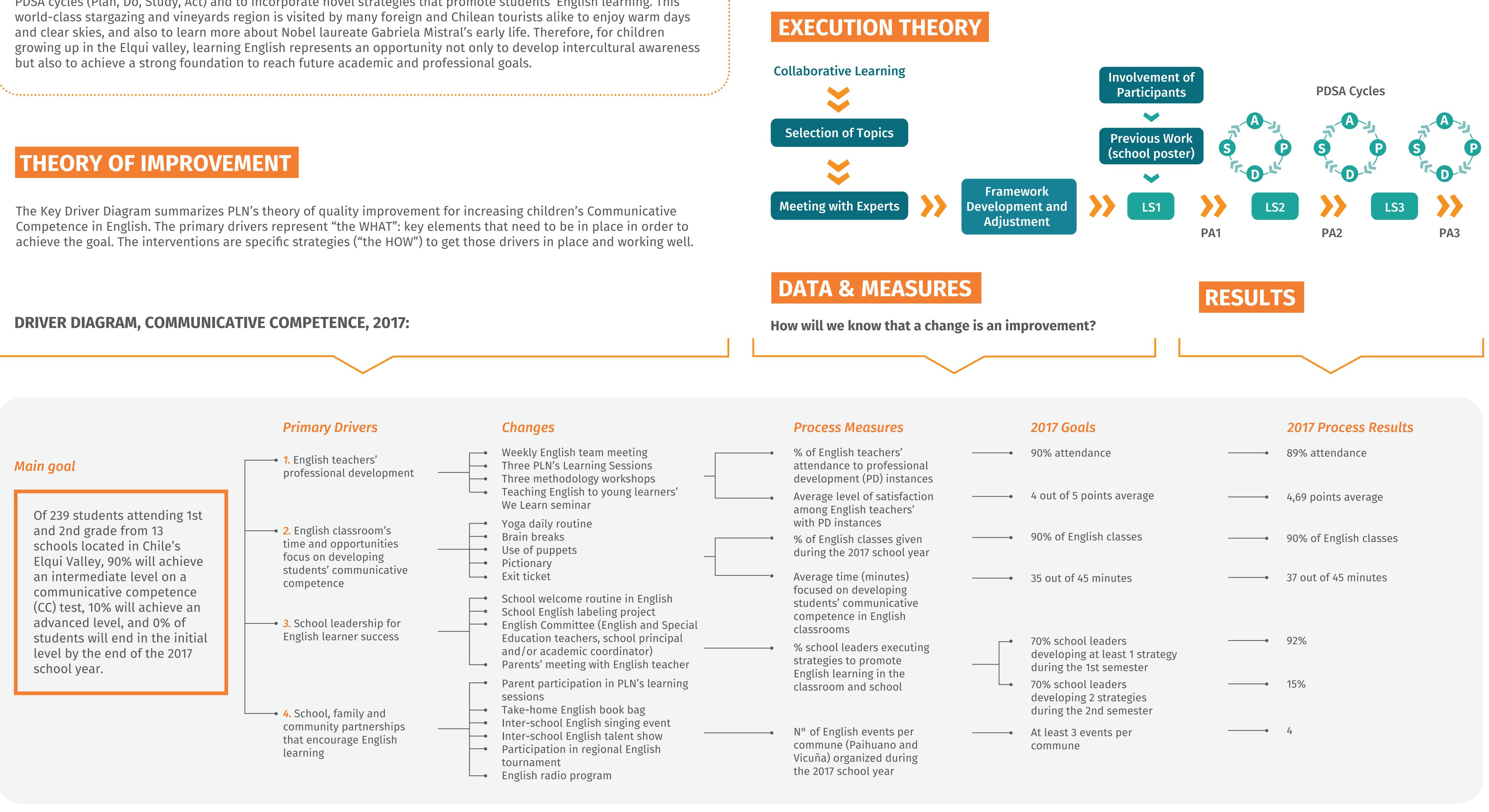
# TEACHING ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN CHILE: COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES USING A MODEL FOR IMPROVEMENT

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## BACKGROUND

Despite the fact that Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Chile is mandatory from fifth grade onwards, nowadays most children's first encounters with English in school occur when they are very young. According to the Inter-American Dialogue, three factors appear to be critical when analyzing English teachers in Latin America: "poor pre-service training, insufficient professional development, and weak implementation of policy frameworks" Learning Network (PLN) through its English program, We Learn, that recruited Chilean and American English teachers, professionals, school leaders and parents to apply a model for quality improvement to increase students' English learning gains in 1st and 2nd grade.

During the 2017 school year, PLN participants from 13 rural schools in northern Chile's Elqui valley learned to create PDSA cycles (Plan, Do, Study, Act) and to incorporate novel strategies that promote students' English learning. This

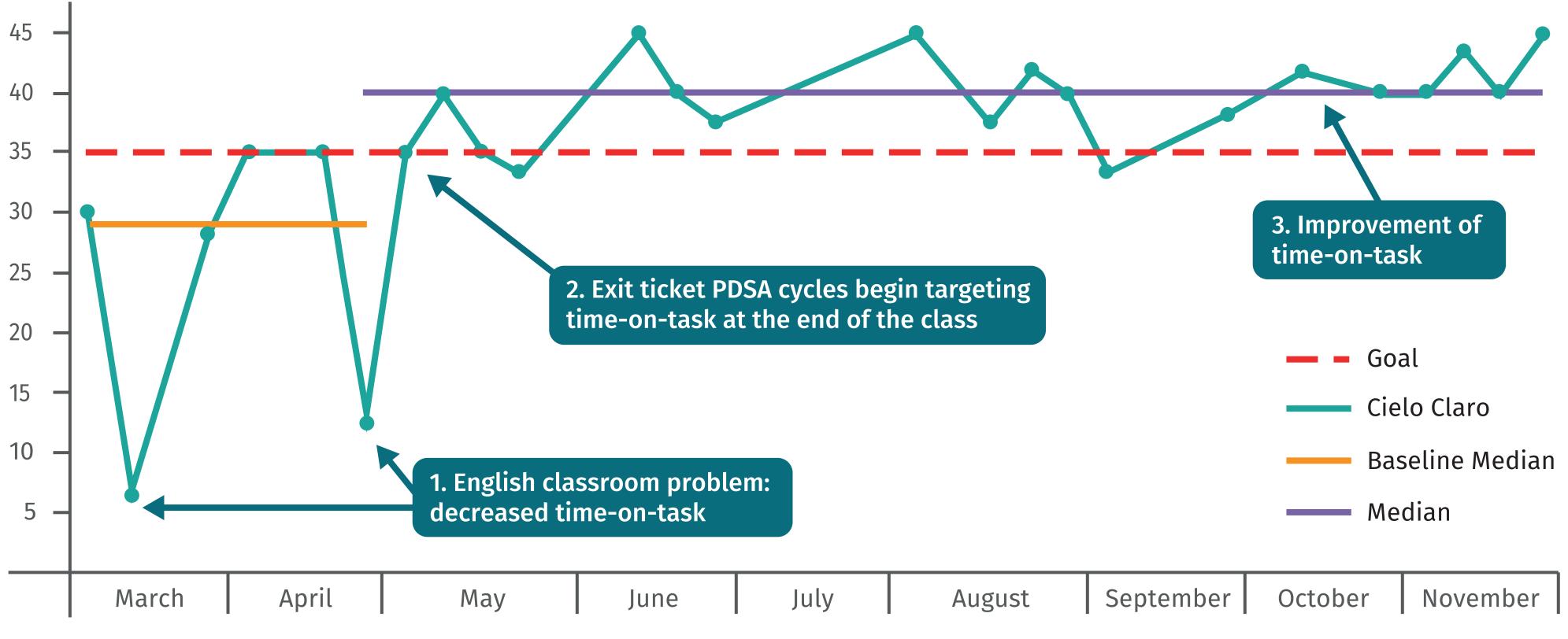


As defined by Díaz Maggioli (2012), effective professional development "gives and receives structured peer support, promotes dialog rooted in evidence from trying new things, focus on enquiry-oriented learning sustained over time, and it is done with teachers, and not to teachers".



# **CONCRETE EXAMPLE**

Average number of minutes per week spent on Communicative Competence during English classes in Cielo Claro School's first grade



#### **EXIT TICKET STEPS**

**1.** At the end of the class, the English teacher says: "Exit ticket time" and students line up to go get breakfast.

**2.** The English teacher asks a question to each student using the content reviewed during the lesson. For instance:

Teacher: "What is this (pointing to her nose)?" Student: "Nose." Teacher: "Good job! You can go for breakfast!"

**3.** Using a piece of paper, the teacher assigns 1 point if the student had to go back to the line and answer a question after three tries, 2 points for two tries or 3 points if he/she gave the right answer at the first try.

#### 80% 50% **• 41%** 40% 30% - Advanced ----- Intermediate 20% 🗕 Initial 10% March 2017 July 2017 November 2017

### Students' Initial, Intermediate, and Advanced 2017 Results on the Communicative Competence Test

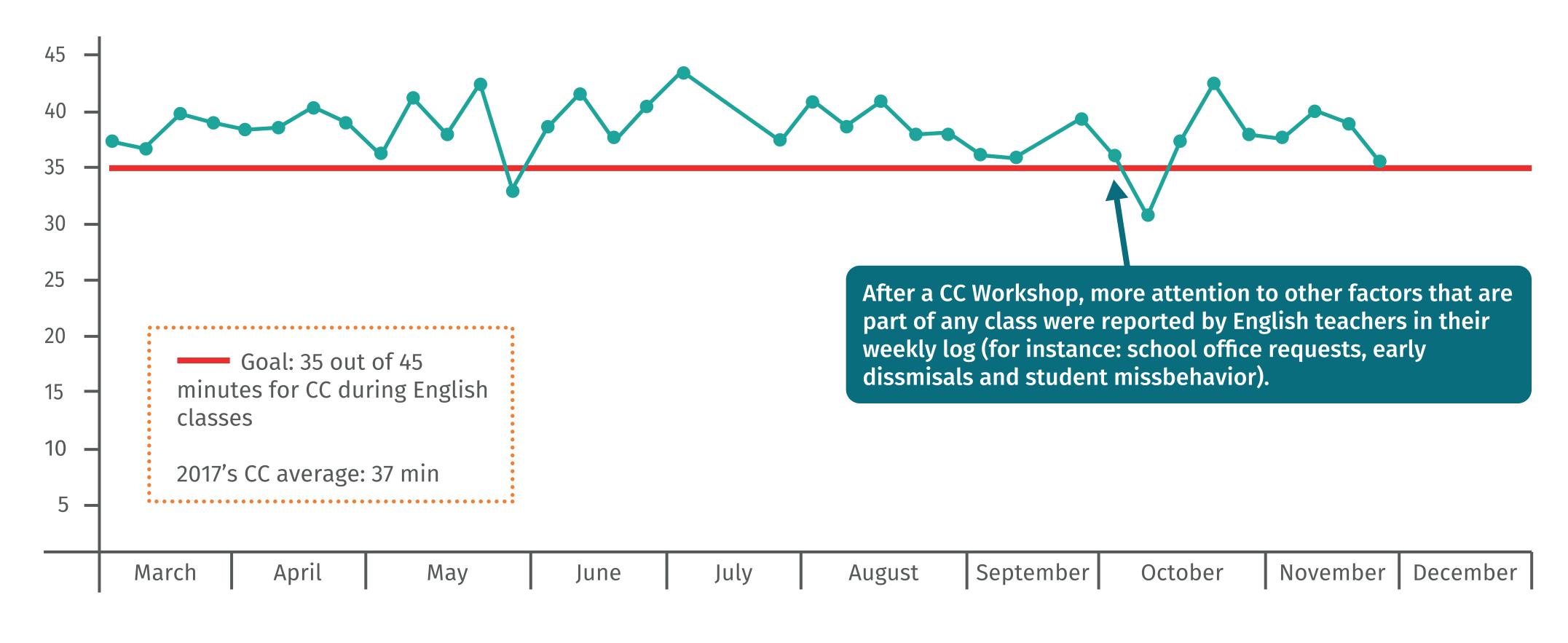
The Communicative Competence test is based on the Cambridge English test: Young Learner Starters. The English teachers through a conversation with each student measured listening and speaking skills in three moments: baseline in March, mid-year in June, and end-year in December.

The initial test showed an expected tendency among the three CC levels: most students achieved an initial level, some achieved an intermediate level and few of them achieved an advanced level.

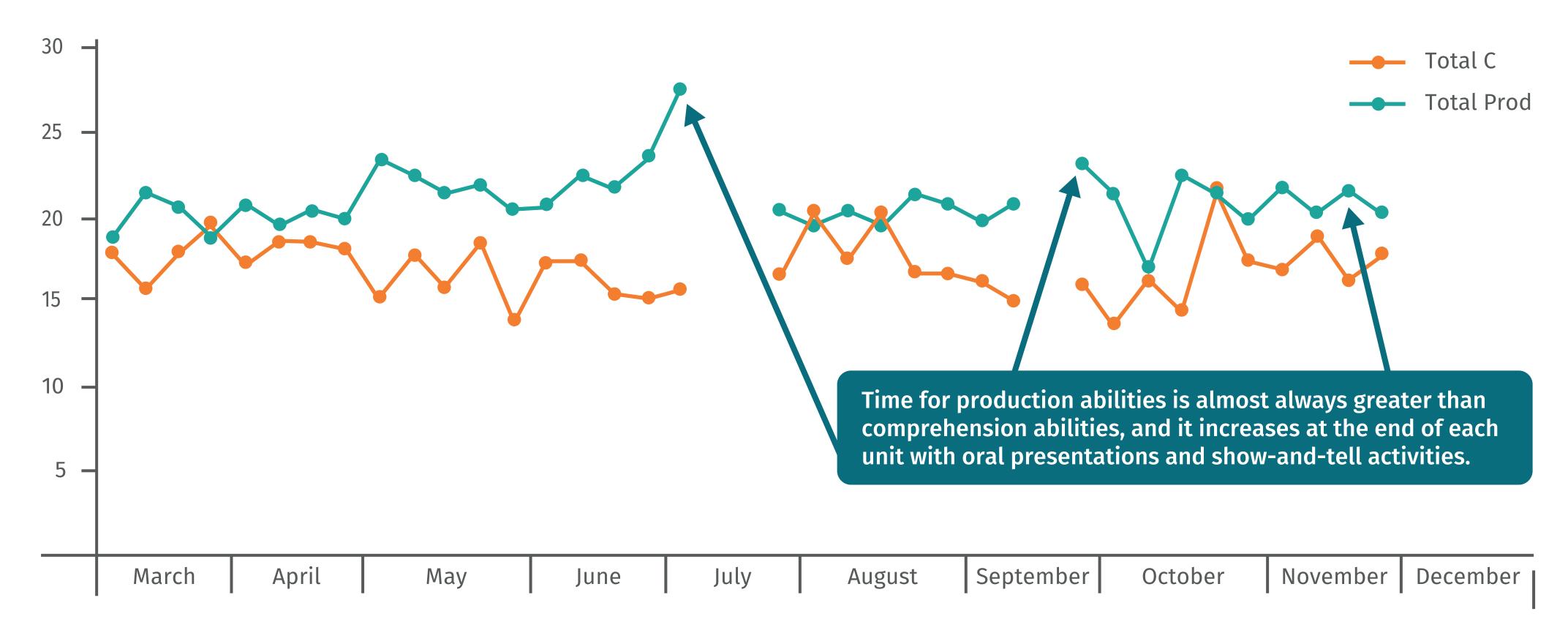
By the end of the first 2017 semester, students achieving an intermediate and advanced level were more than what the PLN had expected. The challenge for the remaining of the year was to sustain these gains and support students achieving an initial level.

At the end of the school year, 19 out 22 first and second classrooms achieved the PLN's aim. The main outcome was nearly achieved. In fact, a greater percent of children achieved advanced results than anticipated (57% v. 10% aim). Unfortunately 2% of children (N= 4) still had beginner levels of communicative competence at the end of the year. These students had learning disabilities, high absenteeism, or problems within their families. In future work, the PLN will devise additional strategies for English competence development among children with these challenges.

Average number of minutes per week during the 2017 academic year spent on Communicative Competence during English classes by the PLN.



Average number of minutes per week during the 2017 academic year spent on Comprehension and Production abilities during English classes by the PLN.



## **2017 PLN'S LESSONS LEARNED**

• What are some TEFL early primary classroom and school challenges faced by the PLN:

- Listening comprehension vs. oral production in English: In many classrooms, students follow directions but are reluctant speakers. In other cases, students interact among them and with the teacher about the lesson's theme, but in

- Allotting time for meetings that focus on English language development: In many schools, English teachers can meet with colleagues, school leaders and parents in few instances.

• How to use PDSA cycles to improve young English learners academic development:

– English teachers explored changes to increase students' English use and simple ways to self-assess their learning. - School leaders gained awareness of the big (cultural event) and small changes (Welcome routine) that can lead to increase students' motivation to use English beyond the English class.

-Using PDSA cycles to integrate new instructional strategies was challenging for primary classrooms and school teams. They overcame barriers of time management, team coordination and data management.

What changes worked and under what conditions:

- Some changes worked across schools (Inter-school English talent show), but others remained difficult to implement across communes (weekly English team meeting).

#### **2018 PLN'S GOALS**

Sustain changes within classrooms and schools.

• Increase data use (collection and analysis) among school teams to drive improvement.

• Address specific classroom/school challenges such as ways to increase school and family communication.

- Increase follow up measurements of PDSA cycles' level of execution.
- Adaptively integrate changes into different contexts to achieve measurements with higher levels of comparison.