, it was evaluated how clear and varied was the language was; consequently, 11 out of 19 students achieved the highest level, 3 an average level with 2 points, and 5 out of 19 students got just 1 point. On this specific criterion, the students' affective filter decreased and the signs of it were less intense. Students showed to be much more capable of managing these emotions. Counting on these data, general results can be compared as follows.

### Knowledge of Contents (comparison)

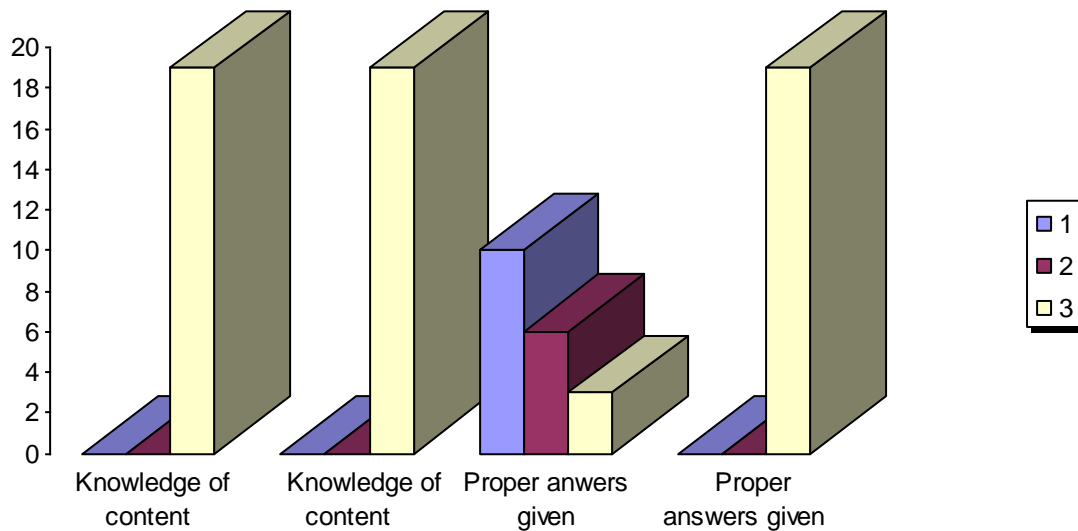


Figure 10. Comparison. Rubric results on oral presentation evaluations at Alcanza Language Center

In terms of the knowledge on the topic, in the first rubric the total of students showed full knowledge and on the second one, the number remained the same; in other words, 19 out of 19 students showed full comprehension of what they were expected to talk about. In terms of providing the right information while delivering the speech, the results showed a difference between the first time in which the rubric was applied. At this time, 10 out of 19 students successfully completed this task by obtaining a grade of 3, 6 out of 19 students reflected a grade of 2, and 3 out of 19 students got the maximum grade, which was a 3 and on the second rubric 19 out of 19 students successfully obtained the highest grade in this criterion.

### Posture and Body Language (Comparison)

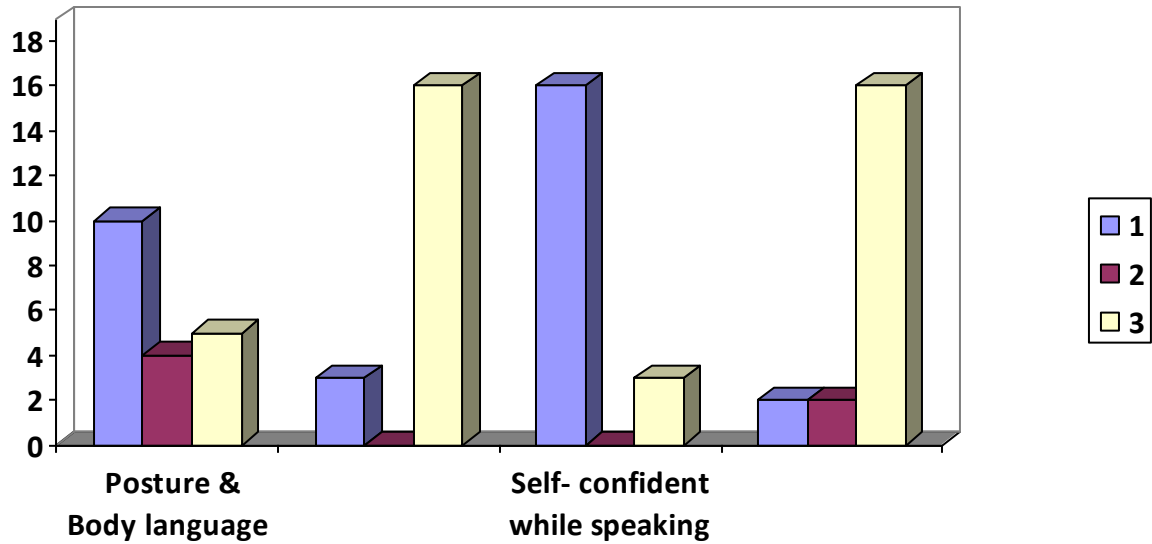


Figure 11. Comparison. Rubric results on oral presentation evaluations at Alcanza Language Center

The students' body language and self-confidence changed from rubric one to rubric two. It was observed that 16 out of 19 students - more than the 90% of the class- lacked self confidence and good body posture while delivering the speech. On the other hand, rubric 2 demonstrated that the body posture of the 19 students was improved, since students scored the highest grade, which was a 3. In addition, the 100% of the class modified their body language. As for self- confidence, the signs of anxiety decreased in 16 students, remained the same in 1 student, and 2 students got the lowest performance.

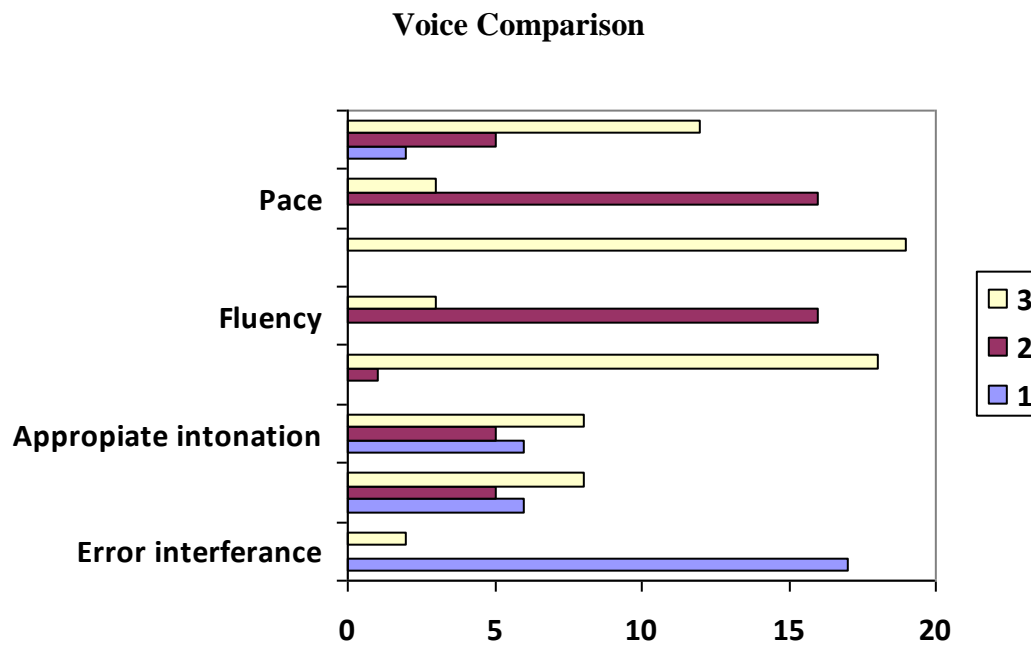


Figure 12. Comparison. Rubric results on oral presentation evaluations at Alcanza Language Center

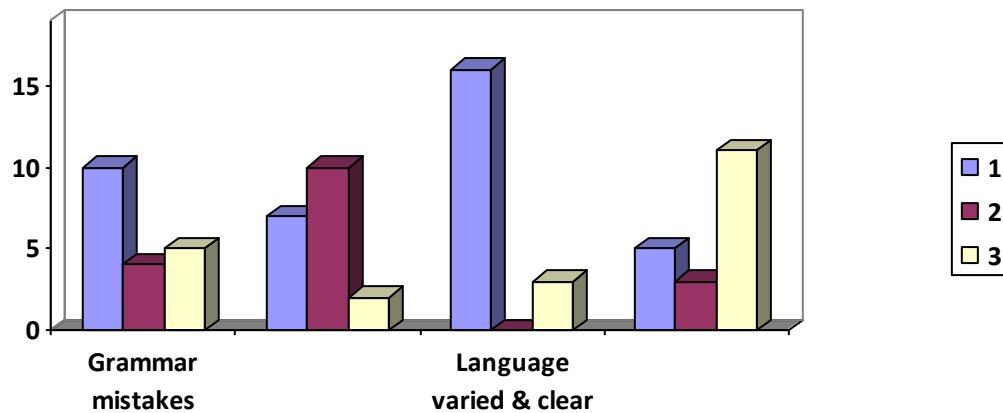
At the beginning, the mistakes made by 17 interfered with their performance, and only 2 students did good. On the other hand, when students were tested for the second time, results showed that 4 students were affected by error interference, 3 of them remained with the average score (2 points), and 12 of them had no interference due to mistakes in their performance. As a result, 63% of the students improved in this area.

Also, regarding appropriate intonation, 18 students reached the highest score and just 1 student got 2 points. In comparison to the first test, 94% of the students improved this skill. In terms of fluency, in the first test 16 students obtained 2 points and 3 students got the maximum of 3. In the second test, 19 out of 19 students had a proper fluency reaching the highest grade; this means that there was an improvement in this skill, as well. In terms of pace, in the first test, none of the students got the lowest score, as 16 students obtained 2 points and 3 students obtained the highest score. On the contrary, 2 students reached the lowest grade, 5

students 2 points, and 12 students the highest, which means that once again the 63% of the class had -an excellent performance.

Lastly, grammar and language had also changed from rubric one to rubric two. Both of them determined how grammar mistakes complicated comprehension and how varied and clear language was.

### Language & Grammar comparison



*Figure 13. Comparison.  
Rubric results on oral presentation evaluations at Alcanza Language Center*

According to grammar mistakes, it can be said that less students got a low score and more students got 2 points, by far more than double in the first rubric and amount of students, who obtained the highest grade. The difference was of 2 students. To conclude, regarding how clear and varied the language was, there was a clear reduction in the affective filter of students, as less students got the lowest performance. It went from 84% to a 26%; in other words, the students who got 2 points went from 0% to 15% and the students who got the maximum of 3 points, went from 15% to 57%.

In terms of the affective filter reduction (See appendix 3), during the first impromptu speech specific traits were observed from the dynamics from students in class and during a performance. As for anxiety signs while communicating, a rapid breathing was noticed. This happened mostly when students had trouble recalling a word or lost track of what they were saying. Shakiness or trembling of hands or legs was noticed during the whole speech delivery on almost half of the class. In addition to this, the pace speeded up by about 5 participants. 4 participants had sweaty hands and 2 of them a sweaty forehead. 16 of them had challenges with eye contact, 2 of them stuttered while speaking which caused them to repeat words and to lower their voice. Also, the class had a little interaction among students and teacher. The class environment was sort of hermetic.

On the other hand, after the mindfulness techniques were applied, it was observed a noticeable change in the delivery of the second impromptu speech. Body posture and self confidence changed; that is, 100% of the class modified their body posture while delivering their second speech and 84% of them improved their performance, reaching the highest grade. 16 out of 19 students looked more confident while speaking and they reflected these results in their performance.

To conclude, the dynamics of the students changed drastically. They had less hesitation when participating or helping others. They talked to each other more and encouraged classmates during a speech or participation. The students reported to have spent more time studying. Most of the students stayed in class practicing English a little bit more during recess by their own will. They left the classroom in a much more organized and cleaner way and they even brought food or practices to share with others, which mean that social and emotional literacy were developed during the time students put into practice the mindfulness techniques.

### 4.1.3. Survey

Moreover, a survey (See appendix 5) was applied to students before 3 task-based activities to be performed in front of the class. It was aimed to find out-the students' state of mind before and after mindfulness exercises right before their performance.

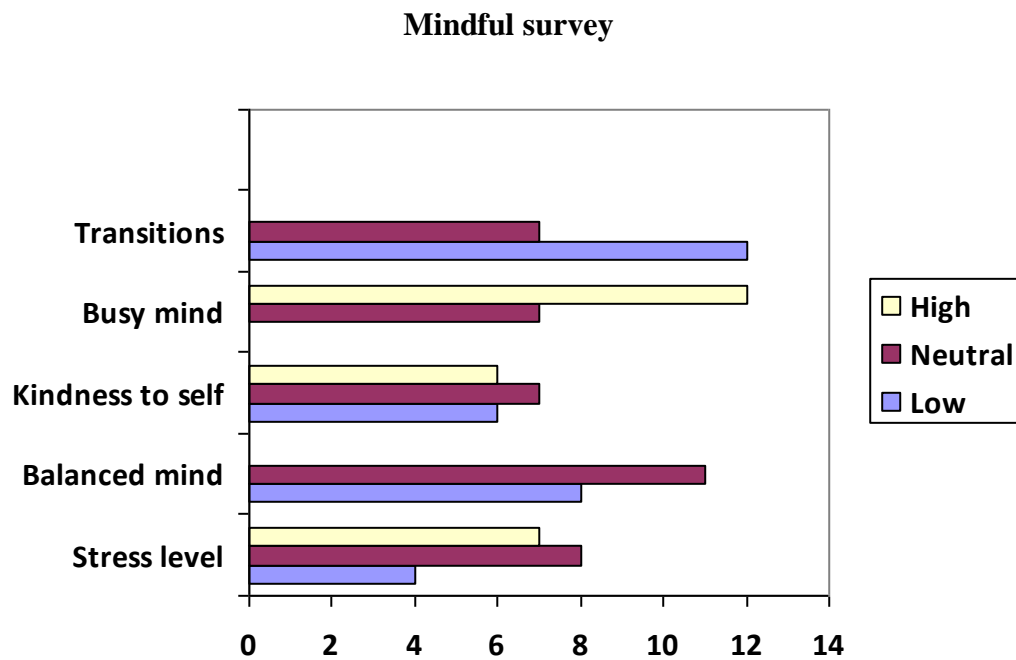
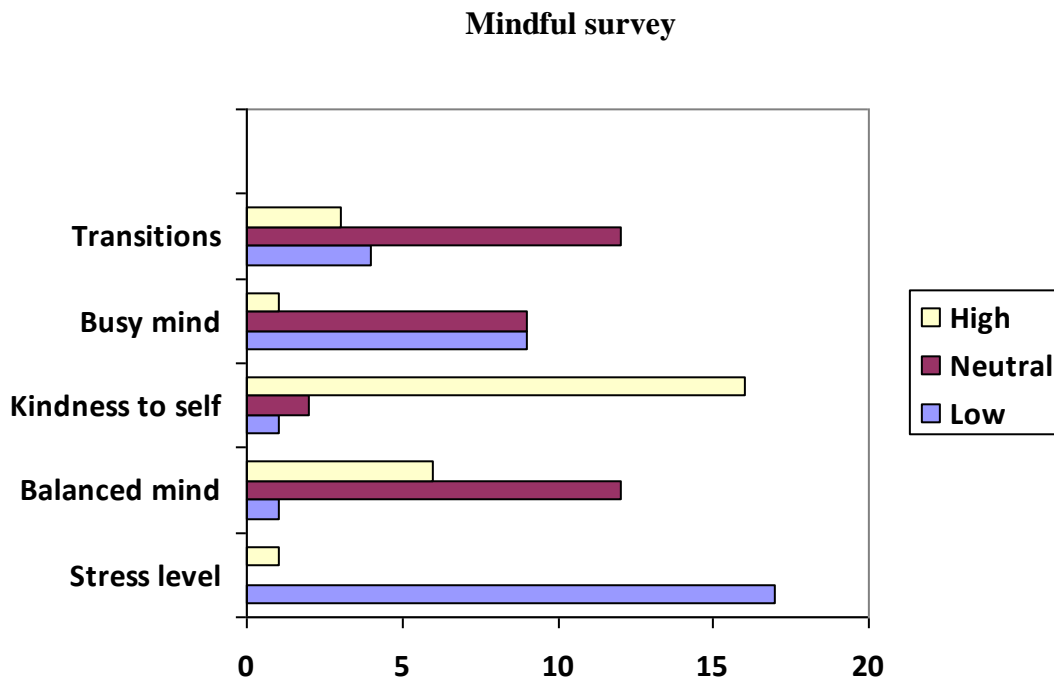


Figure 14. Results on Mindful survey created by Daniel Rechtschaffen

In the survey, 4 students noted that their stress level before the Mindfulness exercises was low, 8 reported to have -a neutral level and 7 noted their stress level was high. About experiencing a balanced mind, 8 students reported this as low and 11 as neutral. About being kind to themselves, 6 noted this criterion as low, 7 students were neutral, and 6 students marked this as high. In terms of how busy their mind was, none of the students marked it as low, 7 students as neutral, and 12 reported it to be high. Finally, students were asked about

how smooth transitions in class were from task to task for them; therefore, 12 reported a low availability to do it, 7 neutral one, and none of them  $\theta$  reported it as high.

After the Mindfulness techniques were applied, the students graded their outcomes as follows.

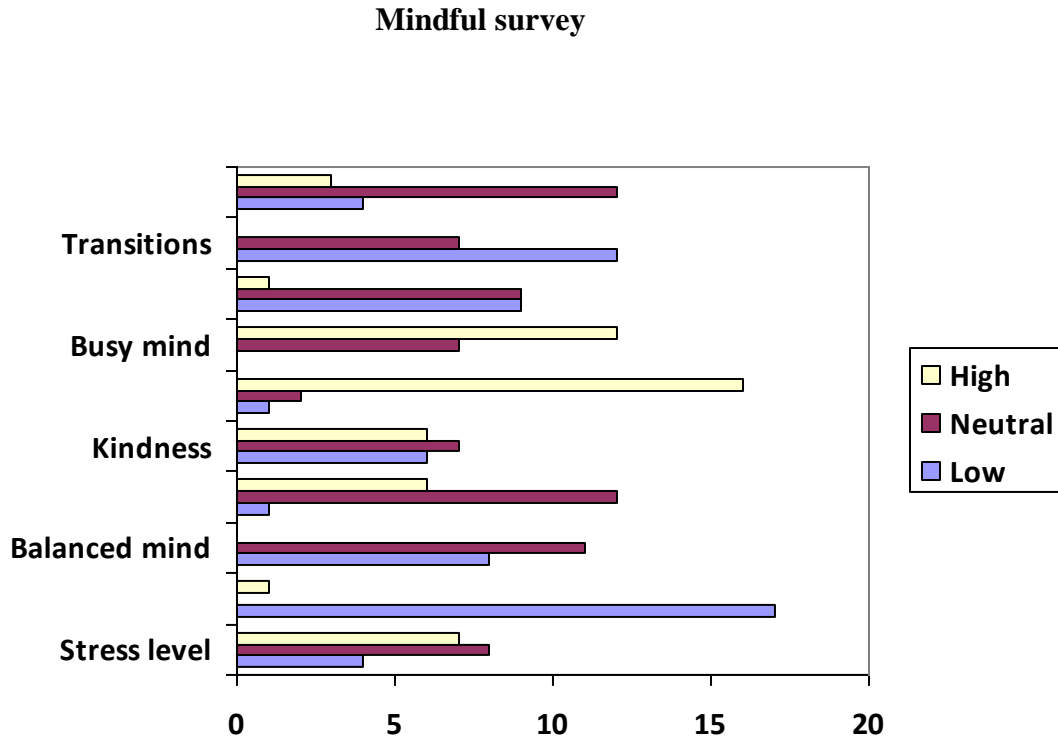


*Figure*

*15. Results on Mindful survey created by Daniel Rechtschaffen*

17 students reported their stress level after the mindfulness techniques as low, none of them  $\theta$  reported to have a neutral level, and 1 student noted her stress level as high. About experiencing a balanced mind, 1 student reported this as low, 12 as neutral, and 6 as high. In regard to be kind to themselves, 1 graded this criterion as low, 2 as neutral, and 16 students marked it as high. When reporting how busy their mind was, 9 students marked it as low, 9 students as neutral, and 1 student reported it to be high. About smooth transitions in class, 4 students reported a low availability, 12 were neutral, and 3 reported it as high. By looking the

results, we can explore the difference between outcomes expressed by students. See results below.



*Comparison Figure 16. Results on Mindful survey created by Daniel Rechtschaffen*

It is important to consider how the mindfulness techniques shows stress reduction, regulation in emotions, organization of thoughts and attentions are developed and supported. The stress level went from neutral and high to a low level. This happened to the 99% of the students. The balanced of the students' minds changed from low to neutral and high levels. 12 students reported a neutral state of mind and 6 a high state. Students went from low and neutral levels to high levels of kindness with themselves. More than half of the class increased kindness levels after the practice. In regard to how busy-the mind of the students was, from the first to the second survey, it showed a reduction of mental activity; as 9 students marked it as

low, 9 students as neutral, and 1 student as high. This means that about 50% of the class could decrease the mental activity. In terms of how easy the-transitions were from task to task for them, there was an increase of how easy students found this. More than half of the students that marked it as low changed to a neutral or high level, 12 students marked it as neutral, and 3 students reached the highest grade which indicated that they could easy move from task to task without losing focus on what it was done in class.

## Chapter V

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 5.1 Purpose of the Conclusion

Now that conclusions are being landed in this research, theories and educational best practices shared by people such as L. Vigotsky, N. Chomsky, P. Freire, D. Hymes, Ausubel and others devoted to continuously see classes as tiny laboratories are meant to create awareness within professors. Consciousness that it is ours to continue exploring their theories and perspectives in the educational field. It is ours to share them with communities. All these theories agree on the importance of the interdependency of educational methodologies, cultural contexts, and more importantly on the interactions among students, the roles played by the teacher and students in their learning process and the intrinsic value that the ability to communicate builds in an individual.

The individual development that happens in a student seen from a mindful progression is the expansion of circles of awareness, compassion and understanding. It is experiencing how thoughts and emotions are roots to reactivity. It is becoming emotionally educated and developing a global literacy. By developing these types of literacies is how students can enhance both; academic and social-emotional learning. It is how a student can construct intrinsic competencies.

By means of this research is also concluded that mindful education makes possible for a student to become more him or herself and that it can change a micro environment such as a class by being more attuned to wisdom, responsibility and integrity. It can certainly modify people around mindful students.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

### **5.2.1 To identify challenges intermediate students experience when developing communicative competence at Alcanza Language Center during the first quarter of 2019**

The research done via pre tests and observations at Alcanza Language Center, confirmed that challenges on oral performances lowered students' communicative competence. The challenges found in 19 students out of 19 were related to the increase of affective filters. The most noticeable ones were stress and anxiety situations which were visibly present in students' performance.

During oral performances with no application of Mindfulness techniques, students' poor communicative competence affected a 100% of the population observed in class. Noticeable traits of anxiety such as sweaty hands and foreheads, body trembling and shakiness in hands or legs were noticed in all students. Lack of concentration, poor body postures, interferences in student's speech, tone of voice and fluency were characteristics that varied from student to student some of them showed reflected one or more than one. Also, language and grammar mistakes were higher while affective filters were present in students' dynamics.

These challenges observed contained objective messages sent by students during their oral performances. Their messages were reflected in lack of motivation, self-confidence, and through the difficulty they faced in regards to emotional regulation, stress reduction, kindness to self, and difficulty to concentrate.

### **5.2.2 To apply mindfulness techniques to improve student's communicative competence at Alcanza Language Center during the first quarter of 2019**

This study found that a teacher may encounter many varieties of stress, anxiety, insecurities and other challenges in students that prevent them from developing communicative competence. This helps a teacher to be aware of these events and that they have been experienced by students many times in the past. Also, to remember that students are still affected by them because they have remained unresolved and that this affects their present.

It can be concluded that with the integration of the mindfulness techniques and their effects on students' brains, the nervous system is brought to a balanced state. It also helped students to face inevitable stressors from different points of view and not get caught up by experiences

. Mindfulness techniques applied to students helped them bring attention to their emotions and how their body felt under certain situations specifically when performing and oral presentation. Students showed to be more capable to organize more their thoughts and therefore manage their emotions. Students reported a better capability to remain focused for more time in one task.

Also, the techniques brought attention to their relationships in class. Students helped each other more, felt confident enough to share their knowledge with others and had no absences while mindfulness techniques were taught and practiced with them. Their perspective about how difficult was to learn the English language changed, they found the language more

accessible to them and fun. Students found ways to assess their learning process by putting into practice their own solutions to challenges faced. For instance, having more time for themselves to practice more English during the week and using Mindfulness practices to self-assess their role as students.

Students reported that through Mindfulness techniques they felt calmer, relaxed and felt that the class was a place where they felt safe and welcomed. Students reported excitement to have their English classes and self motivation to be in them. It is also concluded that mindfulness achieves a profound healing because it stimulates responses in students. Here is a description of the improvement of responses within students in class. Students had a better executive functioning meaning that students were much more capable to think critically and solve challenges in class.

### **5.2.3 To evaluate the outcomes of mindfulness techniques applied to improve student's communicative competence at Alcanza Language Center during the first quarter of 2019**

The field of mindfulness in education is still young, but investigations already done confirm what many professors and students are learning through own experiences. A potent prove of this is what students at Alcanza Language Center lived firsthand by the application of mindfulness techniques.

After applying these techniques in students, we can conclude that students' affective filters were lowered in 16 students out of 19. In addition, mental literacy was also cultivated as attention muscles were being built throughout the practice of mindfulness techniques. In this way, students observed their mental dynamics and applied techniques to deal with mental rumination. An interesting observable outcome was that 100% percent of the class was

capable to be emotionally regulated in different degrees during oral performances in front of the class. The percentage of students who overcame difficulties went over 85% to 90%. In such short period of time of applying mindful techniques, anxiety and stress levels went from high or medium to low and reflected positively in students' communicative competence. They were more capable to stand up in front of the class and accomplished better grades in fields such as knowledge of contents, voice and language & grammar. They projected much more leadership in their body language and posture and were more capable to maintain themselves speaking English for more time. Their pace and tune improved noticeably.

When language of sensations and the mechanics of mind are experienced a bit much deeper by students, then the implicit value that language and society have are noticed in what in mindfulness is called the social literacy or the language of the heart. This means to be more kind to themselves in case they made an error in class, they learned to let it go. Participation increased, classmates liked each other more and students' attendance improved. Also, class grew in number of students. Students asked to include another friend or relative in class; 6 new students were added to the class after running this research and keeping mindful practices in class.

#### **5.2.4 To analyze the impact of mindfulness techniques in intermediate students when developing communicative competence at Alcanza Language Center during the first quarter of 2019**

Over the last 10 years much research has been done around mindfulness and the impact of its techniques in humans. More recently, researchers have run scientific testing on its benefits as well. They have used as reference investigations that involved different points of view in the medical, psychological and neuroscience fields. These are some effects that mindfulness techniques benefit students with:

**Executive functioning:** Mindfulness helps students bring back attention to specific tasks done in class. This is to say that it improves executive functioning in student's brains. Executive functioning is the mechanism that regulates and controls cognitive processes. Students' found much easier to execute transitions in class or to solve problems faced by them in studies. Therefore, it is positive that executive functioning improved in students with mindful practices done in class and at student's homes.

**Focused attention:** Students build their attention muscles by applying self-observation, focusing on their breath, listening to typical noises in the environment, practicing mindful meditations, etc. When is difficult for a student to concentrate, it will be easy for him or her to get distracted and to lose track on whatever is being taught or explained in class. Students demonstrated in the term of two to three weeks their ability to in sync quicker with the class and concepts that were being explained to them. Short term practices focused on attention and concentration repeated several times, can certainly help build long-term results and fantastic

results in students. Students at Alcanza spent less time solving a practice and were less disturbed by external noises.

Fellowship and team spirit: In the beginning students were shy about participating in class or by speaking their minds. Students reported that they cared about the opinion of their classmates and that this refrained them from playing the fool in class. Through mindful practices oriented to develop fellowship, the class environment changed and empathy and real bonding was more visible in it.

Students were expecting mindful practices before class started or asked to have them practiced at some point of the class. After mindful practices, students modified the way their referred to others. They used words as my friend, my brother or even my family to refer to classmates in class. Also, students changed from laughing about a mistake someone else made and started to help him or her discover the correct answer by giving hints to their classmates. They showed a community of learning environment. They started to share practices and notes taken with their classmates.

Stress reduction: Stress can disrupt physical, emotional and mental balance. Stress causes the lost of different abilities like retaining information for less time, focusing or even feeling well. Students body language reflected a relaxed state of mind, openness to learning and stimulated open-mindedness which is the ability to not be bothered by someone else's opinions and value diversity. Students welcomed different answers to questions much easier and demonstrated to be less self-fish and not only developed communicative competence but social competence as well.

**Metacognition:** These techniques applied helped students to not be carried away by their thoughts and emotions. They started to connect with self-awareness and to be better monitors of their thoughts in regards to self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation.

**Self-compassion:** Kindness and esteem for themselves were crucial tools for students at Alcanza in order for them to be less self-critical towards mistakes made by them in class and the ability for them just to let go them. Self-acceptance as not the “I know it all” student helped them to feel more comfortable in their place as students and to be kind towards themselves by finding the gifts behind studying English. Also, to be aware of the impact that these gifts found are causing in their life as English learners.

**Contentment:** Students found different ways to develop their own knowledge and had fun while learning together English. When students feel confident about themselves, build relationships of trust with the classmates and teacher, get used to freely express what they think or doubt, they turn into more playful and creative students; more importantly the protagonists or creators of their own learning. A happier student is more open for learning.

**Cognitive flexibility:** This term refers to the ability of a student to shift from one concept to another or to hold many concepts simultaneously. By observing their emotions towards certain facts in their life as students, students had the opportunity to choose how to feel about it and to control impulses for example school drop outs or skipping homework or classes. They can decide much better how to proceed.

### **5.3 Restatement of the Research Question**

**How students' communicative competence is affected in the oral production of the English Language in intermediate levels during the first quarter in Alcanza Language Center.**

By applying Mindfulness techniques, students identified deconstructed or constructed attributes they needed in order for them to overcome challenges experienced in their communicative competence in the English language.

For example, identifying attitudes of lack of self-confidence and identifying scenes happening in their mind in regards to this matter. In addition, they were able to select the thoughts that will help them construct the path for them to achieve self-confidence by remembering their capacity of auto regulating emotions, thoughts monitoring, cultivate happiness and being agents of compassion towards themselves and others. They had the opportunity to nurture areas of development that they had by applying tools they already had.

Certainly, they were less reactive and more proactive in terms of managing affective filters. They were notably reduced in students and these helped them to project a more confident body language, tone of voice, trusting themselves more and produce less grammar errors. Also in case of making a mistake, to not be easily caught up by it and to let it go in an easier way, this helped them to have less bumps while performing oral presentations. In addition, a better pace while speaking was developed and a much more practical way to communicate ideas in the English language was accomplished by all students in different degrees but always higher results were achieved.

#### **5.4 Unexpected Results**

In terms of observing and analyzing unexpected results, it came to the attention of this study that one student remained neutral in regards to brain activity; even though, he participated in mindful activities. Also, another student reported that his brain activity went from neutral to higher.

This might have happened because depending on the ability of the student to concentrate on breathing, he or she might be able to observe more closely a big amount of ideas and get into their contents. It seems that by concentrating on high amounts of thoughts this student might have increased mental activity. Also, it is highly probable that it was challenging for him just to let go experiences and thoughts.

In terms of the student that remained neutral, he stated that it was difficult for him to stay on one task at the time and that he couldn't tell a specific improvement achieved through mindfulness techniques.

#### **5.5 Recommendations**

It is the hope of this research to create opportunities to expose students to other ways of conceiving a class, work around and with classmates and more importantly showing them a path that will highly connect them with cognition and then recognition of being their of multiple capacities which are expressed continuously expressed by motivated students. This is jumping from the brain of a class taught to the heart of it. In the case of English, teaching from grammar (brain) to an improved communication with others (heart) will add value to language itself. It is important to highlight the fact that Mindfulness should not become just another addition to curriculum or just one more protocol to expose students to wellness programs.

Mindfulness is not just a set of exercises; mindfulness is an opportunity for students to not only show up in class but in life as well.

It will be recommended not to use cultural or religious language that might exclude people or compromise beliefs. It is recommended to introduce mindfulness as a tool that will help students focus more and enhance diverse capacities. Even though mindfulness has demonstrated to cause profound and positive effects in students, it will not be recommended to push students or a school to implement mindfulness techniques because of the impact it has. By practicing simple mindfulness techniques a teacher can begin to make small changes with students, and other professors might be interested in how the teacher has managed to positively affect students in class.

A good practice in mindfulness will be to start with a low amount of minutes to help students and teachers explore what mindfulness is about. For instance, students can have one to five mindful minutes during a class. Because mindfulness is so efficient in the relaxation process in students, techniques may vary depending on the hour. It will not be recommended to practice body scanning or guided meditations in a group of students in the last block of classes of the day as they could feel more sleepy than aware of what is being taught by the teacher or shared by a classmate. The breathing technique will always be useful at any time of the day. It could be shared with students from 5-10 minutes.

There are always going to be students or colleagues who will question the idea of applying Mindfulness in class. It is more than fine for them to explore what Mindfulness is about. Rather than addressing this situation with frustration or anger, it will be recommended to take this as an opportunity to understand misconceptions about the practice and clarify

them. Some professors might think that they will not have enough time to complete the curriculum required to study with students but the truth is that students will go over tasks quicker and more important, subjects will stay with students in a long-term. The teacher will be reactivated and will be able to manage upcoming classes much better. It will be helpful to explain to them that Mindfulness helps with time management and will not bring more stress to a daily routine.

In addition, every teacher is welcomed to develop his or her own mindful technique. The name could also be changed for another one that suits the group much better. Teachers might encourage students to guide mindful moments in class or even expose parents to these practices so that they will experience them first hand.

It will be recommended for future investigations on this field, to explore different mindfulness techniques that might be appealing for kids, for example creating new sets of visuals or games. This will help have a more organic mindfulness practice. Also, it will be good to explore more benefits that mindfulness can offer to a diverse range of ages because sometimes, students will not fully understand the cognitive effects of mindfulness but will feel them. In case of teenagers, it will be suggested to assign these mindful moments as a personal project to avoid pressurizing them to practice mindfulness. It would be very valuable to explore which mindful exercise could bring strength to self identity and authenticity at these ages.

In adult stages it will be highly recommended to motivate them to look inside and find qualities such as self-motivation, focused attention, stress relieved and concentrate on one goal or two and help them develop them.

Teachers may encourage students to use these techniques in class if they feel stressed in the middle of it or when there are at home. It is vital to never lose the focus that teachers sometimes forget that they are valuable pieces in students' life but that they are there to help develop healthy and well-grounded people.

Finally, researchers on this field might consider expanding mindfulness benefits around communities and even starting a group of mindful teaching by organizing groups of teachers who apply these techniques in students so that this will continue updating professors and school with the latest improvements in the field and making possible for more Costa Ricans to have access to these techniques and the long-term benefits that they bring.

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## Appendixes

### Appendix 1.

#### Self-monitor (for teachers)

<b>Developmental Mindfulness</b>
<b>Mindful teaching</b>
<p>What are the ages and developmental areas you are working with?</p> <p><i>I am working with ages from 15-65 years old. The areas of development are: physical, mental, emotional, social and global literacy.</i></p>
<p>What were your biggest stressors and struggles at this stage and time?</p> <p><i>They were: shyness, lack of self-confidence, poor cooperative work in class, lack of patience from my teacher and not being expose to the English language after class.</i></p>
<p>What people and experiences were supportive in your development in this time?</p> <p><i>Games, my tutor and group works.</i></p>
<p>What was most important to you in your life at this age?</p> <p><i>Not being shy and be able to earn good grades.</i></p>
<p>What social and emotional support do you wish you had received at this time?</p> <p><i>More assignments in group, homework that required our of the box thinking, mindful words used by my teacher and parents and to be taught about how to relax and talk to myself. Also, techniques to improve my studying.</i></p>
<p>In what ways can you empathize with your student's developmental struggles?</p> <p><i>1)By being mindful about my wording to them 2) By providing them with meaningful learning which will also involved daily contexts to which they can relate and not limit it to just the book 3) Have a close communication and recall important details they have shared with me 4) To remember the most common errors in communication going from one English level to another.</i></p>
<p>What was your school experience like when you were at this age or stage?</p> <p><i>It was a stage in which my mind was pretty creative for that time. I really appreciate teachers that motivated me to value my thinking regardless the trends of that period of time.</i></p>
<p>What role you would like to play in supporting the development of your students?</p> <p><i>I would like to be the person that can direct them to their own self confidence and teacher. I want to encourage being curious about learning. Also, I would like to be the reminder that creativity and fun are co-related in the construction of learning.</i></p>
<p>How do you hope mindfulness will support your students in their particular development?</p> <p><i>I hope my students will be able to detach from a teacher's or other person's approval for them to be confident while speaking English. I hope for them to have fun while exploring a language and for them to notice their talents when speaking.</i></p>

**Appendix 2.**

Institution	Alcanza Language Center
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class observed</li> <li>• Number of students</li> <li>• Class organization (shaping of the space)</li> <li>• Students’ participation</li> </ul>	Intermediate 1 19 Semi circle, distant to the teacher Only the 3 most proficient in English participated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student’s interaction with the teacher</li> <li>• Student’s interaction with others (learning community)</li> </ul>	Scarce None, individual work unless they had to work in groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-confidence in the use of English</li> </ul>	Just 1 student out of 19 did not hesitate when speaking English
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to focus on one task at the time</li> <li>• Signs of anxiety while communicating</li> </ul>	Low-middle Feet and leg moving, fast participation

**Appendix 3.**

Self- observation (students)

<b>Self-observation</b>  <b><i>Mindful learning</i></b>
1. What has held me back from learning English?
2. What has been my role towards my teacher and classmates during an English class?

## Appendix 4

## ORAL EXAM CHART

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Value: 30 points  
 Constant rate: -3,33  
 Percentage: 10 %



CATEGORY	CRITERIA	VALUE	GOTTEN
<b>KNOWLEDGE OF THE CONTENTS</b>			
1. Knowledge of the content	<i>Has the student shown knowledge of the topic?</i>	3	
2. Answers	<i>Has the student answered the questions properly?</i>	3	
<b>POSTURE &amp; BODY LANGUAGE</b>			
3. Body language	<i>Did the student have a good posture and body language?</i>	3	
4. Self-confidence	<i>Was the student self-confident when speaking?</i>	3	
<b>VOICE</b>			
5. Pronunciation	<i>Did errors in pronunciation interfere with the message?</i>	3	
6. Tone and volume	<i>Did the student have an appropriate intonation and volume?</i>	3	
7. Speed	<i>Did the student talk too fast or too slowly?</i>	3	
8. Fluency	<i>Was the conversation fluent or interrupted?</i>	3	
<b>LANGUAGE &amp; GRAMMAR</b>			
9. Grammar	<i>Have the grammar mistakes complicated the comprehension?</i>	3	
10. Vocabulary	<i>Was the language varied and clear enough to understand?</i>	3	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>		<b>30</b>	

3 = Excellent / 1 error / absolute yes / no difficulty

2 = Fair / from 2 to 5 errors / partially / required a short effort

1 = Needs improvement / more than 6 errors / absolute no / teacher helped

\*All the mistakes must be detailed below.

PERCENTAGE

SCORE

<b>*OBSERVATIONS</b>		
Grammar mistakes	Pronunciation mistakes	Other observations

## Appendix 5

### Affective filter check list

Affective filter	Check list
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class observed:</li> </ul>	Intermediate 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of students</li> </ul>	19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs of anxiety while communicating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Breathing difficulty</b> (rapid and short breathing in the absence of a physical effort)</li> <li>✓ <b>Feeling of shakiness or trembling</b> in hands and legs</li> <li>✓ <b>Noticeable perspiration</b> (sweaty hands and/or forehead, back) in the absence of high temperatures or physical effort</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs of lack of self-confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Continuous eye contact</b> with teacher seeking for remarks of approval</li> <li>✓ <b>Stuttering</b> while speaking</li> <li>✓ <b>Repetition</b> of same words or sentences</li> <li>✓ <b>Low</b> tone of voice</li> </ul>

Appendix 6

Plan 1

Date: March 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2019		Teacher: Elizabeth R P		Unit/Lesson: U3/L2		Note/Reminders: Remind SS about HW and upcoming test	
Week: 17		Schedule: G1-G2-G3		Book: Insights B			
OBJECTIVES	CONTENTS	ROUTINE			TIME: 140 MIN.	HOMEWORK	
At the end of the lesson Ss will be able to:  Talking about ability  Can & Can't  Use of linking words: and, but, or	Grammar: Simple present: Be  Questions with: Can or can't  Vocabulary: Devices & Tools	PRE-ACTIVITIES - 25 min.	A. <b>MOTIVATION:</b> The teacher writes down and discusses the following quote:  "If you want to be happy, be."-Leo Tolstoy		A. 5 MINS	WRITTEN	Review everything seen HW:108, 109,112,113
			B. <b>WARM UP:</b> Teacher introduces mindful breathing in class. Then teacher asks students to monitor themselves via a guided meditation		B. 15 MINS	VIRTUAL	
		ACTIVITIES - 110 minutes.	A. <b>HOMEWORK CHECK UP:</b> Pag 107 & 108 and impropty speech. Teacher goes over check list		A. 45 MINS	BREAK	BREAKTIME G1: 09:20 am - 09:35 am G2: 12:20 pm - 12:40 pm G3: 03:20 pm - 03:35 pm
			B. <b>OPENER:</b> Teacher asks SS to answer: Which of these can you see in the photo? Pag 38.		B. 10 MINS		
			C. <b>READING:</b> Teacher plays track 1.42 and ask SS to find 5 different languages		C. 10 MINS		
			D. <b>AFTER READING:</b> Teacher asks SS to match the questions with the answers on pag 38		D. 10 MINS	TRANS.	G1: 10:55 am G2: 01:55 pm G3: 05:00 pm
			E. <b>LISTENING:</b> Teacher plays track 1.43 and checks exercise 4 on pag 39		E. 10 MINS		
			F. <b>PRONUNCIATION:</b> Teacher asks SS to repeat the text and emphasizes on CANT and strong content words in ex 4.		F. 10 MINS	COPIES	MATERIALS REQUEST
			G. <b>GRAMMAR:</b> Teacher asks Ss to complete the Grammar workout on page 39. Then, teacher checks answers.		G. 15 MINS		
			H. <b>SPEAKING:</b> Teacher asks SS to do the Life Skills Questionnaire and compare answers with a classmate		H. 15 MINS		
			I. <b>WRITING:</b> Teacher asks Ss to create their own Life Skills Questionnaire about topics such as: Memory, Music, Practical, Strength and compare the questionnaire with 3 classmates more.		I. 10 MINS	TO BUY	

WEEKLY PLANNING

		POST-ACTIVITY - 25 min.	A. The sketch #1 Teacher will split the class in to 2 teams. She will give a scenario for SS to solve a situation. "You travel to Hawaii. While in the island a hurricane destroys part of the island and you are forced to go back to Costa Rica. You will need to construct a boat, take your team with you and decide to bring 3 people more with you. You will need to decide between: A priest, a Scientist, a Mechanics technician, a Tour guide, a Maps & Oceans specialist, a doctor and a boat race champion.		A. 15 MIN	SB	ALCANZA COSTA RICA HW:108, 109,112,113
			B. The sketch #2. SS will explain the class their final decision explaining why each character is in or left outside the boat.		B. 10 MINS		

Appendix 7

Plan 2

Date: March 9th, 2019		Teacher: Elizabeth R P		Unit/Lesson: U3/L3		Note/Reminders: Remind SS about HW and upcoming test				
Week: 14		Schedule: G1-G2-G3		Book: Insights 1						
OBJECTIVES	CONTENTS	ROUTINE				TIME: 160 MINS	HOMEWORK			
<p>At the end of the lesson Ss will be able to:</p> <p>Giving instructions</p> <p>Use imperatives</p> <p>Use definite articles</p>	<p>Grammar: Simple present: Has</p> <p>Vocabulary: Code Computer Dial Microphone Number Guitar Select Hair Swim Jeans Webcam Menu</p> <p>Pronunciation Practice to stress syllables</p>	PRE-ACTIVITIES - 25 min.	A. MOTIVATION: The teacher writes down and discusses the following quote:  "I'm a success today because I had a friend who believed in me and I didn't have the heart to let him down."-Abraham Lincoln		A. 5 MINS	WRITTEN	Review everything seen HW: Practice sent by the teacher			
			B. WARM UP: Giants, Dwarf and magicians round #2. Guided meditation		B. 15 MINS	VIRTUAL				
		ACTIVITIES - 110 minutes.	A. MINDFULNESS PRE TEST: Teacher asks students to perform an impromptu speech talking about things they do during the week. 5-6 lines. Check list on class dynamics.		A. 45 MINS	BREAK	BREAKTIME G1: 09:20 am - 09:35 am G2: 12:20 pm - 12:40 pm G3: 03:20 pm - 03:35 pm			
			B. OPENER: Teacher asks SS to identify what words are in the lesson? Ex: Code, microphone, computer, dial, guitar, hair.. etc. Ex 1 pag 40		B. 10 MINS		TRANS.	G1: 10:55 am G2: 01:55 pm G3: 05:00 pm		
			C. READING: Teacher plays track 1.44 and ask SS: What is Ricardo's problem? What is the solution?		C. 10 MINS			MATERIALS REQUEST		
			D. AFTER READING: Teacher asks SS to tell which items are True or False on pag 40 ex 3		D. 10 MINS	COPIES				
			E. LISTENING: Teacher plays track 1.45 and checks exercise on pag 41		E. 10 MINS					
			F. PRONUNCIATION: Teacher asks SS to place words that she will pronounce from ex 5 on pag 41 in the correct column.		F. 10 MINS	TO BUY				
			G. GRAMMAR: Teacher asks Ss to complete the Grammar workout on page 41. Then, teacher checks answers. Then, she checks abbreviations from ex 6 on pag 41		G. 15 MINS					
			H. SPEAKING: Teacher asks SS to pair up and organize the texts in the right order and share responses orally.		H. 15 MINS					
I. WRITING: Teacher asks Ss to write down on their notebooks a small note with a full note.		I. 10 MINS								

WEEKLY PLANNING

POST-ACTIVITY - 25 min.	A. Song#1 Teacher hands out a song previously selected by SS to go over vocabulary and filling in the blanks.		A. 20 MINS	SB	Teacher's practice for test	
	B. Jutti Erititi #1. Teacher will give 5 categories to SS and assign a letter. Each SS will need to find a word for each category that begins with each the letter previously assigned.		B. 15 MINS		TB	HW: Review topics seen



Appendix 8

Plan 3

Date: March , 23th		Teacher: Elizabeth R P		Unit/Lesson: Unit 4/L1		Note/Reminders: HW & Oral presentation	
Week: 14		Schedule: G1-G2-G3		Book: Insights B			
OBJECTIVES	CONTENTS	ROUTINE				TIME: 180 MIN.	HOMEWORK
At the end of the lesson Ss will be able to:	<b>Grammar:</b> Simple present: Be  Modal verbs: May Could Would	PRE-ACTIVITIES - 25 min.	A. <b>MOTIVATION:</b> The teacher writes down and discusses the following quote:  "Let it be." -The Beatles  A. <b>WARM UP: -TABOO game</b> - Teacher divides the group into 2 teams and hands out different cards with different words on them. Students must guess the words described on the cards without saying the actual word to be guessed.  B. .		A. 1 MIN	WRITTEN	Page: 124, 125, 126
					B. 10 MINS		
Order food	Affirmative and negative forms	ACTIVITIES - 110 minutes.	A. <b>MINDFULNESS SURVEY:</b> Teacher applies mindful survey to evaluate student's state of mind before mindfulness techniques.  <b>B. OPENER:</b> Teacher opens the class with <u>What can you see in the photo?</u> <u>Page 52.</u>  C. <b>READING:</b> Teacher plays track 2.03 and asks SS to follow up reading and find new vocabulary related to "The restaurant"  D. <b>AFTER READING:</b> Teacher asks SS to choose the correct word in ex. 3 pag.52.  E. <b>MINDFULNESS:</b> Teacher applies the first mindfulness technique- Conscious breathing- to evaluate outcomes in students' communicative competence. Then she plays track: "I am worthy" by Susana Majul.		A. 10 MINS	BREAK	<b>BREAKTIME</b> G1: 09:20 am - 09:35 am G2: 12:20 pm - 12:40 pm G3: 03:20 pm - 03:35 pm
Make reservations	Vocabulary: Food		B. 5 MINS				
Use negatives	Pronunciation Phonemes		C. 15 MINS				
Monitor thoughts & emotions	/tʃ/, /s/, /z/		D. 15 MINS	TRANS.	G1: 10:55 am G2: 01:55 pm G3: 05:00 pm		
			E. 15 MINS			MATERIALS REQUEST	
					COPIES		

### WEEKLY PLANNING



	POST-ACTIVITY - 25 min.	<p>Teacher applies Mindfulness survey once again to evaluate outcomes of the technique applied.</p> <p>F. <b>VOCABULARY:</b> Teacher asks students about vocabulary used at restaurant and lists it on the board. Then, she assigns to each student a name of a dish and each SS assigns to each new word a movement, students mimic each one and recall everyone's dish by going in clockwise in a circle. He or she says aloud the word and mimics it along with classmates.</p> <p>G. <b>WRITING:</b> Teacher asks SS to pair up and write down a small dialogue in which they can include 3 different tasks: a) Making a reservation b) Ordering food at a restaurant C) Paying the bill</p> <p>H. <b>SPEAKING #1:</b> Teacher asks students to practice this dialogue with a classmate and then perform a role play to the class.</p>	<p>F. 15 MINS</p> <p>G. 20 MINS</p> <p>H. 20 MINS</p>	TO BUY  N/A
		<p>A. <b>MINFULNESS:</b> Teacher asks a previous assigned student to conduct Body Scanning and teacher ends with the Conscious Movement mindfulness technique.</p> <p>B. <b>POST TEST:</b> Teacher asks students to write down an impromptu speech talking about things they like to do and things they can or cannot do.</p>	<p>A. 6 MINS</p> <p>B. 25 MINS</p>	PAGES SB 52 & 53 TB

### Tribunal Examinador

**Tribunal Examinador**

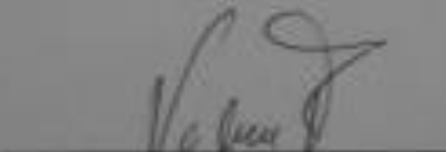
Esta Tesis fue aprobada por el Tribunal Examinador de las Carreras de Inglés de la Universidad Internacional de las Américas, como requisito para optar por el grado de Bachiller en Inglés con énfasis en la Enseñanza.



M.Sc. Yaneth Delgado Chacón  
Tutora



Licda. Margarita Pérez Reng  
Lectora



M. Ed. Virginia Muñoz Ruiz  
Directora de las Carreras de Inglés

### Head Master's letter



## Reader's letter

## Carta del Lector

San José, 13 de abril del 2019

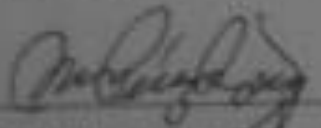
Mi amor  
Vanessa Mafini Ruiz  
Directora de las Carreras de Inglés y Enseñanza del Inglés  
Universidad Internacional de las Américas

## Estimada señora:

La estudiante Elizabeth Rojas Pérez, portador (a) de la cédula de identidad no 112170348, ha presentado para su lectura y corrección de estilo la tesis denominada *Integration and Implementation of Mindfulness Techniques in the Acquisition of Communicative Competence in Intermediate Level Students at Alcatraz Language Center during the First Quarter of 2019*.

He revisado y corregido la coherencia de los objetivos con el marco teórico, instrumentos y resultados, la calidad del trabajo y la relevancia del trabajo. Por lo tanto, hago constar que esta se encuentra lista para ser presentado a la Universidad como trabajo de graduación.

## Atentamente,



Lidia Margarita Pérez Rojas  
Lector (a) de Tesis

## Reviewer's letter

### Carta del Revisor

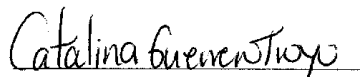
Miércoles, 24 de abril del 2019

Máster  
Vanessa Muñoz Ruiz  
Directora de las Carreras de Inglés y Enseñanza del Inglés  
Universidad Internacional de las Américas

Estimada señora:


La estudiante Elizabeth Rojas Pérez, portadora de la cédula de identidad no. 112150348, ha presentado para la respectiva revisión la tesina denominada *Integration and Implementation of Mindfulness Techniques in the Acquisition of Communicative Competence in Intermediate Level Students at Alcanza Language Center during the First Quarter of 2019*. Por lo tanto, se hace constar que el documento fue revisado en lo relativo a la estructura gramatical, ortografía, puntuación, cohesión y terminología. Por ende, una vez incorporadas las recomendaciones efectuadas en el documento, el mismo se considera listo para su presentación la Universidad como trabajo de graduación.

Atentamente,



M.Sc. Catalina Guerrero Troyo  
Cédula: 1-1012-0519

## Ethics code



**Universidad Internacional de las Américas**  
**Código de Ética**

La docente Elizabeth Rojas Pérez, número de carne: 112150348 graduada del grado de Bachiller de la Universidad Internacional de las Américas, se compromete a cumplir, durante el ejercicio profesional, con el Código de Ética de la institución, que se rige por los siguientes principios:

**PROBIDAD:** actuar siempre con rectitud y honestidad.

**PRUDENCIA:** actuar con pleno serojamiento de la materia sometida a su consideración.

**JUSTICIA:** permanente disposición hacia las funciones de la profesión, bajo los lineamientos legales que debe respetar todo profesional.

**RESPONSABILIDAD:** cumplir con los deberes, tanto en calidad como en oportunidad.

**DISCRECIÓN:** guardar respeto sobre los hechos o informaciones de los que tenga conocimiento con motivo del ejercicio profesional, sin que esto perjudique las funciones y responsabilidades.

**INDEPENDENCIA DE CRITERIO:** no involucrarse o comprometerse con situaciones, transacciones o actividades contrarias a la moral, a la sana crítica y que, por ley, sean incompatibles con las funciones profesionales correspondientes.

**DIGNIDAD Y DECORO:** actuar con sobriedad y moderación.

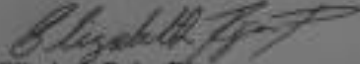
**TOLERANCIA:** evidenciar una actitud paciente y de comprensión ante las opiniones divergentes que puedan expresar otras personas.

**EQUILIBRIO:** desempeñar las funciones profesionales con sentido práctico, buen juicio y equidad.

**ACTUALIZACIÓN:** comprometer parte del tiempo en actualizar los conocimientos y adaptarlos en el desarrollo de la actividad profesional.

**VOCACIÓN:** mostrar siempre apego al trabajo y a la educación recibida, como fundamentos para el desempeño laboral.

**BUENA FE:** toda conducta o comportamiento, criterio emitido y labor desempeñada debe basarse en los más altos principios éticos y tendrá como fundamento la buena fe.

  
Elizabeth Rojas Pérez  
1-12150348