

JOSE MARTÍ UNIVERSITY

SANCTI-SPIRITUS

PEDAGOGICAL SCIENCES FACULTY

Foreign Languages Department

Major Paper

"THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDEPENDENT WORK IN THE ENGLISH LESSONS"

Authoress: Leydi Laura Fernández Luna

Tutor: Ms. Geonel Rodríguez Pérez.

2015-2016

Abstract.

The present research paper deals with a current problem which is hindering the English language learning, accordingly to the new transformations in the junior high school model and the importance of the independent work method in regard to form the personality of the learner, the learner's learning autonomy and the creation of independent work habits and the development of research skills. The teaching activities of this work aimed at contributing to the development of independent work and were created on the basis of a pedagogical model, different from those traditionally presented in English language teaching. The objective of this research is to apply teaching activities in the English lessons in order to contribute to the development of independent work in ninth grade students at "Ernesto Valdés Muñoz" Junior High School in Sancti Spiritus city. Theoretical methods were used such as the historical-logical, the analysis-synthesis and the induction-deduction; from the empirical level, the interview, the survey, the scientific observation and the document review were used; and from the statistical and mathematical processing level, the procedure of percentage calculation was used. The results obtained during the stage of final research diagnosis were evaluated, which allowed to conclude that the implementation of the activities greatly contributed to solve the existing problems and showed evident changes and an increasement in the development of independent work in the selected sample.

Résumé

Cette recherche aborde une problématique actuelle qui constitue une des majeures difficultés auxquelles l'éducation fait face en prenant compte les nouvelles transformations du modèle de la secondaire basique et à l'importance qui prend la méthode de travail indépendant par rapport à la formation de la personnalité des apprenants et à la création des habitudes de travail indépendant et le développement des compétences investigatrices. Dans la recherche ils s'appliquent des activités adressées à contribuer au développement du travail indépendant, son élaboration est basée dans un modèle pédagogique différent à ceux qui ont été traditionnellement exposé pour l'enseignement de la langue anglaise. L'objectif de cette investigation c'est appliquer des activités qui contribuent au développement du travail indépendant en cours d'anglais des élèves de la neuvième année de l'École

Secondaire Basique Urbaine « Ernesto Valdés Muñoz » de la municipalité de Sancti Spiritus. Ils se sont employés des différentes méthodes: du niveau théorique : la méthode historique et logique, l'analyse et la synthèse et l'induction et la déduction ; du niveau empirique l'entrevue, l'enquête, l'observation, et la révision des documents ; du niveau mathématique, le calcul des pourcentages. Ils se sont fait des validations des résultats obtenus pendant l'étape de diagnostic initial de la recherche et qui on permit arriver à la conclusion de que l'application des activités a contribué significativement à résoudre la problématique existante, puisqu'ils existent des évidences des transformations et augments par rapport au développement du travail indépendant à la montre sélectionnée.

Introduction

Education needs to be more scientific and efficient in the contemporary world and must guarantee the cognitive independence offering man the possibility of being capable of directing its learning, to ensure its continuous education and, in that way, achieving a high level of independence and efficiency in carrying out its current labor.

One of the major problems currently faced in teaching theory and methodology of different levels is concerning the correct independent work development. Taking into account that independence is precisely one of the personality traits that have its expression in the reasoning system; it is on duty, as new society formers, of working tirelessly in the search for working methods that actually contribute to the formation of future generations, developing creative and independent potentialities in them.

By means of working independently, students develop their learning capacity, based on the scientific information received. Such a study way contributes to the development of critical and independent thoughts, increases the interest in the study subject, the acquired knowledge becomes solid and wide, self-disciplines in the students' work and prepares young man for his future professional work, because working independently they use several materials, different literature and other sources that collaborate with the improvement in the acquisition of knowledge. Cuban authors have pointed out from the theoretical and methodological points of view the independent work such as: Pérez, Gastón and Nocado, Irma (2002), Antich de León, Rosa (1988), Báxter Pérez, Esther (1988), Santana Amargo, Juan (2000),

Herrera Rojas, Luis and Ríos González, Miriam (2001), Ríos González, Miriam (2002), Quiñones Reina, Danilo (2003), Rodríguez Melgarejo, Yurima (2008), Ruíz Álvarez, Mayelín Magdely (2009). All these authors have aimed their research to enrich the theory and methodology of the independent work.

Potentialities:

- Students like the English subject.
- There are different learning sources such as magazines, digital dictionaries and printed materials.
- The students are motivated for the English lessons.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of responsibility on the part of some students.
- Some students are not willing to do the independent work activities at home.
- While working independently, they sometimes do not get involved in the activity.
- They do not know the procedures or steps to work independently.

To carry out this work, it has been considered that one of the problems of the current Cuban school is the wrong orientation, execution and control of the independent work, essentially by training teachers.

The following **problematic situation** has been verified by means of studies that have been made to different documents and researches, that in spite of the availability of information in materials, the students are lack of resources to achieve autonomy, personal effort and constancy during the development of the independent work, this **contradiction** provokes inadequacies in the teaching-learning process (TLP), therefore the following **scientific problem** arises:

How to develop the independent work in the English lessons for ninth grade students at “Ernesto Valdés Muñoz” Junior High School?

Objective:

To apply teaching activities in the English lessons in order to contribute to the development of independent work in group five from ninth grade at “Ernesto Valdés Muñoz” Junior High School.

Scientific questions

1. What are the theoretical and methodological foundations that support the development of the independent work?
2. What is the current state of the development of the independent work in group five from ninth grade at Ernesto Valdés Muñoz Junior High School?
3. What characterizes the teaching activities that contribute to the development of the independent work in group five from ninth grade at Ernesto Valdés Muñoz Junior High School?
4. How to validate the applied teaching activities that contribute to the development of the independent work in group five from ninth grade at Ernesto Valdés Muñoz Junior High School?

Scientific tasks

1. Determination of the theoretical and methodological foundations that support the development of the independent work.
2. Diagnosis of the current state of the development of the independent work in group five from ninth grade at Ernesto Valdés Muñoz Junior High School.
3. Elaboration of teaching activities that contribute to the development of the independent work in group five from ninth grade at Ernesto Valdés Muñoz Junior High School.
4. Validation of the application of teaching activities to make the development of the independent work possible.

The theoretical methods used were:

- Analysis- synthesis: to analyze the instruments employed and summarize the elements which were useful in the elaboration of the research report, related to the independent work in the English lessons.
- Induction- deduction: to deepen into the theoretical precepts that support the independent work in the English lessons.

The empirical methods used were:

- Pedagogical observation: to diagnose the problem, related to the independent work in the English lessons at “Ernesto Valdés Muñoz” Junior High School.
- Interview: it was employed in order to know about the different interests and motivations students have, related to the subject and the development of the independent work in the English lessons at “Ernesto Valdés Muñoz” Junior High School.
- Document analysis: it was made to evaluate and verify the objectives of the syllabus and the treatment of the independent work in the English lessons.

The mathematical/statistical method used was:

- Descriptive statistics: it was employed to summarize and show the compiled information about the problem, related to the independent work in the English lessons.

To carry out the investigation a **population** composed of group five from ninth grade at Ernesto Valdés Muñoz Junior High School was selected. These students do not have solid knowledge in the English language because in previous years they did not have a specialist in front of the classroom for teaching them, so, they do not have language skills that allow them to have some cognitive independence in the language itself.

Forty five students belonging to ninth grade were selected as sample representing the 100 % of the population. This **sample** was intentionally selected because it is the group in which the authoress teaches.

They are characterized by being adolescent students between fourteen and fifteen years old. The sample is formed by students from Sancti Spíritus city. The racial composition of the class is as follows: four blacks, two mulattoes and the rest are white. They all have good manners; more than the ten percent of the group are divorced parents origin. They are not interested for the study of the English language, so they demand a high level of preparation and motivation from teachers towards the subject.

The scientific novelty lies in the teaching activities that contribute to the development and strengthening of the independent work in the foreign language subject, and they are characterized by giving more effectiveness to the subject learning strategy in the grade, helping the students' self-learning. The practical significance is given in the proposed activities that allow the development of independent work in a similar context.

The present paper is structured in introduction, development, conclusions, recommendations, bibliography and annexes. In the introduction, the importance of the topic and the theoretical and methodological design of the investigation are taken into account. In the development are stated the most updated word-groundings of the theme, it presented the initial and final stages of the research and the teaching activities as such.

Development

With the revolutionary triumph in 1959, big changes commenced, giving priority to the necessity for stimulating and developing the students' independent work. From this moment on, independent work constitutes one of the fundamental ways to favor the development of students' cognitive potentialities in the teaching-learning process.

The research claims to deepen into theory and it is necessary to define the following terms:

José Martí speaks of independent work and he says:

“(...) schools must be reasoning houses with a wise guide and the boy is accustomed to developing his own thought, and it is specified later on, in an arranged relation the objectives and ideas, in order to deduce the direct and harmonic lessons that leave him enriched with its information, besides strengthening with the practice and the taste of having discovered it”.

Martí calls schools reason houses; therefore, he is already making a call to education to develop its logical and scientific thoughts, in which through a teacher's guide, the student develops his own thinking in an independent way, and in this manner he makes his logical and harmonic thoughts rich, besides, this makes him

stronger through practice and the taste of having discovered knowledge by themselves.

According to Félix Varela Morales (1788-1853), to observe is the first step the teacher develops at the time of putting into practice independent work in his class, therefore, he would ask his students to observe, to ask and to judge by themselves. In the same way, José de la Luz y Caballero (1800-1882) who dedicated most of his pedagogical life, with a great interest, to the students' educational formation and he defended the explanatory method and he has explained:

“(...) you do not assist the establishments for learning what you have already learned, but very regularly for learning how to study and for learning how to teach”. (1986: 427)

With this, Luz y Caballero explains that you do not attend to the school just for learning what you have already learned, but the main objective is to teach the student how to learn, that is why the problematic of teaching independent work occupies a very important place, it is the teacher's duty that they learn how to study and how to teach, this is what develops the reasoning, the logical thinking, the capacities and the activities that are capable of preparing the young man for his life.

Gisela Sánchez Orbea (1987: 14-18) says that independent work is:

“(...) every activity that is carried out independently or in a group by the student, aimed to consolidate, amplify and deepen in knowledge, habits and acquired skills, in assigned activities as well as by his own desire, without the help of the teacher to solve the presented problems”.

Independent work, both individual or in groups, out of the English lesson, facilitates the meeting with the language students study in conditions different from the ones they have in the classroom, what it gains a bigger significance when its teaching-learning process is developed out of the linguistic circle. (2009: 195-197)

Pidkasisti, P. I. (1986: 45) expresses that:

“(...) independent work is the way to include the students in the cognitive activity, or it is defined as the organization way of the cognitive activity, as its way of logical organization, psychological and pedagogical”.

The opinion of Baranov, S. P. (1989: 133) is that:

“(…) independent work is the cognitive activity, in which the student’s logical thinking in his intellectual actions and practice depends on the student and are determined by him”.

In the specific case of foreign language teaching, independent work contributes significantly, aside from the established, to the development of student’s communicative competence, insofar as they are involved in the search for linguistic models fitting the communicative functions they are studying to insert them in the solution of the communicative functions the teacher has set them up from a stated solution. (2009: 195-197)

The authoress ascribes the theories provided by Baranov because he states the important role students play in developing their own independent work. In doing this, they are the only ones directly involved in the activity and the outcome entirely depends on their interest, effort, dedication and the motivation toward the activity.

The stages of Independent Work are:

Organization-Planning: it has as objective the study of the theoretical material that is directly linked to the activity that will be developed. It is organized taking into account the educational literature as starting-point, including the basic textbook and the complementary one, the materials, as well as the preparation guide or the teaching tasks that were planned and the preparing for the lesson. It is a desk didactic work where the teachers from the pedagogical staff are responsible to make the content aspects from the syllabus be part of the independent work system. This stage, organization-planning must include the following elements:

- Determination of the objective.
- To establish the available spending time for the independent work in relation to each grade subject. (real time available)
- To determine the previous knowledge students should master.
- To have the basic bibliography and the reference at disposal.
- To guarantee a determined information level and knowledge of the place where the independent work will be done.

- Diagnosis control.
- To determine the directions for the self-evaluation and the evaluation.
- To determine the methodological actions to follow.

Orientation-Implementation: it is one of the most important stages of the process, the what for and the how to carry it out are summarized. It makes use of all the content potentialities for a suitable motivation, on the basis of the benefits that produce the work for the students, its present and future utility that gives the fellows that learn according to skills that turn into stable ways of acting. The activity guidance foundation is fulfilled in the guide for self-learning, and then the students are supposed to be directly involved in it, linked to the activity, doing observations, making notes, asking for information, facts. In this case, the guidance will help him as a way for carrying the demanded tasks out and they have a direct relation with the objective that will be obtained.

The teacher should take into account the following elements:

- Students' preparation level, that is to say, from the theoretical basis in relation to the work to do.
- Ability for working with materials that provide him the necessary information.
- Command of technical vocabulary characteristic of the subject.
- Possibility to establish relations and comparisons.
- Observation of the students during the independent work.

The following steps will be taken into consideration:

1. Presentation of the actions.
2. Analysis and appraisal in group.
3. Development in group or individual.
4. Control of the activity.

It is important to specify the reference materials that will be used from the independent work and the methods and procedures that will be used for its fulfillment. In order the students to be able to carry out with effectiveness what was

assigned, it is indispensable in the lesson process that the teacher takes into account the skill development for making notes, making summaries, analyzing new materials, developing problems, and others, in correspondence with the characteristics of every subject and every student.

In the adequate and systematic orientation of independent work, the main role of the teacher is evident, he has to lead his students in a correct way, to deepen constantly in regard to the activities they do in the consolidation, searching of knowledge and in the acquisition and development of skills. Likewise, the responsibility of doing the control of knowledge in the students and the duty to inform their difficulties to them in a systematic and operative way, for working quickly to eliminate them, falls on the teacher.

The implementation can be in the lesson or out of it, in which the activities are solved individually or in group. It is where the students learn the ability and the teacher follows-up the particularities in their display. It is confirmed how the transit from dependence to independence evolves and what regularities show us a stable quantitative transformation of the ways of acting of the fellow that is learning in the new problem solution, that gives him new information, that organizes their logical acting accordingly to assume their protagonist role as the center of the process.

In this stage students should apply foreseen procedures and strategies with the aim of producing the required transformations to make independent work with quality, besides, all the activities should be object of analysis as part of the orientation stage, this allows the student to get a conscious and rational implementation, it is important to direct what the student should do in a certain moment to obtain right results.

There are occasions, before carrying-out independent work, in which the students act immediately without an analysis process, reflection and searching for answering without taking into account the used procedure for its obtaining.

Another element to take into consideration by the teacher when the students are doing the corresponding actions to the learning tasks is related to what they can do by themselves and what they can do with help.

The Control: it is a constant following the process from its own determination to check how the students are progressing in the development of the proposed abilities in learning situations, the data analysis and the observations made to arrive to

conclusions and generalizations. The information the student will make the rest of his partners know must be structured because it will be the object of reflections due to its instructive and educational function, apart from the following statements:

- Presentation of the report.
- Making some oral questions.
- Discussion and debate of the theme as study object.
- Critical evaluation of the monitoring process and its results.

Both, the answers of the oral questions and the discussion and debate in matter must be well-based with an adequate use of the vocabulary characteristic of the subject. (Álvarez de Zayas: 2009)

Even though, independent work presents perceptible advantages to obtain a conscious learning, it presents as objections: "(...) the time, as well as the difference in students' work pace". (2002: 212)

However such disadvantages, the teacher should avoid the danger that the given time isn't enough when he organizes it, and also, the system of assigned activities that should be planned according to individual differences from his pupils' characteristics will start.

Carlos Álvarez de Zayas, (1992: 220) asserts that independent work is:

"(...) way the teaching process organization is managed to form independence as a characteristic of students' personality".

Clara Arango (1994: 34) refers that all independent work has to fulfill the following aspects:

- Philosophic aspect: Dialectic-Materialistic conception of the world.
- Psychological aspect: Psychological activity stage and structure of thought.
- Psychological-Educational aspect: To consider what type of activity it is.
- Educational: Educational functions.
- Methodological: Sources of information and means for developing activities and habits.

- Organizational-Methodological: Logical organization and the frequency of the activities.
- Organizational: Independent activity structure. (Luciano Pérez, S., 2008:35)

Carlos Rojas Arce (2003) explains the fact that:

“(...) from its double character, that is to say, independent work can be defined from the consideration, in the first place, either from the teacher’s pedagogical activity or, from the student’s learning activity”.

Some educationalists refer to independent work as a set of activities that students do without the presence of the teacher to solve the tasks proposed by him in the direction of the teaching-learning process.

“Independent work is a system of activities directed by the teacher where the student is located as character capable of transforming the work method and to develop new procedures”. (Ruíz Álvarez, M. M., 2008: 28).

Elaine Navarro Leyva considers that independent work is:

“(...) a way to organize the students’ independent cognitive activity that is expressed by means of a set of tasks that can be used during the teaching activity or out of it methodologically, as well as its uses in any of the organization ways it will be used”. (Cordero Valdés, G. J., 2009: 20)

“Independent work should be understood as a system directed to the students’ insertion in the independent cognitive activity, according to internalization and assimilation of new contents they acquire”. (Labarrere, G. y Valdivia Pairol, G. 2000)

Mirtha del Llano Meléndez (1984:35) expresses that independent work is:

“(...)” a way to organize the students’ independent cognitive activity that is expressed by means of a joint of teaching tasks directed by the teacher in which the students’ intellectual action, thought and physical activity get around to fulfill the proposed objective”.

The graduated Elvira Caballero Delgado points out that:

“(...) it is impossible to associate independent work with a specific method or a procedure; it is simply every activity that involves the student in the independent

cognitive activity under the teacher's direction". (García Batista, G. y Caballero Delgado, E. 2004: p.p. 16-30).

PhD. Josefina López Hurtado defines independent work as:

"(...) that activity assigned by the teacher for the students to do, in or out of the teaching process, in a certain time, without the constant and direct help of others". (1999:137)

Independent work has a great importance for the development of students' cognitive independence, that is why it implies the search of methods, procedures and learning strategies independently and, if the independent work is done out of the classroom area, it contributes significantly to the self-learning development. When this activity is done out of the teaching process it is recognized as independent study, in which it is developed with a student's high-independence.

There is a tendency among teachers to identify independent work with independent study. Although, there is not a big mistake, it is convenient to recognize some differences between them, because that contributes to improve its practical uses. Both, independent work and independent study are part of the student's self-training system.

Independent Work.	Independent Study.
It is planned by the teacher.	It is planned by the student.
Directed towards the group.	Individual necessity.
An aimed control.	A straight control.
Learning from a system of actions.	The use of a system of actions.

Independent work application should be based on a task system elaborated in accordance with the principle of complexity increasing of the practical and theoretical

activities, in which academic, labor and investigative components students should do are interrelated. This principle is valid for the independent study.

That system of tasks should stimulate the development of psychic processes that intervene in learning, that is to say, senso-perceptual processes, motivation, memory, thinking processes, as well as the procedures and strategies of work. An independent work task system with those characteristics should contribute the student to assume progressively professional ways of acting in which compromise, self-consciousness, independence and creativity are evident.

The characteristics that distinguish the independent work task system in a teaching-learning developing conception are:

1. Theory and Practice bond.

Practice as a human activity way constitutes in a knowledge form, which becomes into theory as it is systematized. Theory, on its part, permits the foundation of practice and it is applied to the practice. This theory-practice bond should favor a student's reflection in the practice, from practice to practice, which is a condition for a real transformation. In this bound achievement the established interrelation has an essential role throughout the career among the academic, labor and investigative components.

2. Problematic character with a scientific and investigative approach.

It is essential that the tasks create contradiction between what is known and what is unknown for the student, between what is achieved and the new demands, between the explicit and the implicit. This transition from what is known to the unknown that includes the knowledge system, the habits and skills system; the relation rules of the world and the experience of the creative activity from the reproduction until the creation, permits to get to a new development stage.

Therefore it can be said that independent work:

- Implies conscious assimilation of knowledge.
- Develops creative thoughts.
- Permits the development of correct habits and skills.
- Stimulates investigative spirit.

- Increases learning and capacity.
- Contributes to the development of integral personalities.
- Demands more effort from the students and from the teacher.
- Needs a conscious organization and preparation on the part of the teacher.
- Contributes to the formation of the future producer the socialist society needs.

The independent work involves the student to be capable of:

- Thinking about concrete objectives to do his independent activity.
- Making plans of individual or in group work under the teacher's guide.
- Searching for data he needs to work with in bibliographic sources.
- Learning how to evaluate his activity results and his classmates'.

Independent work is one the most effective ways to develop skills, acquire knowledge individually, apprise and apply them to practical life. This allows to educate cognitive activity and to develop independence. Students learn how to do through independent work.

The independent work is also approached as a method, procedure, organization way and even as a system of didactic measures towards:

- The conscious assimilation of the teaching material.
- The improving of knowledge and its development.
- The consolidation of knowledge.
- The formation of practical skills.
- The formation of a tendency to an independent search for new knowledge.

However, it is considered that you cannot identify independent work as a method, because it can be done by students using any method as well as in any teaching organization way, due to its implementation can be developed in any of the teaching-learning process components.

The independent work objectives include:

- New material studying.
- Deepening.
- Knowledge application.
- Consolidation, checking and evaluation. These three last moments can be reached by means of different cognitive activities carried out by the students, which can be productive or reproductive, but, combined in keeping with the reached standard.

In the National Seminar for Managements and Methodologists held on February 1982, two independent work principles were stated:

1. Scientific succession of tasks complexity in content and implementation methodology, distributed so that each of them permits to pass to the next execution.
2. Systematization of the structured tasks on the basis of a gradual increase of the activity and independence for its implementation. The success depends on the strict difficulties gradation; here is the importance of the students' systematic diagnosis has in the process as a starting point for planning, organization and implementation in the classroom.

On the contrary, independent work acquires different forms such as making notes, working with the textbook, consulting materials in the library, doing homework, preparing a paper, doing a critical appraisal, etc. The most used independent work and independent study strategies are: making notes, underlining, summing up and reviewing, all of them obviously related to the reading process. As follows, a brief description of each of them is presented.

Making notes: activity also known as taking notes and consists of writing information from a text, a lesson, a conference or another academic activity. This strategy has two conditions: storage and coding.

Underlining: it is an activity that consists in placing lines under the information considered important or to bring such information out as reading. Underlining favors memories of the underlined material to the detriment of that it was not underlined or brought out.

Reviewing: this activity, fundamental in the study process, consists in rereading or in reviewing the underlined information, or on which has generated notes.

Summing: constitutes a fundamental skill for the comprehension, learning and study process. It consists in rewriting the study material, paraphrasing the information, including only important or relevant information and organizing the material through the process of establishing the relations present in the text. (2007: 11).

The theoretical supports claim to diagnose the potentialities and deficiencies.

Diagnosis study

From Ernesto Valdés Muñoz Junior High School, group five with a registration of 45 students selected as sample (in which the experiment and the control were done). With the purpose of diagnosing the real state of the scientific problem stated, investigation instruments were applied and the main empirical methods used were:

- The Interview: To check the opinion students have about the independent work method in the English lessons.
- The Pedagogical Observation: To check the students' behavior during the development of independent work in the English lessons.
- Document Analysis: To verify if the students do the independent work tasks assigned.
- Percentage Calculation Procedure: To analyze the research quantitative data.
- The Survey: To verify the application level of independent work methods.

Diagnosis

A survey to the students was given (annex 1) in which they explained that, because of time, independent work is not always checked, because the right moment for this process is not always planned. In the initial interview to the students, they answered the following:

The teacher always assigns independent work, 4 said always which represent the (8.8%), 10 said sometimes (22%), 21 said almost never (46%) and 10 said never (22%). The teacher explains clearly what you have to do, 3 said always (6.6%), 19 said sometimes (42.2%), 8 almost never (17.7%), 15 said never (33.3%). The independent work is checked, 1 said always (2.2%), 27 said sometimes (60%), 9

said almost never (20%), and 12 never (26.6%). You are oriented the proper bibliography, any student said always, 2 said sometimes (4.4%), 3 said almost never (6.6%), 40 said never (88.8%). You feel motivated to carry out these activities, 2 said always (4.4%), 3 said sometimes (6.6%), 25 said almost never (55.5%), 15 said never (33.3%).

Besides that, several lessons were observed, taking into account the proposed indicators to value the behavior of the students concerning the independent work in the English subject:

Indicator 1: three students said always (6.6%), four said sometimes (8.8%) and 38 said never (84.4%).

Indicator 2: six students said always (13.3%), three said sometimes (6.6%), and 36 said never (80%).

Indicator 3: three students said always (6.6%), two said sometimes (4.4%), and 40 said never (88.8%).

Indicator 4: three students said always (6.6%), two said sometimes (4.4%), and 40 said never (88.8%).

Indicator 5: three students said always (6.6%), one said sometimes (2.2%), and 41 said never (91.1%).

Indicator 6: three students said always (6.6%), zero said sometimes, and 42 said never (93.3%).

Indicator 7: three students said always (6.6%), two said sometimes (4.4%), and 40 said never (88.8%).

Teaching activities, one of the most effective ways for oral practice, have been approached by different authors and have been defined in different stages. Studies made coincide that they have a great importance in the learning process; they contribute to the instruction and education of the personality and to the development of the reflexive thought.

On the other hand, teaching activities are planned and oriented by the teacher and they are developed by the students, they can be in class or outdoor class, they imply

the search and acquisition of knowledge, the development of abilities and the integral formation of the personality. Silvestre, M (2001:35).

Several works related to teaching activities among them: Labarrere (1996), Álvarez de Zayas (1997, 1999, 2004) state some points of coincidence in the conception and formulation of the teaching activities. For the application of these, the teacher should take into account the following parameters:

- What elements of thought need to reveal.
- What operations of thought to stimulate, how to combine different types of teaching activities.
- What activities promote cognitive, intellectual and formative demands.
- The conditions in which they are developed.
- What sociocultural aspects involve the students.

Moreover, the teaching activities are characterized to be sufficient, varied and differentiated. Caballero, E. (2002:43-44). Sufficient, because they assure the necessary practice, the assimilation of knowledge for the development of the abilities. So, if the student is going to learn she/he will learn how to do it in an effective way and when she/he is prepared to put the difficulties away, then learning is granted.

Varied, because they have different demanding levels to promote the intellectual effort in the students, from a simple exercise to the solution of a problem, the formulation of a hypothesis to the search of solutions.

Differentiated, because they are within the range of everybody's capacities, they facilitate the attention of the individual needs of the students and the students do not need a great amount of effort to do them.

Without a doubt, the analyzed criteria before showed a double functionality of the teaching activities taking into account each of the levels that intervene in the teaching learning process, for example:

- 1) - As a means to learn (students).
- 2) - As a means to direct the learning process (teachers).

Language practice, however, does not lead to spontaneous creative use of language. The functional-notional approach encourages the students to speak creatively since the very early stages of the learning process by making emphasis on the use of some items of pronunciation, word-forms, structures, or any other linguistic or cultural items that can be used by students as communicative tools. These should normally be integrated, but it may sometimes be necessary to isolate certain items from the dialogue in order to provide the students with a set of items they can use in different communicative situations keeping in mind the uses to which the language is put and through the major role given to speech activities.

Proposal foundations

Characteristics of the teaching activities to develop the independent work in the English lessons for ninth grade students in Ernesto Valdés Muñoz Junior High School.

These teaching activities have as main objective to develop the independent work in the English lessons for ninth grade students in Ernesto Valdés Muñoz Junior High School. They offer the teachers an alternative in order to achieve the objective stated in this research. These teaching activities were designed taking into account the students' characteristics, motivations and the curriculum objectives of the English subject in the secondary school.

The activities are characterized by:

1. Being gradually applied.
2. Being varied and dynamic.
3. Being according to their needs, characteristics, and motivations.
4. Being flexible.
5. Being developmental.
6. Being problem-solver.

Taking into consideration all the above characteristics, some pedagogical and psychological demands to be fulfilled while working with the pedagogical activities are stated:

- Begin working with the general diagnosis of the group.

- The pedagogical activities should be developed in a cordial, communicative and respectful environment.
- They should be developed in an organized way, anticipating the needed materials for the work to be done.
- Guarantee all the necessary conditions such as teaching aids, equipment and classrooms.

The proposal consists of ten teaching activities which have the following peculiarities:

- 1) They can be developed at school or at home.
- 2) They have a previously determined content in the established syllabus and study programs.
- 3) They take into account three moments or stages:
 - ✓ The assignment: (statement of the task and to guarantee the orientation)
 - ✓ The actions: (implementation stage)
 - ✓ Valuation actions: (the process regulation and the results control)

A unity between the emotional/motivational, the procedural and the cognitive is present in the proposal. It bears in mind the common psycho-pedagogical demands in adolescence; inadequacies, potentialities, students' and teachers' requirements, and the school, familiar and community context. In its design, it was taken into account:

- ✓ From the **methodological** viewpoint: how to proceed in each of them.
- ✓ From the **psychological** viewpoint: the teenagers' psychological and social requirements.
- ✓ From the **philosophical** viewpoint: its expression through theory and practice.

Teaching activities proposal to enhance independent work.

Activity 1

Title: "Reporting for the Art Magazines"

Objective: To construct oral texts in which personal information questions and their answers are the basic notions and functions to deal with.

Procedure: The students will work in pairs playing the roles of a journalist who works for the Art Magazine and an important personality. (Actor, actress, singer, musician, dancer, painter, movie star and writer.)

Lexicon to be used: Data related to personal information (name, age, address, occupation, marital status, nationality, languages, children, phone number, likes and dislikes, who they live with.)

Time: 15 minutes.

Teaching Aids: Pictures, magazines.

Control:

Checking the students: While students are working, the teacher walks about the classroom to explain any question students may have.

Assessment: The students self-evaluate, co-evaluate and finally the teacher evaluates them.

Activity # 2

Title: "Describing the members of my family".

Objective: To express orally about the members of the family.

Procedure: The students were supposed to find the meaning of the word family in different sources, such as: Bantam dictionary, Cuyás dictionary and digital Oxford dictionary. They had to make their own concept with the help of their teacher. Then, they had to write a brief paragraph in which they describe their family physically and morally.

Lexicon to be used: Physical description: Tall, short, thin, black, fat, skinny, plumb, average height, brunet, blonde, bold, young, old, pretty, handsome, good-looking.

Moral description: Kind, honest, laborious, friendly, funny, smart, intelligent, careful, hardworking.

Daily activities: listening to music, read books, watch television, paint, cook, play football, fishing, running, etc.

Time: 15 minutes

Teaching aids: family pictures.

Control:

Checking the students: While students are working, the teacher walks about the classroom to explain any question students may have.

Assessment: The students self-evaluate, co-evaluate and finally the teacher evaluates them.

Activity 3

Title: “Are they alike?”

Objective: To compare the members of the family using the comparative degree.

Procedure: The students should bring family photos to class. Each student will make a comparison using two pictures belonging to different members of the family.

Lexicon to be used: Height, build, age, general impressions, eyes, hair, skin.

Time: 15 minutes.

Teaching Aids: Family pictures.

Control:

Checking the students: While students are working, the teacher walks about the classroom to explain any question students may have.

Assessment: The students self-evaluate, co-evaluate and finally the teacher evaluates them.

Activity # 4

Title: “I like...”

Objective: To construct written texts to express the functions and notions related to their likes and preferences.

Procedure: The students should write a brief paragraph about one of the following themes:

1. Coppelia.
2. The Beach
3. The Zoo.

Lexicon to be used: Have in mind the Present Simple and Continuous Tenses and the proper vocabulary related to these places, expressing their likes and preferences.

Time: 10 minutes.

Teaching Aids: Black board.

Control:

Checking the students: While students are working, the teacher walks about the classroom to explain any question students may have.

Assessment: The students self-evaluate, co-evaluate and finally the teacher evaluates them.

Activity # 5

Title: "Planning my week."

Objective: To construct oral and written texts about their daily activities.

Procedure: Each student will work with a partner and make the schedule for next week. They have to exchange each other.

Lexicon to be used: Daily activities.

Time: 10 minutes.

Teaching Aids: Black board and sheets of paper.

Control:

Checking the students: While students are working, the teacher walks about the classroom to explain any doubt students may have.

Assessment: The students self-evaluate, co-evaluate and finally the teacher evaluates them.

Activity # 6

Title: “My last Vacation”.

Objective: To construct written texts about their recent vacation.

Procedure: The students will make a summary about their last vacation and socialize it with their classmates.

Lexicon to be used: Mainly action verbs, such as: visited, went, danced, enjoyed, participated, drank, swam, watched, played, took, slept, walked, washed, sang, knew, wrote, read, rode, ate, get dressed.

Time: 20 minutes.

Motivation: By means of questions.

Control:

Checking the students: While students are working, the teacher walks about the classroom to explain any doubt students may have.

Assessment: The students self-evaluate, co-evaluate and finally the teacher evaluates them.

Activity # 7

Title: “What are you doing?”

Objective: To exchange information about the activities they are doing at the moment of speaking.

Procedure: The students will have a small picture the teacher will give them, representing a person doing an action. They should work in pairs, and ask each other some questions.

Lexicon to be used: Action verbs, Present Continuous Tense.

Time: 10 minutes.

Teaching Aids: Pictures of persons.

Control:

Checking the students: While students are working, the teacher walks about the classroom to explain any doubt students may have.

Assessment: The students self-evaluate, co-evaluate and finally the teacher evaluates them.

Activity # 8

Title: "I had a wonderful time."

Objective: To expose the activities they performed during their last vacation by means of a poster.

Procedure: The students have to prepare a poster using photographs, pictures, phrases or drawings that will construct the story related to the activities they did during their last vacation.

Lexicon to be used: Names of places, means of transportation, action verbs, adjectives.

Time: The whole lesson.

Teaching Aids: Photographs, pictures, phrases or drawings.

Control:

Checking the students: While students are working, the teacher walks about the classroom to explain any doubt students may have.

Assessment: The students self-evaluate, co-evaluate and finally the teacher evaluates them.

Activity # 9

Title: Why do people wear uniforms?

Objective: To express orally about clothes, exactly about uniforms.

Procedure: The teacher shows to the students a list of people who dress in a particular way. So they have to describe how they dress and in small groups they have to discuss why these groups dress as they do.

Lexicon to be used: Describe different kinds of uniforms.

Time: 20 minutes.

Teaching Aids: Pictures and by means of questions.

Control:

Checking the students: While students are working, the teacher walks about the classroom to explain any doubt students may have.

Assessment: The students self-evaluate, co-evaluate and finally the teacher evaluates them.

Activity # 10

Title: My house.

Objective: To express orally about the parts of the house.

Procedure: The teacher will divide the students in small teams, and they should design the house of their dreams with garden included. At the end they will vote for the best house designed.

Lexicon to be used: Describe rooms, decoration, furnitures, equipment, facilities, locations and staffs.

Time: 30 minutes.

Teaching Aids: Brain storm.

Control:

Checking the students: While students are working, the teacher walks about the classroom to explain any doubt students may have.

Assessment: The students self-evaluate, co-evaluate and finally the teacher evaluates them.

After the application of the proposed activities the students were interviewed once more to know if there has been a bettering concerning the treatment of independent work on the part of the teacher. **The results are the following:**

The teacher always assigns independent work, 12 said always representing the (26.6%), 15 said sometimes (33.3%), 15 said almost never (33.3%) and 3 said never (6.6%). The teacher explains clearly what you have to do, 15 said always (33.3%), 27 said sometimes (60%), 8 almost never (17.7%), 5 said never (11.1%). The independent work is checked, 10 said always (22.2%), 27 said sometimes (60%), 8 said almost never (17.7%), and any student said never. You are oriented the proper bibliography, 10 said always (22.2%), 15 said sometimes (33.3%), 8 said almost never (17.7%), 12 said never (26.6%). You feel motivated to carry out these activities, 13 said always (28.8%), and 20 said sometimes (44.4%); 6 said almost never (13.3%), 6 said never (13.3%).

To value the final results lessons were observed again:

Indicator 1: 35 students said always (77.7%), six said sometimes (13.3%), and four said never (8.8%).

Indicator 2: 39 students said always (86.6%), five said sometimes (11.1%), and one said never (2.2%).

Indicator 3: 33 students said always (73.3%), 10 said sometimes (22.2%), and two said never (4.4%).

Indicator 4: 40 students said always (88.8%), five said sometimes (11.1%), and zero said never.

Indicator 5: 35 students said always (77.7%), nine said sometimes (20%), and one said never (2.2%).

Indicator 6: 42 students said always (93.3%), two said sometimes (4.4%), and one said never (2.2%).

Indicator 7: 40 students said always (88.8%), four said sometimes (8.8%), and one said never (2.2%).

Conclusions:

- ✓ Checking pedagogical literature allowed deepening into the independent work concept, as well as an enrichment of the author's knowledge about the principles to take into consideration and its utility in the development of independent work. It was also determined that though many are the books and articles about this topic few view it entailed to the communicative approach.
- ✓ The analysis of the diagnosis showed that it was necessary to study the development of independent work in group five from 9th grade at Ernesto Valdés Muñoz Junior High School for presenting problems in the learning autonomy and with the solution of the teaching tasks independently.
- ✓ The teaching activities for the independent work development are directed to 9th grade and they are characterized by their pleasant design, order in their complexity, orientation for their development, as well as the possibility for their inclusion in the lesson to achieve the proposed objective.
- ✓ The application of the proposed teaching activities show an improvement in the independent work development, higher students' independence during the work, a high development of investigative skills, an increasement in the learning quality. There was a higher conscious assimilation of knowledge by the students as well, and their learning autonomy improved.

Recommendations:

It is recommended the socialization of the results obtained in this research in scientific forum or scientific events.

It is also recommended the presentation of the paper to deepen into it and to be used scientifically in further investigative works.

Bibliography:

- Addine Fernández C. Fátima (2004). Didáctica, teoría práctica. La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.
- Álvarez de Zayas, C. (1992). La escuela en la vida. La Habana: Editorial Félix Varela.
- Álvarez de Zayas, C. (2000). Metodología de la investigación. La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.
- Antich de León, R., Gandarias Cruz, D. y López Segrera, E. (1988). Metodología de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras. La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.
- Baranov, S. P. y otros (1989). Pedagogía. La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.
- Báxter Pérez, E. (1988). El Estudio Individual o Estudio Colectivo. La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.
- Chirinos Ramos, M. V. (2005). "El trabajo independiente desde la concepción desarrolladora del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje". En: G. García Batista. El trabajo independiente. Sus formas de realización. (p.p. 16-27). La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.
- Colectivo de Autores. (1999). "Folleto-El Trabajo Independiente y la formación de habilidades para el trabajo científico: Curso 2". En: Pedagogía '99. La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y educación. p.137
- Cordero Valdés, G. J. (2009) Tesis presentada en opción al título académico de Máster en Ciencias Pedagógicas. "Alternativas didácticas para el desarrollo del trabajo independiente en alumnos de quinto grado". Sancti Spíritus: UCP: Cap. Silverio Blanco Núñez.

- Del Llano Meléndez, M. (1984). Organización de la actividad cognoscitiva independiente de los alumnos. *Revista Ciencias Pedagógicas* N. 8, mayo.
- Enrique O'Farril, C. y otros. (2008). *English Workbook for Ninth Graders*. La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.
- García Batista, G. (2004). *Temas de introducción a la formación pedagógica*. La Habana: Revista Educación.
- García Batista, G. y otros. (2005). *El Trabajo Independiente: Sus formas de realización*. La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.
- García Batista, G. y Caballero Delgado, E. (2004). "La función docente-metodológica del maestro desde la perspectiva de su profesionalidad".
- García Batista y E. Caballero Delgado (compil.). *Personalidad y Práctica pedagógica*. (p.p. 16-30). La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.
- García Matamoros, L. y otros. (2004). *Consejos prácticos para la orientación y control del estudio independiente en la enseñanza de la Lengua Inglesa*. Sancti Spíritus.
- González Cancio R. G. (2009). *La clase de lengua extranjera. Teoría y Práctica*. (p. 195-197). La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.
- Herrera Rojas, R. y Miriam Ríos González (s.a.). *El Trabajo Independiente en la Formación de Habilidades para el Trabajo Científico*. Sancti Spíritus.
- Imbert Stable, N. (2012). "El trabajo independiente en equipo: ¿aceptado o rechazado?" En: A. M. González Soca y C. Reinoso Cápiro. *Nociones de sociología, psicología y pedagogía*. (pp. 302-308). La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.
- Labarrere, G. y Valdivia Pairol, G. (2000). *Pedagogía*. La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.
- Lima Álvarez, L. y Rafael Ortiz Gómez. (2004). *Alternativas para el trabajo independiente en la clase: La tarea cognoscitiva*. *Revista Pedagogía y Sociedad*, Año 5, Nº 9, marzo.
- Luciano Pérez, S. (2008). Tesis presentada en opción al título académico de Máster en Ciencias Pedagógicas. "Actividades de aprendizaje dirigidas al

desarrollo del trabajo independiente en escolares de cuarto grado, desde la clase de Matemática”. Sancti Spíritus: UCP: Cap. Silverio Blanco Núñez.

Martí Pérez, J (1975). Obras Completas. Tomos I al XVIII. La Habana. Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.

Ministerio de Educación; Cuba (1982). VI Seminario nacional a dirigentes, metodólogos e inspectores de las direcciones provinciales y municipales de educación. La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.

Ministerio de Educación; Cuba (1984). VIII Seminario nacional a dirigentes, metodólogos e inspectores de las direcciones provinciales y municipales de educación. Segunda parte. La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.

Nocedo León, I. (2012). Metodología de la Investigación Educativa II. La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.

Pidkasisti P. I. (1986). La creatividad cognoscitiva independiente de los alumnos en la enseñanza. La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.

Primer Congreso del PCC: Tesis y Resoluciones. Editado por el Departamento de Orientaciones del Comité Central del PCC. Ciudad de La Habana, 1986. (p. 427.)

Quiñones Reina, D. (2013). El trabajo independiente en las universidades pedagógicas: una propuesta para su mejora. (Manuscrito)

Ríos González, M. D. (2012). Tesis en opción al título académico de Máster en Ciencias Pedagógicas. “Propuestas metodológicas para evaluar el desempeño del docente en la dirección del Estudio Independiente”. ISP Félix Varela.

Rivera Acevedo, G. Sánchez Diggs, M. y Gómez Álvarez. (2002) “El sistema de trabajo independiente: Adaptaciones circulares para satisfacer las necesidades de aprendizaje”. En: E. Caballero. Didáctica de la escuela primaria (p.p. 158-173). La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.

Rodríguez Melgarejo, Y. (2008) Tesis presentada en opción al título académico de Máster en Ciencias Pedagógicas. “Actividades para contribuir al desarrollo del trabajo independiente en la asignatura inglés en los

estudiantes de la especialidad contador del IPE: Enrique Villegas Martínez”. Sancti Spíritus: UCP: Cap. Silverio Blanco Núñez.

Rojas Arce, C. (2013). El trabajo independiente de los estudiantes. Su esencia y clasificación. En: CD carrera Ciencias Naturales, tercera versión.

Ruíz Álvarez, M. M. (2008) Tesis presentada en opción al título académico de Máster en Ciencias Pedagógicas. “Actividades metodológicas dirigidas a la preparación de los docentes de la sede para la dirección del Trabajo Independiente”. Sancti Spíritus: UCP: Cap. Silverio Blanco Núñez.

Sánchez Orbea, G. (1987). “Orientación del trabajo independiente en los Institutos Superiores Pedagógicos”. En: Selección de Artículos N. 37. La Habana.

Santana Amargó, J. (2000). Reflexiones acerca de la orientación y control del estudio independiente. UCP: Cap. Silverio Blanco Núñez.

Soca Gener, M. (2012). “El Trabajo independiente en la formación inicial del profesional de la Educación”. En: N. Imbert Stable. Nociones de Sociología, Psicología y Pedagogía. (pp. 211-220). Ciudad de La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación.

Annex 1

Entrevista aplicada a los estudiantes. (Inicial)

Estudiante, solicitamos tu colaboración para que respondas la siguiente entrevista de proyecto investigativo. Marca con una x según tu opinión respecto a la orientación y ejecución de los trabajos independientes. Gracias.

Objetivo:

1. Constatar en la práctica pedagógica la opinión de los estudiantes respecto a la orientación y ejecución de los trabajos independientes.

1. El profesor te orienta trabajos independientes.

Siempre_____ A veces_____ Casi nunca_____ Nunca_____

2. El profesor te explica con claridad qué debes realizar.

Siempre_____ A veces_____ Casi nunca_____ Nunca_____

3. Se chequean los trabajos independientes.

Siempre_____ A veces_____ Casi nunca_____ Nunca_____

4. Se te orienta la bibliografía adecuada.

Siempre_____ A veces_____ Casi nunca_____ Nunca_____

5. Te sientes motivado en la ejecución de este tipo de actividades.

Siempre_____ A veces_____ Casi nunca_____ Nunca_____

Annex 2

Guía de observación a clases. (Inicial)

Profesor, solicitamos su cooperación a través de esta guía de observación a clases para constatar cómo se aplica el método de trabajo independiente y su impacto dentro y fuera de la clase.

Objetivo:

1. Constatar en la práctica pedagógica el uso e influencia del método de trabajo independiente, en la adquisición y desarrollo de habilidades del mismo.

Aspectos a observar.

1. Se utiliza el método de trabajo independiente.

Siempre_____ A veces_____ Nunca_____

2. Los estudiantes trabajan de manera independiente durante la clase.

Siempre_____ A veces_____ Nunca_____

3. Los estudiantes poseen habilidades en la búsqueda de información.

Siempre_____ A veces_____ Nunca_____

4. Se incrementa la calidad de aprendizaje.

Siempre_____ A veces_____ Nunca_____

5. Se observa una asimilación consciente de los conocimientos por parte de los estudiantes.

Siempre_____ A veces_____ Nunca_____

6. Se observa solidez en los conocimientos de los estudiantes

Siempre_____ A veces_____ Nunca_____

7. Se observan acciones de búsqueda de información por parte de los estudiantes.

Siempre_____ A veces_____ Nunca_____

Annex 3

Guía para el análisis de la documentación.

Objetivo:

1. Recoger información de cómo se proyecta el trabajo independiente teniendo presente la integración de los contenidos en los documentos oficiales emitidos por el Ministerio de Educación.

Documentos:

- Programas
- Orientaciones Metodológicas de Humanidades.
- Libros de textos de inglés.
- Cuaderno de trabajo de inglés.

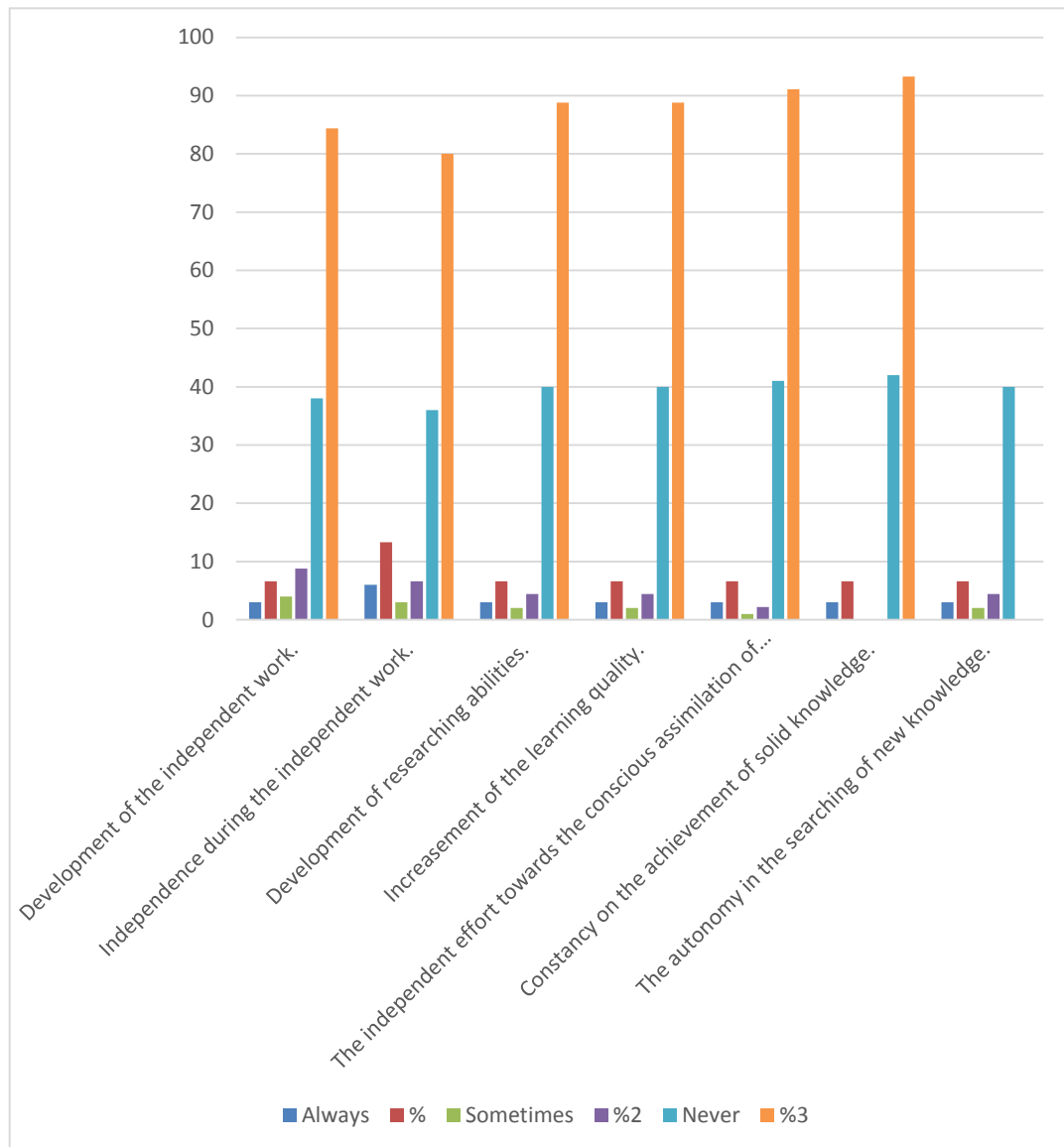
Annex 4

Chart 1.Behavior of the independent work in the English subject.

Indicators	Behavior of the relation between indicator/ subject and % of investigated subjects: 45 (Pre Test)					
	Always	%	Sometimes	%	Never	%
Development of the independent work.	3	6,6	4	8,8	38	84,4
Independence during the independent work.	6	13,3	3	6,6	36	80
Development of researching abilities.	3	6,6	2	4,4	40	88,8
Increase of the learning quality.	3	6,6	2	4,4	40	88,8
The independent effort towards the conscious assimilation of knowledge.	3	6,6	1	2,2	41	91,1
Constancy on the achievement of solid knowledge.	3	6,6	0	0	42	93,3
The autonomy in the searching of new knowledge.	3	6,6	2	4,4	40	88,8

Annex 5

Graphic 1. Behavior of the independent work in the English subject.



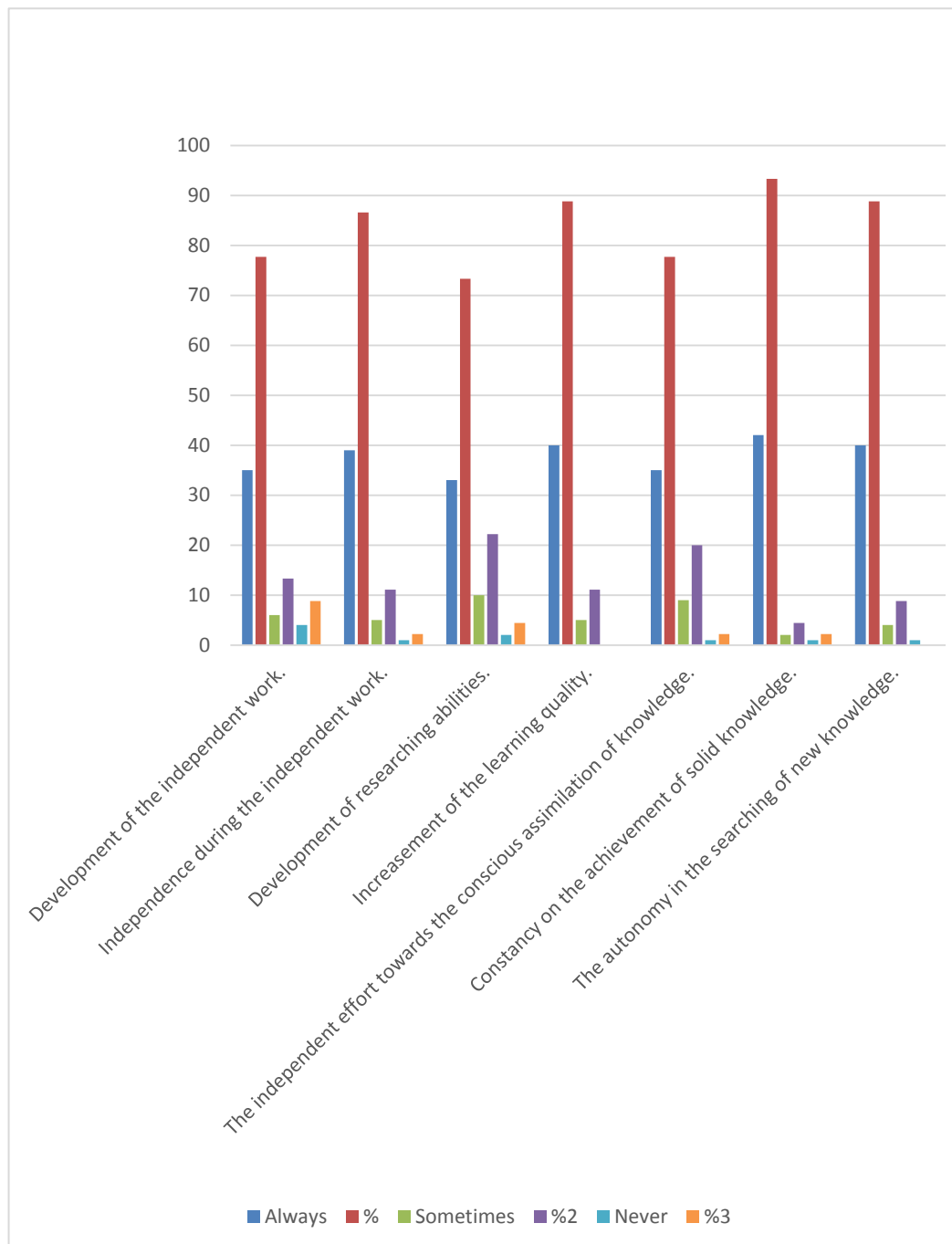
Annex 6

Chart 2. Behavior of the independent work in the English subject.

Indicators	Behavior of the relation between indicator/ subject and % of investigated subjects: 45 (Post Test)					
	Always	%	Sometimes	%	Never	%
Development of the independent work.	35	77,7	6	13,3	4	8,8
Independence during the independent work.	39	86,6	5	11,1	1	2,2
Development of researching abilities.	33	73,3	10	22,2	2	4,4
Increasement of the learning quality.	40	88,8	5	11,1	0	0
The independent effort towards the conscious assimilation of knowledge.	35	77,7	9	20	1	2,2
Constancy on the achievement of solid knowledge.	42	93,3	2	4,4	1	2,2
The autonomy in the searching of new knowledge.	40	88,8	4	8,8	1	2,2

Annex 7

Graphic 2. Behavior of the independent work in the English subject.



Annex 8

Result analysis:

