PROJECT-BASED INSTRUCTION FOR THE APPROPRIATION OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK IN SANTUARIO- RISARALDA

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ABSTRACT

This classroom project addresses the reflection process that practitioners developed as part of an indirect methodological implementation procedure, regarding the impact that Project-Based Instruction (PBI) had on the teaching-learning environment of English classes at a state, rural high-school in the municipality of Santuario, Risaralda, Colombia. Considering that existing literature about Project-Based Instruction has reported positive effects on both the development of citizenship skills and the target language (English in this case), practitioners collected data to analyze and determine the likelihood of such contentions in this particular context.

The present classroom project was conducted with the participation of 110 students divided into 4 groups, each group representing one grade from 8th to 11th and one English in-service teacher for all of the groups. The methods implemented for the data collection process consisted on reflective logs and focus groups. Results showed that including projects as part of the L2 instructional process promoted Group-Work skills such as active participation, leadership, commitment and responsibility. Nevertheless, due to a lack of data related to language development, results in regard to this component were not found. Finally, both the in-service teacher and student-researchers reported their pedagogical skills as well as lesson planning abilities were strengthened as a result of the implementation process.

RESUMEN

Este proyecto de clase informa sobre el proceso de reflexión que desarrollaron los practicantes como parte de un procedimiento de implementación metodológica indirecta, con relación al impacto que el Aprendizaje Basado en Proyectos (PBI) tuvo sobre el ambiente de enseñanza-aprendizaje de las clases de inglés en un colegio público y rural del municipio de Santuario, Risaralda, Colombia. Teniendo en cuenta que en la literatura académica relacionada al Aprendizaje Basado en Proyectos se ha reportado efectos positivos tanto en habilidades ciudadanas como en el desarrollo del Idioma, los estudiantes-investigadores recolectaron información para analizar y determinar la aplicabilidad de dichos hallazgos en este contexto específico.

El presente Proyecto de clase fue llevado a cabo con la participación de 110 estudiantes divididos en 4 grupos, cada grupo representando un grado de 8º a 11 º, con la participación de un profesor titular para todos los grupos. Los métodos implementados para la recolección de datos fueron el uso de formatos de reflexión y el establecimiento de grupos focales. Los resultados arrojaron evidencia relacionada a como la inclusión de proyectos como parte del proceso instruccional en lengua promovió la emergencia de habilidades de trabajo en grupo, entre éstas: participación activa, liderazgo, compromiso y responsabilidad. Sin embargo, por falta de datos relacionados al desarrollo de la lengua, no fue posible metodológicamente el obtener resultados sobre este componente; finalmente, tanto el profesor titular como los practicantes reportaron un fortalecimiento en sus habilidades pedagógicas como también en la planeación de clases.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Justification

The process of acquiring / learning a Second or Foreign Language (L2) comprises multiple opportunities and advantages from the point of view of cultural enrichment, amelioration of inter-communicative competences for the economically-open contemporary societies (yet characterized by their diverse linguistic nature), access to state-of-the-art scientific research, efficient overcoming of the existing digital divide among nations as well as cooperative social integration. (UNESCO, 2005).

One of the major advantages resulting from acquiring and/or developing communicative competence in L2; and specifically in English, is the resulting integration among nations. Such integration fosters changes in cultural skills by means of language interaction. According to Parra (2013), the relation between language and culture is highly positive as participants must reflect upon their own beliefs, culture, behaviors and attitudes in order to develop a set of social and mental skills to be able to interact and communicate with people with different cultural backgrounds.

Another highly relevant aspect concerning the learning of a language, and more specifically the English language, is the possibility of accessing world-wide state-of-the-art scientific knowledge. According to the UNESCO Statistical Institute of Quebec INRS (2000), 46,6% of the total world scientific publications included in the Science Citation Index (SCI) were developed by The United States, United Kingdom and Canada, which are predominantly English-speaking countries. Therefore, during the last decade, there has been an incipient initiative from the Colombian Ministry of Education to provide opportunities for the learning of English, as this language has undoubtedly positioned as

the international Lingua Franca of science, businesses and technology. In this order of ideas, there is a national interest to become a more competent nation via the improvement of communicative competences in English, in order for citizens to apply for better job opportunities, strengthen scientific national production and increase academic mobility.

Accordingly, the Colombian Ministry of education, the regional educational secretaries and a number of companies from the private sector, have designed and presented a project under the name of "Programa Nacional de Inglés 2015 - 2025, *Colombia Very Well*" which seeks to improve and strengthen the Teaching and Learning of English throughout the country. In other words, it looks forward to promoting English Teaching and Learning via a thoughtful and proper training of the Colombian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers from public schools. Such training would require these EFL teachers to be equipped in terms of the use of Information and Communication technologies (ICT's), as well as a professional updating process in terms of the most functional pedagogical-didactic models that they should incorporate in their learning environments.

As a whole, the project is aimed at standardizing the minimum levels of accomplishment in terms of English proficiency that high-school students should reach nationwide, as well as strengthening and supporting regional projects in EFL.

Nonetheless, despite the previous and current efforts to improve the Teaching and Learning of EFL in the country, research results provided by the *Banco de la República* (2012), concerning the level of English proficiency in Colombian high-school students, have shed light on the fact that just 11% of the students in public schools have a

proficiency level in English that can be considered higher than a CEFR B2 level. In addition, a study developed by the SENA (2012) determined that only 7% of university students in the range of 17 - 25 years old have been involved in the learning of English, and from these, only 4% of them achieve an A2 level, and 3% an A1. These results reflect the ample extent of the challenge that the Colombian education system must face in the teaching-learning of EFL and how the implementation of new methodologies must positively and efficiently impact learners' language development.

Bonilla (2012) emphasizes on the need for Colombian educators to go through an instructional paradigmatic-shift; in that sense, EFL teachers should reconsider their cultural beliefs in terms of how the English Language should be taught. This readaptation process entails an analysis of the cultural background and affective filter that stimulates the beliefs and ideas that help teachers create an adequate teaching environment. Another relevant aspect highlighted by Bonilla is the need for redefining teacher roles aimed at fostering educational changes so that the population of Colombian high schoolers can develop adequate civic and academic skills as those required by contemporary synergetic societies; that is to say, encouraging and stimulating students' innovation, intercultural and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, teachers should build strategies in their lessons favoring reflection tasks, in which students can express different points of view and exhibit creativity in order to enhance the teaching-learning process.

Under such premise, one of the main challenges in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language relies on the fact that the Colombian educational system has somehow promoted teacher-centered classrooms where students are not involved, and, as a result,

it may have repercussions such as low levels of motivation; this difficulty, nevertheless, could be solved with the implementation of Project -Based Instruction (PBI) in the Target Context, which according to Weng et al. (2009) is an essential learning strategic system that combines different complementary educational principles to improve the instructional process, especially focused on underlying principles aimed at promoting and optimizing the process of student-centered learning in collaborative contexts.

In view of all these issues as well as the increasing necessity of developing English language competences; a methodological shift for the teaching of English as a Foreign Language should be considered, moving from traditional teacher-centered approaches to learning and learner-centered classrooms. In that sense, Rousová (2008) elaborates on the idea that whereas the traditional theories of teaching represent learning from books, learning words and utterances in isolation and learning through repetition, modern approaches introduce learning through experience. Consequently, studying English should not necessarily focus on syntactic accuracy or competency in grammar usage; instead, it should be focused on providing opportunities to students to use language meaningfully for communication and acquire 21st century skills. Therefore, this proposal intends to implement a Project-Based Instruction philosophy of teaching and learning, which is embodied by means of a learner-centered scenario where learners can interact using the target language for real communication, and exploit their creativity while fostering their critical thinking skills, in order to see the impact that it has on the learners' English Language development and promotion of 21st century citizenship skills.

In that sense, Project-Based Instruction offers several advantages that may shed light on how the Colombian education system could possibly face some of the current

difficulties mentioned throughout this justification. Solomon (2003) states that Project-Based Instruction is an approach based on the achievement of projects different from traditional instruction because it emphasizes learning through student-centered, interdisciplinary, and integrated activities in real world situations. In other words, PBI is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by means of collaborative work over an extended period of time, in order to investigate and respond to a complex question, problem, or challenge relevant to their setting.

Project-Based Instruction can have an important impact in the context of Risaralda, on the grounds that it establishes the learner as the main actor of his/her own knowledge building and helps activate learners' autonomy and cooperative skills throughout the development of projects (Heguy, 2006); these skills are highly relevant, as Ravitz et.al (2012) state, due to the fact that they are becoming essential for dynamic citizens in the 21st century. In addition, the 3 stages proposed by Moss et. al (1998) in order to execute the project, provide participants with the opportunity to learn how a project is structured and what kind of behavior and type of communication is expected from them. PBI also provides enough spaces where learners can interact with each other in a meaningful way in order to negotiate ideas, as Fried-Booth (1986) highlights.

Organizing projects is an effective way to create opportunities for L2 learners to develop their abilities in the target language, by interacting and communicating with each other in authentic contexts. Therefore, as it can be appreciated, PBI can provide Risaralda's high-schools with the tools needed to promote learners who can work collaboratively, who can conceive how to develop and structure a project methodologically and who can negotiate and discuss ideas in a positive and constructive way.

To put it into perspective, "Project-Based Instruction for the Appropriation of the Strategic Framework in Santuario-Risaralda" was methodologically established as a project which attempted to systematically document the impact of PBI with regard to English language development in high-school students ranging from 8th to 11th grade with support from Gobernación de Risaralda and UTP's Applied Linguistics research group: *Grupo de Investigación de Lingüística Aplicada (GILA).*Throughout the development of this project, it was expected to have raised awareness on the importance of being proficient in English as a Foreign Language, vision that is pursuit by the government of Risaralda in its attempt to become a bilingual (Spanish-English) department.

Finally, the reflection process of this project revolves around three categories, taking into consideration not only the strengths found during the implementation of the project but also the challenges that emerged. In that sense, the first area of reflection will be professional growth, as it is aimed to analyze the impact of the methodology not merely from the students' perspective but also in terms of the researchers' skills to plan lessons; second, students' responses in regards to the implementation of this specific methodology and third, linguistic outcomes, which is a key area of reflection inasmuch as it will provide information about the results of the project in relation to language development.

Objectives

Teaching objectives

General Objective

To identify the impact of Project- Based Instruction on the learning process of English as a foreign language in a state, rural high school in the Department of Santuario Risaralda, Colombia.

Specific Objectives

1. To foster and activate learners' involvement and motivational components towards the English subject matter.

2. To instruct and guide the in-service teachers in the development of PBI.

Learning objectives

General Objective

To make use of Project-Based learning and related collaborative learning strategies in order to promote active participation and increase motivation.

Specific Objectives

1. Learners will be able to explain the elements of the Institutional Educational Project (PEI) that they were assigned to be empowered with in the target language.

2. To use collaborative work as an opportunity to practice the Target Language and interpersonal skills.

3. To identify the principles and benefits of learning through projects and be able to use them in their learning processes.

1. Conceptual Framework

The project is structured and supported theoretically relying on a framework based on the constructs of Language Development and Project Based Instruction (PBI). This chapter intends to define, through the analysis of academic literature presented by different authors, these 2 main constructs and seeks to expose how PBI can enhance the learning and development of English as a Foreign Language.

1.1 Language Development

The process of Language Development starts in early years of life, several theories intend to describe how it occurs, and which stimuli are required in order for children to transition from babbling isolated utterances up to the point of reaching properly structured speech. According to Pinker (1994), language is an innate instinct to humans, supporting the idea as follows:

"Language is not a cultural artifact that we learn the way we learn to tell time or how the federal government works. Instead, it is a distinct piece of biological makeup of our brains. Language is a complex, specialized skill, which develops in the child spontaneously without conscious effort or formal instruction, is deployed without awareness of its underlying logic, is qualitatively the same in every individual, and is distinct from more general abilities to process information or behave intelligently" (p.18).

From this theoretical perspective, it is feasible to assume that language development in terms of L1 acquisition is naturally and systematically shaped by our intrinsic evolutionary machinery, and does not depend on any sort of formal educational instruction, or requires any essential nurture artifact in order to spontaneously spring up in children.

On the other hand, Second Language Development (for instance: English as a Foreign Language) differs from L1 in the sense that it requires conscious learning and/ or instruction. Accordingly, the theoretical implications of language development, when this is understood as the improvement of communicative skills in EFL, vary drastically in comparison to the initial asseverations presented. That is the reason why a restatement of linguistic concepts regarding second language acquisition (SLA) and L2 development under this perspective is required. Initially, it would be quite useful to state that Foreign Language development necessarily implies a conscious learning process in which a number of psychological functions such as awareness, attention and motivation are identified as stated by Schmidt (1995). In addition, Gass (1990) points out further characteristic factors determining language development in L2 in the following way:

"Foreign language learning differs in success, in the character and uniformity of the resulting systems, in its susceptibility in factors such as motivation, and in the previous state of the organism: The learner already has knowledge of one language and a powerful system of general abstract-problem solving skills" (p.41).

Moreover, success in second language development is considerable attached to factors such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, attention, involvement towards the instructional process and awareness of the ultimate L2 purpose in social or academic life, as Cummins (1991) pointed out. According to Krashen (2003), the process is highly affected if a psycho-affective filter happens to emerge in learners' cognitive schemata. The aforementioned phenomenon, emerges as the result of psycho- behavioural characteristics and responses promoted in a given English Language Learning environment, as well as the result of certain adopted pedagogical and methodological dispositions of an EFL instructional process that might result in learners' anxiety and inhibition.

As Krashen states, an ideal learning environment for Foreign Language development; EFL in this case, would be therefore one in which negative affective factors are diminished by providing students with a motivating, engaging and learning-centered environment; such instructional setting should not contribute to the emergence of inhibiting anxiety factors in learners.

In this order of ideas, this learning and teaching scenario is characterized by its thoughtful pedagogical considerations in terms of learning needs and effective usage of comprehensible input, as well as sufficient opportunities for contact and practice in L2. This assertion is supported by Spada and Lightbown (2006), in the sense that while successful learners have been found, in general, to be quite motivated, the opposite has not been found. Unsuccessful language learners are not necessarily unmotivated, there

may be other reasons explaining their lack of success. For example, they may simply not have had sufficient opportunities for contact with L2.

In the same line of analysis, Tomasselo (2003) comes to the conclusion in the research study: *Constructing a Language: A Usage-Based Theory of Language Acquisition,* that language accuracy in learners develops from meaningful language use. Thereupon, closer examination to the arguments presented by different authors along this chapter could shed light on the fact that Language Development in terms of EFL instruction properly takes place when motivating and comprehensible input, in addition to cognitively demanding tasks of higher order thinking (that demand creativity and problem solving skills) as part of a cooperative and constructivist learning scenario related to useful social purposes.

The previous claim, dealing with the question of how to successfully develop and improve English language competencies, and for the practical purposes of this classroom project, the methodological model that was adopted in the learning environment for teaching English as a foreign language is supported by Krashen's theories of creative construction and comprehensible input, as well as Long's integrationist view and Spada and Lightbown's conceptualization of affective factors. Therefore, PBI was systematically adopted and developed for English Language Instruction within the framework of this classroom project, due to the fact that it offers opportunities for Language development under the terms that have been already discussed in the chapter.

1.2   Project-Based Instruction

Project-Based Instruction is not completely novel in the general sense, instead, it may have been part of many periods in history; there are even authors who consider it may be related to the ancient Greek period where Socrates guided his disciples from an indirect question towards a systematized scheme of inquiry in which the philosopher would participate as a facilitator to find the answer (Orig-n.d); however, a more recent origin is granted to John Dewey (1916) "who boosted his belief that education is not a mere means to … a life, education is … life." This means that we do not learn how to live, but we live as we learn. These theoretical considerations help to better comprehend Blumenfeld et al.'s (1991) definition, which states that PBI is an engaging perspective where learners are motivated by a driving-question which will lead pupils to develop several skills such as "asking and refining questions, debating ideas, making predictions, designing plans and/or experiments, collecting and analyzing data, drawing conclusions, communicating their ideas and findings to others, asking new questions, and creating artifacts."

Another definition of Project-Based instruction states that PBI is based on engaging projects which promote learners' interest and curiosity and which challenges learners to find solutions to complex problems and/or develop products (Moss, Donna - Van Duzer, Carol, 1998). Such definition presents PBI as goal-oriented ; however, PBI not only focuses on the outcome, but on the process itself as the projects require learners to develop 21st century dynamic skills related to "design, problem-solving, decision making, and investigative activities (Thomas, 2000). Interestingly, Stanford University, after having started implementing PBI in its courses, has also made its contribution in terms of helping

define PBI as an approach which fosters authenticity, cooperative learning, group communication, the use of reasoning, decision-making and self-assessment strategies (Stanford University, 2001)

Project-based instruction suits 21st century learning-teaching environments, far away from teaching traditional methods where the learners are recipients to be fulfilled, and the interactional patterns are characterized by being "…a functional procedure which focuses on skills and areas of knowledge in isolation" (Boumová, 2008).on the other hand, "Project-Based Instruction activities are long-term, interdisciplinary, student-centered, and integrated with real-world issues and practices." (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 3). Finally, Hartman et al. (2013) draw from Savery (2006) to define PBI as an approach that stimulates learners' strategies and pragmatic skills, as to conduct an inquiry-project applying theory and practice to solve the driving question or problem. Thereupon, it can be concluded that PBI is an approach which conceives developing projects as its unit of learning, it intends to develop research and humanistic competences through a process in which the learner is the center and the teacher adopts a guiding role.

1.2.1 Phases in PBI

Bearing in mind the three-phased PBI description by Moss et al. (1998) and the six-stepped procedure presented by Barret (2005), the characterization of PBI will now be presented:

Firstly, in a preparation stage, it is relevant that the learners be exposed to a preparation phase before formally starting the project, in order for learners to get involved with the class- work via communicative activities that allow them to feel more comfortable by doing information gap activities, surveys, learner-to-learner interviews, role plays, simulations, data collection, field trips, writing practice tasks and presentations with peers that encourage learners to collaboratively work with their classmates. In addition to the preparation stage for specific language, it is also important to do some training in data collection methods such as gathering information via interviews, asking questions and taking notes through activities that consist on implementing problem-solving strategies, using of language for negotiation, and methods for developing plans.

After the preparation stage, learners will be provided with more practice to continue the process. Phase 1. Selecting topics. Steps 1 & 2: 1) The problem or the driving question to be solved is presented to the learners 2) the learners analyze the problem in their research groups and through peer-discussion they define what the problem is, what skills, subjects and knowledge they will need, and they agree on a possible action plan based on their background knowledge. This phase is extremely crucial as it is necessary to engage the learners in the project by allowing them to exercise autonomy so that they can determine how they will achieve the aim.

Phase 2. Making plans and doing research Steps 3 & 4: 3) Learners consolidate their action plan and start conducting research. It is important that the learners become acquainted on inquiry methods by taking advantage of libraries, databases, the web, knowledgeable people and observations. 4) They present what they have investigated to receive some peer-feedback and have some guidance from the tutor.

Phase 3. Sharing results with others. Steps 5 & 6: 5) They present their solution or "artifact". Learners should have agency in deciding how to present it and it should be presented to people genuinely interested in the problem, even and especially, the community to make it more authentic and engaging. 6) Reflection stage. All the participants review the new knowledge and reflect about the process to raise awareness.

1.2.2 Benefits of PBI

There are many advantages attributed to PBI (EducaMadrid, 2012); nonetheless, we recognize five of those benefits as the most relevant ones, considering that they are interconnected directly or indirectly with secondary advantages. These main benefits are students' active role, collaborative learning, use of technology, development of problem-solving skills and lifelong learning.

Students' active role: The Malaysian Ministry of Education (2006) defines PBI as an active exploration of knowledge and learners' capacities. They also explain that students have an active role in PBI as learners plan, design, research, propose, evaluate and implement based on their own ideas; this possibility of making decisions make learners feel ownership of the project which is relevant to sustain motivation and feel important. This motivation for discovering and creating make learners "become engaged builders of a new knowledge base and become active, lifelong learners" (p. 9) which is highly relevant in the 21st century as professionals need to become active non-stop learners.

Collaborative learning: Heguy (2006) argues that PBI is a learner-centered approach which gives the learner an active role in his/her learning process; therefore, it implies that the learner must develop autonomy skills to work actively without the constant supervision of the teacher. Heguy also believes that this autonomy results in individual responsibility with the learning process as the learner has to become independent and must find the most suitable way to succeed; the author concludes when she claims that this individual

autonomy and responsibility is guided by PBI into a collaborative and cooperative learning process. The fact of being autonomous means learning to exchange experiences with the project group in order to know more about them and their abilities. Fernandez (2001) cited by Heguy (2006) notes that autonomy does not mean isolation, but it is intrinsically connected to the concept of social commitment; consequently, the connection between autonomy and communication must have repercussions on cooperation as decisions are taken through group negotiation.

Use of technology: As it was mentioned in the justification, one of the purposes of the UNESCO is to reduce the digital divide among northern and southern countries; therefore, the use of technology in current methodologies becomes imperative. In addition to global needs, PBL Guide (National Academy Foundation, nd) describes how the use of technology in PBI provides several benefits in the learning process such as "project authenticity" as project outcomes are usually tangible products for real audiences; "student engagement" as learners have the chance of participating to create the curriculum based on their interests and goals; "active learning" as learners can interact through the net to solve problems, to communicate, to discuss, to create and to build their digital intelligence; thus, the use of technology in and out of the classroom must not be accidental at all, but it must be a deliberate and careful calculated tool in order to have the best results from it.

Problem-solving skills: Projects in PBL require learners to use high-order thinking, communication and problem-solving skills in order to find out the solution to a given problem. National Academy Foundation (nd) declares that "PBL is an effective strategy for teaching complex skills such as planning, communicating, problem solving, and decision making" when teacher provides enough support in skills such as "inquiry learning, effective technology use, metacognition and workplace skills". The teacher's and classmates' role is highly relevant in this context as Vigotsky stated, the learner will achieve his/her real potential if she/he is scaffolded through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD); hence, for an improvement in learner's cognitive process, peers and teacher play a fundamental role.

PBI provides the opportunity for social interaction among learners and the teacher; nonetheless, the social interaction is not enough for the achievement of high-order thinking skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking. It is necessary to encourage the inclusion of demanding problems or tasks as the ones that learners in PBI have to face. Blumenfeld (1991) is clear when he states that "the prevalence of low-level tasks contributes to students' lack of understanding of content and process and poor attitudes toward learning and schooling" (p. 371); consequently, PBI offers both the complex tasks and the social interaction which are necessary for learners' cognitive development and problem-solving skills.

Lifelong learning: One of the challenges that teachers of any subject must face is related to the way of promoting effective lifelong learning skills in their pupils. Learners need to

develop strategies for self-assessment in order to identify strengths and challenges, they need to become independent and autonomous so as to take responsibility of their learning process and evaluate the results (Ram, Ram, Sprague, nd); furthermore, the curriculum needs to be "meaningful" in order for learners to find the purpose of learning; "socially responsible" so that the learners become aware of social needs and develop citizen sensitiveness; "reflective" so that the learners develop critical-thinking; "holistic" in order to have a connection among all the subject matters; "open-ended" where it gives the opportunity to learners to go beyond the expected outcomes; "goal-based" so the learners create a sense of achievement; and "technological" in order to provide the tools for learners to become effective digital users (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2006)

Teacher's role:

In Project- Based Instruction, as we mentioned before, students work in groups through a variety of resources in order to decide how to approach a problem and determine what activities they should pursue. Learners need to gather information from a variety of sources; for that reason, according to Solomon (2003), during the course of this process, the teacher's role is to guide and advise, rather than to direct and manage the students' work. In addition, the teacher also has an important role, which is to provide learners with resources that help them investigate and find relevant information for their project.

Another important role is the role of designer. Egenrieder (2010) explains that the facilitator needs to plan ahead a driving question which will lead learners to accomplish

both the school's curriculum and exploration on their own interest. In this regard, the facilitator needs to be flexible on the grounds that learners may want to have reorientations or to change their topic; this is important because learners need to keep their motivation, and having autonomy to reorganize their ideas is one way of giving them the opportunity to be responsible for their decisions.

1.2.3 Relation PBI - Language development

As Beckett (2002) states, it is important to provide learners with enough opportunities to practice the target language in the classroom, since that sort of output can benefit language development. This contention is also shared by Swain (1985), in the results of her evaluation of Canadian French immersion students' learning, in which she points out the relevance of language output in foreign language development; this led her to propose that L2 learners need to produce comprehensible output through meaningful interaction. In order to produce comprehensible output, Swain concludes that students need a variety of communicative opportunities where they can engage in meaningful negotiation and interaction.

As it was stated previously, language development is also considerably affected by factors such as learners' motivation and their involvement in the instruction process; in that sense, Project-Based instruction entails certain benefits in terms of Language Development, regarding relevant factors such as learners' motivation and the opportunities to use the Foreign Language. Therefore, authors such as Adderly et al. (1975) point out the importance of a methodology based on projects, since it provides the

chance for intrinsically-motivated students to learn, fostering problem-solving, and developing independent and cooperative working skills. It is also believed that PBI allows students to develop critical thinking and decision making skills and positively contributes to engage them in-depth learning of the subject matter.

In terms of language output, Ribé and Vidal (1993) state that PBI provides opportunities for comprehensible output and integrated language teaching; in that way, Project-Based Instruction prevent students from learning from the teacher and textbooks and from focusing on language skills.

In accordance to the phases explained above, it is possible to conclude that PBI is an approach based on long-term projects which are the "meaningful units of instruction" (Blumenfeld, 1991, p. 370) where the problem is a mechanism to foster cognitive development (Strang et. al., 1967) and a "vehicle for the development of clinical problem solving skills" (Barrows, 1996). These problems must be authentic and purposeful in order to engage the learners in the research process where the teacher is seen as a tutor rather than a controller. Furthermore, these projects should allow learners to develop autonomy, responsibility and as previously mentioned, some of the 21st century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, innovation, self-direction, global and local connections, and use of technology. (Ravitz, Hixson, English, Mergendoller, 2012).

2   Related studies

In order to have a more detailed perspective of how Project- Based Learning can contribute to language development, it is important to analyze the following research studies since they are oriented toward the same idea. They will provide a primary inquiry and its respective findings with regard to the use of PBI in EFL classrooms; from this review, useful theoretical basis to comment on the validity of the proposal will be expanded and nourished.

2.1   Research study conducted in Greece

The first research to be analyzed is the project conducted by Tsiplakides (2009), which deals with the implementation of Project-Based instruction in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). The researcher is concerned about the methodological changes that the implementation of PBI in EFL classes implies; in that sense, he draws from Levy (1997) the idea that the role of the teacher is affected, since he/she must act as a facilitator and a guide rather than a dominant or controlling authoritative figure. This idea is also based on the fact that the responsibility of the learning process moves from the teacher to the learners due to the fact that it becomes more cooperative, and in that way learners must move from working alone to working in groups. Additionally, the researcher also anticipates the benefits that the implementation of the PBI may have; therefore, he cites the work of Fried-Booth (2002) where she states that Project-Work contributes to language learning inasmuch as it provides opportunities for students to

develop their confidence and independence. In addition, it is also pointed out that through projects, learners can increase their cooperative skills and group cohesiveness, since they are involved in group work most of the time; finally, the work by Evine (2004) is cited in order to argue another benefit of PBI, which deals with the idea that through this approach, learners have opportunities to use language in purposeful communication for authentic activities. It means that interaction among learners increases and as motivational consequence, they will improve their speaking and listening skills. Thereby, research was conducted with the purpose of unveiling how PBI contributes to Foreign Language Development, critical thinking, motivation and social skills; in that sense, not only did the project cognitive aims but also emotional and psychomotor objectives as well.

The research, that lasted six months and had students working on the project for two hours each week, took place in a Greek school with a subject population of fifteen sixth- grade primary school students, aged 11-12 years, from a village in the prefecture of Achaia; two teachers got involved as well, one being an experienced teacher in the implementation of modern teaching methods and the English teacher being the second. Participants were asked to develop a project, the topic was chosen by the whole group and they decided to work on "local history". After the groups were consolidated, learners started to develop the project that included a gathering of information stage, which consisted on searching for a variety of related data, interviewing people and collecting articles. Then, they had to select the appropriate information in order to present their final products.

By the end of the implementation stage, most of the learners improved in all four language skills, their speaking and listening skills, in particular, had the greatest improvement. This finding is related to the fact that students developed their communicative competence to a greater extent, but exhibited less improvement in their grammatical competence. Some students did not present considerable improvement in terms of language proficiency; nonetheless, they showed amelioration in some behavioral traits such as participation, motivation and self-esteem. On the other hand, there were also certain methodological difficulties during the implementation, as the result of unfamiliarity with group work, uneven levels of participation and commitment, among others; notwithstanding, the most striking difficulties were rooted to the fact that some students did not use the target language for communication at the beginning of the process, but rather their mother tongue; moreover, due to the fact that the time span of the project was too long, some students lost motivation towards the project.

The implementation of this research is highly relevant to our proposal since it can support the idea that a learner and language user can improve his/her language skills given that PBI renders students with the opportunities to practice their understanding on the learning material by interacting and communicating with their peers in groups. Learners do not memorize concepts, but undertake a process of collaborative and self-directed discovery. In other words, they have a chance to practice their understanding on the learning material via Project-Based learning. The study is also helpful for it provides information about the possible difficulties that facilitators could encounter in an EFL classroom in which PBI is intended to be implemented, for instance: loss of motivation and code-switching to the Learners' mother tongue when these are not directly monitored.

2.2 Second related study: conducted in Turkey in an EFL classroom

Similarly, another research project was carried out by Baş (2011), this one aimed at understanding the cognitive and affective impact of PBI; namely, the learning and behavioral schemata that are developed in learners under EFL Project- Based instruction. The researcher argues about the importance of implementing PBI into the classroom; drawing from Moursund (1999) the idea that PBI proposes different classroom activities and that these should be student-centered, cooperative and interactive; it implies a new methodology and the development of skills and competences such as collaboration, topic discussion and an increase of learners´ participation. Baş (2011) also explains that PBI implementation is significant due to the fact that it provides opportunities in order to face real life situations, and, subsequently to investigate about them; in that sense, he cites the works developed by Blank (1997), Harwell (1997), Dickinson et al. (1998) and Westwood (2008) where they make emphasis on the idea that "Project- Based Instruction is an authentic learning model in which students plan, implement, and evaluate projects that have real-world applications beyond the classroom." In addition, the researcher argues that PBI is still in its developmental stage and that under such circumstances, there is not sufficient research to able to state its effectiveness with all due certainty; despite the presumable lack of conclusive data, the author considers it is still feasible to propose a correlation between PBI and Language Development.

In order to develop the project previously described, the researcher got involved in a Turkish high school in the community of Nigde, teaching a group of 60 ninth graders

during the years of 2010 and 2011. The participants were divided in an experimental and control group. The questions addressed in this classroom project were stated as follows:

1. Is there a significant difference between the achievement levels of the students in the experimental group and the students in the control group in terms of the usage of Project-Based learning?

2. Is there a significant difference between the attitude levels of the students in the experimental group and the students in the control group towards the lesson in terms of the usage of Project-Based learning?

A pre- and post-test experiment undertaken during randomly assigned classes to the experimental and control groups was employed to examine the effects of the treatment process in the study. It was possible to determine that the initial findings of an English academic achievement Pre-test dealing with a number of tasks proposed in the unit of past activities, presented no significant differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of their academic achievement scores in the English lesson; hence, it can be said that both groups exhibited quite similar pre-learning levels. Following the same route, the scores related to the attitude Pre-test were also very even both for the experimental and control groups.

Whereas project-based learning was applied to the experimental group, Textbook-based instruction was developed with the control group. And even when the entire students of the two groups (experimental and control) were exposed to the exact same content for the same class-length (45-minute class sessions) and were provided with an

equal amount of instruction for a four-week period, the results in the English Proficiency post-test showed that students in the experimental group had reached a higher achievement level compared to those in the control group. The experimental method, which was project-based instruction, was more effective than the instruction based on student textbooks in the control group. In addition to the academic achievements, the experimental group also expressed positive behavioral attitudes towards learning English, the students seemed rather happy to have been interacting in English through Project-Based instruction because they were able to progress at their own pace and, at the same time, contribute to others' learning process in such a supportive and encouraging learning context. Therefore, results also suggested that the students in the experimental group had reached higher attitude scores compared to those in the control group since the experimental method applied had enabled the students to develop positive attitudes towards the English lesson.

The findings of the research synthesized here are considerably relevant for our Classroom Project since they support the idea that language development can take place through the implementation of PBI ; the findings also raise awareness on the fact that PBI does not only deal with the improvement of academic achievement but also with the learners' behavioral attitude levels. This study contributes to the classroom project idea in the sense that it presents the information by contrasting the results of two different groups (control and experimental), such technique is quite helpful, for it evidences the level of improvement that has been achieved by each group after having worked with PBI.

2.3 Research conducted in Thailand.

Another related study regarding Project-Based Instruction was conducted by Poonpon (2011); it deals with the implementation of PBI in an English classroom aimed at improving the English skills and the learners' language usage for specific purposes; in that sense, the researcher highlights the theory from Moss & Van Duzer (1998) in which PBI is conceived as an instrument to contextualize learners as if they were to face real-life problematic situations and solve them; it presents as its definitive goal the fact that learners can improve their English skills while using them in real contexts, fact that would consequently imply purposeful communication both in and out of the classroom , where genuinely meaningful language learning is achieved via collaborative tasks. The author also reports from Solomon (2003) & Willie (2001) that PBI is focused on learning by the means of students-centered, interdisciplinary, and integrative activities in real-life contexts.

In that sense, PBI deals with the role of the teacher as a facilitator who encourages participation, cooperation and leads students to use language during the class as well as in real life contexts beyond the classroom setting as it has previously been mentioned. In addition, Poopon (2011) claims that over the years, the strategies have changed and currently PBI has been adopted and focused on communicative language teaching which facilitates the learning process in order to improve the communicative competence. Therefore, the implementation of PBI in English classes is intended to render important outcomes due to the fact that it helps learners develop and improve their English skills on the grounds of authentic real-life communicative needs.

The research population was integrated by 47 students, 36 females and 11 males, majoring in Information Science and enrolled in an English course at a Thai university during the second semester of the 2009 academic year. They received 45 hours of English classes during the semester and the course was designed according to their academic needs. This study was articulated under the inquiry of the following 2 research questions:

1. What are Thai university students' opinions about the implementation of Project-Based instruction, in the form of an interdisciplinary-based project in an English language class?

2. What are Thai university students' opinions about how Project-Based instruction can enhance their four communicative skills in English (i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing)?

According to the researcher, the data collection method was based on oral and written presentations conducted by the students that led the teacher to know how learners were improving in terms of the usage of the target language. The data collection process was analyzed through transcripts of student's interviews and observation of their performance in the four communicative skills in English. Findings suggested that the outcomes were very successful in view of the fact that most of the learners said that the program was useful tool to acquire the target language, so they felt satisfied with the final results as their language skills were enhanced; nevertheless, some learners felt that they needed more input in order to improve their 4 skills through PBI.

Concretely, the study was designed to enhance learners´ English language skills; thereupon, this research is interrelated to our classroom project proposal bearing in mind that the implementation of PBI helped to enhance learners' language development. Furthermore, the usage of authentic material in the learning process (when taking into account the learners' needs in the field of their professional lives) represents an interesting course of action from which the intended classroom project could be implemented from a similar perspective, this classroom project helps the practitioners analyze what components were successfully accomplished and which were not, and resulting from such analysis, it can help improve the general project implementation in order to have better outcomes in future research initiatives supported on Project- Based Instruction.

3 Methodology

3.1 General context

The project entitled as *The implementation of Project-Based instruction for the appropriation of the strategic framework in 6 non-certified municipalities of Risaralda* was carried out through an agreement between Gobernación de Risaralda and the program of Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa from Universidad Tecnologica de Pereira, particularly through the Applied Linguistics Group (GILA), in order to encourage bilingualism (Spanish-English) via the presentation of a project targeting non-certified municipalities of the department so that Educational institutions from those municipalities would get involved and participate in the implementation of alternative methodologies for English language teaching. Moreover, the project attempted to have an impact upon the socialization of the "Proyecto Educativo Institucional (PEI)" of each institution.

Although the project had the participation of 6 municipalities of Risaralda, namely: Guatica, La Virginia, Quinchia, Santa Rosa de Cabal and Santuario, this paper will be specifically focused on Santuario. Therefore, for a better understanding of this specific context, the following paragraphs are intended to give details about the specific context, participants, design, resources and reflection.

3.2 Specific context

This Classroom Project was carried out at a coeducational Public High School located on the municipality of Santuario, Risaralda; considering the privacy code as part

of the ethical considerations of this paper, this high school will be named as Santuario Institution. One experimental group from grades 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th received a weekly 1-hour session of their English Language classes by using Project – Based Instruction, classes were focused on empowering learners with the most significant contents of the school's *Proyecto Educativo Institucional (PEI)*, that for the practical purposes of this study will be named as *Strategic Framework*. From data collected via a semi-structured questionnaire completed by the in-service teacher of the institution, it has been possible to determine that EFL instruction in the institution is oriented by the *Guía No. 22 Estándares básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés*, issued by the Colombian Ministry of Education (2006). In addition, it has also been suggested that one of the most defining instructional principles in the institution is Communicative Language Teaching (Richards, 2006).

The curricular distribution of the institution is quite generous in terms of the time that is devoted to English Language Instruction, as students from 8th grade and on have the possibility to belong to the *School's specialty in English*, which consists on providing academic emphasis on the Learning of English as a Foreign Language, for this reason, the 220 students from the 4 groups that were studied received 5 weekly hours of instruction for the learning of English, from which one was specifically set aside for the implementation of PBI.

One of the main limitations of this study consists on the fact that the role carried out by the practitioners was that of *Lesson Designers* only. This implies that there was not a direct on-site analysis process with the participants, but rather a systematic data

collection process from the reflective logs that were completed weekly by the in-service English Language teacher and the focus groups that were developed.

3.3 Participants

The participants of this project consisted on the student population, the in-service teacher and the practitioners. Data regarding the number of participants for each specific grade at Santuario Institution, the age group, interests and linguistic profiles of the learners was obtained via a semi-structured questionnaire that was completed by the in-service English Language teacher.

This project was carried out with 4 groups in total, 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th grades correspondingly, for a total number of 110 participants. In terms of gender distribution, it has been possible to determine that approximately 60 % of the participants were male and 40 % were female. Learner's interests were mainly related to the bio-diverse components in flora and fauna that are present in the municipality. Accordingly, a considerable component of the English Language classes had to do with topics dealing on environmentally friendly production, consumption and maintenance.

Given the fact that the in-service teacher is familiar with the theories of multiple intelligences and learning styles, English language classes at the institution had been normally developed under an inclusive premise in which both the stronger and weaker learning profiles could interact via varied proposed activities that included kinesthetic, logical – mathematical, musical, naturalistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences (Gardner, 1985). Specific age groups by grade will be characterized as follows:

8th Grade: There was a total of 25 students ranging from 12 to 15 years old. In terms of Proficiency (from a speculative analysis developed by the in-service teacher), it was possible to characterize 80 percent of the students as Elementary Learners of the Language (A-) and the remaining 20 % presumably as A1 language users.

9th Grade: There was a total of 30 students ranging from 14 to 16 years old. It was possible to characterize 80 percent of the students as A1 Language users and the remaining 20% as A2 Language Users.

10th Grade: There was a total of 32 students ranging from 15 to 18 years old. It was possible to characterize 20 % of the students as A1 Language users, a 70 % as A2 Users and the remaining 10% as B1 Language Users.

11th Grade: There was a total of 23 students ranging from 16 to 19 years old. It was possible to characterize 20 % of the students as A1 Language users, a 50 % as A2 Users and the remaining 30% as B1 Language Users.

In-service Teacher: The in-service teacher developed a weekly 1-hour class with each of the 4 groups belonging to 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th grades. In order to properly do so, he received a lesson plan each week that followed the principles of Project-Based Instruction (Thomas, 2000) and the sequence of Engage, Study and Activate (ESA) proposed by Harmer (1998). Once each session finished a reflective log was completed.

Reflection in action (notes and observation while teaching) was complemented with the reflection on action (analysis post-session) that was elicited on the log.

Practitioners: the practitioners were in charge of designing the lessons, collecting data, guiding the in-service teacher regarding PBI and analyzing the reflective logs.

3.4 Design

In order to implement Project-Based instruction for the teaching of EFL in the context of the municipality, the six steps proposed by Barret (2005) were followed, which are integrated in three phases designed by Moss et al. (1998). The first phase consisted of two steps that corresponded to the presentation of the project and the action plan that students would develop to achieve the established goals. This phase initiated when the teacher established a project which needed to be accomplished in groups. To develop that project, students would need to make groups in which they would define what the project is, skills required, necessary knowledge, role assignment and they agreed on a possible action plan that contributed to the development of the project; this phase was extremely crucial as it was necessary to engage the learners in the project with a topic which seemed interesting and appealing to their setting, this was achieved by allowing them to have autonomy and decide how they would achieve the aim. This first phase was developed during the first session of the instructional process under PBI.

The second phase could be defined as the key stage to accomplish the project inasmuch as it was the period when students started developing the corresponding

research for their assigned role in the group, the information analysis and the project progress as to present the final product. In this phase, different tasks were included such as surveys and interviews with classmates, schoolmates and even people of the academic community, they were guided and advised by their facilitator, who was in charge of providing feedback and helping them maintain the focus of the project, they were also exposed to input related to the projects such as vocabulary and grammar structures needed to develop the tasks; this process took 3 weeks and during that time, learners were asked to complete specific functions comprising the project. Therefore, during this phase students would collect the necessary information to conduct their project and to share their drafts, this way, they were able to receive feedback on their partial achievement process.

Finally, the third phase was related to the presentation of the final product and the reflection stage. In this phase, students would show the entire process they had developed; that is to say, the outcome regarding the assigned strategic framework element. It is relevant to say that a reflection stage was also included in this phase of the project, since it provided the opportunity for students to express their thoughts/feelings about process itself with their teacher and peers.

3.5 Resources

During the implementation, different types of resources were used in order to guide the teaching and learning process. Firstly, as part of class preparation, the lesson plan helped to guide the teacher throughout the pedagogical sequence of the lesson, as the facilitator was provided with specific procedures in order to develop the lesson; on the other hand, technological tools such as computers and video projector were also used as to engage learners through video clips and PowerPoint presentations with images and related effects. The use of authentic materials such as Institutional Educational Projects (PEI's) from English-speaking countries and videos about Finland's education system were also taken into account. Besides this, the in-service teacher was encouraged to use a video-recorder in order to keep evidence or learners' artifacts. Also, and as part of our anticipated solutions, the teacher could also implement more traditional resources such as handouts, worksheets, board and markers. On the other hand, learners used resources such as photocopies for readings, posters and PPT slides in the presentation stage to show their final projects.

Likewise, learners were exposed to activities such as interviewing schoolmates to collect data, games to review concepts and vocabulary, discussions regarding the PEI and project tasks, poster-sessions to present their final projects, peer-feedback sessions to advise their classmates about their presentations and role-plays to represent concepts and practice their Oral production skills..

3.6 Reflection

The reflection methods for the implementation of this project consisted on reflective logs and focus groups; in that sense, it is relevant to describe both concepts.

Focus groups: According to Marczak and Sewell (1998) focus group is a method in which a group of people is brought together to discuss about a common topic of interest; it became a valuable method for our project, since as Marczak and Sewell propose, it "provides a means of evaluating existing programs"; that is to say, through this method, the information collected provided us with a primary insight on the effectiveness of the implemented methodology. Having this theoretical perspective in mind, an interview was conducted at the end of the process with the in-service teacher with the aim of analyzing the impact of Project-Based Instruction on learners' attitudes and language development; the practitioners proposed reflective questions such as: What did go well? What aspects needed improvement? How did students feel during the process? What were the aspects that students felt they improved the most? What were students' thoughts about the implemented methodology?

Reflective logs: Crown (2010) defines reflective logs as an analytical record about what it has been done in the teaching practice in order to identify, analyze and explore the new ideas which have been implemented. Crown also states that recognizing our weaknesses requires high-order thinking- skills, and, that identifying our strengths may be even more complex; therefore, when the author declares that "the more reflective practice you engage in, the easier it becomes!" he means that reflection skills require

practice so as to be improved. This reflection log was designed so that it could consider different elements such as the actions carried out, the values and feelings involved, the thoughts fostered by the implementation, self-awareness to understand our own strengths and weaknesses, empathy to understand other viewpoints and finally, motivation which is how we supported ourselves and others.

Therefore, reflective logs were used in this project to collect data from the in-service teachers on the implementation of Project-Based Instruction in the EFL classroom. They reflected upon the learning and teaching experiences promoted by the use of the new methodology, feelings which would determine what went well and what needed improvement, and conclusions to detect what the in-service teacher would do different a next time. One reflective log per group was written every week by the teacher and they were collected periodically in order to have a constant reflection and make necessary adjustments about the lessons during the process.

Data analysis and reflection process: After having read and analyzed the reflective logs and the transcription of the interview from the focus group, practitioners did a triangulation table in three columns: Information (reflective log, transcription) – category (professional growth, students' responses, linguistic outcomes) and reflection. In the information column, practitioners wrote the data collected fron the focus group, in the category column, practitioners wrote the appropriate category (professional growth, students' responses, linguistic outcomes) in front of each key phrase or paragraph, and

then, in the reflection column, practitioners wrote why that phrase or paragraph was part of that category. Finally, practitioners highlighted the ideas which were systematically mentioned and identified throughout the data collection process (reflective logs, focus group) in order to find evidence to support the reflection and sustain the results. Therefore, the extracts which will be used during the section of results were the phrases and paragraphs which were analyzed in the triangulation. If the reader wishes to read the extract directly from the transcript, he just needs to read the codification where "R" means *reflective log* and "Interview" means transcription of the interview, "L" means the number of the line. For instance: "*R: 4, L: 114-115*" means Reflective log number 4, lines 114-115. (Both the interview and reflective log are in the appendix section)

4 Professional Growth

The following chapter describes the results related to the impact that PBI had on both the in-service teacher and practitioners' professional growth, as all of us grew as professionals during this process. This chapter will be divided into two sections; in the first part, the positive findings will be discussed while in the second part, the challenges which were found will be presented.

4.1 Positive results

4.1.2) Contextualization of class material, tasks and procedures in order to promote learner's intrinsic motivation based on their interests and needs.

As it was evidenced in the collected data, namely by analyzing the in-service teacher's reflective logs, the implementation of PBI in the institution resulted in the sharpening and contextualization of skills oriented towards the learners' needs and interests. The PBI-led instructional process contributed to the improvement of the facilitator's scaffolding and contextualization techniques.

According to Rivet, Joseph S. and Krajcik (2007), Project-Based-Instruction requires content contextualization and inclusion of socially meaningful tasks in order to optimize learner's involvement towards a project. In this order of ideas, it is suggested that the level of success and achievement that learners can possibly obtain from this type of instruction is notably influenced by how well topics, lessons tasks and materials are

adapted to the pupils' reality. Thus, the evidence provided in the reflective logs highlights the importance of contextualizing the tasks proposed in the lesson plans, as some of the pedagogical considerations held by the lesson designers were not necessarily applicable to the learners' interests. The in-service teacher refers to this issue repeatedly as follows:

I.S. T1 RL1-8 L6

"I had to do a variation in the task so it was more interesting and appealing for them".

In this sense, it is clearly evidenced that the in-service teacher had to become an active participant in the sharpening of the proposed lesson plans, since he would analyze the proposed activities and tasks, and, based on his own criteria and previous knowledge of the teaching-learning environment, he would select or redesign those tasks that would suit learners' interests and would increase motivation levels. As Spada and Lightbown (2006) state, it is often motivated learners who excel in the learning of the target language; therefore, contextualization was an extremely relevant component for the establishment of an inclusive project in which learners felt engaged and willing to participate, by contributing to its consolidation.

From a similar perspective, the in-service teacher found it essential to model and include pre-task stages in which learners were introduced to key aspects of the lesson such as vocabulary and grammar models that would be required for the completion of a particular component of the project. In this sense, considering what Acher, A., Arca, M., & Sanmarti, N. (2007) propose in terms of *Modeling as a Teaching Learning Process for Understanding Materials*, it is a process in which learners are able to find meaningful

correlations between that material that is presented and the intended goal expected from the lesson, meaning that it is possible to determine how materials will be used and how these will contribute to the achievement of a defined purpose. To present evidence on this component of professional growth, the following pieces of reflection are shared:

I.S. T1 RL1-8 L7

"Something I should do differently is to help them with some vocabulary and models so it is easier for them to state the objective of the lesson".

I.S. T1 RL2- 8 L16

"I would definitely look for more adequate or adapted materials, authentic materials appear not to be working for them".

As a result, the in-service teacher undertook a process of both reflection- on- action and reflection-in-action, leading to corrective courses of action to remedy unsuccessful practices during the development of lessons. Interestingly though, as Mena Marcosa, J., Miguela, E., & Tillemab, H. (2009) point out, there is still a considerable gap between what is theoretically said about reflective processes and what is done in practice, given the fact that there has not yet been found a conclusive practical correlation between what is observed, and the implemented pedagogical-didactic plans to improve such aspects; nevertheless, evidence has been found to support the opposite contention on this particular scenario, as the in-service teacher did reflect on what was going on and also became propositive enough as to suggest potential action plans to improve conflictive

phenomena, a couple of reflective pieces are proposed below in order to illustrate this finding:

I.S. T1 RL5- 8 L43

"For a further lesson I think it is important to design a task in which they discover the importance of thinking and reflecting about education policies since that really affects students, although they are not aware of it".

I.S. T1 RF1- 11 L113

"For a future session, I would choose a different video, or I would select one with the subtitles in English, or I would include a pre-listening task to prepare them to understand better".

Based on samples presented throughout the theoretical development of this finding, it can be said that the in-service teacher was constantly challenged to contextualize the lesson topics, tasks and procedures. Thus, a need for raising awareness in terms of the most appropriate techniques to adapt material and scaffold learners emerged, contributing to the sharpening and amelioration of the in-service teacher methodological skills required for this purpose.

4.1.3) Raising of awareness and Implementation of grouping techniques as a means to foster collaborative and cooperative learning.

Getting students to work cooperatively and collaboratively is one of the main principles of PBI as proposed by Thomas (2000). For this reason, it is necessary for the facilitator to encourage tasks and activities in which learners' previous beliefs about individual and isolated classwork are debunked. Accordingly, the data collected via the in-service teacher's reflective logs suggests that the implementation of team-work and grouping techniques was a vital tool in order to encourage learners' active collaborative and cooperative participation. For instance:

I.S. T1 RF1- 8 L11

"I asked them to do something very simple, they were grouped in fours and had to select 10 phases they were sure to understand".

I.S. T1 RL 5- 9 L86

"Then I asked them to prepare a group presentation on their vision and mission in pairs".

Despite the fact that cooperative and collaborative learning is perhaps the most critical principle leading towards the successful completion of a project in PBI, teachers' conceptions towards group work are somehow associated to the belief that associative grouping techniques may result in classroom management issues which may negatively impact the learning environment (Cohan E. and Lotan R. 2007). Notwithstanding the

apparent dilemma raised by some scholars in terms of group work, the collected data supports the argument suggesting that the promotion of collaborative and cooperative learning ultimately carries positive results in terms of language development and citizenship/civil skills. For instance: by raising awareness and increasing the expertise of the facilitator's grouping techniques, by allowing learners to discuss and contrast viewpoints, among others. On this issue, the in-service teacher manifested:

I.S. T1 RL1-8 L8

"Another aspect is that I should have insisted on, is the need to have everyone's participation as one of the main goals of their task as well as using the material in the most useful manner in that direction".

On the one hand, awareness was raised in terms of how relevant it was to promote grouping techniques that favored group-work and avoided student isolation. On the other hand, it was also possible to determine that the in-service teacher had found a correlation in terms of how cooperation and collaboration among peers was a crucial component for them to achieve higher levels of performance regarding their roles in the project. In this sense, Johnson, W., and Frank P. Johnson. (1999) argue that collaborative learning is ideal in the sense of promoting an environment in which a common goal is shared and learners help each other in order to achieve such proposed goal; for this reason, it is often observed that an alternative manifestation of the Zone of proximal Development (ZPD) arises, since peers become the scaffold for each other and this positively affects their

results in terms of their expected performance throughout the completion of the project. The in-service teacher referred to this phenomenon as described below:

I.S. T1 RF1- 8 L9

"Three students had written something on their notebooks, therefore as the group is small I decided to group them in three big groups so they could rewrite what one of them had using their own words".

I.S. T1 RF1- 8 L11

"I asked them to do something very simple, they were grouped in fours and they had to select 10 phases they were sure to understand".

The presented data points at the fact that although the in-service teacher faced challenging situations on how to get learners to work cooperatively and collaboratively, he was able to apply grouping strategies that promoted this type of interaction, the process implied a progressive analysis of the students' reactions, which contributed to the improvement of the teacher's cognition and expertise in terms of these grouping techniques. For instance:

I.S. T1 RL 5- 9 L86

"Then I asked them to prepare a group presentation on their vision and mission in pairs".

I.S. T1 RL 5- 9 L91

"Then students were informed that they should be in teams of 4 or 6 students to plan an oral presentation on their perfect social environment. With this it is expected that collaboration in the group happens because they were instructed to assign

roles and the presentation should permit to focus on their own interests, expectation and beliefs to make language instruction more meaningful".

Finally, another highly remarkable component of this finding is related to the fact that collaborative and cooperative learning were explicitly explored, meaning that during the development of lessons, there were specific moments in which both the instructor and learners reflected on the concept and implications of being immersed in this kind of environment. From this line of analysis, it can be inferred that pedagogical-didactic metacognition took place, since not only were they focusing on the roles and stages of the project but also on the social behaviors that they were exhibiting as members of a group sharing a common goal, this type of reflection can be thought of as a form of transition towards a cognitive-academic dimension of language proficiency and Langauge use (Cummins, J. 1991). Below, fragments from the reflective logs are presented in order to illustrate the aforementioned contention:

I.S. T1 RL1 – 10 L96
"it is expected that collaboration in the group happens because they were instructed to assign roles and the presentation should permit to focus on their own interests, expectation and beliefs to make language instruction more meaningful".

I.S. T1 RL2– 10 L104"I identified some progress in their teamwork, but for a next session I would insist on the fact that collaboration in team work is mandatory and that the results everyone's responsibility".

4.1.4) Teachers' cognition in terms of elicitation strategies was enhanced and its related implementation procedures were sharpened.

According to Solomon (2003), the role of the facilitator in PBI is the one of a guide or mentor, rather than a controller or evaluator. In this sense, the facilitator is conceived as a connecting bridge in terms of the learner's knowledge and previous experiences, and the proposed goals to be obtained during the developmental process of the project. Nevertheless, learners' L2 cognition is usually limited by proficiency constraints in terms of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. In this order of ideas, the data collected via the teachers' reflective logs provides valuable insight regarding the facilitating role that the in-service teacher assumed by means of elicitation.

In other words, the in-service teacher refined his elicitation skills, so that the already-existing student's knowledge and ideas in L1 could be expressed and used as meaningful contextual tools for developing the different tasks proposed in the stages of the project in L2, as these were related to concepts likely to be known by the students in L1 beforehand. It was also observed that there were different scenarios in which the facilitator understood that learners really knew or wanted to say something; nonetheless, they were restricted in terms of L2 proficiency, so rather than being an evaluator or focusing on correcting their L2 mistakes, he acted as a scaffold so that learners could reach their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) via elicitation. Evidence for this finding is presented at follows:

I.S. T1 RL1– 8 L2

"the teacher elicited some comments on the video of the Crown using a Wood stick".

I.S. T1 RL2– 8 L10

" I elicited the meaning and message of the video, it was productive for them to reflect on their own previous work".

These pieces of evidence suggest that the in-service teacher needed to deal systematically with elicitation in order to foster learners' involvement. He was also challenged to determine what the most appropriate technique to be implemented was; therefore, it was possible to infer that these constant needs in terms of facilitating learners' cognition by means of scaffolding contributed to the improvement of elicitation strategies and use, as part of the in-service teacher's professional growth. For instance:

I.S. T1 RL3– 8 L18

"I had to start the class asking students in Spanish for their definition of goal, I had to help them with some words, then I asked them about strategy and I wrote the two definitions on the board".

I.S. T1 RL3– 8 L20

"I asked learners to find some commonalities and underline them. They found some differences, I highlighted others so they felt that they had important previous and correct knowledge".

Theoretically speaking, as Cummings (1991) describes, Language instructional processes taught under the premise either of Content or Subject-like input transition

from merely being focused on the acquisition Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) towards Cognitive Academic Language proficiency Skills (CALPS); the latter will allow learners to make use of their previous knowledge in L1 so that L2 learning is enriched and mediated by the cognitive skills they already possess. Under these considerations, the in-service teacher was able to elicit L1 references that were suitable for the development of the proposed stages and roles that learners had been assigned for the completion of the project. Also, as part of the process of professional growth, the in-service teacher needed to go beyond conventional elicitation, which required him to go through a process of preparation prior to each lesson, so that he could be properly equipped with the jargon and conceptual tools in order to carry out such procedures. Some excerpts dealing with this finding as presented as follows:

I.S. T1 RL2– 9 L57
" The students came up with a few examples, then I elicited some questions related to why and how to write a mission statement for a company".

I.S. T1 RL4– 9 L83
"I must have also prepared better my answers to the questions suggested in the lesson plan with more specific jargon or specific words so that they could have a better input".

   As a result, considering the data presented throughout the development of this finding, it was evidenced that elicitation in order to promote L1 already-existing cognition into the L2 instructional process was a key component for fostering learner's involvement. Additionally, the-service teacher was able to sharpen his elicitation skills and became better acquainted with its subsequent implementation.

4.2   Professional Growth Challenges

Despite having achieved several positive results in terms of professional growth and lesson planning skills, as both the in-service teacher and student-practitioners reported, challenges were also identified as a result of the limitations of the project. Given the methodological design and data collection artifacts, in certain cases, it was possible to remedy some of the negative phenomena that was identified via the reflective logs during the initial stages of the implementation process. Nevertheless, after having conducted the closing interview of the project, there were additional factors that were brought into consideration for future research initiatives dealing with Project-Based Instruction. This second part of results will be related to those factors that presumably constrained the completion of the project.

4.2.1   Achievement of lesson aims were affected by time constraints as these were over ambitious.

Establishing realistic estimates of how one's lesson plan will do in terms of time management is often a skill that requires repetitive and progressive on-site experience, as well as a careful evaluation of how much one wants to cover during a particular time-span. In this sense, the challenge of instructional design consists of two aspects: 1) One the one hand, lesson designers must propose activities and tasks that are challenging enough as to engage students and promote critical thinking beyond traditional language-focused approaches (Krashen, 2003); on the other hand, lesson aims should not become overambitious, taking into account that these should be proposed in reasonable periods.

As it was stated by the in-service teacher, one faces a disproportionate challenge when lessons are not well-though of regarding time transitions. As a result, lesson aims are left half-way rather than being successfully completed. Bearing this issue in mind, the in-service teacher repeatedly referred to such constraint. The samples below help elucidate such limitation:

I.S. T1 RL5– 8 L51

" Having the lesson plans for each class has been very useful as these are a starting point for me to plan the lesson, nevertheless, I have found that the time allotted for each activity is too short; for this class for instance I invested 100 minutes instead of 60".

I.S. T1 RL5-8 L52

"On the other hand the original lesson plan was too ambitions for a single lesson, it suggested covering three main aspects, so I decided to focus on only one: mission and vision".

From a theoretical perspective, it is possible to argue that lesson plans are likely to be affected either by endogenous or exogenous factors, some of which may be in fact out of one's control. Regarding this issue, Harmer (2001) states that *"it is possible to anticipate potential problems in the class and to plan strategies to deal with them. But however well we do this, things will still happen that surprise us, and which, therefore, cause us to move away from our plan"*. In this order of ideas, it was possible to identify that the in-service teacher needed to extend the amount of time devoted for the project, situation which may have negatively affected his classes, considering that it had been agreed that only one

hour would be set aside for the development of the project per week. Some excerpts are therefore presented to support such claim:

> I.S. T1 RL5-9 L86
>
> *"Then we asked them to prepare a group presentation on their vision and mission in pairs. We gave students 20 minutes to prepare their talk, but it was not enough and   the lesson went on solving questions on how to say this and that".*

> I.S. T1 RL1–10 L98
>
> *"I would also manage the time more effectively because the lesson was planned for sixty minutes and I spent 100. I think I can do it better.*

In synthesis, it was possible to conclude that there various issued related to time management and lesson design, as the proposed aims and tasks would often take more time than the suggested time distribution provided in the lesson plans.

4.2.2 Topic Selection was too demanding and too focused on the Educational Field.

According to Beckett (2002) , PBI seeks to provide learners with enough opportunities to practice with the target language, by establishing a common goal that must be sought after by assuming roles that will ultimately lead to the completion of the established project. In order to successfully do so, the selection of the topic that will serve as the framework for learners to work on needs to be "meaningful" so that individuals can find the purpose of learning.

In this order of ideas, theoretical perspectives provided by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (2006) also point to the fact that PBI must constitute an active exploration of knowledge and learners' capacities. It is explained that students should have an active role in PBI as learners plan, design, research, propose, evaluate and implement based on their own ideas; this possibility of making decisions makes learners feel ownership of the project which is relevant to sustain motivation and feel important.

Despite the aforementioned considerations, one limitation of the project consisted on having proposed the completion of a PBI learning-environment defined by rather specialized academic concepts. In other words, the conception of the project and subsequent design of lessons emerged from the regional need of empowering learners from non-certified municipalities of Risaralda with their school's Institutional Educational Project (PEI). Given this situation, there were times in which both the in-service teacher and lesson designers encountered challenging situations related to the students' appropriation of such thematic. In order to illustrate so, the following data excerpts are shared below:

I.S. T1 RF2-8 L17

"I think they are not ready to face it mostly for the kind of topics involved. It would be different for example if the topic was more about their immediate reality or surrounding, it would not matter if it was authentic instead of adapted".

I.S. T1 RF1-8 L11

"The next step was reading the environmental policy of Coca-Cola, which was full English so it was very difficult for them".

From these fragments, it is possible to determine that although learners were motivated towards the project because of the novelty of the class design, and, as a result, the underlying pedagogical-didactic implications, the topic itself seemed too technical and far away from a high schooler's main interest. Regarding this issue, Moss et al. (1998) as well as Barret (2005) emphasize on the need that learners get involved with the class-work via communicative activities that allow them to feel more comfortable by doing information gap activities, surveys, learner-to-learner interviews, role plays, simulations, data collection, field trips, writing practice tasks and presentations with peers that encourage learners to collaboratively work with their classmates. Nevertheless, as it is implied from the reflection process conducted on the reflective logs below, this was not always the case for learners did not exhibit sufficient previous L1 cognition as to feel confident enough to talk about this topic in a communicative way, establishing a collaborative and peer-led learning environment:

I.S. T1 RF1-10 L95

"On the other hand the video did not show any images, it only consisted in a pointer drawing key words. Then when I asked them to prepare an action plan for a further oral presentation they said to be confused. I did not have a video as Plan B since they need a better input or model for them to plan their presentation".

I.S. T1 RF2-9 L58
"Unfortunately there was some language items that needed clarification and the time constraints did not permit to finish the class by grouping them and asking them to choose a company and write the mission statements based on what they learnt".

As conclusion for this second section concerning challenges in professional growth, it is important to highlight that not only are positive results relevant or worth-mentioning but also are the aspects to improve, as these constitute valuable data on how to ameliorate for future research projects. For this reason, these finding are also valuable, as the purpose of any inquiry is to obtain answers either supporting or debunking one's initial hypothesis.

5 Students' Responses

In this chapter, students' responses will be presented and theoretically discussed. The findings are the result of the data analysis process that resulted from the implementation of PBI in the municipality of Santuario with grades 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th. The methodological artifacts used to collect data were a (1) reflective log designed to be completed after a process of reflection on-action conducted by the in-service teacher once each lesson had been taught, and a (2) focus group held at the institution after the implementation stage had formally been completed.

Students' responses refer to the different psycho-behavioural attitudes identified during the instructional process in the subject-population. For the practical purposes of this classroom project, students' responses will be conceptually structured upon the following theoretical consideration:

""*The concept of motivation is linked closely to other constructs in education and psychology such as constructs of attention, needs, goals and interests which all contribute to stimulating students' interest in learning and their intention to engage in particular activities and achieve various goals." (Krause, K.L, Bochner, S, & Duchesne, S., 2003)*

Thereupon, different students' responses were identified by analyzing the data collected in the aforementioned methodological artifacts, accordingly, these will be presented as follows:

5.1 Students' responses

5.1.1 Learners' demonstrated initial high levels of involvement, interest and expectancy towards English lessons given the novelty of PBI in their learning –teaching environment

Project Based Instruction (PBI) was implemented as an innovation in terms of pedagogy and didactics for the School subject population of Santuario. Its implementation implied that learners would be working on specific Content-Based referents, and based on these, learners would subsequently assume roles in order to provide solutions or possible courses of action via collaborative and cooperative work.

Since learners were used to studying English following a specific Course book during their EFL lessons, the expectation of experiencing new type learning promoted initial high levels of expectancy and interest, meaning the learners felt excited about the idea of doing something different, something that was out of the textbook routine. Accordingly, during the initial stages of the project, learners felt eager to participate and develop the assigned tasks that were proposed as part of the project. A piece of evidence provided by the in-service teacher during one of the opening lessons, supports this statement:

> *I.S. T1 RL1-8 L6*

> *"I think its implementation has been interesting and positive since I notice, judging by the learners' reaction more involvement and expectancy on the work since they know that the work is not based on the workbook".*

Following this piece of reflection, it is possible to determine that there was not any sort of negative bias a priori. In fact, evidence suggests that the learners' initial disposition and interest towards the project was mainly positive and characterized by the expectancy of the new *learning – teaching environment* that was going to be implemented. Subsequently, it was possible to determine that learners engagement, participation and interest towards the EFL lessons considerably increased, taking into account that novel as well as cognitively demanding tasks were presented and implemented during the Project-Based instructional process. A second piece of evidence supporting this claim is presented in the following way:

I.S. T1 RL1-8 L14

" I observed that there was little interaction among the students and with the teacher during the different tasks. I think it was because of the apparent difficulty of the material and topic I proposed them. They are accustomed to more colloquial and routinary topics".

By analyzing this cite in isolation, it would be tempting perhaps to assume that the proposed activities and material were rather decontextualized, and therefore, demotivating for the learners. Nonetheless, a more holistic view of this response is obtained by analyzing the comment provided by the in-service teacher right next to the one presented above:

"At the same time I would say that the students appeared to be interested in the lessons for they have showed to be interested in the tasks. The two reactions, I would say, are not contradictory since a topic or a task can be challenging enough to keep learners attentive, but doubtful and confused at the same time".

These two cites present a quite insightful learning-teaching scenario during the implementation of PBI ; namely since it is suggested that learners were 1) quite excited, and portrayed a feeling of expectancy during the instructional process, after knowing that they would be working on something different to the textbook during their EFL classes. 2) engaged and interested in the lessons since the proposed tasks were both novel and cognitively demanding, meaning that not only did they feel that they were learning English but also interacting and exploring with more challenging subject content.

This first response can be articulated with Cummins' (1979) hypothesis of linguistic Interdependence, specifically on the theoretical contributions related to the acquisition of Cognitive Academic Learning Language Proficiency (CALPS), in which language instruction is not aimed at providing learners with merely isolated communicative competences, but rather focuses on the integration of language as a means for acquiring academic literacy in L2.

Under this premise, this finding can be conceptually interpreted in the sense that students were initially engaged, interested and were characterized by the expectancy towards the project to be implemented in their EFL lessons. However, once they were

exposed to the tasks, activities and related input, they appeared to be initially confused and challenged by these, as they did not have enough experience on L2 academic instruction. Nevertheless, they remained motivated and willing to participate as they found it interesting, since not only did they perceive that they were learning English but also were engaging in tasks that were cognitively demanding as to promote their motivation and curiosity.

Finally, it is pertinent to highlight the fact that this response did not remain the same throughout the entire implementation of the project. In fact, this very first finding has been referred to by using the adjective *" initial"*, e.g.: *" initial high levels of involvement, interest and expectancy".* As a result, a noticeable change was found, this is opposed to the one presented below. In this order of ideas, the second finding will be presented:

5.1.2 Student's motivation, engagement and interest towards the PBI project progressively decreased as they found the proposed topics rather technical and too demanding.

PBI allows learners and teachers to explore an almost limitless variety of topics and Problem – Based situations from which projects can be developed. In this sense, EFL lessons become meaningful, as learners have the opportunity to take decisions and apply their critical thinking skills in the solving of a problem that is related to their interests or immediate reality, National Academy Foundation (nd). Nonetheless, the design and implementation of the project followed already-established parameters in terms of the content to be taught. Since this project responded to a governmental initiative by the Secretaría de Educación of Risaralda, there were specific interests and aims for which insight was desired. Therefore, the Applied Linguistics Group (GILA) of the Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, decided to design and implement the project in the municipality bearing such governmental purposes in mind, contributing to the educational goals established for non-certified municipalities of the department.

As a result, it was determined that the instructional process would be focused on the exploration of the Proyecto Educativo Institucional (PEI) of the Institution at Santuario, this implies that the project was articulated around the contents of the PEI, which mainly deal with the Institution's educational mission, vision, goals , values, pedagogical considerations and policies. The relevance and significance of these topics in terms of the students' context was justified in the sense that learners would be better empowered and would develop a more active educational - institutional role in their school and municipality

if they knew what their school's PEI was about. In other words, students would develop a more intrinsic and authentic feeling of belonging towards their school and municipality if they got involved in the study of the mission, vision, goals and pedagogical considerations of the Institution.

Despite having the previous considerations in mind, and having carefully designed each lesson plan so that the proposed tasks were not monotonous or boring, the student-researchers knew that it would be rather challenging to get genuine student's involvement and intrinsic motivation towards the designed lessons under the precepts of the School's PEI. Nonetheless, it was agreed that if well- thought and properly- designed didactic tools were included in each lesson plan, this content challenge could be overcome and no a-priori negative bias should be considered as a limitation.

On the one hand, after having carefully analyzed the data and considered the initial finding, it was possible to determine that the novelty of the lessons and proposed activities were meaningful enough as to maintain positive students' responses in terms of interest, engagement and motivation during the initial / mid-term stages of the implementation. On the other hand, it was clearly evidenced that after quite a few lessons were implemented, the students' affective filter activated as they lost interest and became demotivated because the proposed topic was perceived as far from their reality and interests, therefore, decontextualized an over- demanding in terms of cognition, considering their age , particular learning needs and preferences.

The following cite provides evidence for the previous claim:

I.S. T1 RL4 -8 L31

"*My students in this lesson were very passive. I think they are feeling confused or unmotivated because of the topic itself. They have not dared to say it, but I think it is not interesting for them to have a lesson about goal and strategies setting in the context of education*".

In this particular cite, it is evidenced that learners remained respectful and followed the instructions proposed by the in-service teacher. Notwithstanding, there was already an intuition by the in-service teacher in which he suspected that learners had lost interest since the topics were not meaningful for them, it is specifically remarked that perhaps the fact of emphasizing on technical concepts in the field of education is not really motivating for high school students.

Further analysis of the reflective logs provided sufficient evidence as to find out and determine that learners were in fact somewhat demotivated after being recurrently exposed and asked to develop tasks related to the field of education.

As the in-service teacher expresses it, there was a moment in which he suspected learners were "*fed up*" with the proposed content as they were not studying for becoming teachers and the class was going too far into pedagogical technicalities.

I.S. T1 RL4- 8 L33

"They have been very quiet and respectful at listening to what we or classmates say, but I suspect they are fed up with the topic".

I.S. T1 RL4- 8 L34

"It sounds not too close to their reality. They are not teachers nor are they studying to be teachers. This topics sounds like that".

Based on these pieces of evidence, it is possible to state that the implementation of the Institution's PEI as the subject-content was not really successful or contextualized, as learners viewed it as quite distant from their interests and learning needs, this resulted in a demotivation passive stage during the final stages of the project. This was evidenced via reflective insight of the type:

I.S. T1 RF3- 9 L 70

"They did not show enthusiasm, but they were in silence, listening and participating in a serious and committed way. They asked for new vocabulary which was explained in English".

Overall, it could be determined that the proposed subject- content was not fully applicable to the students' learning needs and interests. One of the core characteristics of PBI is that content should be meaningful enough so that leaners can find the instructional process motivating and as a key part of their life-time learning, as it is defined in Project-Based Learning handbook (2006). Nevertheless,

this did not take place successfully after the closing stage of the implementation, because of the heavily education-oriented focus of the school's PEI.

5.1.3 Students' anxiety and inhibition components activated when asked to elaborate on technical educational concepts, mainly in written form.

Lesson plans followed a Presentation, Practice and Production pattern Harmer (2001) in which learners were initially introduced to the concepts to be developed during the class, then different examples were presented by using videos or images, and finally learners were asked to work in groups in order to develop content-based products related to the lesson's aim. Given the nature of the school's PEI, these products were usually written-oriented, mostly dealing with the educational-pedagogical technical concepts that were to be studied during the lesson. Since most learners were totally non-acquainted with these academic concepts, the resulting response was inhibition and anxiety, which led students to assume that they were unable or did not have enough linguistic resources as to produce written technical outcomes.

As it was stated in the chapter devoted to the conceptual framework, Krashen (2003) holds the view that L2 learning processes are truly successful when students do not feel inhibited or anxious. In order to optimally reach this learning response, the learning-teaching environment should be designed in a way so that all the components of

a possible negative affective filter that may activate in learners are diminished, this can be done by proposing novel, meaningful, engaging and learner-centered activities and tasks that relate to the Ls' interests and needs. Although it was proven that the initial and mid-term stage of the PBI implementation was novel and engaging, the proposed content and tasks became too technical and during the subsequent stages. In addition, learners were not only demotivated but also non-acquainted in terms of academic writing. For this reason, learners' response was rather poor when asked to produce written outcomes, a possible explanation for this resides in the fact that (1) they did not feel interested towards the school's PEI components, (2) they did not understand neither wanted to explore educational – pedagogical technicalities and (3) felt unsecure, nervous and anxious when asked to produce written outcomes dealing with such academic concepts.

The following reflective evidence supports this response:

I.S. T1 RL3- 9 L71

"They asked for new vocabulary which was explained in English. On the other hand they said to be afraid of not being able to write something coherent."

Further analysis regarding whether students presented a different response when facing these type of tasks in an oral way, suggested that a very similar response arose either when these were asked to make presentation or write down conceptualizations in terms of education. These two pieces of evidence point at the fact that inhibition and anxiety were not specifically associated to the writing or oral production competence itself,

rather, these were directly related to the learner's lack of technical educational knowledge in general terms.

I.S. T1 RL5- 9 L88.

"When students are asked to prepare a presentation on their version of mission, vision and philosophy, they react nervously just to the idea of talking about it. It seems challenging enough for them"

Another relevant aspect related to the in-service teacher's perception regarding the proposed tasks that should be developed based on the PEI components was obtained via the reflective logs. Based on his comments, it was possible to infer that he considered that the opportunity to work on a more meaningful and contextualized topic for the institution had been lost. He emphasized on the fact that learners from 8th and 9th grade were not cognitively mature enough as to focus on this type of content. On the other hand, he stated that although a very respectful and committed development of activities continued to take place by the students, these were merely following his instructions in a somehow passive way:

I.S. E T1 L 148

"En grados octavos no sentía que fuera un tema apropiado para trabajar con ellos, pues yo considero que la misión, la visión y la filosofía son algo complicado para trabajar en grados octavos, yo sentía que ellos estaban prestando atención pero el interés venia de otra parte".

I.S. E T1 L151

"PBI se presta para trabajar con tantos temas y justo escoger un tema para trabajar tan pesado, la verdad no es nada llamativo, ósea ustedes como diseñadores y nosotros como aplicadores hicimos lo mejor para trabajar con los estudiantes ya que los gustos son diferentes entre los estudiantes".

In addition, the in-service teacher also provided his opinion in terms of having been instructed to work specifically on the Institution's PEI components, which he considered as unnatural and rather forced, being a major component for the activation of Ls' inhibition and anxiety:

I.S. E T1 L147

" Lo negativo es que la idea del proyecto que se pensó sobre trabajar el PEI de las instituciones, fue algo forzado por parte de la secretaria de educación."

As a conclusion, it was possible to determine that students' responses were initially positive towards the implementation of the Project, considerable interesting results were identified in terms of Ls' interest, expectancy towards the EFL lessons, intrinsic motivation and active engagement during the initial stages via cooperative an collaborative work. Nonetheless, these responses changed as learners motivation decreased given the highly academic content that was recurrently presented and taught, this simply did not relate to students' reality and needs and was therefore rejected during the closing stage. In this order of ideas, it was possible to confirm the initial hypothesis taken from Lightbown and Spada (2006) , which stated the usual successful L2 learners are those who are

motivated, as opposed to those students who are not motivated and are often inhibited and unsuccessful in terms of their L2 attitudes, proficiency and cognitive progress.

To sum up , it is fair to state that responses were mostly successful in terms of the novelty, roles and planning of the project itself, however, responses were somehow challenging during the closing stage of the Project, mostly because of the highly technical content that was being used. As a result, these responses point at the fact that the project was in fact successful despite having presented the school's PEI as the main source of input. On the other hand, it is also inferred that a more careful and consented selection of the topics and focus on the project, for instance: by interviewing learners on their likes and needs, will certainly yield better results.

6 Limitations of the project "PBI"

During the development of the Classroom Project, the following limitations were faced:

Firstly, one methodological – observational limitation was the fact of not having been directly involved during the implementation of the PBI lessons in-situ. This implied that the obtained data was collected based on the teachers' reflective logs and the focus group conducted once the instructional process had formally been completed. In this sense, the findings and conclusions are based on the in-service teacher's perceptions and reflective process on action, and the subsequent qualitative and theoretical analysis carried out by the practitioners..

A second limitation consisted on the role that the participants of this classroom project assumed. As PBI lesson designers prepared each unit in advance, the in-service teacher was provided with a lesson plan for each lesson to be taught weekly; this situation led to several misunderstandings from the in-service teacher's point of view that arose as the result of not comprehending the accurate focus and procedures related to the proposed activities, also, in terms of time management, as he had not intervened in the design and planning.

A third limitation was related to the reduced number of visits to the institution that took place in order to have face-to-face meetings with the in-service teacher for identifying the progress, strengths and aspects to be improved during the implementation stage.   At the beginning of the project, it had been agreed that the government would contribute by providing means of transportation in order to visit the institution, but this support was

provided once only. This hindered the implementation process for the practitioners could not develop the visits as planned at first. For this reason, practitioners had to spend their own money to visit the institution in Santuario.

A fourth limitation was related to the content focus that was selected and taught during the instructional process. Not only did it present challenges for the designing of the lessons but also was found to be limiting and highly correlated with the obtained student's responses in terms of motivation and content appropriation development.

From another point of view, a fifth limitation was L1 overuse, as it was described by the in-service teacher, the majority of the student population presented proficiency levels in English within the A1 range, with a smaller proportion of students considered as A2 language users according to the CEFRL. For this reason, learners tended to switch to L1 whenever they found unknown vocabulary, required grammatical structures, did not understand the provided instructions or considered it was easier to express themselves in their mother tongue.

The Implementation of Cooperative and Collaborative learning strategies was also a limitation, given the lack of experience that the lesson designers, in-service teacher and learners had working with it. For this reason, getting used to designing, teaching and studying by means of cooperative and collaborative focused lessons was a challenge during the initial stages of the project as there was not sufficient expertise on these techniques and it was mainly exploratory. Nevertheless, it proved to be an enriching factor as practitioners as well as the in-serviced teacher considerably strengthened their

competences on this aspect, based on the research they made and the strategies that were proposed and implemented.

Another limiting aspect consisted on the time devoted for the project within the English subject. Each course received a weekly hour of PBI instruction since the remaining time needed to be focused on the school's EFL syllabus. As a result, the in-service teacher would often have to postpone the development of the project in order to cover the topics that belonged to the school's curriculum for the EFL class.

7   Conclusions

In this chapter, conclusions will be presented after having carried out the entire implementation process and completed the data analysis procedures of the present classroom project. The conclusions will be presented along each objective in order to verify whether it was achieved or not. Firstly, we will present our teaching objectives, then, we will proceed with the learning ones. No interest conflict is attributed since both positive and challenging conclusions are considered.

After having analyzed the proposed teaching and learning objectives and contrasted them with the results of the implementation and data analysis process, the following conclusions will be presented as follows:

The first teaching objective was related to <u>fostering and activating learners' involvement and motivational components towards the English subject matter.</u> In order to elaborate on this objective, two of the findings encountered in terms of students' responses must be referred to: 1) *Learners' demonstrated initial high levels of involvement, interest and expectancy towards the English lesson given the novelty of the PBI Methodology. 2) Student's motivation, engagement and interest towards the PBI project progressively decreased.*

Based on these two findings, it could be concluded that learners' involvement and motivational components towards the English lesson were in fact fostered during the initial and mid-term stages of the implementation. It was found that learners' interest and participation were encouraged given the novelty of the project. In this order of ideas, it could be said that learners were in fact receptive and willing to participate in the project.

Nonetheless, this objective was partially achieved based on the subsequent students' responses which pointed at the fact that while the motivational and involvement components were in fact fostered, these did not remain the same throughout the entire instructional process and tended to decrease progressively.

The most determining factor for not having totally achieved the first teaching objective was related to the content focus for the development of the PBI project, from the data analysis process it was possible to conclude that this was too technical and did not fully respond to the learners' interests as highs school students.

The second teaching objective was related to instructing and guiding the in-service teacher in the development of PBI. Based on the focus-group conducted with the in-service teacher once the instructional process had been completed, it could be concluded that the in-service teacher's perceptions on the guidance and instruction provided by the lesson designers were positive. It was concluded that he had graded the provided instructional and guidance process as satisfactory, by analyzing the transcripts of the interview in which he highlighted aspects such as professionalism and politeness of the communication channel that had been established. Despite the limited face-to-face meetings that were held at the institution, it was concluded that the instruction and guidance process had successfully taken place via email and mobile phone communication.

Regarding the learning objectives, it was possible to conclude that for objective having to do with the students' appropriation of the strategic framework in L2, the results

were heterogeneous. The data analysis process concluded that the PEI appropriation had been more successful in grades 10th and 11th than in 9th and 8th grades. This conclusion was obtained by analyzing the available data on students' responses. In this sense, it was implied that the topics selected for grades 8th and 9th represented a major challenge for learners as these had never been exposed to that type of content in L1, and as a result the appropriation of key concepts in L2 was partially achieved given the cognitive-conceptual challenges that they faced.

In grades 10th and 11th, the appropriation of the strategic framework was more successful, learners' previous knowledge and experience facilitated the incorporation of L1 cognition into L2 conceptual appropriation. Nevertheless, the major difficulty encountered with learners of higher grades was related to the responses in terms of motivation and interest during the final stages, since learners thought that the topics and focus of the project were too focused on educational academic concepts and they did not have previous experience in terms of academic writing.

Regarding the learning objective on collaborative work as an opportunity to practice the foreign language and to develop interpersonal skills, it could be concluded that learners responses about group work and cooperative learning were ultimately and successfully achieved. Initially, a very important factor limiting the achievement of this objective was the lack of expertise that the lesson designers, in-service teacher and students themselves had regarding this type of work. Nonetheless, as lessons took place, the collected data suggested that responses in terms of collaborative work improved as better contextualized procedures and tasks were designed and implemented in the lesson plans. Overall, it was concluded that the proposed components for the development of the

PBI project were successful at the time of promoting interpersonal skills via collaborative learning, motivation and interest; however, it was the content election rather than PBI itself that led to the partial achievement of certain components of the objectives.

8 Implications

Professional Growth and Research Implications

On the one hand, professional growth implications refer to the factors that contributed to improve the professional profile (competences and performance) of both the PBI lesson designers/ practitioners and the in-service teacher. On the other hand, research implications refer to the possibilities that exist in order to expand or refute the presented findings of this classroom project via subsequent research studies.

From the lesson designers point of view, t lesson planning implied that the processes of presentation and implementation of this methodological innovation were meaningful and engaging enough as to promote learners motivation, interest, active participation during the project and contributed to L2 development. In order to do so, the lesson designers needed to consider the Content Focus and present it via the most suitable didactic- ludic techniques.

Therefore, it was required to present and interact with content by means of collaborative and cooperative learning, complementing it with appropriate materials and tasks in order to scaffold learners L1 already existing cognition into L2. These considerations were highly demanding in terms of lesson drafting, as extensive reading in terms of PBI instruction and cooperative and collaborative learning strategies was required. As a result the lesson designers needed to go through a process of theoretical exploration and empowerment in order to make use of the better contextualized techniques and strategies for contributing not only in terms of language development but also in terms of the PBI project execution with the specific student population.

Consequently, the lesson designers needed to consider and constantly improve their planning skills in terms of time management, patterns of interaction, selected material and visual aids, integration of content and language development into the execution of the project and consideration of the reflection on action carried out by the in-service teacher, in order to take action for the modification of the aspects that needed to be improved.

From the point of view of the in-service teacher, developing a PBI project in his EFL classes implied that he needed to analyze and adapt the lesson plans that were provided to him according to his own needs and particular unexpected teaching-learning phenomena that took place during each of the classes. Additionally, it implied the development of high levels of abstraction and reflection in order to complete the reflective logs after each lesson was taught. In this sense, the in-service teacher needed to become both an instructor and a researcher on- action , and while so doing, he needed to reduce as much as possible his own biases regarding the beliefs and conception towards PBI and language development.

Regarding the research implications, further research projects could be developed by gaining initial student consensus about the PBI content and focus that learners wish to work on based on their own interests and learning needs. Additionally, future research projects could also gain more holistic insight if the methodological artifacts for the data collection process were not only focused on the in-service teacher's perception and reflection on action, but also focused on gathering learners' perceptions and reflection by designing complementary methodological artifacts in order to collect their responses.

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LESSON PLAN 3

Date of the class: Friday, October 17th, 2014.	Grade: 9th Class Number: 3 PEI focus: Mission and Vision.

AIM: Al final de la clase, los estudiantes tendrán una idea más clara y realista de que lo que implica establecer la misión y visión de un proyecto, al mismo tiempo que desarrollan sus habilidades de pensamiento crítico y argumentación.

Estándares Básicos de Competencias (MEN)

Estándar General: Participo en conversaciones en las que puedo explicar mis opiniones e ideas sobre temas generales, personales y abstractos

Estándares Específicos:

Escucha: Utilizo las imágenes e información del contexto de habla para comprender mejor lo que escucho.

Escritura: Escribo diferentes tipos de textos de mediana longitud y con una estructura sencilla (cartas, notas, mensajes, correos electrónicos, etc.)

Conversación: Participo espontáneamente en conversaciones sobre temas de mi interés utilizando un lenguaje claro y sencillo.

 Indicadores de logro:
*Comprende su rol y contribución específica para la consecución del proyecto.

Assumed Knowledge:
- Expresiones sencillas para dar una opinión.
- Vocabulario relacionado con el entorno social al cual están relacionados, específicamente el ámbito educativo de su institución.

Materials:

Video projector, videos, hand-out, tablero y marcadores, lesson plan.

ACTIVITY/TIME	PROCEDURE TEACHER AND LEARNER ACTIVITY	ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS AND PLANNED SOLUTIONS	COMMENTS
Introduccion a la clase/ 3 min	1. Al iniciar la clase en profesor mostrara un video que habla de la misión y la visión en L2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYDQfMMYw_8	En caso de tener problemas con los videos, el profesor puede hablarles de empresas que sean exitosas como empresas de autos de comida, o de ropa	
Socializacion de la tarea / 12 min	2. El profesor pregunta a los estudiantes acerca de la tarea asignada previamente, después de que unos estudiantes participen, se escribe en inglés en el tablero las ideas más acertadas. Se les muestra un video que representa la visión y misión de un proyecto. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixOPX5zKfSI		
Socializacion del video / 5 min	3. Después de ver el video el profesor puede señalar el mensaje del video, como creer en los sueños, trabajar para que se cumplan, el trabajo en equipo, etc.		
actividad/ 10 min	4. los estudiantes verán un video acerca de las compañías más exitosas del mundo, después se les preguntara porque creen que son exitosas dándoles pistas, por ejemplo: porque son creativas, porque son organizadas, innovadoras, etc. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yzD3cLnVX8		

actividad / 15 min	5. los estudiantes escribirán en sus cuadernos oraciones en ingles expresando lo que piensan de la empresa, cuales creen que son sus ventajas y desventajas, y como creen que será visto ante las otras empresas del mercado.		
relato/15min	6. Los estudiantes escribirán en ingles un pequeño relato (5-8 renglones) donde expresen: -Como se imaginan que será físicamente su empresa. - A quién van a vender el producto (edad, género). -Lo bueno y lo malo del producto.		

EXTRA-CLASS WORK, ANNOUNCEMENTS, THINGS TO CONSIDER:
 Pensar en un logo para su empresa, que sea atractivo para las personas.

REFLECTION SESSION:

What went well?
How do you know that?
What didn't go that well?

Sample of reflective logs

Grado 8

Lección 1 – 29 de julio

FORMATO DE REFLEXIÓN

Nombre:XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX   Institución: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Lección #: 1   Fecha: July 29th 2014

El proyecto de investigación "Pedagogía Basada en Proyectos para la apropiación del marco estratégico en 8 municipios no certificados de Risaralda" tiene como fin el mejoramiento de las competencias comunicativas en lengua inglesa, al igual que el empoderamiento de dicha pedagogía; por consiguiente, éste formato busca conocer su percepción acerca de la implementación, ya que para nosotros sus opiniones son muy valiosas y significativas.

En ésta primera sección se quiere conocer la percepción del profesor frente a la metodología de "Pedagogía Basada en Proyectos".

I think its implementation has been interesting and positive since I notice, judging by the learners' reaction more involvement and expectancy on the work since they know that the work is not based on the workbook.

En ésta sección se quiere conocer la reacción que los estudiantes han tenido frente a la implementación de PBI.

2 Describa la reacción de los estudiantes.
At first it was difficult for students to understand and explain in their own words the goal of the lesson, then during the video, they were very concentrated and there were some free participation when the teacher elicited some comments on the video of the Crown using a Wood stick.
After students commented on the importance of a strategy, the teacher proposed them to carry out a task in which they would have to apply an strategy. As they are a group of 22 students, they were to act as a whole team. For the task the students were give slips of paper with lyrics of a song, they were also provided with sheets of paper, markers, a board and the video player for them to listen to the song. They were given 30 minutes to carry out the task. The learners were highly involved, nevertheless around 7 learners were not participating at all. They did not use all the resources and they did not have a clear strategy to get everyone's help around the task. I had to do a variation in the task so it was more interesting and appealing for them. Even they assigned some roles and they cooperate each other, the only matter was that not everyone was involved them. I just set aside so the next time they improve team work.

Finalmente, se quiere conocer cuáles son sus observaciones frente a la metodología de PBI.

3 ¿Qué haría diferente en una próxima sesión?

Something I should do differently is to help them with some vocabulary and models so it is easier for them to state the objective of the lesson. Another aspect is that I should have insisted on the need to have everyone's participation as one of the main goals of their task as well as using the material in the most useful manner in that direction. The song was adequate, short and at their English level. (Don't worry be happy by Bobby Mc ferrin)

Interview

128. **Entrevistador:** Buenos días profesor, muchas gracias por permitirnos realizar esta entrevista.

129. **Profesor:** Con mucho gusto, antes de empezar con la entrevista,   quiero compartir algunas opiniones sobre la propuesta de la ministra Gina Parodi, de contratar personal extranjero para dictar clases de inglés en Colombia.

130. **Entrevistador:** Está bien, adelante profesor. ¿ Qué desea decir al respecto?

131. **Profesor:** Para la ministra, la enseñanza de este idioma sería mucho mejor al contratar extranjeros que si la clases fuesen impartidas por profesores de inglés colombianos.

132. Yo apoyo la iniciativa de criticarle eso a la ministra porque la intención de ella no es sana, porque es menospreciar a los maestros colombianos, y si está mal la educación pues mejorarla.

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133. **Entrevistador:** Mucha gracias por su apreciación. Esperamos que desde el ministerio de educación se puedan determinar cursos de acción que no menosprecien la labor ni la preparación pedológico-didáctica de los licenciados colombianos.
134. Ahora bien, con relación al proyecto, ¿ Cuáles considera usted han sido los aspectos positivos de la implementación de PBI en la institución?

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135. **Profesor:** En un proyecto de investigación, el hecho de que no se logre lo esperado no quiere decir que el proyecto fue un fracaso, sirvió para darse cuenta como no hacer las cosas y sirve para una futura corrección.

136. Definitivamente uno de los puntos a favor es que cuando uno a los estudiantes le dice que va a poner en práctica algo distinto, o una metodología distinta, el solo hecho de hablar de un cambio a los estudiantes los predispone para estar alerta, para estar motivados, eso es un punto positivo.

137. Cuando yo les hablo a los estudiantes de algo distinto sobre una iniciativa de la UTP a ellos les suena como bueno porque los saca de esa rutina de ese lineamento en que yo tengo el pecado de caer.

138. Otro aspecto positivo es el tocar temas como visión, misión y filosofía.

139. Uno debe tocar vocabulario que no es tan coloquial, pues puede ser positivo para ampliar el vocabulario de los estudiantes.

140. Otro aspecto fue el apoyo de los voluntarios de la fundación Nukanti, ya que él me ayudaba a parafrasear, a dar ejemplos para así hacer el tema más accesible para los estudiantes. Me sirvió mucho su ayuda.

141. La comunicación entre los estudiantes pertenecientes fue muy atenta, muy profesional y muy cordial, fue una comunicación muy buena.

142. Otro punto positivo es el uso de los lessons plans, ya que hace más fácil el desarrollo de la clase, puesto que si fuera al contrario, -responsabilidad de nosotros- sería mucho más difícil y tomaría más tiempo.

143. En este proyecto solo trabajamos desde los grados octavos ya que los otros dos docentes no pudieron y no quisieron ser parte de este proyecto, con grado octavo fue complicado trabajar ya que su nivel de inglés hacía difícil abordar algunos temas.

144. En general la respuesta de los estudiantes hacia el proyecto fue muy buena pero no sé si fue debido al proyecto o a la evaluación que debían hacer al final.

145. El uso de la metodología permite abordar temas más conectados con   la realidad de los estudiantes, más contextualizados.

146. **Entrevistador:** Muchas gracias por permitirnos escuchar sus   apreciaciones. No obstante, para nosotros es bastante relevante recibir retroalimentación sobre los aspectos negativos del proyecto, ¿ Cuáles considera usted que son los puntos negativos o a mejorar?

147. **Profesor:** Lo negativo es que la idea del proyecto que se pensó sobre trabajar el PEI de las instituciones, fue algo forzado por parte de la secretaria de educación.

148. En grados octavos no sentía que fuera un tema apropiado para trabajar con ellos, pues yo considero que la misión, la visión y la filosofía son algo complicado para trabajar en grados octavos, yo sentía que ellos estaban prestando atención pero el interés venia de otra parte.

149. De pronto ellos estaba pensando en las notas ya que ellos saben que yo siempre saco nota después de cada actividad.

150. Creo que se debería trabajar por ejemplo en grado décimo con la realidad del país, temas más cercanos a lo actual. Porque si a veces trabajando el enfoque pedagógico de una institución con los profesores y se duermen ahora trabajando con estudiantes.

151. PBI se presta para trabajar con tantos temas y justo escoger un tema para trabajar tan pesado, la verdad no es nada llamativo, ósea ustedes como diseñadores y nosotros como aplicadores hicimos lo mejor para trabajar con los estudiantes ya que los gustos son diferentes entre los estudiantes.