

**A CRITICAL APPROACH TO READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH:
TEACHING INTERVENTION WITH A GROUP OF TEENAGERS AT A NON-
FORMAL EDUCATION INSTITUTION**

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Santiago de Cali
Colombia, 2014

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1 Abstract

The following paper is an action research made with a group of 6 teenagers aged 11-13 from the city of Cali. The project was carried out at a non-formal education institution and basically describes the process of a teaching intervention in which the concepts of Critical Pedagogy and Task-Based Learning were the protagonists. The results show first, that students really need to feel motivated in order to accept a critical approach; second, that the role of the teacher in the achievement of the objectives is extremely relevant; it is necessary for them to have a critical perspective before working on this field besides the constant seeking of information in order to innovate in their classes; third, that the TBL (Task Based Learning) and the critical pedagogy are processes that need some time in order to bear fruits; and fourth, that a needs analysis is essential for the quality of the intervention.

2 Introduction

A critical pedagogy seeks a reflection on the elements that govern our society: ideologies, values, situations of injustice among others. As Giroux in McLaren and Kincheloe (2007) say, it is a teaching proposal that rejects the official lies of powers and opens a space where students can be able to become critical agents. A deep consideration of the different issues that rule today's society leads to an emancipatory effect on learners which suggests a change in coexistence.

This paper is the report of an action reflection research that consisted of an intervention focused on the development of reading skills through a critical approach. Its results show first, that students really need to feel motivated in order to accept a critical approach; second, that the role of the teacher in the achievement of the objectives is extremely relevant; it is necessary for them to have a critical perspective before working on this field besides the constant seeking of information in order to innovate in their classes; third, that the TBL (Task Based Learning) and the critical pedagogy are processes that need some time in order to bear fruits; and fourth, that a needs analysis is essential for the quality of the intervention.

Bearing in mind the aforesaid, this project is structured in the following way:

The first chapter frames the justification. It explains why the idea of a critical reading intervention emerged, as well as the expectations upon completing the process.

Following, a chapter entitled "Theoretical framework" disclosures the theory necessary to understand the nature of the approach selected. It explains seven important theoretical components: the reading approaches which give an account on the different orientations to work with the reading skill; the literacy and the critical literacy which show how reading and writing are skills that work as means for the reflective process; the new literacy studies which talk about the importance

of reading and writing as skills that show and change people's worlds, the critical pedagogy and the components of critical pedagogy that serve as elements that ensure the quality of the critical classes and the task-based learning as the teaching methodology that concentrates not only on the linguistic aspects but also the cultural elements of learning. This part is followed by some antecedents that give an account of some projects that served as models on theory and methodology or research. The first one worked on literacy practices as a resource to build resiliency through the study of forced displacement in Colombia; the second, used the systemic functional linguistics as a way to identify ideologies, the third concentrated on culture education and the fourth one focused on media literacy to work critical pedagogy.

In this way the methodology becomes the core of this project. The approach chosen was the Action Research which is a small intervention that analyzes its effects. This chapter explains the process of the research period from the beginning until the end where the findings are shown. First, it describes the context and the participants of this intervention, second it frames the procedure which starts with the planning, then the intervention period where the activities are shown; then, the analysis of findings which is divided into two domains: the affective domain and the cognitive domain; both represent the specific objectives of this project.

The structure of this methodology was guided by taking into account the objectives that show the goals set after the analysis when seeking possible solutions to the issue previously identified. These ones were organized as "General Objective" and "Specific Objectives"

This process is concluded with the last chapter called "conclusions" which describes the deductions after analyzing all the data collected. These conclusions represent a change of mind when talking about critical interventions: first, that the implementation of critical reading activities implies plenty of time; second, that the teacher's knowledge and her critical stance are relevant to the success of the

project and finally that now it is possible to think of a TBL critical language pedagogy.

To wrap up, it is also important to mention that a comprehensive bibliography is shown to demonstrate the extensive research of information which gave the necessary fundamentals to carry out the objectives previously set.

3 Justification

It seems that reading has been curiously isolated by some English teachers. And it appears that within their teaching practices this skill occupies the last place in the range of importance. It is like the Cinderella of the group of the four traditional skills in language teaching (speaking, listening, writing and reading). In general, English teaching at this binational center fosters the development of the speaking and listening skills and reading is an option that needs to be worked in a deeper way.

When talking about “interaction and dynamism” many ideas emerge, but almost all of them are meant to work oral and listening skills and the magic of interpreting written texts moves away. The texts proposed by some textbooks are used to answer literal questions; this is done to know if students really understood the syntactic structures lexical items. On the other hand, these texts shown in the book seem to foster ideologies regarding the supremacy of the American life style, which represents perhaps a wrong idea of what life should be or a misconception of reality.

Bearing in mind the above, I consider that a teaching intervention could be a good option to show a different way to carry out reading comprehension critically. Obviously, without leaving aside the dynamism and the meaningful learning also proposed in the methodology used by the institution.

4 The Problem of Investigation

The institution is a binational center that promotes English learning in the city of Cali. This center intends a methodology based on the communicative learning and promotes the development of cultural activities for the community.

After having taught many courses in this center, besides some observations, I concluded that the reading comprehension skill worked was focused on texts with which the student was supposed to answer some literal questions. For instance, a text that talked about Vancouver was worked by reading it and answering questions such as: Which sports can you do in Vancouver? Or Which animals can you see at the Aquarium? – All the answers were explicit in the text- (See appendix 3 - Examples 1 and 2). Thus, students' work was limited to go and seek the literal answer in the reading.

All this, made me come up with the following questions: What happens then with the critical level? And how can my students read critically?

The text book presents some written texts that the teacher can use to work with reading comprehension. Nevertheless, the teacher is the one in charge of trying to explore the various levels of reading; besides, he/she also has to bring supplementary or extra materials to foster the target skill.

A reading test also showed a low level of critical literacy in students which somehow perpetuates a status quo of a society which oppresses and does not promote justice and democracy. This test concluded that students really need help when analyzing a text critically. It was impossible to go deeper with their level of criticism and any kind of level was possible only with the teacher's help (See appendix 4).

On account of the aforementioned situation, the idea of a teaching intervention through a set of communicative activities emerged. These activities were thought to enrich the critical reading comprehension skills and of course, to

foster a positive change of attitude towards the critical reading tasks in the English class.

5 General Objective

To describe the impact of the implementation of a critical reading approach on a group of teenagers at a binational center.

6 Specific Objectives

- To outline the impact of the approach at the affective domain on students.
- To explain the impact of the approach at the cognitive domain on students.

7 Theoretical Framework

Reading in a foreign language cannot only be seen as the ability to decode a written text in a different language but also as a social practice which is taken from the “theory of literacy as a social practice” discussed by Barton, D., Hamilton, M. and Ivanich, R. (2003). The aforementioned is what makes it rich and therefore interesting to explore.

The concept of reading and the approaches to teaching reading in the EFL classroom consistent with that conception and the pedagogical guidelines of the institution where the intervention was carried out require some theoretical considerations that will be discussed in this chapter. I will explore first some existing reading approaches and its relation to Critical Literacy, New Literacy Studies, Critical Pedagogy proposal, the components of Critical Language Pedagogy and finally the Task-based language. All these constructs were considered for implementing reading comprehension critically in the language classroom.

Reading Approaches

Helping ourselves with a methodology is great but we also need to know the real essence of what we are going to work in class. We may say “reading” but the truth is that “reading” can be much more than decoding, as said before.

Catherine Wallance in Carter and Nunan (2001) explains the three different orientations as to what reading means. “Practice” is the first orientation that focuses on the uses of reading; “Product” whose attention lays on the text and the “Practice” that takes the reader rather than the text as a starting point.

As part of research “reading as practice” opens a breach for the investigation on the theory of literacy as a social practice which will be explained a bit more later. The aforementioned aspect examines the impact of the literacy practices that children experiment outside the school on the literacy practices at the school. The students’ input and the output will be influenced by their day to day

reading and writing practices. This orientation can be taken into account when the goal is to examine students' literacy practices, what influences on them and their responses to external stimuli.

"Reading as product" has to do with a text-focused research. This type of research looks for a learning attending the genre of the text. Cope and Kalantzis (1993) in Carter and Nunan (2001) explain the importance of teaching students how the different texts work in order to help them understand what they read. Here, students can be able to learn the grammatical structures and the lexical features necessary. Here, the focus is not on students' perceptions but on linguistic aspects inside the text.

On the other hand, "Reading as process" is a research that focuses more on the reader. According to Wallance in Carter and Nunan (2001), it works with the strategies and resources which readers employ in reading and learning to read. However, something seems to be missing since the student's reflective process is still put aside.

Finally on a last but not less important position, we can find "Reading as a social process". This last approach

"...pays greater attention to social and ideological factors which mediate in readers' access to text..." Wallance in Carter and Nunan (2001). (p. 24)

As for the objective of this project this last one was selected considering learners' limited critical reading by the lack of reading approaches that promote critical literacy as stated in the problem. Critical reading has to do with the ideologies that play a persuasive role in the text. Students will also combine their own particular knowledge that will influence in their opinions and acceptance of the content of the text.

Then looking at written texts critically requires to understand from what perception criticality is understood and how critical literacy fulfills that critical perspective of reading.

Literacy and Critical Literacy

Now that we got to know two reading approaches that intends the work with literacy and critical reading, it becomes necessary to analyze their meaning.

Cassany (n.d.a.) meanwhile talks about Reading as Literacy. The communicative language teaching gives great importance to real-life situations; in this way, reading critically comes to be a very authentic situation if we relate it to real-life topics of discussion.

For Cassany,

“the concept of Literacy covers all the necessary knowledge and the attitudes in order to use the written genres effectively. In fact, it covers not only the code and the written genres but also the knowledge the speech function and the roles assumed by the reader and the author, the social values associated to the corresponding discursive practices, the thinking ways developed from those social values among others¹..” (p. 1)

It is clear then, that we are not talking about reading to understand literal information but reading as a way to get to know more about other worlds, other viewpoints, other perspectives. This is a different kind of knowledge, something that is not often taken into account in the teaching practices.

Gray (1960) cited by Alderson (2000) in Cassany (n.d.b.)” proposes three ways or levels of reading: Reading the lines: literal comprehension, Reading between lines: inferential comprehension and Reading behind the lines: comprehension of ideologies, positioning and viewpoints. The latter is the focus of this project.

For Cassany “criticism” leads to reading critically, understand critically and adopt a critical viewpoint. Although, it is a very common term among curriculums, its meaning is not precise and it may vary. However, he suggests that reading critically requires being able to develop a personal opinion from the reading. Thus,

¹ Translated from the Spanish text.

reading can be seen from different perspectives or viewpoints and in this project the focus is on reading as a critical process.

Carter and Nunan (2001) explain that the objective is not necessarily to understand what one reads, to see its syntax or its vocabulary, but reflect about the way the text is written and the motivation of the author to use a certain type of vocabulary and syntax. It is basically reading not only the explicit information but also what is implicit; perhaps intentions, values, ideologies.

This is precisely what I pretend to reach with this teaching intervention. A critical view by the students, a view that goes beyond the “literal information finding” traditional model, a conscious and/reflective view.

Malamut (2011) states that Critical Literacy is about examining the world and all the texts we encounter within it, thoughtfully and skeptically, remembering that our interactions with text are influenced not only by author bias but by our personal experiences as well.

For Molden (2007) in Malamut (2011),

“[Critical literacy] asks us to second guess what we believe is true, ask harder and harder questions, see underneath, behind and beyond these texts, see how these texts establish and use power over us, over others, on whose behalf and in whose interest...[it allows us to] see the text from all angles, not just [believe] what is written down.” (p. 50-51)

This is of course, a very deep analysis of a written text; it is something that is not often worked out in the classrooms, perhaps due to various factors that belong to the institutions’ planning such as the little time left for reading or the teacher’s lack of training.

However, for Behrman (2006) cited by Malamut (2011), the critical literacy is a teacher’s responsibility since they are in charge of choosing the most appropriate teaching practices according to the classrooms.

Talking about Critical Literacy is highly connected with the NLS (New Literacy Studies). Critical Literacy is principally the NLS' objective.

In this 21st century our students are surrounded by a bunch of written texts that have an implicit cultural message. All of the texts that we read may come from different places, cities, countries or continents and are full of values, ideologies, habits and many other constructions that together now are called "culture".

The New Literacy Studies is a shift in the way educators assume Literacy. Some years ago, literacy was seen as a cognitive practice, it is, teaching how to read and write a code. Nonetheless, these days, the NLS approach tries to incorporate the literacy to work with specific cultural contexts.

For Barton, Hamilton and Ivanic (2003), literacy is a social practice, and as a social practice it is also a cultural way to use the written texts which people draw upon in their lives. So, this literacy practices are influenced by the social rules which regulate not only the way a person understands or interprets a text but also the way he/she creates a written text.

Gee (2003) cited by Chapetón (2004) states that reading "implies not only linguistic knowledge, but a set of social processes which bring into play the crucial role of literacy."

Using the NLS approach educators can help students create awareness of their identities and the identities of others; they create cultural connections which, at the end lead to a great amount of knowledge, the knowledge of the world that makes them more open-minded human beings. According to Chapeton (2005),

"having the chance to communicate, express, negotiate and share critical responses to readings, is a way to understand our worlds. It also is a way to foster changes and reflect on our lives by creating a social-supportive network among the participants of a community of readers." (p. 5 abstract)

This of course, has to do with some very important values such as respect, solidarity and acceptance, which are going to be part of the content of this teaching intervention.

Literacy as a Social Practice has been always important, but it is more important that we critically frame the diverse texts that our students read. Pahl and Rowsell (2010). In this way we assure a real critical reading comprehension in our students, since we set the starting point which has to do with the selection of relevant and/or worthy texts and/or activities.

In the 80s, Literacy was finally considered a Social Practice, something that people do in their everyday life; at home, at school, at work. To illustrate this, Pahl and Rowsell (2010) put the following example using *Facebook* (the social network):

Literacy event	Literacy Practice	Social Practice
Sending a message	Facebook messaging	Facebooking to a friend in the next corridor.

We can ask ourselves: What does it have to do with reading? Well, it is well known that Reading and Writing are skills that almost always go together; we may say they basically complement each other and with the example above, we can also conclude that after the reception of the message, the person on the other side will read the text and for sure, will understand it (if we take into account that both are probably members of the same community, with similar beliefs and who share the same culture). That is literacy, as a social practice. Nobody is saying that it has to do only with Literary analysis of one of Shakespeare's books or Rimbaud's poems. The reading comprehension goes beyond; it involves the individual's life experiences and the domains where it is performed (at work, at school, at home). Pahl and Rowsell (2010) say that

“When our students write and read, they infuse these practices into their identities. Literacy learners bring their identities into the making of meaning, and as they learn to read, or put marks on a page, their marks are inscribed with that experience....” (p. 6)

McManus (1998) and Baynham (1995) cited by Chapeton (2005) say that readers are situated in common cultural and historical sceneries and influenced by powerful ideological discourses that shape the identities they reflect when reading and producing a text.

For a long time we have been trying to impose believes and modes through already established texts in the field of reading education; and without taking into consideration what is said above by Pahl and Rowsell (2010) regarding identities, learners used to follow non-sensed instructions when working with reading and as a result, their practices were limited to decode written texts with no analysis.

All in all, this project will take into consideration all the scenarios that are familiar to these students, bringing authentic texts that they can be able to recognize and that they can feel identify with.

Critical Pedagogy

When we talk about critical literacy it is inevitable to think about the approach to carry out this process. In this case, the Critical Pedagogy becomes the ally that gives sense to reading tasks done in class and that serves as the principal tool to teach how to question any utterance that may appear in the written texts.

The Critical Pedagogy is a teaching proposal that tries to help students become critical individuals before the beliefs and practices that govern our society. It is supposed to be an emancipatory model from the educational field. In this way the teacher guides students to question the theories and practices that are considered oppressive. On the other hand, the student starts reflecting about his/her own position in the society.

Giroux in McLaren and Kincheloe (2007) says that critical pedagogy refuses the official lies of powers and opens up a space where students should be able to come to terms with their own power as critical agents. Reading is of course one way to follow this proposal; students can question any written text being able to set their own positions towards the topic read. The idea is that students do not accept all the input offered but that they can be able to select what is good for them taking first a moment for reflection.

Critical Pedagogy is not only seen from a general education perspective. In second and foreign language education, critical pedagogy is being discussed and introduced in the classrooms. Kumadavarivelu (2012) talks about the principle of possibility that is derived from critical pedagogy which treats the experiences gained from the language classroom as sources for individual identity formation. Weeden (1997) in Kumadavarivelu (2012) says:

“....language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed.” (p. 15)

It is then, a teachers’ responsibility to introduce these new ways to become critical individuals. As Giroux in McLaren and Kincheloe (2007) says:

“.....Pedagogy always represents a commitment to the future, and it remains the task of educators to make sure that the future points the way to a more socially just world, a world in which the discourses of critique and possibility in conjunction with the values of reason, freedom, and equality function to alter, as part of a broader democratic project.....” (p. 2)

For Chapeton (2005) for example, the Freirean transformative pedagogy is a liberating way to promote changes in society and that gives value to the personal experiences.

And following Giroux's beliefs, Critical Pedagogy is not only showing students that they should think critically but it is also necessary to provide them with tools and strategies to discriminate and select critically what they really want to learn for life.

In her research Auerbach (1992) in Kumaravadivelu (2012) proposes five steps to critically engage students in problem-posing activities in the context of adult ESL literacy: a. describe a cultural text (code) related to a problem pertaining to learners' lived experiences; b. ask questions to help students identify and clarify the problem; c. ask them to share similar experiences; d. help them analyze the root causes of the problem and finally e. help them strategize possible responses. Even though this was created for adults it becomes a guide to apply on young learner's classes. It seems then that language is not only a means of communication but also a means to become aware of the world around us which leads to an unavoidable reflective position.

In literature, there are no many pedagogical guidelines on how critical pedagogy can be introduced in the language classroom. However, certain authors have tried to make an inventory of the components of critical language pedagogy that can serve not as a model but as a reflection on how they are consistent with Critical Pedagogy, considering the underlying principle of critical pedagogy as a non-prescriptive one.

Components of Critical Language Pedagogy

Auerbach (2001) cited by Crooks (2013) states that teacher praxis

"....evolves through an ongoing process of embracing certain aspects of the approach on one level, attempting to apply this preliminary understanding in practice, bumping into problems that trigger further reflection, then applying this new understanding, bumping into new problems (or the same ones) and so on." (p. 6)

The above stated is extremely close to what action research seeks which implies, as Crooks (2013) says, the need of baby steps in order to have a successful teaching practice. It seems then, that an introductory exploration along

with later reflections that make the spiral continue its sequence, pop up some different knowledge each time and make the teaching practices rich and gratifying experiences. This obviously suggests the great responsibility and the caution that all this process implies since there are human beings involved.

According to Crooks (2013), there are nine components that will make classes work successfully, however, as for this project I took into consideration the following ones:

Language Organization and Classroom Management Prerequisites. Which basically calls out the urgency about the way teachers introduce students into a foreign language, the type of instructions given taking into consideration the community's needs and trying to set a good classroom environment where the knowledge will appear in a more natural and nice way. They are called prerequisites because they look forward to give a right and comfortable and therefore a meaningful introduction to learning.

But it is at the same time necessary a **Critical Stance by the Teacher**. It is obvious that teachers should have a critical position towards working with critical activities in the classroom. As Crooks (2013) states, they are people with beliefs, values and a critical teaching philosophy, and it becomes an essential component of the critical pedagogy.

On the other hand, the **codes** represent a relevant component since it allows students to articulate their unpredictable interpretation of the issues presented for discussion. The codes are then, the different forms of expression used as materials for the critical classes. Taking into account the focus of this project, reading can cope a variety of multimodality texts such as simple pictures, advertisements, graffiti or lyrics which show different ways of communication. So, for the purposes of this project the codes provided were focused on real life issues chosen on account of their social and personal contents. Topics that make students start reflections because of their critical potential.

Based on these elements proposed, the **dialogue** becomes a key component of this teaching intervention. According to Freire (2000) in Crooks (2013):

“.....the dialogical character of education as the practice of freedom does not begin when the teacher-student meets with the students-teachers in a pedagogical situation but rather when the former asks herself or himself what she or he will dialogue with the latter about....”

This basically means that dialogue is not only what the simple word means but it is something constructed long before the communicative situation. Crooks (2013) says that this component is, of course, sometimes difficult to handle because of some difficulties such as teacher's inexperience or because of institutional issues, when, for example the teaching practice should follow the sequence of a textbook.

Accordingly, it is also necessary to consider an approach to teach languages that conveniently fits critical an approach that promotes critical literacy in a sociocritical approach as critical language pedagogy and that is consistent with the current paradigms in language teaching as the Communicative Approach. This approach is Task Based Language Learning.

Task Based Language Learning

The Communicative Language Teaching is an approach that focuses on interaction as an essential way to learn to communicate in a foreign language.

However, the Communicative Language Teaching, known at the beginning as Communicative Approach was thought to be functional-notional. This meant that learning turned around situations in which the learner, as a user with communication needs, tried to learn functions leaving the grammatical aspect totally aside. Nowadays, the CLT copes both sides. It is very frequent to hear about “communicative grammar” and it is very common to see communicative classes with a great attention on the linguistic part.

Despite all the methodologies that have appeared so far, educators have had an evident inclination towards the communicative way. Richards (2006) says that our understanding about learning a second language has changed considerably throughout the last thirty years. The CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) is partly an answer to those changes in understanding. Before, the learning process focused on the refinement of the grammatical competence as said before; it was a mechanical process and there was no place for critical positions or errors, thus, a good competence when communicating any idea was not possible. Nevertheless, nowadays the perspective is different. Learning is seen as a process that involves interaction and collaboration and where the student is an active individual, capable to negotiate meanings. What's more, the interaction is not only seen when practicing speaking; we can also find this important element when the students read a written text. The fact of trying to decode implies asking oneself what it means, it implies a brainstorm of concepts, beliefs and ideas that put together come to a meaningful understanding.

In recent years there has been an increased interest in using communicative activities. Nunan defined them as activities that "involve comprehending, manipulating, producing and interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form" (1991:10).

The theory of Communicative Learning implies that the student can be aware of his/her own learning process. This, of course, helps him/her reflect about every experience. In this way, creating opportunities in communicative contexts is an extraordinary tool to motivate students to produce and understand in the foreign language. This allows the student to interact with written authentic texts, contextualizing themselves and seeing the reading activities as something that belongs to real life. The aforementioned may lead to critical positions.

Since interaction is the focus of the Communicative Language Teaching, it becomes necessary to highlight that it does not only occur with the speaking skill.

The interaction can also happen between the reader and the written text; this represents the link between the topic of this project and the approach mentioned.

Kumaravadivelu (2006) introduces the word “negotiation” which is important for L2 development because it involves both, linguistic and pragmatic knowledge/ability. The “interaction” is one of the dimensions of “negotiation” and according to him

“negotiated interaction in the L2 context entails the learner’s active involvement in such communicative activities as clarification, confirmation, comprehension checks, requests, repairing, reacting, and turn-taking.” (p. 34)

Although this explanation may make us come up with ideas to work with the speaking and listening skills, it is also possible to think of it when working with reading comprehension activities. In order to understand the written text, the student should interact with it, he should ask himself about what he does not understand, and he needs to question, reflect and analyze the input given.

Richards (2006) also affirms that the Communicative Language Teaching proposes a very clear objective: the Communicative Competence which is being capable of using the language effectively. Thus, the student would be able to understand and produce different types of texts; the fact of having a communicative competence allows him/her to know what to do when facing written texts. The student will then, recognize critical positions that he could adopt later.

According to Richards (2006) the Communicative competence includes aspects of language knowledge such as “Knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions”, “Knowing how to vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants (e.g., knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication)”, “Knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g., narratives, reports, interviews, conversations)” and “Knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one’s language knowledge through using different kinds of communication strategies)”. So, having the communicative competence leads undoubtedly to interpret written texts: if the

student understands, he/she will be able to launch judgments; if the student understands ideologies, later he/she will be able to set a personal position.

However, talking about CLT is vast, and this is why we need to mark out the topic. As a branch of the CLT, the Task Based Teaching (TBL) is a methodology that involves students as active participants in the development of diverse “tasks” in order to achieve an objective. These “tasks” are not simple activities; these have a specific purpose and lead to a product.

According to Ellis (2003), all the designs proposed for TBL lessons have three principal stages in common. The first stage is called “Pre-task” and prepares the students for the task; this phase involves non-task activities that may generate ideas, activate previous knowledge and serves as an opportunity to model the main task expected to be done by the students. The second stage the “during-task or task-cycle”, focuses on the performance of the task and may require the guidance of the teacher. Finally, the last phase “Post-task”, promotes reflection about the tasks performed and may be a space for repetition.

Lee (2000) in Ellis (2003) highlights the importance of “framing” the tasks to be done giving a sort of organizer for students to know what to do and when to do it. This obviously corresponds to the first stage which is, perhaps the most important one for the success of the objectives. In this first part the focus is on the engagement of students so, he as other authors sees the value of explaining students the importance, the utility and/or the objective of the activities to be performed in the classroom. This enables students to feel more motivated in the development of any activity for the consecution of the tasks.

The time limitations in the second stage are essential for the class if what we want is fluidity. In this task-cycle the teachers can promote the search of a variety of resources that will give the necessary input for the accomplishment of the tasks. Here, it is also important to introduce new surprising information to help students in the construction of ideas.

On the other hand, Ellis (2003) talks about the importance of prior knowledge for the development of task-cycle process:

“ How teachers and learners conduct a task will be influenced, to a large extent, by their prior experiences of teaching and learning and their personal definitions of the particular teaching-learning situation.....” (p. 251)

This last element to take into consideration is somehow a limitation for the lesson design and performance since it implies a good knowledge of the community that participates in the tasks proposed.

The third stage may imply different options. As said before this can be a space for repeating exercises or reflecting on them.

Willis (1996) in Ellis (2003) recommends asking students for a report where they explain how they did the task and what they learnt from it. It is also good to talk about their feelings towards the activities performed and try to negotiate in order to find solutions or to modify aspects that did not go well during the tasks. Here we can place the linguistic aspects since students will reflect not only on the ideas developed but also on the forms used; this last one becomes an unavoidable part on account of our brain's organizational system.

To conclude, I think this methodology will help enormously in the achievement of the goals set for this teaching intervention. Critical reading activities also need a structured organization that first prepares students for the reading tasks, makes them be the center of their own learning process and helps in the development of critical thinking through feedback.

8 Related Work

Some research studies can provide guidelines at the global level in order to carry out this project. At the local level there are no many referenced studies related to critical reading. Most of these works have been interventions in the language classroom related to reading comprehension at literal and inferential levels and not focused on a critical reading approach. However, it may serve as a challenge to make a contribution on this matter which hopefully will provide more insights to help in future researches.

Following, there is a brief description of four antecedents found in different sources and that have a methodological and a theoretical relationship with this work.

Wang (2008) did a research Project at Durham University entitled Teaching media literacy through critical pedagogy: an action research project in higher education. This project took place in Taiwan, China. The purposes of this Doctorate thesis, as stated by the author were to, 1) outline the concerns and importance of media literacy education in Taiwan, 2) demonstrate how youth consciousness is oppressed and manipulated by ideologies of power in society and the media and 3) determine effective methods for improving university students' critical thinking about television. This action research was applied to develop media literacy courses based on the concept of critical pedagogy and help students use their critical thinking abilities when facing television discourses.

The author used observation, interviews, questionnaires and diaries as tools for data collection and her findings evidenced the effects of teaching/learning on media literacy by showing students' improvement regarding critical thinking based on critical pedagogy; they also showed university students changing their media

mindset by acquiring deeper internal media knowledge, while furthering their relationship to society and themselves through critical pedagogy; media literacy's teaching learning effects produced through critical pedagogy were also identified. These theoretical and methodological elements served as a reference for the development of this project. It gave important insights on critical pedagogy; as a critical thinking developer and as an autonomy booster. In the same way, it provided information about the role of the teacher as a builder of value experiences by taking advantage of real social environments.

Malamut (2011) did a research project at Iowa University entitled Critical Literacy and The World Language Classroom: Complicating Culture Education. This research project took place in Iowa, United States. The purposes of this master's degree, as stated by the author, were to provide background about the history and current practices of culture education in world language classrooms, to explain critical literacy as a theory, its possibilities for instructional methodology, and how critical literacy can address the struggle in language education worldwide and help to teach students a deep, complex understanding of culture, to outline an adapted culture curriculum that uses critical literacy as a bridge to understanding culture, highlighting the practices, goals and purposes of the adapted curriculum, and to provide support for the adapted curriculum in current research and national standards for education. The author provides some strategies and activities for teaching culture in the classrooms and took into consideration the following concepts: Critical Literacy to understand culture, meaningful texts, a culture curriculum and the classroom as a community. Among these elements, the concept of critical literacy to understand the culture was a reference for the present research. Among her findings she states that all of the independent practice with familiar, fictional texts is important for future activities that ask students to use these skills with abstract, non-fiction concepts. She also says that listening to and discussing other students' observations supports critical thinking in and it exposes students to a variety of perspectives on culture within their community. Besides, the author mentions that beginning to build empathy by looking at culture from

different perspectives also establishes the necessary foundation for the other activities that ask students to consider bias in historical representations of cultural interactions in the United States. Finally, she suggests using pre- and post-surveys on culture to provide reliable and beneficial data, as well as students' notebooks, research projects, portfolio among others.

Chapeton (2005) did a research project entitled *Fostering Resiliency through Literacy Practices with Adults in Situation of Displacement*.

This case study took place in Bogota with a group of male and female adults aged 20 to 50 from different regions of Colombia. These people were victims of the violence in the country. The objective of this project was to understand and describe literacy practices as a resource to build resiliency through the study of forced displacement in Colombia. The author used field notes, transcriptions of tape recordings, interviews and questionnaires as tools for data collection and took into consideration the following concepts: Literacy as a Social Transformative Practice, the Pragmatic Theory of Reading as a Situated Social Practice, Reading Transactions and Readers' Response and Critical Pedagogy as a Liberating Approach to Education. Among her conclusions, the author states that a Reading Club was a resilient environment where interaction, sharing, reflection and critical reading were the most important strategies. Besides, this qualitative case study helped her become aware of the critical social issues that are present in her language teaching practice.

The above antecedent served as a reference in order to know or become familiar with the critical pedagogy seen as a shift in language teaching where the linguistic aspects are not the core anymore and they become a complementary element being the reflection on situations of injustice the most important element. In the same way, the tools for data collection used in this research project such as field notes, transcriptions of tape recordings and interviews helped to know the importance of the quality of the data collected.

García (2008) did a research project entitled *Removing the veil: Developing critical reading skills through Systemic Functional Linguistics*. The research was made with a group of 22 students aged 19 to 20 enrolled in the fifth level of a content-based English course and its main objective, as stated by the author, was to evaluate the efficacy of instruction on systemic functional linguistics to develop critical reading skills. In general terms, the purpose was to help students identify ideologies hidden in the authors' discourses. Throughout the paper, the author develops various important concepts regarding reading comprehension such as: critical reading skills, ideologies and author's opinions in a written text among others, through some topics included in the content of the course: euthanasia, abortion, etc. The methodology consisted of testing students' improvement through four separate stages. The texts used were a collection of ten short texts about controversial issues. Questionnaires were also used for data collection. The results showed a dramatic increase in the number of students who were able to identify the author's position as well as the quality in their answers. The project above served as reference in order to understand the importance of train critical learners through a reading that goes beyond its literal level. According to the author it is relevant to understand how powerful language can be in any field: economy and politics, among others, and how important it is to know how to identify the ideologies printed in the different texts that surround us.

To conclude, it is possible to affirm that all these works have represented a theoretical guide that helped at first, to have a general view of the future project and later to organize it as a research paper with a university academic level. Besides, these projects also clarified a misunderstanding about critical pedagogy. One of them regarding the fact that "a critical pedagogy" doesn't mean to teach students become ideology activists or look at the world with suspicious eyes but to reflect towards the actual issues of our society. However, despite an exhaustive research on related projects, it seems that there is a lack of interest on this matter at a local level, which makes me reflect at the same time on the veil that still covers our appreciations.

9 Methodology

On account of the nature of this project, the Action Research was chosen as the methodology to follow in order to carry out the objectives established. Dealing with different definitions we can take the most general one stated by Cohen and Manion (1994) in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005). They define it as

“a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention”. It is basically what this project proposes; a kind of little local intervention on critical reading, in a real class that examines the impact of the same.

On the other hand, Kemmis and McTaggart (1992) in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005) say that in order to carry out an action research the researcher should plan, act, observe and reflect very carefully. Furthermore, Burns (2010) mentions the four phases in a cycle of research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1998), who explain a process which becomes spiral and that ends only when the researcher feels the product is satisfactory enough. These are: planning, action, observation and reflection.

9.1 Context and Participants

The Binational center where the project took place is a non-profit organization. It was founded in 1954 and is located in the city of Cali, in the commune 17, within the socioeconomic strata 4 and 6.

Physical Description

Each classroom counts with chairs, a DVD, speakers, a board and at least 1 fan. As it is described, this is a big institute that counts with plenty of rooms and its capacity makes it a comfortable place to study. Its environment is “university like” which represents an appealing option for young people. All the rooms have the necessary equipment in order to have a complete interactive and technological class. This institute also counts with a small library with a space for conferences and with internet service access.

The foreign language acquisition is different for each individual. The importance of taking into account the psychological and social aspects involved has been determined. Hence, the implementation of a flexible and harmonious methodology that responds to all the necessities and profiles is sought. Taking into account these principles, the binational center has the following characteristics:

- Communicative-functional language focused classes.
- Emphasis on real life situations.
- Dynamic, participative and student-centered classes. Students are actively involved in their own learning process. They create, understand and connect their knowledge of English with their real day to day life.
- The book is just a guide. As for this project, the book's name is Next Stop 5 by Viv Lambert, McMillan editorial.
- Supplementary material is used to expand the contents of the book.

Nevertheless, this center focuses on the development of oral skills as one of the most important elements for communication.

Pacing and Book

The pacing as well as the rubrics are designed based on the books. Actually, the textbook brings a syllabus that fits the program given by the institute. This pacing works as the syllabus and it shows not only functional objectives but also objectives that make it look as mixed syllabus; it integrates situational syllabus; for example “at the beach” (here, students explore vocabulary or expressions regarding a day at the beach), a task-based syllabus; for example little projects where students have to complete some tasks to reach a goal, a genre-based syllabus where students are to follow especial structures in order to learn how to write a letter or any other type of text. In this way, one book is offered for every two courses and they change according to the level. Ex. Kids 7 and 8: Next Stop 4, Junior 1 and 2: Next Stop 5 and so on. There is a Student’s book, a Workbook and a CD. There is also a book for teachers, which is the one they use to plan their classes. And as said before, the book for students who participated in this project is Next Stop 5 which can be used for junior 1 and 2.

This book brings a brief explanation on how to use it and a grammar overview. It explains the topics of each unit as an Area Planning: Unit, Topics for vocabulary, grammatical topics, and additional features².

It is necessary to highlight that every unit works as a guide, so teachers should get supplementary materials to develop the topics proposed.

This binational center follows a non-formal education within a constructivist approach. This approach proposes a paradigm where the learning process is carried out as dynamic, participative and interactive processes. Thus, knowledge is an authentic construction made by the person who learns. This can be seen in the methodology used by the institution.

² Information taken from the experience working at the institution.

Participants

As for the achievement of this project a group of 6 students who live in the city of Cali was selected. This group is constituted by four girls and two boys aged 11 to 13 who belong to different social strata. These are students whose motivation to read is a mixture between entertainment and responsibility. Most of them reported to enjoy reading in English and among their preferences we can mention printed book as well as novels and short stories.

9.2 Procedure

Before the implementation of any kind of reading comprehension activity, it was necessary to a survey on reading habits in order to know students likes and dislikes and therefore design the activities for the intervention. (See appendix 1). In order to assess students' levels of reading comprehension a Diagnostic Exam was designed. (See appendix 2). Here, students were asked some questions ranging from literal level questions, passing by inferential level questions and ending with a critical questionnaire.

As far as the integration of a critical reading approach to the communicative class is concerned, there were 7 activities fixed to the regular lesson planning. (See appendixes 3, 4, 5, 6).

Finally, in order to analyze the results about the impact of the intervention, the observation was definitely the most important for data collection. However, the notes on the personal diary, students' crafts; reflections on every lesson plan and a focus group interview on students' perceptions gave further information about the development of the activities.

Thus this action-research covered three stages: planning, intervention and analysis.

9.2.1 Planning

Seven observations were made from September 20th to November 15th, 2013 and since the focus was not on the students but on the way teachers worked the reading comprehension skill in class, the group of students observed was a different one. During this stage the diagnosis was established and a short analysis of the institution's pacing was made trying to select appropriate possible topics to work on critical reading. After meeting the new group of students, these were informed about the project as well as parents who signed a consent form for the research.

9.2.2 The intervention

Taking into consideration that the classes were once a week, seven reading comprehension workshops were implemented. Each one took an average of 1 hour and 30 minutes and in some cases the use of the multimedia room was necessary to project pictures and texts. All of them were focused on topics that generated a critical thinking such as discrimination, sexual abuse and slavery among others. There were oral discussions and written productions which were discussed and analyzed after each intervention with the mentor. All the adjustments were considered to improve the other interventions. In this way, these interventions also were taken as the practicum requirement. (See appendixes)

As for the activities done, authentic material served as codes; it was presented as printed texts that students had the opportunity to read and analyze individually or in pairs and whose questions were posed by the teacher. However, due to its "debate" character, all the students had the freedom to ask their own questions and to give opinions about others' answers. Since the TBL was the methodology chosen, all the interventions had three stages (pre, while and post).

During the pre, students were introduced to the activity by comments or questions that had a close connection with the topic. After this introduction, students were asked to read the texts and to answer some critical questions that started the discussions. Finally, during the post task, students were asked about their opinions on the activity and a moment to work on the linguistic aspects such as past tense and vocabulary related to the topics given by the book was considered.

The following is a summary of reading comprehension activities aimed at developing students' critical literacy:

Reading comprehension activity No. 1 (See appendix 10.5.1) Gossiping in our society:

Students were given to read a quote about the issue of gossiping. They answered and/or discussed some critical questions about this issue and dramatized a situation of gossiping.

Reading comprehension activity No. 2 (See appendix 10.5.2) Depression in our globalized society.

Students were shown a picture of an old woman surrounded by many pets. They discussed some questions regarding the issue of people who overcome their depression through the company of pets. They read a text from a blog about depression and anxiety and discussed some critical questions.

Reading comprehension activity No. 3 (See appendix 10.5.3) The role of the woman in the family core.

Students were asked some questions about the role of their mother at home. Then they were given a comic strip about Hagar the horrible and answered some critical questions regarding the role of the woman in the family. They wrote an opinion about the topic.

Reading comprehension activity No. 4 (See appendix 10.5.4) Racism and other types of discrimination.

Students were shown the picture of some women from another country and were asked about comparisons with women in our country. Then, they were shown a picture with written text about racism and discrimination. Students discussed some critical questions and wrote a reflection about the topic.

Reading comprehension activity No. 5 (See appendix 10.5.5) Violence generated by brands and child exploitation.

Students were asked about their preferences on brands. Then, there were shown two advertisement of Nike and discussed some critical questions. In this way they were introduced in an issue of exploitation by giving them a text about Nike's situation of abuse against children. Students discussed some questions and created a small poster explaining the considerations people should take into account when shopping for something.

Reading comprehension activity No. 6 (See appendix 10.5.6) The role of the society towards the issue of endangered animals.

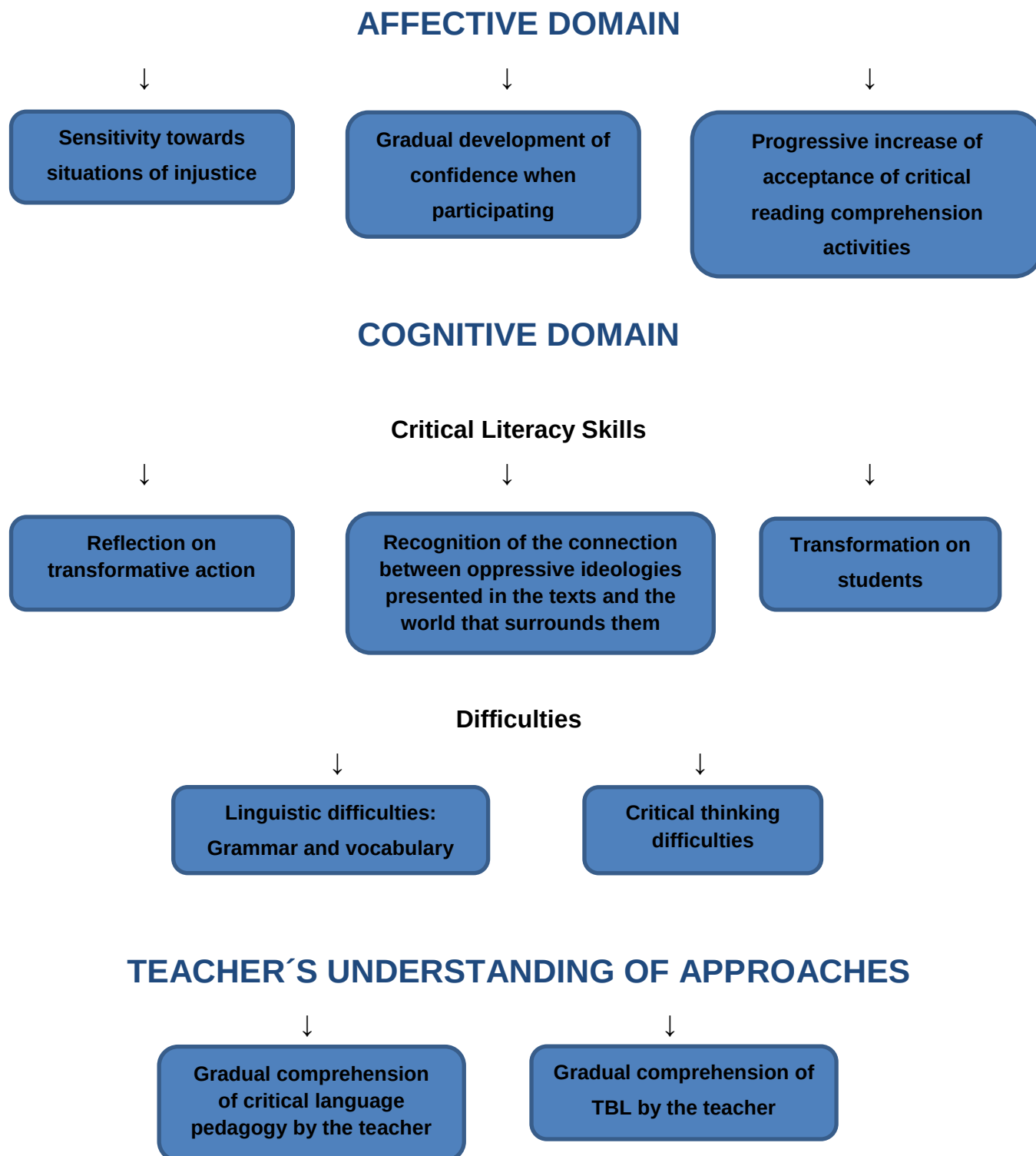
Students were shown pictures of endangered animals and were asked about what these animals have in common. Then, they answered some questions about an article on endangered animals. They created a brochure about any endangered animal explaining its situation and proposing some solutions. At the moment of analyzing the brochures, present tenses, past tenses or past or present progressive tenses were discussed.

Reading comprehension activity No. 7 (See appendix 10.5.7) Sexual abuse.

Students read a real story about an African girl who suffered with her stepfather abuse. Students discussed the content to understand and asked about unknown words. Then, they discussed some critical questions. Simple past and past continuous usage was discussed.

9.2.3 Findings

CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES:



As for the analysis of this project, the deductive and inductive combined approach was used. The analysis of data collected through a personal diary, an exam, a survey, a focus group activity and observations, contributed to fulfill the research objective which was to describe the impact of critical reading on a group of teenagers. The data analysis showed that the intervention had an impact at the affective domain which included the sensitivity towards situations of injustice; a gradual development of confidence when participating and a progressive increase of acceptance of critical reading comprehension activities. Data also showed that the intervention influenced students at the cognitive level. They mainly demonstrated a students' reflection on transformative action, a recognition of the connection between oppressive ideologies presented in the texts and the world that surrounds them, a transformation of students, linguistic difficulties in grammar and vocabulary and difficulties in critical reading. Lastly, and unexpectedly at least at the initial stage of the stage, data showed that at the teacher level there was a Gradual comprehension of TBL as well as of critical language pedagogy. First of all, it is necessary to highlight that, as Neuman and Friedman (2010) say, the affective domain is a sphere that has a close relation with all the existing domains. There is an interconnection that guarantees each one's success. This interconnection was definitely evident for the two big categories mentioned above: The Affective Domain and The Cognitive Domain. In order, to assure some evidence of critical literacy skills, it was necessary that students accepted the approach which gradually showed a progressive confidence, through the sensitivity generated by the topics proposed. These affective elements built the motivation that encouraged students in the improvement of their cognitive skills.

9.2.3.1 AFFECTIVE DOMAIN

This category represents every student's sphere regarding emotions, values and the principles or conceptions that characterize their background. Friedman (2008) cited by Neuman and Friedman (2010) explains that affective domain has to do with the emotional life of the student where the feelings, values and beliefs are

involved. And for Neuman and Friedman (2010), this domain “cannot be known except by observing behavior.” It cannot be measurable by tests and it is “the most complex and deepest kind of learning” so, objectives accomplishment and observations are the only tools in data collection.

Taking into account Bloom’s seminal work which also includes the affective domain, the AFFECTIVE category is based on Neuman’s Taxonomy of Affective Learning. This model, according to Neuman and Friedman (2010) assumes that motivation and receptivity is something that appears in any learning situation.

Taking into account this category, data analysis yielded the following three sub-categories:

Sensitivity towards situations of injustice

This sub-category is defined as the reaction when understanding the meaning of the topics read. According to the analysis, students really seemed to feel how situations of injustice affect other people in the society. For data analysis the observations, the diary, students’ crafts, focus group transcriptions and the lesson plans reflections were used. During the activities students showed anger, rejection and compassion through their comments and body language which can be set as evidence of their sensitivity towards certain topics such as poverty, slavery, sexual abuse (especially against children) and discrimination. It is evident that they were touched, perhaps on account of their background of values and principles as human beings. Besides, they compared themselves with those who experienced situations of injustice and started reflecting on the lucky people they were.

During the focus group activity, some students did important interventions when being asked about their opinions on the experience:

“Además... podíamos tener conciencia de algunos temas por ejemplo lo de los zapatos Nike, que es nuestra decisión si comprarlos o no comprarlos.” Student 4. Focus group transcription. P. 1.

The excerpt shows the student's sensitivity when talking about "conciencia" which seems to be related to his principles or conceptions. It confirms the affective impact.

The following is also an interesting example:

I think that the woman in the family is ~~X~~

Correction.

solution:

The of the woman in the family is important because they always give love and feelis goods. but sometimes ~~some~~ some men hate at the women how it did a work of the house, do the food, do organize the house. do clean the house, do every thing, but the men don't

The example above shows an opinion given by student 4 during class number 4, dated March 15th, 2014, where he explains his feelings towards the mother's role in the family. This shows that the topic worked touched his emotions; he may have related this issue his own family situation which goes beyond a matter of rationalize a social problem.

The next excerpt was taken from the personal diary, dated April 26th, 2014:

“Students talked about the difficulties some people “different to them” have to bear just because not having money.” By the teacher. P. 7

The following excerpt was taken from the reflection on lesson plan 6, dated March 29th, 2014. Here, students discussed about brands, violence and child exploitation:

“Students constantly compared themselves with those kids who are taken as slaves and seemed to be very thankful with their living styles.” By the teacher.

“..... however, when talking about all the work mothers have at home besides the fact that some of them are single mothers, students had an attitude of compassion.” By the teacher. P. 4.

This last excerpt, taken from the diary dated March 15th, 2014, demonstrates students’ sensitivity, maybe because they relate it to their own mothers’ case.

In the following case we can see a student’s answers when asked about the critical reading experience in class:

“Han pasado muchas cosas en nuestros países como lo de los niños que hacen zapatos para Nike, esa fue una noticia impactante que nos dio algo a conocer que no sabíamos.” Student 1. Focus group transcription. P. 1.

The above was an answer given in the focus group activity done on April 26th, 2014, where most of students expressed how the topics worked impacted on them.

It is evident that knowing those cases of injustice in a deeper way was astonishing taking into account that these students had not probably lived similar experiences. Thus, the findings in this category can be understood as reactions about emotions that students felt on account of the link they did between others’ experiences and their own lives. Most of evidence was perceived during observations.

Gradual development of confidence when participating.

This sub-category is determined by the moments in which students participated or not and the reasons why this happened.

For this analysis, observations, the diary, focus group transcriptions and lesson plans reflections were used. During the classes, there were moments in which students were very shy and it did not help in the dynamism of the reading activities. As the classes passed, students' interventions increased which confirmed that motivation was higher:

"They are weak when speaking, they do not feel confident and that is a big problem for the development of my critical reading activities. Not even telling them they can speak Spanish. These students only speak about simple day to day topics." By the teacher. P. 1.

The excerpt above was taken from the personal diary, dated February 22nd, 2014. This text shows the rejection of students to participate in the first days of class. This behavior could be the result of the unfamiliar character of the reading activities.

In the following examples taken from the focus group transcription, we can see an evidence of reasons when students were asked about their limited participation:

"Yo creo que eso sucedió por el miedo a equivocarse o tener un error o que todos se le burlen." Student 1. Focus group transcription. P. 4.

"yo creo que nuestros compañeros al principio no decían nada porque nunca habían practicado ese enfoque." Student 4. Focus group transcription. P. 4.

In the following excerpt we can see some improvement:

"All students participated actively and it helped a lot in the development of the class. Students seemed to be happy talking about endangered animals. By the teacher. Personal diary. P. 5.

Finally, we can confirm the evident progress with the following one:

“So far, I can say that now they feel pretty much more confident when participating, maybe because now they are used to working with critical reading activities.” By the teacher. P 6.

In addition, the observations support this gradual development of confidence which could be perceived from intervention one to seven.

This also suggests that students’ motivation could give the confidence required to develop reflections around different topics related to situations of injustice.

Progressive Increase of acceptance of critical reading comprehension activities.

This sub-category explains the attitude of students towards critical reading activities which changed in a gradual positive way from the beginning until the end of the interventions. The diary, the observations and the focus group transcriptions were used for this subcategory.

This sub-category appeared after the evident negative reaction that students expressed when they were asked to think critically. This reaction changed gradually throughout the critical reading experiences in class. Perhaps, students became aware of the relevance of knowing more about the world that surrounds them:

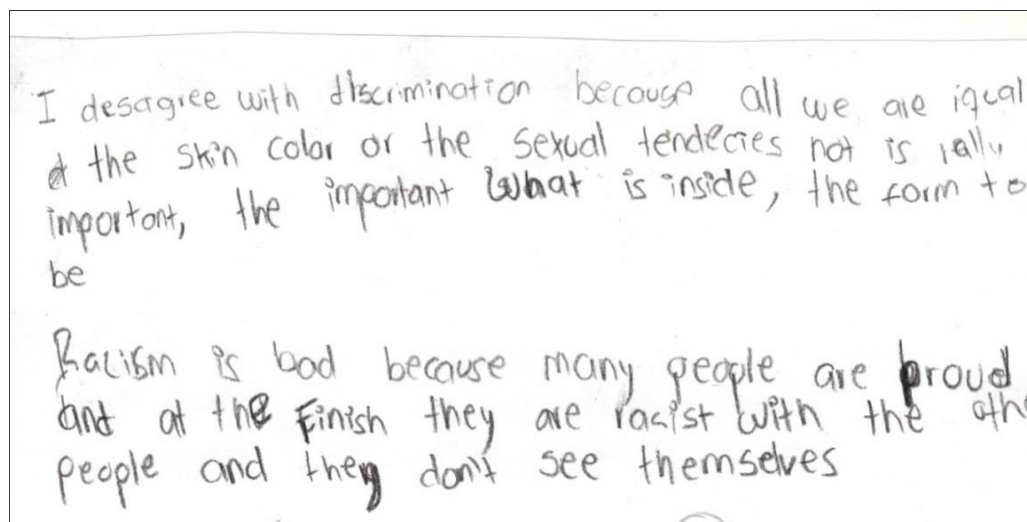
“Although it was a simple introductory activity, their faces showed they were kind of overwhelmed when I asked them to think in a different way. I told them this activity was not to answer literal questions but to reflect on the situation.” By the teacher. Personal diary. P. 1.

The excerpt above, taken from the diary, dated February 15th, 2014, shows that the first time students experienced the critical reading activities was not satisfactory.

“The week of March 22nd and today was very satisfactory. Children’s reports were really nice. It seems now they are not only getting used to critical reading but also passing to a higher level of criticism.” By the teacher. Personal diary. P. 4.

The above mentioned excerpt, taken from the diary and dated March 29th, 2014 is a sample of improvement.

In the following example taken from student 4's craft, dated March 22nd, 2014, confirms the aforementioned:



"A mi me pareció muy importante porque las noticias fueron informativas y las.. pues con las actividades, me gustó mucho porque entendí muy bien." Student 6. Focus group transcription. P. 1.

"Bueno, a mi me pareció bien porque pues la lectura crítica era muy dinámica, ehh, siempre la hacíamos en grupo y dábamos diferentes opiniones y todas valían porque pues todos dábamos una opinión que pensábamos cada uno, entonces me gustó mucho por eso." Student 5. Focus group transcriptions. P. 2.

These latter excerpts prove that the critical reading interventions were successful in terms of acceptance.

9.2.3.2 COGNITIVE DOMAIN

This category is defined as rational processes that every student experiments. Neuman and Friedman (2010) state that the cognitive domain refers to learning and recalling information and is often guided by Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive learning (1956, 1964). Krathwohl (2002) explains that this original taxonomy is frequently used "to classify curricular objectives and tests items in order to show the breadth or lack of breadth in the objectives and items across the spectrum of categories." Data showed that in the cognitive domain, the intervention influenced learners on the critical literacy skills and experience some difficulties.

Taking into account this category, three sub-categories emerged:

Critical Literacy Skills

Reflection on transformative action

This sub-category outlines the result of the critical mental processes experienced during the reading activities. Reflections lead to a change of attitudes towards situations of injustice around the world.

For this category used the diary, the observations, students' crafts, focus group transcriptions and the lesson plans reflections were used.

Throughout the critical reading activities, students showed changes in their opinions about intentions and suggestions of improvement for their future actions:

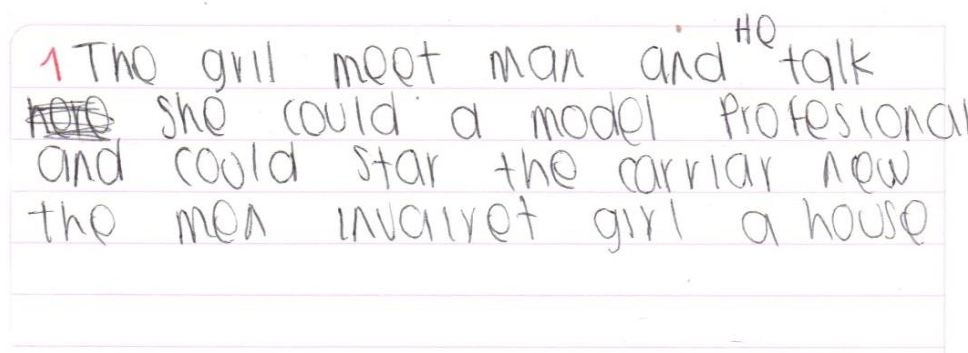
"They also said they knew that from now on they have to be careful with the way they talk and act with the presence of people with physical disabilities or with different tendencies." By the teacher. Persona diary. P. 4.

Excerpt from the diary, dated March 29th, 2014.

During the focus group activity, some students did important interventions when answering question number 1 about their opinions on the experience:

“Además... podíamos tener conciencia de algunos temas por ejemplo lo de los zapatos Nike, que es nuestra decisión si comprarlos o no comprarlos.” Student 4. Focus group transcription. P. 1.

During lesson plan 8, dated April 12th, 2014, students worked on sexual abuse. This is an example of a situation of risk proposed. Students gave solutions orally:



1 The girl meet man and ^{HO} talk
~~HO~~ she could a model Profesional
and could star the carrier new
the men invaiet girl a house

Student's craft.

In the example above, students 3 and 6 proposed as a solution not to talk to men who offer easy ways to get money. It may represent then a proof of students' development of reflection on action.

Recognition of the connection between oppressive ideologies presented in the texts and the world that surrounds them.

This sub-category is defined as the identification of elements that operate in a powerful way on people. For data analysis the focus group transcriptions, the observations, the diary and the lesson plans reflections were used. During the critical reading activities students showed they were really aware of the implications or consequences of some actions in life as well as the messages or ideologies implicit in some texts.

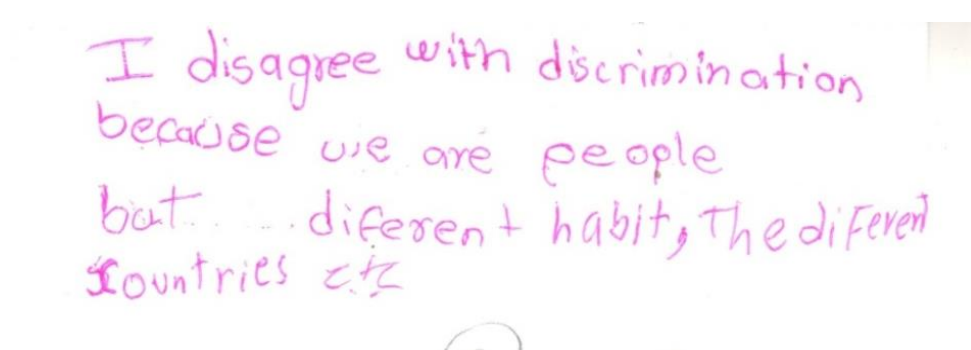
The following excerpts were taken from the reflection on lesson plan 3. It was a free participation activity made on March 1st, 2014, where students discussed the relationship between depression and consumerism:

“Teacher: How do you think consumerism is affecting our society? - All students provided ideas to construct the following answer: “People feel bad and they go to the supermarket and collect all the objects they see on t.v.” Teacher: What is the relationship with depression? –because they feel better when they buy.”

“Teacher: it becomes an obsession. Is it good? – No. Teacher: Why? – Because people buy and buy and “me voy a hacer feliz con lo material pero luego te das cuenta que para qué lo material si después igual te vas a sentir solo.” Student 1.

Almost all the answers regarding their opinions on ideologies or messages hidden in some texts demonstrated that students recognize many situations of oppression that govern our world very well.

The next example is taken from student 6’s craft. Lesson plan 5, dated March 22nd 2014, which worked the phenomenon of racism and/or discrimination, confirms the aforementioned:



Transformation of students

This sub-category is defined as the transformation that students showed in terms of opinions or viewpoint towards future projections. The observations and focus group transcriptions were tools used for data collection. Although the data collected

was not seen in an important range of frequency, it was necessary to take it into consideration on account of the qualitative character of the project which considered not only groups but also individuals. During the focus group activity students answered about what they learnt from this critical reading experience and here there is a very interesting answer that supports the transformative side of the interventions:

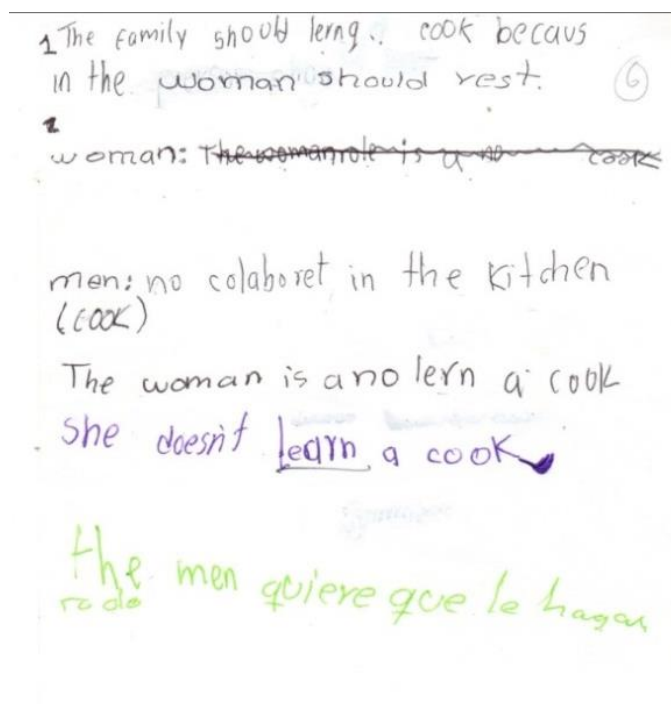
“Dar nuestras opiniones, eso nos puede ayudar para cuando uno esta en una empresa, para no tener timidez o miedo de enfrentarse a los demás sino que esto puede ayudarnos a practicar y no tener miedo a decir nuestras opiniones en el mundo en inglés o en español. Student 1: Focus group transcription. P. 3.

Difficulties

Linguistic Difficulties: Grammar and vocabulary.

This sub-category shows the problems students had that emerged regarding grammatical structures and words or expressions in order to understand and communicate. Observations, diary, focus group transcriptions and lesson plans reflections were used. Throughout the intervention period, the lack of understanding on structures and vocabulary present in the texts taken for critical reading was a big concern. There was also an evident improvement on this aspect; however, it was not clear whether it was due to the critical reading interventions or an external influence. Nevertheless, it was necessary to ask students orally in order to understand what they really wanted to say when writing opinions or proposals for solutions.

The following example was taken from student 6's craft, dated March 15th, 2014 shows students linguistic difficulties:



It was necessary to talk to the student in order to know what she really meant.

The following is an excerpt from the diary, dated February 8th, 2014, which shows that since the first day of class, where a diagnostic exam and a survey on reading were applied, students showed serious difficulties in the linguistic aspect. I was then, a primary teacher's concern:

"Students were struggling with the structure of the questions and in some cases with vocabulary. The difficulties were with basic things, for example, they did not recognize very well the possessives and got confused with information and yes/no questions. Two students did not know what "where are" means. I had to mime a lot and giving examples was a need in order for them to understand the texts given."

By the teacher. Personal diary. P. 1.

Students also expressed their feelings on this matter. During the focus group activity they were asked about their feelings when working on critical reading activities:

“Bien aunque en algunas lecturas me sentí nerviosa ya que como dice Estudiante 2, algunas de las oraciones que tenían esos textos tenían un poquito de complicación en lectura y también en... cómo se dice??... en... pronunciación.” Student 1.P. 2

“Yo me sentí bien y a la vez confundida porque algunas palabras no las entendía y pues eso me ayudaría a mejorar en la pronunciación y pues sí, me gusto también mucho.” Student 5. P 2.

Critical thinking difficulties

This sub-category is defined as the complications that some students had during the process of thinking critically when trying to understand the ideologies or social issues. It shows the difficulties students had in order to see beyond the literal reading. The diary and observations were the only tools for data analysis. This sub-category was seen especially the first weeks of the intervention period. Students were not used to thinking critically because of the previous approach which was focused on literal and, in exceptional cases inferential reading. The characteristic of reading as a critical process was shocking for students who claimed not to work with difficult texts. It took some time for students to get used to the new approach and for the activities to flow in a better way.

The following excerpt was taken from the diary, dated March 1st, 2014. It was written after a reading activity about depression:

“Even though, in this activity I spoke and influenced a lot; I hope it helps at least a little on their capacity of reflection.” By the teacher. Personal diary. P. 3.

It may imply that in order to collect good information, the teacher's intervention or influence was absolutely necessary. The next example from the diary, dated March 9th, 2014, confirms this type of difficulty:

“I worked on the analysis of activity 1, lesson plan 1. This analysis showed that in general, the group has a low level of critical reading comprehension. It was frustrating.” By the teacher. P. 3.

As for the following category, the focus is not on the student but on the teacher. Although they were not part of the general objective, they became an ally. The diary was the only tool for data collection in both sub-categories. During the process of planning, it was notorious the progressive comprehension of the TBT and Critical Pedagogy and by seeking a constant improvement, errors and new information appeared. This of course, helped in a great amount in the achievement of the objectives and also in the reliability of the information collected.

9.2.3.3 TEACHER'S UNDERSTANDING OF APPROACHES

This category is defined as the gradual understanding of the critical pedagogy as an approach chosen in order to give a different perspective to reading comprehension. Besides, it also represents a progressive understanding of TBL as a methodology for lesson planning.

At the beginning of the project this category was not in mind, it was not expected in the data collected and was not part of the objectives. However, it suddenly appeared and became a key element to relate it with the other categories.

Gradual comprehension of critical language pedagogy by the teacher

This emerging sub-category can be explained as the progressive understanding of the Critical Pedagogy teaching proposal. At first, it was unknown by the researcher teacher that the mother tongue was possible in the FL classes according to the critical pedagogy as well as the fact that working with this approach takes a long process to see some kind of transformation on students.

On the other hand, it is necessary to mention that while researching on theory it was possible to realize that this category represented one of the elements proposed by Crooks (2013) in his chapter about the components of critical language pedagogy.

Here, there is an example that supports this sub-category which : Taking from the diary, dated March 29th, 2014.

“First, I found out that mother tongue is not so bad when working with critical reading. Opinions can be accepted in mother tongue even if we are in an English class. So my frustration finished there.” By the teacher. P. 4.

Thus, the role of the teacher in the achievement of the objective was relevant; besides the fact of the learning effect that research itself gave to the teacher.

Crooks (2013) says that in order for teachers to have a critical perspective, it is necessary to have not only experience in the teaching practice but also to read books and to attend conferences as well as becoming a continuous researcher. This is what he considers one of the components of critical language pedagogy a critical stance by the teacher.

The teacher's knowledge about the content and the methodologies presented to the class influenced in a great amount, not only in the achievement of the objectives but also in the quality of the data collected. In this way, for the execution of this project, the gradual increase of knowledge on TBL and Critical Pedagogy allowed better teaching practices that motivated students in a positive manner in order to construct improved critical thinking environments and guidance. It was only possible through the dialogue with the research advisor who provided a guide to reach this gradual learning. At first, the knowledge about TBL was limited: knowing that it implied communication and that it was a branch of the Communicative Language Teaching. However, throughout the process it was possible to become aware of all the aspects to take into account such as the need of the linguistic component that the post-task should involve. Thus, it is also possible to recognize that the TBL can be used to develop critical thinking and not only to teach the language itself.

On second thought, it was possible to recognize that the lack of knowledge or preparation by the teacher regarding the methodologies used was a source of frustration. According to Crooks (2013), applying the Critical Pedagogy to our classes demands a long process for students to adapt and where teachers can find a bunch of difficulties, some of them very recurrent such as the shortage in materials resources and time. In my case, I and my students had to adapt to this new teaching perspective and devoted much time in understanding the approach, planning, finding and selecting the material or codes.

Gradual comprehension of TBL by the teacher.

This sub-category is defined as the progressive understanding of the Task-Based Teaching methodology. The diary was used as a tool for data collection. This understanding on TBL helped enormously in the development of the project. However, it is still an ongoing long process. So, as said in the personal diary, the learning gained with one activity led to the other activity's improvement. In this way, it was possible to know that post-tasks should have a linguistic component and that pre- tasks are transitions that must have something that makes students think about the future topic.

This example was taken from the personal diary, dated March 14th, 2014:

"It seems I had not understood really well the steps of TBL, I feel I could finally understand what each stage involves. Unfortunately the first three classes were done without taking into account some important aspects of TBL such as the linguistic need in the post-task and the importance of introducing the topic through the pre-task." By the teacher. P. 3.

The following text confirms this category: Also taken from the diary and written on March 29th, 2014:

"Understanding TBL was a long process. So the discovering seen with one activity led to the other activity's improvement. This is Action research. I started

discovering new things about this since the first lesson plan and now I am in lesson plan no. 6 and I still find new things to correct. There should be a grammatical component in the post for example, pre- tasks should be like transitions; they should have something that makes students think about the future topic.” By the teacher. P. 4.

To conclude, all these categories represent great findings that showed, at the same time the complexity that a critical approach refers. This complexity is based on the fact that students are rational individuals with different socio-affective backgrounds that make the classes a mixture of view-points, sensitivities and understandings.

10 Conclusions

This intervention that consisted on the implementation of a critical reading approach through task based language learning had significant effects on students' affective and cognitive domain as well. During the intervention, learners also faced some linguistic difficulties that affected their reading comprehension and their development of critical literacy because of their linguistic level and previous reading experiences and habits. Furthermore, data yielded showed a relationship between these significant effects and a gradual teacher's understanding of critical pedagogy and task based language learning which promoted a better development of the intervention. On one hand, in the affective domain, learners developed sensitivity towards situation of injustice, a gradual development of confidence to participate in class and a progressive increase of acceptance of critical reading comprehension activities. On the other hand, in the cognitive domain, learners reached some degree of critical literacy by reflecting on some transformative actions and a recognition of some of the oppressive ideologies present in the texts they read and the world that surround them.

Thus, a Critical Reading Approach can be possible only if we teach our students how to read critically the world as Freire (1970) says. He used this concept to highlight the importance of bringing topics related to oppression, power and injustice to our classrooms. In this way, applying a critical reading approach helped in the understanding on how to work with reading beyond the linguistic and discursive fields without leaving them aside.

It also proved that the level of English was not important and that reading is not necessarily decoding a written text but that teachers can take advantage of other elements present in multimodal texts today such as pictures as the multimodality concept explains. This concept shows that it is possible to combine the written code, audio and visual texts in order to present create material for the classes. In addition, as Crooks (2013) says, the process of adapting to critical language pedagogy requires time; it is not something that appears immediately

after you start the critical process, but it appears long after. It represents a long, carefully organized process.

Nevertheless, academic success or better students' development of critical literacy requires an understanding of its underlying principles and the pedagogical procedures to implement it such as critical pedagogy, critical language pedagogy and task based language learning.

For instance, as in the case of the implementation, the teacher got acquainted with students' literacy practices and understood the role of their first language to encourage dialogue and reflection. Furthermore, in order to develop critical literacy teachers should promote reflection which can help reduce the gaps between pre-established beliefs and freedom in thinking. Unfortunately, our school system does not permit a correct application of these critical practices because as Freire (1970) says, schools are designed to perpetuate dominating and oppressive ideologies. The students who participated in this research did experience problems regarding their ability to think critically because of their lack of exposure to these kind of reading approaches. Teachers must also be careful in the selection of the "codes" taken to the classroom; these should be as authentic as possible, since it does not only work as a motivating element but also as a reference to identify ideologies (Crooks, 2013).

As for the role of the teacher in this kind of interventions, Kincheloe (2010) states that the idea is not only learning about pedagogical techniques but it is also necessary to know the social, economic and psychological dimension of the community we are working with if what we want some academic success.

Additionally, TBLL can also be seen as a way to foster language learning without studying the language as a system only. It is what we can call a Task-Based Critical Language Pedagogy. This project aimed at developing learners' critical literacy through critical language pedagogy and task based language learning by focusing learners on communicative tasks in three phases (pre, while and post task) and some attention to language in the post tasks.

This intervention also provided some insights for further research or pedagogical interventions. The development of students' critical literacy cannot only be from the reading comprehension perspective but also taking into consideration the four traditional skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). This practice may be then cross-curricular in which learners' skills focus on their critical literacy without ignoring the development of their communicative competence through the four abilities.

Although this intervention can be considered fruitful, it is necessary to have more time if what we want is to enrich the data collected; the necessity of following the pacing programmed by the institution and the time assigned were limitations in the selection of topics as well as the number of reading activities that could have been worked on.

Nevertheless, from the perspective as a novice researcher the outlook is also interesting. The needs analysis before getting into teaching practices is an indisputable prerequisite. It gives researchers a clear panorama and therefore, all types of selections needed for activities and for the implementation of data collecting tools can promise good results. Kincheloe (2010) explains that teachers should get acquainted with all the students' worlds and/or contexts in order to take them into account when planning their lessons. It is also a must to know exactly what the researcher is looking for in order to ask the appropriate questions and guarantee the quality of the data collected. Although a needs analysis was done, the results were not as expected. It suggests that a survey is not enough and that more individual interviews to students and, if possible to parents plus diagnostic exams are necessary in order to collect data of good quality that contribute to a needs analysis more critical and accurate for planning. The survey on students' reading habits showed that they really need to work more on their critical level of reading comprehension. On that ground, the readings were selected but students did not seem motivated. Once multimodal texts were used, they felt better

encouraged to get involved. It seems that survey had been enough and that multimodal texts were never considered as a source of material by the teacher at the beginning. Later, the teacher inferred that these kinds of texts were part of their reading practices.

What is more, in order to collect good quality information, it is fundamental the analysis of students' craft such as written activities, notes or posters. They give first-hand information which gives reliability to the project. Besides, reading well selected texts of primary sources and an exhaustive seek of similar projects that can give us insights on theory and investigation, creates a great guidance to achieve the goals avoiding chaotic processes.

To conclude, research should be a continuous end-less process on account of the changes the humanity suffers and because the innovation is the weapon of war for the teachers. Therefore, as Giroux in McLaren and Kincheloe (2007) says it is our commitment as educators that students learn how to construct a more socially just world.

11 Appendixes

11.1 Appendix 1: Survey on students` reading comprehension needs and skills.

La siguiente encuesta se realiza como parte del desarrollo del trabajo de grado de la Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras en la Universidad del Valle titulado “Un Enfoque Crítico para la Comprensión de Lectura en Inglés: Intervención Pedagógica con un Grupo de Adolescentes en una Institución de Carácter no formal”. Este documento sólo busca recoger información acerca de los hábitos de lectura de los estudiantes del curso Junior 1 y así poder diseñar una intervención que permita alcanzar nuestros objetivos.

Name:

Age:

1. Do you like reading? Why?

2. How much do you enjoy reading?

- Very much ____ - Just ok ____ - Not so much ____

3. What motivates you to read?

- Entertainment ____ - School Responsibilities ____

- Other ____ Which one?

4. How often do you read material in English?

- Once a week ____ - Twice a week ____ - Other ____

5. For how long do you usually read every time you read?

6. Where do you usually read?

7. Do you think reading in English is important in your life? Why?

8. What do you choose to read?

- Print book___ - E-books___ - Magazines ___
- Newspapers___ - Websites___ - Others

9. What kind of texts do you read?

- Novels/short stories___ - Comics___ - Scientific texts___
- Advertisements___ - Manuals___ - Reviews/opinions___

10. What genres do you prefer?

- Police thrillers___ - Science fiction___ Love stories___
- Epic stories___ - Others

11.2 Appendix 2: Diagnostic Exam

DIAGNOSTIC EXAM

El siguiente examen se realiza como parte del desarrollo del trabajo de grado de la Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras en la Universidad del Valle titulado “Un Enfoque Crítico para la Comprensión de Lectura en Inglés: Intervención Pedagógica con un Grupo de Adolescentes en una Institución de Carácter no formal”. Este documento sólo busca recoger información para diagnosticar el nivel de lectura de los estudiantes del curso Junior 1 y así poder diseñar una intervención que permita alcanzar nuestros objetivos.

NAME:

DATE:

- Read the following piece of news.



A resident from California saw a mountain lion near his house. He called the emergency services because mountain lions are not just big cats, they are wild dangerous animals.

People who take care of the animals and wildlife in the area came to help in this situation. They put the mountain lion to sleep and moved it back to nature in a big car. The male animal weighed 56 kilos. Mountain lions are common in California but they rarely attack people.

<http://www.newsinlevels.com/#>

- Who saw the animal?

- What type of animal does the text talk about?

- How heavy was the animal?

- Read the following statements and answer the questions.

From this building Andy and Mary can see the ocean. They are staying here for about 4 days. This seems to be a great vacation.	Where are Andy and Mary now?
Andrew goes to the school every day. His students think that he is a very responsible person.	What does Andrew do?
I am very worried. Sam did not fix the roof and the house is flooded.	What is the weather like?
I am only 13 years old!	Is the person old or young?

- Read the following comic strip and reflect on the questions.



<http://www.timetravelturtle.com/2011/11/mafalda-statue-buenos-aires-argentina/#sthash.0XcVSMmW.dpbs>

- Where are Mafalda and her mother?
- How do you think the relationship between Mafalda and her mother is?
- What is the possible environment in their house?
- What does Mafalda mean with “And if it’s Happiness?”
- What kind of family is this?
- What does the author want people to reflect about?
- Can you identify a social problem here? Explain.

11.3 Appendix 3. Examples of readings proposed by the institution's textbook.

Example 1 (Taken from the original textbook: NEXT STOP 5 by Viv Lambert. MACMILLAN Editorial)

Example 2 (Taken from the original textbook: NEXT STOP 5 by Viv Lambert.

Unit 1 Lesson 7

1 Read and complete the chart.

Canada



Vancouver is a big city next to the ocean in North America. There are some beautiful beaches and there's an island, too. The great Rocky Mountains are behind the city.

kids' guide to Vancouver



There are lots of things to do. You can go skiing, walking, or horseback riding in the mountains. You can go diving and swimming in the ocean or you can go shopping or visit the buildings in the city.

Why come to Vancouver? Because it's a great city for a vacation with kids!



There are lots of interesting buildings and museums in the city. See fish, whales, frogs, and snakes at the Aquarium and learn about dinosaurs at Science World.

Don't forget to send a postcard home!

town or city	geography	sports and activities	interesting buildings
Vancouver	ocean	skiing	

2 Ask and answer.

- Why is Vancouver a great city?
- Is the city in the mountains?
- Which sports can you do in Vancouver?
- Which animals can you see at the Aquarium?
- Which places do you want to visit?

It's Sticker Time

Which animals sing in the ocean around Vancouver?

Go to pages 4 and 5. Complete.

16

Unit 1 Lesson 3



Reading

 **1** Listen and read. Write the animal names in the sets.



dog

Pets for houses



Pets for apartments

Which pet?

When you're choosing a pet, it's important to think about your home. Do you live in a house with a big yard? Do you live in an apartment building with a small balcony and lots of neighbors? Dogs like big yards. Cats and rabbits like yards, but they're OK in apartments, too. Fish and hamsters are small

I have a pet ferret. Ferrets are funny, beautiful, and very friendly. They aren't dangerous, dirty, or noisy. (But it is important for small children to be careful with ferrets.) They're smaller than dogs and they're happy to live in apartments. I think they're more interesting than cats. I play with my ferret



Here's a letter from a reader about her pet ferret.

11.4 Appendix 4. Diagnostic exam. A sample of a student's answer on critical reading.

<http://www.timetravelturtle.com/2011/11/mafalda-status-buenos-aires-argentina/#sthash.QXcYSMmW.dpbs>

- Where are Mafalda and her mother? *in the house*
- How do you think is the relationship between Mafalda and her mother?
the relationship Mafalda and her mother is protect
- What is the possible environment in their house?

- What does Mafalda mean with "And if it's Happiness?" *it's a happy*
- What kind of family is this?
a family is problem
- What does the author want people to reflect about?
The sentiment
- Can you identify a social problem here? Explain. *In a don't open the door*

11.5 Appendix 5 Reading Comprehension Activities.

11.5.1 Reading comprehension activity No. 1 Gossiping in our society:

PRE

Do you think there is a neighborhood with no gossipy people?

WHILE

Let us read the following quote. Write on the board: ***“Every man is surrounded by a neighborhood of voluntary spies.”*** By Jane Austen.

Taken from: <http://thinkexist.com/quotes/with/keyword/neighborhood/>.

Have students read and try to clarify unknown words with them. Write the following questions on pieces of paper and paste them around the classroom: What is the quote about? Why does the writer say “voluntary spies”? What is the social problem we can live with our neighbors? What do you think is the message the author want to give us with this quote?

Ask students to write the answers on pieces of paper to pick up. Then socialize answers.

POST

Do you have gossipy neighbors in your neighborhood? Have you been victim of gossiping? Socialize some experiences.

Ask them to work in pairs and create a funny gossip. Have them dramatize a situation and have the rest of students reflect on that.

11.5.2 Reading comprehension activity No. 2 Depression in our globalized society.

PRE

Show students the pic of an old woman taking care of many pets. Ask: What type of people try to find company in pets? Why do you think these people look for this type of company? Is that healthy?



Taken from: <http://razonesparamaryrespetaralosanimales.blogspot.com/2011/11/blog-post.html>

WHILE

Hand out a text from a blog called “Dogs Help People Overcome Depression and Anxiety”

- [Home](#)
- [News by Industry](#)
- [RSS Feeds by Industry](#)
- [Our Services](#)
- [Distribute Your News](#)

Dogs Help People Overcome Depression and Anxiety

[WEBWIRE](#) – Thursday, February 03, 2011

(Nutley, NJ)—Dogs may be a key to helping the millions of people in the United States who are affected by depression and anxiety each year.

Researchers at the University of Missouri-Columbia noticed particular hormonal changes that occur in humans when they interact with dogs. The study revealed that petting a dog even for a few minutes creates “feel good” hormones in humans, such as serotonin, prolactin and oxytocin. This discovery, experts believe, could help people cope with depression and certain stress-related disorders.

It seems that dogs have the ability to provide consistent psychological and physical comfort to their owners. In fact, it was found that a pet can be even more calming and protective than a spouse or a friend.

“From my personal experience I know that depression is a very dangerous disorder. It would have ruined my life if it weren’t for my dogs—especially my pit bull, Shelby,” says Joe Dwyer, dog trainer, owner of four dogs, motivational speaker and author of the new book “Shelby’s Grace.” “Shelby motivated and encouraged me to do things that helped me get out of my depression and see the world from a different prospective. She is magical.”

In his book, Mr. Dwyer describes his remarkable odyssey with Shelby, an abused pit bull he saved from a shelter. In return, she saved him from terrible depression and anxiety, and together they recovered their senses of purpose. Now Shelby is a certified therapy dog who helps people in difficult times.

It’s a proven fact that people around dogs tend to be calmer, more relaxed and softer. They smile more often and are happier. For these and many other reasons, therapy dogs are now widely used in nursing homes and psychiatric clinics.

“Good companionship that can calm you and lift your spirit is the key to overcoming

depression and anxiety" says Mr. Dwyer. "Dogs can provide this for us. They also keep their owners on track and disciplined because they live in their homes and always available."

Depression is a mood disorder that interferes with everyday life for an extended period of time. The most common depression signs are:

- Loneliness
- Sadness
- Feeling worthless
- Feeling unloved
- Having no purpose in life

"Daily worries and problems create a lot of stress, and there is no doubt that dogs can be a powerful distraction. Mine naturally shift my attention when they are around. As soon as I see my dogs wagging their tails, I am relaxed and I smile" says Mr. Dwyer. "Hopefully more people will realize that having a pet is more than just a hobby."

Taken from:

<http://www.webwire.com/ViewPressRel.asp?ald=131476#.UwfypmJdXPU>

Discuss the following questions: Why do you think some people feel depressed? Or What is the origin or the cause of the human depression in our western society? How do you think consumerism is affecting our society? Give examples. Has it happened to you? Why do you think it happened? How would you avoid depression? Or What should people do to avoid depression in life? Is a pet a good solution?

Students can discuss the questions in pairs. Each pair may be in charge of one or two.

Students answer orally and teacher takes notes and records their voices. Students can discuss in groups first and then socialize together.

POST

Ask them if they liked the text.

11.5.3 Reading comprehension activity No. 3 The role of the woman in the family core.

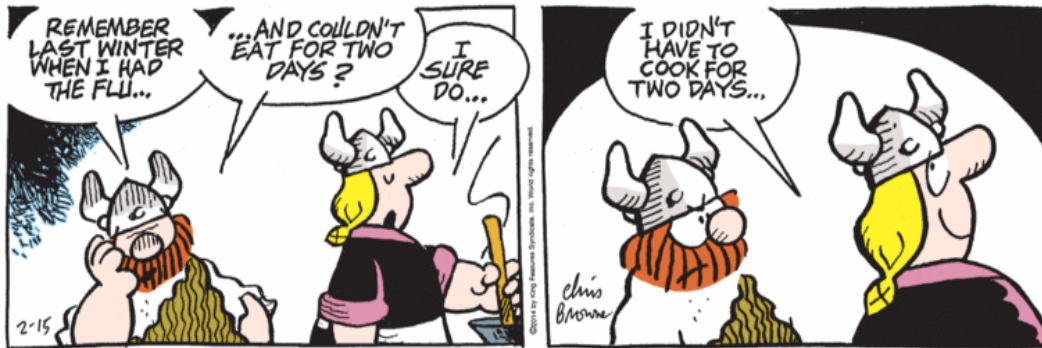
PRE

Show them a pic of Hagar the Horrible. Ask them if they know him and explain the type of criticisms he does. Ask: Mention 3 things you can't do when you have flu. Now, remember the last time your mother had flu and say 3 things she couldn't do.



WHILE

Take students to the multimedia room and show a comic strip about Hagar the Horrible.



This comic strip, created by Richard Brownie was found at <http://www.hagardunor.net/comicsByDate.php>.

Identify the grammar and discuss the critical questions.

What is the comic strip about?

Who are the characters?

What happened to Hagar?

Does his wife remember what happened to him? Why?

Look at the wife's face. What is her expression when she says "I didn't have to cook for two days"?

Why do you think she looks happy when she says that?

Is there any family problem here? Which one?

Who cooks in your house?

Do you help at home with the chores?

Do you think it is fair that a man does chores at home?

What would you do to solve Hagar and Helga's family problem?

POST

Ask them if they liked the cartoon and why. Ask them to write a reflection on a piece of paper about if they consider fair to think of women as the only one who should be in charge of the house chores. They also can record their reflections and send this record to your mail.

11.5.4 Reading comprehension activity No. 4 Racism and other types of discrimination.

PRE

Show the pic of some Singaporean women. Ask students to tell you some of the physical traits they can see from these women and compare them with our Colombian physical traits.



WHILE

Hand out sheets of paper with a picture taken from an application called 9gag.



Have students read and discuss the following questions:

What is the information the picture is showing us?

What do you think the topic is?

What is the message the text tries to give us?

What is the difference between appreciation and proud?

Should we feel appreciation or proud?

Are white people the only racist people? Why?

Where does racism come from?

Are physical and cultural traits differences an excuse to discriminate people?

Do you feel different from black, white or other race? Why?

Have students write a reflection about racism.

POST

Ask them to tell you how they feel talking about this topic. Ask if they feel it is necessary to continue talking about this and in which places it is necessary to touch these types of topics and why.

Evaluation: Students write a reflection about racism.

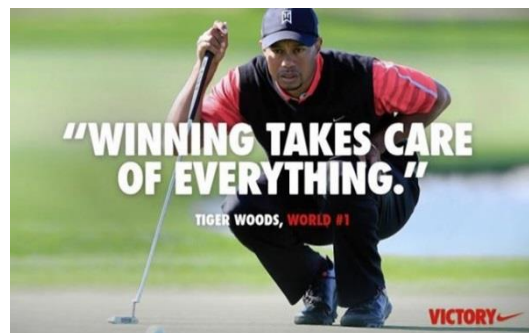
11.5.5 Reading comprehension activity No. 5 Violence generated by brands and child exploitation.

PRE

Do you like sneakers? Which brand do you prefer? Start discussing about their brand preferences regarding shoes or clothes.

WHILE

Show a picture “advertisement of Nike”.



Taken from: <http://www.adweek.com/adfreak/nikes-new-tiger-woods-ad-says-more-about-us-him-148172>

Discuss the following questions: What do you see? What do you think this picture is trying to tell us? What sensation do you feel when you see this picture?

Now, look at this picture: Show another advertisement “a famous person with Nike shoes”. Discuss the following questions: What does the picture say? What does it mean with “victory” and “Tiger Woods No. 1”?

- Everything is good so far. But did you know that these advertisements are so powerful that some people kill to have Nike accessories? That is the first issue.
- The second issue is what the company does. Do you know what Nike does to produce its shoes?

Hand out text about Nike's exploitation.

Albion Monitor / News

Nike Accused of "Slave" Child Labor

by **Andreas Harsono**

(AR) JAKARTA -- **An Indonesian** labor advocate said that American shoe maker Nike Inc. is employing Indonesian children under 16 years old to produce their athletic sneakers, confirming an earlier report by an American lobbying group that the children work in sweatshops like "slaves."

Indera Nababan of the non-profit Yakoma PGI labor advocacy organization said on Monday that the employees are paid the official minimum wage of 5,200 Indonesian rupiah (US \$2.17) per day, which is "just enough to survive to the following day to work again."

"How can you live with [\$2.17] in an expensive metropolis like Jakarta," asked Nababan, adding that Nike Inc. has more than a dozen subcontractors in Indonesia that employs child workers, he said.

Taken from: <http://www.monitor.net/monitor/9606a/nikelabor.html>

Have them read and discuss: What is the issue in this piece of news? Do you agree or disagree with child labor? Why? Is it fair that children work? Why? Would it be fair to be paid that way even if you are adult? Why? What do you think about Nike now? Would you continue buying this brand? Why?

POST

Ask them if they liked the activity. Have them work in pairs and create a poster writing the considerations they think people should have when shopping for something.

11.5.6 Reading comprehension activity No. 6. The society towards endangered animals.

PRE

Show pictures of several endangered animals and ask them some info. about them. Ask students if they know what they have in common.



Blue and Gold Macaws (endangered)



Taken from : <http://worldwildlife.org>

WHILE

Hand out copies of a text, a short article about endangered animals.

The screenshot shows the Mother Nature Network (MNN) website. The header includes the MNN logo, the date "WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2014", a Google Custom Search bar, and social media links for Facebook (398k likes) and Twitter (Follow). A navigation bar lists categories: EARTH MATTERS, HEALTH, LIFESTYLE, GREEN TECH, ECO-BIZ & MONEY, FOOD & DRINK, YOUR HOME, and FAMILY. Below this, a breadcrumb trail reads "MNN.COM > ECO-GLOSSARY". The main article is titled "Endangered Species" and includes a photograph of a white tiger. The text explains that a species is considered endangered if it is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range, and lists various species including birds, insects, fish, reptiles, mammals, crustaceans, flowers, grasses, and trees. It also mentions that there are approximately 1,300 endangered or threatened species in the U.S. today. The article further discusses the importance of biological diversity to human society and the impact of human activities on the environment. A sidebar titled "OUR FAVORITE STORIES" features two articles: "12 exceptionally smart Hollywood stars" and "10 beautifully useful things made from useless trash".

Endangered Species

A species is considered endangered if it is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. Species include birds, insects, fish, reptiles, mammals, crustaceans, flowers, grasses and trees. There are approximately 1,300 endangered or threatened species in the U.S. today.

The importance of biological diversity to human society is immeasurable. However, human activities the world over are causing the progressive loss of species of plants and animals at a rate far higher than the natural background rate of extinction.

An estimated 40 percent of the global economy is based on biological products and processes. Poor people, especially those living in areas of low agricultural productivity, depend especially heavily on the genetic diversity of the environment. The effective use of biodiversity at all levels — genes, species and ecosystems — is therefore a precondition for sustainable development. (Source: EPA, UNEP, NOAA / Photo: Flickr)

OUR FAVORITE STORIES

12 exceptionally smart Hollywood stars
They boast advanced degrees, Ivy League diplomas and Mensa-qualifying IQs.

Can licorice and coconut oil prevent cavities?

10 beautifully useful things made from useless trash

Taken from: <http://www.mnn.com/eco-glossary/endangered-species>

Discuss the following questions: Where does the text come from? Is it reliable? What type of text is it? What is its title? What is the general topic? Which species are considered endangered? Why? Do you think it is fair that we as humans sacrifice animals' lives to our own benefit? Why? What can be the consequences of the ecology destruction? Which are the possible solutions? Do the governments do something to prevent future problems regarding environment? What? Is it working?

POST

Take students to the multimedia room and ask them to look up information about one endangered animal and prepare a brochure where they give general

information about the animal and a short reflection about what they think regarding humans' actions. Show them a brochure for them to know how it is.

At the moment of analyzing the brochures, focus on present tenses, past tenses or past or present progressive tenses and have students identify them.

11.5.7 Reading comprehension activity No. 7 Sexual abuse.

PRE

When do you usually speak using past tenses? Elicit: stories.

What kind of stories do you like?

I personally like strong experiences of other people that make me reflect. For example stories about abuse.

What is sexual abuse and how can you avoid it?

WHILE

Hand out copies of a story about a girl who suffered with her stepfather abuse.

Trisha's story



One of the causes pushing children to abandon their homes and go to the streets is abuse. Sexual abuse is one of the most appalling forms of abuse and it can affect both girls and boys. In most cases sexual abuse happens at home and the author is a family member. Children are threatened and therefore can't speak out to denounce their suffering. They find themselves trapped in a vicious cycle of violence; until they can't take it anymore and run away. They end up on the street because they have nowhere else to go.

This is what happened to Trisha (not her real name). She ran away from the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo with her mother and found refuge in northern Zambia. Her mother remarried to a Zambian man. When her stepfather started abusing her sexually, Trisha was too scared to talk to her mother for fear she would not believe her and chase her away. But after a while she could not cope with her stepfather's continuous abuses and she ran away from home.

She was found in the streets of Kitwe by our partner Friends of the Street Children. Trisha was skinny, dirty, scared and she only survived by begging and scavenging in the streets. She told one of our partner's outreach workers that she was thinking about going into prostitution as she could not stand staying hungry anymore.

Trisha was brought to our partner's residential center for girls. She's been living there for two years now. She goes to school, she works in the garden where girls learn how to grow vegetables, she helps the younger girls. She looks happy, and like any other adolescent girl in the world, she thinks about her future. *"I like going to school, my favorite subjects are English and Social Development Studies. I want to be a reporter when I grow up. You know like one of those reporters from the BBC who go around the world and tell the people about the major events affecting men and women in their countries"*.

Taken from: Webpage: Street Child Africa. Stories of African Children.

<http://www.streetchildafrica.org.uk/pages/stories-from-th-trishas-story-378.html>

Students read, discuss to understand and ask about unknown words. Then, discuss the following questions: What happened to the girl? Where did it happen? Do you think it only happens in other countries? Why sexual abuse happens? Which are the situations that put children in risk? Should parents be punished to leave their children unprotected? How can you avoid these situations? Do you know any campaign against sexual abuse? Where? Are they working? What would you do if you find yourself in a similar situation of abuse?

Ask children work in pairs and ask them to think of a risky situation that can facilitate abusers to violent a child. Then, they also have to think about the ways to avoid this situation and solutions in case it happens. They are to write it on a piece of paper.

POST

Ask student how they feel now after reading about children sexual abuse. Discuss about the way simple past and past continuous is used (when to use both)

11.6 Appendix 6. Focus group

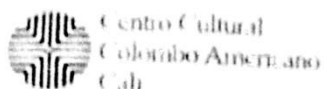
GRUPO FOCAL JUNIOR 1

INTERVENCIONES EN LECTURA CRÍTICA EN INGLÉS

Buenos días, el siguiente ejercicio hace parte de las actividades de recolección de datos que favorecerán la evaluación de este trabajo de grado, que como ustedes ya saben tomó un enfoque crítico para trabajar con la habilidad de lectura en inglés. La siguiente actividad se denomina grupo focal y es básicamente una entrevista grupal que busca conocer sus opiniones o percepciones sobre las intervenciones de lectura realizadas en clase.

1. ¿Cómo les pareció esta experiencia de lectura crítica?
2. ¿Cómo se sintieron durante las actividades de lectura crítica?
3. ¿Ya habían trabajado de esta manera antes?
4. ¿Qué creen que favoreció y qué creen que no favoreció en el desarrollo de las actividades de lectura en clase?
5. ¿Qué aprendieron con estas actividades de lectura crítica?
6. ¿Creen que las actividades o las preguntas para discusión fueron difíciles?
¿Por qué?
7. ¿Les gustaría seguir trabajando con este enfoque? ¿Por qué?
8. En algunas ocasiones la participación fue muy limitada, ¿por qué creen que esto sucedió?
9. En la encuesta sobre hábitos y gustos en lectura casi todos ustedes respondieron que acostumbraban a leer novelas, sin embargo al momento de realizar la primera actividad de lectura crítica con un texto extenso ustedes opinaron que el texto no les había gustado mucho por el mismo hecho de ser extenso. ¿Podrían explicar la contradicción?
10. ¿Creen que su forma de pensar frente a ciertos temas tratados en las actividades de lectura crítica cambió y los hará actuar de forma diferente? O ¿Ustedes sienten que no influenció en sus vidas de una manera significativa?
11. ¿Hay algo que quisieran cambiar en la forma de trabajar textos para lectura crítica?

11.7 Appendix 7. Pacing.



PACING GUIDELINES JUNIOR 1-NEXT STOP 5: UNITS 1-5 16 CLASSES

CLASS	UNIT	FUNCTIONS
1 2 3	1 WELCOME TO CANADA!	-Talk about neighborhoods and neighbors -Talk about pets and friends - Write descriptive texts -Value-respect
4 5 6	2 WOW IT'S EGYPT!	-Give ordinal numbers and dates -Talk about the past -Talk about famous people in History -Write a blog entry -Value: respect older people
7 8	3 WELCOME TO SINGAPORE! MIDTERM REPORT	-Talk about what someone else was doing in the past -Write where you were at a specific time
9	3 WELCOME TO SINGAPORE!	-Describe a schedule -Talk about animals -Value: Punctuality-don't be late
10 11 12	4 WELCOME TO ECUADOR!	-Talk about what two or more people were doing in the past -Write about a past experience -talk about endangered species -Value: Ecology- think about the environment
13 14 15	5 HERE'S AUSTRALIA!	-Tell a story or describe an event that happened in the past -Talk about how people spend their free time -Write a newspaper article
16	FINAL REPORT	Review material from the course

11.8 Appendix 8 Informed consent forms

Fecha:

Nombre del estudiante:

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

En el marco de desarrollo de mi trabajo de grado de la Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras en la Universidad del Valle titulado “Un Enfoque Crítico para la Comprensión de Lectura en Inglés: Intervención Pedagógica con un Grupo de Adolescentes en una Institución de Carácter no formal”, solicitamos de forma muy respetuosa la autorización para recoger información de su hijo(a) a través de las entrevistas orales, encuestas y actividades que serán parte de este proyecto. El trabajo básicamente busca analizar el impacto de una intervención con actividades de comprensión de lectura a un nivel crítico.

Las preguntas y actividades sólo estarán relacionadas con la habilidad de comprensión lectora en lengua extranjera y en ningún momento generaran riesgo alguno. La información requerida será tratada con confidencialidad y se respetará la identidad de los participantes.

Debe tener en cuenta que la participación es voluntaria y si acepta puede retirarse en el momento que lo desee, así como también tiene el derecho a que le sean aclaradas sus dudas en caso de que se genere alguna.

Con su participación lograremos alcanzar más rápidamente nuestros objetivos; lo que ayudará en un futuro a encontrar y aplicar acciones que promuevan las actividades de comprensión de lectura crítica en las clases de inglés de esta institución.

Por favor firme esta carta que autoriza la realización de las respectivas entrevistas, encuestas y actividades y que demuestra que usted entiende la naturaleza y el propósito de este trabajo.

Si tiene alguna inquietud al respecto no dude en contactarme personalmente en la institución o escribir al correo electrónico: lina2mg@hotmail.com.

Profesora: Lina María Caipe

Firma del padre de familia

CC.

Cali, 1 de febrero de 2014

Señora Claudia Gutiérrez

Coordinadora del Programa de Kids and Teens de la institución.

Solicitud de Autorización para la Realización de una Intervención Pedagógica en la institución.

En el marco de desarrollo del trabajo de grado titulado “**A CRITICAL APPROACH TO READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH: TEACHING INTERVENTION WITH A GROUP OF TEENAGERS AT A NON-FORMAL EDUCATION INSTITUTION**” de la Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras en la Universidad del Valle, solicito de forma muy respetuosa su autorización para llevar a cabo las entrevistas, encuestas y actividades que serán parte de este proyecto. El trabajo básicamente busca analizar el impacto de una intervención con actividades de comprensión de lectura a un nivel crítico.

Las preguntas y actividades sólo estarán relacionadas con la habilidad de comprensión lectora en lengua extranjera y/o las percepciones de los estudiantes acerca de la intervención y en ningún momento generaran riesgo alguno para los estudiantes.

Con esta oportunidad se logrará alcanzar más rápidamente los objetivos propuestos; lo que ayudará en un futuro a encontrar y aplicar acciones que promuevan las actividades de comprensión de lectura crítica en las clases de inglés de la institución.

Autoriza: _____

cc.

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