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El compromiso con el aprendizaje de idiomas es un concepto multidimensional que abarca componentes cognitivos, sociales y emocionales (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Sin embargo, quienes formulan las políticas, los profesores de idiomas y los estudiantes de la institución educativa Juan Bautista la Salle parecen ignorar esta complejidad puesto que aparentemente su mayor preocupación recae en el desempeño académico de los estudiantes y en los logros institucionales. Este estudio intenta determinar la conexión del compromiso con el aprendizaje de idiomas y la alfabetización crítica en los estudiantes un salón de clase de grado noveno. La investigación de acción participativa es el diseño metodológico que sustenta este estudio. Así pues, esta investigación propone dos talleres diseñados bajo los principios de la alfabetización crítica para proveer a los estudiantes con las herramientas necesarias para abordar problemáticas locales que su comunidad resiste. Los hallazgos que surgieron de esta investigación sugieren que la práctica de la alfabetización crítica compromete a los estudiantes desde las dimensiones cognitiva, social y emocional. Este enfoque crítico juega un rol importante en la activación de la disposición de los estudiantes para encarar el aprendizaje de idiomas y enfrentar dificultades relacionadas con el mismo.

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ABSTRACT: (Máximo 250 palabras)

Language learning engagement is a multidimensional concept that embraces cognitive, emotional, and social components (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). However, stakeholders, language educators and students from Juan Bautista La Salle high school seem to ignore its complexity since apparently their main concern relies on the students' academic performance and institutional achievements. This study intends to determine the connection between language learning engagement and critical literacy in a ninth-grade classroom. Participatory Action Research is the methodological approach framing this study. Thus, this investigation proposes two workshops, designed under the principles of critical literacy to provide learners with tools to approach local issues occurring in their community. Findings emerging from this research suggest that the practice of critical literacy engages students in learning from the cognitive, social and emotional dimensions. Then, this critical approach plays a pivotal role in activating students' willingness to cope with language learning and tackle learning-related difficulties.

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Running head: LANGUAGE LEARNING ENGAGEMENT AND CRITICAL LITERACY

Enhancing Language Learning Engagement by means of Critical Literacy at a Public Institution
in Caquetá, Colombia.

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Abstract

Language learning engagement is a multidimensional concept that embraces cognitive, emotional, and social components (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). However, stakeholders, language educators and students from Juan Bautista La Salle high school seem to ignore its complexity since apparently their main concern relies on the students' academic performance and institutional achievements. This study intends to determine the connection between language learning engagement and critical literacy in a ninth-grade classroom. Participatory Action Research is the methodological approach framing this study. Thus, this investigation proposes two workshops, designed under the principles of critical literacy to provide learners with tools to approach local issues occurring in their community. Findings emerging from this research suggest that the practice of critical literacy engages students in learning from the cognitive, social and emotional dimensions. Then, this critical approach plays a pivotal role in activating students' willingness to cope with language learning and tackle learning-related difficulties.

Keywords: Learning engagement, language learning, critical literacy.

Resumen

El compromiso con el aprendizaje de idiomas es un concepto multidimensional que abarca componentes cognitivos, sociales y emocionales (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Sin embargo, quienes formulan las políticas, los profesores de idiomas y los estudiantes de la institución educativa Juan Bautista la Salle parecen ignorar esta complejidad puesto que aparentemente su mayor preocupación recae en el desempeño académico de los estudiantes y en los logros institucionales. Este estudio intenta determinar la conexión del compromiso con el aprendizaje de idiomas y la alfabetización crítica en los estudiantes un salón de clase de grado noveno. La investigación de acción participativa es el diseño metodológico que sustenta este estudio. Así pues, esta investigación propone dos talleres diseñados bajo los principios de la alfabetización crítica para proveer a los estudiantes con las herramientas necesarias para abordar problemáticas locales que su comunidad resiste. Los hallazgos que surgieron de esta investigación sugieren que la práctica de la alfabetización crítica compromete a los estudiantes desde las dimensiones cognitiva, social y emocional. Este enfoque crítico juega un rol importante en la activación de la disposición de los estudiantes para encarar el aprendizaje de idiomas y enfrentar dificultades relacionadas con el mismo.

Palabras clave: Compromiso con el aprendizaje, aprendizaje de idiomas, alfabetización crítica.

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LANGUAGE LEARNING ENGAGEMENT AND CRITICAL LITERACY

Introduction

This project investigates the issue of language learning engagement (hereafter LLE) in an EFL classroom regarding the implementation of critical literacy practices. In this sense, this study relies on the understanding of language learning engagement as an integrative construct, including cognitive, social, and emotional engagement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). In doing so, 34 ninth graders from Juan Bautista La Salle high school in Florencia Caquetá, were involved in this Participatory Action Research (hereafter PAR) aimed at integrating participants in the co-researching process of implementing critical literacy practices to determine its connection with the construct of language learning engagement.

On the purpose of determining if learners are engaged or not with learning the foreign language, and identifying students' closeness to the components of language learning engagement, a needs analysis was conducted. In doing so, two instruments were used. The first one was a set of feedback cards implemented with a sample of five students. The intention of this data collection tool was to inquire about students' perceptions and understanding of language learning. Meanwhile, the second instrument was a class observation form aimed at identifying the various types of engagement and the length of this phenomena within the classroom. The results depicted by this analysis evidenced that most of the learners in this group are not engaged in language learning, regarding the three components mentioned above. So far, participants seemed to be mainly concerned with their academic performance; then, learners and teachers do not appear to consider the emotional and social components of engagement as part of the language learning.

Even though, Fredricks et al. (2004) allege that "The study of engagement as multidimensional and as an interaction between the individual and the environment promises to

help us to better understand the complexity of children's experiences in school and to design more specifically targeted and nuanced interventions" (p. 61). Stakeholders, teachers, and students at Juan Bautista la Salle high school seem to overlook the importance of the social and emotional components of engagement when it comes to language learning. The following transcription illustrates how cognition is exclusively emphasized in the teaching and learning processes at this institution, "As an alternative, the challenge is to intellectually potentiate young learners, with the intention of developing communicative skills that allow them to interact and build a fairer and more competent country" (Juan Bautista la Salle, 2009). In light of this, the remaining components of engagement (social and emotional) appear to be alienated from classroom practices. It is to say, at Juan Bautista la Salle High School, interaction serves as the goal for learning English, but it is far from being a means for learning to take place.

What is more, although studies have been conducted on the field of academic and language teacher research engagement, Storch (2008) affirms that little has been done concerning the issue of language learning engagement. In this sense, researching on the relationship between language engagement and critical literacies in high school learners supposes a great opportunity in this field, mainly unknown for the public education sector in Caquetá. Therefore, this research study relies on the principles of Qualitative Research (QR henceforth), as a manner to examine the participants' experience to contribute to the understanding of LLE in particular contexts. In the same vein, PAR describes the type of study framing this investigation, which seeks to actively involve participants in a democratic model planned to engage students in the co-researching affair of inquiring on their local problematics. The data collection tools serving this project are focus groups interviews, questionnaires and students' artifacts. These instruments have provided qualitative data aimed at giving an answer to the research question and accomplishing the research objectives. Similarly, an initial focus group interview has served to

examine students' perceptions and attitudes regarding the issue of LLE, as well as to delimit the research problem. Meanwhile, a post-intervention focus group interview has allowed the researchers to describe variations in the way in which students perceive LLE once they enrolled in this research study.

The pedagogical intervention illuminating this study consisted of two workshops designed under the light of critical literacy. Participants were in charge of selecting the topics for the intervention through a PAR questionnaire to deepen on their school and community problems. The affinity among students' responses led teachers-researchers to implement a first workshop namely "Discrimination is real" a printed sample that invited students to examine this issue from a broader perspective while reflecting upon the school experience. The second workshop denominated "JUBASA moves on" focused on environmental issues, this workshop was an online version that allowed students to research on the environmental problematics affecting their localities and propose actions for transformation. Students' participation in this series of workshops was accompanied by the writing process attained to the practice of critical literacy. Herein, students raised their voices through the institutional journal "JUBASA Revolution" to invite the school and community to fight against the local problematics constraining them.

Findings emerging from this investigation suggest that the practice of critical literacy is able to engage students from the cognitive, social and emotional dimensions. This critical approach plays an important role in activating students' willingness to cope with the language learning and tackle learning-related difficulties. Results also demonstrate that there is a direct relationship between the multidimensional nature of LLE and academic achievement. All in all, the practice of critical literacy positively intervenes LLE. In this sense, this critical approach results in a significant alternative when it comes to enriching learning scenarios and adding significance to the language learning process. This idea may contribute to energizing

curriculums, especially in the public sector, where there is a need to re-orient national policies dictating English language learning in the country.

Chapter I

Research Problem

Statement of the Problem

This research study looks into the connection between LLE and critical literacy. According to Svalberg (2009), “as a construct, the notion of engagement could provide ways of explaining why some linguistic or language-related behaviours and attitudes seem to facilitate language learning and learning about language/s more than others” (p.2). Meanwhile, Pineda et al. (2014) argue that “while the expansion of education coverage and enrolment has been evident in Colombia there is also a need to examine how educational institutions are seeking to strengthen students’ engagement with their academic endeavours and thereby raise graduation rates” (p.3). Thus, for the context of this research, engagement results in a significant component of foreign language learning and its concept needs to be carefully examined to determine the factors mediating both LLE and critical literacy for the participants of this study.

Fredricks et al. (2004) state that “defining and examining the components of engagement individually separates students’ behaviour, emotion, and cognition. In reality, these factors are dynamically interrelated within the individual; they are not isolated processes” (p.61). According to this, although language engagement embraces cognitive, emotional and social components. A thorough examination of the Educative Institutional Project and the curriculum describing language learning in Juan Bautista la Salle high school shows that stakeholders, language educators, and learners from this school seem to be mainly concerned with engagement regarding academic performance and they somehow ignore the multidimensionality of the concept. Results emerging from an initial focus group interview to examine students’ perceptions and attitudes regarding the issue of LLE prior to the pedagogical intervention corroborate this idea.

According to the participants, even though English classes as experienced before the pedagogical intervention maintain a strong focus on academic results. They fail to guide students to discover the whys and wherefores of language learning. Following Al Rifai's (2010) ideas, this issue has to do with the reasons that students encounter to learn the language, and it explains the motivational variables able to guide learning. Similarly, the benefits that students ascribe to language learning connect to the ideas of enrolling in college, traveling, and trading with foreigners. Controversially, the possibility of using the language in the classroom is far from engaging students in the learning process. This idea uncovers the fragility of social engagement within this classroom context once it neglects Svalberg's (2009) insights when she defines LLE as both the state and the process in which language is not only the object but also the means of communication. Then, for this group of participants, language learning is a cognitive outcome, but it struggles to be a social process.

In the same line of thought, students link the positive and negative feelings emerging from the class dynamics to their level of engagement. They emphasize the role of teacher-centered classes in the decrease of their language learning commitment. In agreement with Fredericks et al. (2004) achievement closely connects to the different dimensions of engagement, in reality, emotional engagement has the power to increase cognitive engagement and therefore, achievement rates. This issue evokes the multidimensionality of the notion of engagement, and it adds significance to the idea of providing students with the possibility of embracing language learning from the cognitive, social, and emotional perspectives.

In this order of things, in this institution, the idea of language engagement seems to be partly understood; hence, stakeholders and educators tend to focus primarily on one of its components or the other. Under these circumstances, having revised how researchers define LLE

and examined students' perceptions and attitudes concerning this issue, the intentionality of this study is to determine how useful (or not) critical literacy is to the construct of LLE.

In light of this, critical literacy may serve as an approaching framework, for this disintegrated concept to be interpreted. In this regard, Barno (2014) expresses, "critical literacy, for some, may be defined as an amalgam of literacy expectations which combine basic literacy skills with recognition of the power of language and of the individual (reader, writer, speaker, and listener)" (p.11). Nonetheless, Bacon (2017) states that "the practices realized through critical literacies, however, are often denied to the growing number of students who are learning English as a second or additional language (henceforth multilingual learners)" (p.2). Thus, to resist such a severe assertion; critical literacy may open up a door for these students to be aware of both their learning of the foreign language and their understanding of the world.

Afterward, to illustrate how the issues of LLE and critical literacy have been addressed, researchers have made significant contributions. So far, concerning the problem of LLE, Brooks and Thurston (2010) examined the probabilities of engaging students in academic tasks, through the implementation of an Eco-behavioural approach to investigate instructional group configuration having found that instructional grouping configuration has significant possibilities to energize learning engagement. Researchers also report that language learning is more likely to occur in small group configuration than on whole group discussions or individual work. Similarly, Hunter and Caraway (2014) indicate previous research on learning engagement, focused on the use of Twitter to challenge literacy learning and literature engagement; to encourage young learners from an urban school to cope with literature and increase participation in the classroom; this study concluded that literacy practices enrich students' academic identities. Besides, these authors maintain that such practices lead to transformative classroom

environments able to foster in students, alternative ways of thinking since they encourage learners to think about reality.

Meanwhile, regarding the issue of critical literacy, Freire (2002), Freire and Shor (as cited in Contreras and Chapetón, 2016) emphasizes on the idea that education is not as “a pure transference of knowledge that merely describes reality; dialogue, critical reflection, and praxis are essential elements to critical pedagogy” (p.136). Once more, these authors recall Freire’s (2002) ideas when he states “the notion of praxis as dialectic of action and reflection in the learning process; that confronts reality critically and acts upon that reality through a process of communication where there exists a co-participation of the teacher and the students in the act of learning” (p.136). Besides, Gomes (2007) states on critical literacy that “[...] it is possible, through critical education, to help students to exercise agency. By agency I mean a reflexive and transformative action; this considers means of self-reflection about individual and social experiences and histories, involving critical thought and action” (p.53). This idea relates to Juan Bautista la Salle high school when they define as one of their purposes the development of the “critical, reflective and analytic capability to strengthen the national scientific and technological advance; prioritizing the cultural improvement and the life quality of the population, the search of alternative solutions to problems and the social and economic progress of the country” (Juan Bautista de La Salle, 2009).

Because of that, studying critical literacy as the approaching component of this research study entails a contribution to the collective goal of the institution. Similarly, studying LLE expands the opportunities for further researchers to deepen on this issue. Although studies have been conducted on the field of academic and language teacher research engagement, Storch (2008) affirms that little has been done concerning the issue of LLE. In this sense, researching on

the relationship of language engagement and critical literacies in high school learners supposes a great opportunity in this field, mainly unknown for the public educative sector in Caquetá.

By understanding the connection between language engagement and critical literacy, participants will be involved in the co-researching process of including their local inconveniences to advocate for critical literacy practice. As a result, learners could benefit from experiencing a pedagogical intervention especially planned for them; as a manner to enhance LLE. Thus, this examination also allows in-service teachers to consider renewal classroom practices where the English language can be authentically used.

The purpose of this PAR study is to determine the connection between LLE and critical literacy for ninth graders at Juan Bautista la Salle high school. At this stage in the research Svalberg (2009) defines language engagement as “[...] a cognitive, and/or affective and/or social state and process in which the learner is the agent and language is object, and may be vehicle (means of communication)” (p.3). While Luke and Dooley (2009) understand critical literacy as:

[...]-part of a longstanding normative educational project to address social, economic, and cultural injustice and inequality. It aims towards the equitable development and acquisition of language and literacy by historically marginalized communities and students, and towards the use of texts in a range of communications media to analyse, critique, represent and alter inequitable knowledge structures and social relations of school and society. (p.1)

Research Question

What is the connection between language learning engagement and critical literacy for ninth graders at Juan Bautista la Salle high school?

Research Objectives

General objective: To determine the connection between language learning engagement and critical literacy for ninth graders at Juan Bautista la Salle high school.

Specific objectives: a) To describe how ninth graders at Juan Bautista la Salle high school perceive language learning engagement. b) To explain how critical literacy intervenes language learning engagement for ninth graders at Juan Bautista la Salle High School. c) To appraise the use of a macro-strategy aimed at enhancing language learning engagement through the practice of critical literacy.

Related Studies

Students' learning engagement and critical literacy have been a matter of interest for many researchers who have focused on examining the features behind these concepts. Furthermore, outstanding research has been carried out in these fields to determine variables in language learning, not only when positioning engagement along with approaching components such as task-based, networking, among others, but also, when enhancing critical literacy practices to negotiate meanings with students. Thus, related studies on the field of learning engagement, LLE, and critical literacy, advocate for the objective of the present research and serve the purpose of illustrating how researchers have addressed the tenets under discussion.

Concerning LLE, Svalberg (2009) conducted research aimed at explaining what engagement with language means. The author implemented two strands to analyze and discuss the data. The first one was an approach used by Ellis (2004) to interrogate and develop a construct. The second element focused on applying the components of language engagement to exemplify data collected from a different study, where adult learners and teachers of an ESOL program were interviewed and observed. Then the final analysis of the data resulted in a discussion about the connection between LLE and language awareness.

The results thrown by this study showed that the types of engagement (cognitive, social, and emotional) are tied together so that one might influence the other/s in both positive and

negative ways. The author also concluded that a broad definition of engagement entails existent and non-existent events in the classroom, and it helps to make this tenet a more measurable and researchable component of language learning. This study has contributed to defining LLE as a holistic concept, including three primary interrelated constructs, cognitive, social and emotional engagement. Moreover, this analysis has informed the operationalized subcomponents of the types of LLE. This branching has served the design of questionnaires and focus group interviews to collect data able to articulate cognitive, social, and emotional engagement.

In the same way, Diemer, Fernandez, and Streepey (2012) developed a study to determine students' perceptions about learning and engagement. In doing so, researchers implemented iPad-based class activities and asked participants to rate their experiences with the use of the devices, using a 5-point Likert scale survey. Similarly, participants were requested to answer questions about their age, gender, and willingness to cope with e-learning; to examine how these factors modify students' perceptions. To analyze the results, researchers classified data into two main categories, perceived learning, and perceived engagement. They also used a Pearson correlation to measure the connection between the level of engagement that students described when using the iPads and their learning.

Findings revealed that exposing students to new forms of experiencing learning can increase their self-efficacy as well as strengthen learning and engagement perceptions. This investigation has led researchers to declare an existent correlation between learning outcomes and intense engagement. This study has helped to demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of learning engagement. The concept defined by the authors regarding active and collaborative learning gives an account of cognitive, social, and emotional engagement. In this sense, this research has served to exemplify how the use of alternative resources impact students' perceptions. As a result, this

study inspired the second cycle based on using technological devices in the present research project.

To a great extent, Hunter and Caraway (2014) investigated both learning engagement and literacy practices. The objective of this study was to expand literacy engagement outside and inside the classroom. In this regard, researchers implemented an eight-week unit with ninth and tenth-grade students, mostly Afro-American and Latinos. To offer them the opportunity to use Twitter to discuss a piece of literature and receive feedback from Master's degree candidates. Data collected mostly consisted of students posts and responses on the social network; thus, results were reported employing discourse analysis.

The results of this study displayed that new structures and forms of participation academically and emotionally engaged students in the literacy practice. It implies participants' readiness to construct academic identities and take academic risks once they feel challenged to reach meaningful goals such as sharing Master's writing and vocabulary level. This investigation has supported the present research since it reflects how literacy practices can engage students in learning. This idea opens up the landscape for this research to an inquiry about a more context-relevant sort of literacy where students can engage in learning the foreign language while reflecting, analyzing, and transforming their surrounding conditions.

On the subject of critical literacy, Contreras and Chapetón (2017) performed a study to describe the impact of implementing collaborative learning from a dialogical perspective on seventh graders' interaction in an EFL classroom. Thus, the purpose of this project was to critically transform the traditional teaching practices such as teacher-centered classes and the banking model and energize EFL practices at this school, as well as consider the students' social context and a more humane and dialogical vision of teaching. The nature of this study relied on the cyclical principle of action research. The study was conducted with a group of seventh

graders who manifested serious behavioral and academic difficulties at a public school located in the southeast of Bogotá. Data were collected using an initial questionnaire, field notes (supported by video-recordings of class sessions), students' journals, semi-structured interviews, and artifacts. The pedagogical implementation process was developed in four cycles during sixteen weeks throughout the academic year.

Results of this study showed that taking a critical approach to language education and understanding collaborative learning as a social construction of knowledge can ignite opportunities for changing traditional teaching and learning practices. Herein, both the teacher and students take different roles resulting in balanced classroom relations and interaction, which also promotes students' empowerment. The study is relevant for this research since it demonstrates the importance of implementing innovating teaching and learning methodologies, especially in educational scenarios where context problematics are generalized; moreover, this study relates to the pillars of this investigation; initially, collaborative learning has to do with the concept of social engagement, the latter explains how the co-constructed experience of knowledge mediates students' desire to invest in language learning. At the same time, critical literacy supposes an opportunity to go beyond the already mentioned traditional teaching practices and open up the possibility for students to add significance to language learning.

In the same way, Cruz (2018) explored the different locally grounded English language teaching practices and how, through the critical pedagogical practices, educators arrive at their teaching objectives. The investigation was developed with a group of four teachers from different departments of Colombia. The data collected consisted of teachers' narratives and field observations. From the perspective of language teaching as a socially sensitive practice, findings suggest that teachers' own experiential and situational knowledge constitutes a powerful platform from which valuable practices are and can further be devised.

Again, Cruz (2018) highlights the importance of understanding the value of alternative critical approaches. For instance, the author refers to Kumaravadivelu's (2006) ideas of critical pedagogies aimed at engaging students in social-transformational practices. In a similar way, the author mentions Garcia and Wei (2014); Creese and Blackledge's (2010) notions of the translanguaging approach attempting to include students' linguistic and cultural realities to enrich learning. All of the above to engage learners with socially responsible practices. This idea is relevant to the present study once it illustrates how providing learners with a critical view regarding some issues of their surroundings seem to be essential today. In this sense, this article pictured the present pedagogical proposal including a series of workshops (or cycles). This endeavor offers the learners some of the most salient social and environmental problematic issues they face in their everyday life.

Finally, Granados (2018) reassessed critical approaches to research in the field of English language teaching (ELT) in undergraduate programs in Colombia. The intention was to better respond to the current situation of the world and the country, national language policies, and the kind of research most commonly promoted in teacher education programs at undergraduate levels. The context where the projects took place was a 12-year-old BA program in bilingual education in Bogotá, Colombia. The first data were collected through the interviews with four professors from Licenciatura programs. The teachers interviewed were in different main cities in the country; Neiva, Cali, Medellín, and Florencia. This data was collected with the purpose of understanding pre-service teachers in Colombia from the perspective of the linguistics professionals, and therefore examining how undergraduate students perceive language teaching within each context. The following data resulted from an on-going project that consisted of categorizing the bank of theses of the BA program during more than seven years for identifying

trends and gaps and supporting students to design new investigations based on the existing arguments.

This research shared a reflection on the importance of revisiting critical approaches in the field of research in an undergraduate ELT program. It also suggested the inclusion of critical research in the different academic scenarios of our territory. In the same way, it indicated the need for exploring various fields of inquiry since the primary emphasis relies on technical rationality of the language; causality, technicality, and language instrumentality. Likewise, it suggested the need for implementing new research methodologies, beyond Action Research. The investigation served this research purpose as it highlighted the need for implementing critical approaches in this particular setting, through the development of contextualized materials and the exploration of the context and the participants. In this sense, this study provided the underlying premises supporting a different core of investigation; in this case, the relationship between LLE and critical pedagogies. This investigation also presented a detailed examination of the research tendencies adopted by pre-service teachers in the country. In this regard, the author concludes that undergraduate students have started to move beyond the interest in skills-based research and other common tendencies in the field, such as learning strategies and motivation. To adopt renewal forms of research, for instance, citizenship and intercultural competence, which, according to the author, suppose an incipient growing concern of students regarding crucial issues affecting this nation. In this sense, this study accounted for an alternative idea of critical English language teaching that recognizes the power-relationships embedded in education. In reality, this research study can be seen as an invitation to researchers in the field of language teaching to act beyond the instrumental use of the language, and focus the forthcoming inquiries on social-critique as a manner to resist power-relationships. This idea connects to the purpose of the present research once it supports the initiative of taking learning from the mere contemplation

to the embracement of concrete ideas. Then, in favor of determining the connection between LLE and critical literacy, this research not only contributes to expanding the EFL framework but also provides this group of participants with the necessary tools to examine their local realities and fight against social and environmental issues concerning them.

Setting

This research study took place at Juan Bautista la Salle high school, a public institution located in the center town of Florencia, the capital of the southern department of Caquetá. The school is also known by the acronym “JUBASA,” which is the name that participants of this study use the most. The institution serves a diverse population; the vast majority immersed within a low socio-economic stratum; most students come from the marginalized neighbors surrounding the institution. As a result, the mission of the school highlights as one of their essential aims to strengthen human, sexual and reproductive rights, so that they build up peace agents able to lead transformative processes in the Amazonian context. In light of this, the institution has been able to foster in students sport and cultural abilities which have positioned the educative community within the most outstanding participation.

Altogether, for this research study, English language learning in Juan Bautista la Salle High School creates opportunities for understanding participants' contexts and provides empowerment resources for generating ideas of transformation of their realities. Considering this, most of the students reported being concerned about social inconveniences such as drug consumption, robbery and violence. These issues were declared in a PAR questionnaire designed to identify the students' encountered problematics that guided the topics selection for the workshops supporting the critical literacy practices.

Rationale

The interest of carrying out this study arises from the examination of students' responses to the needs' analysis aimed at identifying the problem to be addressed with the community partner, in this case, ninth graders from Juan Bautista la Salle high school. Herein, results thrown by this needs analysis showed a significant deficiency of students' engagement during the English lessons. The absence of engagement in education is a phenomenon that in our consideration, most of the educators identify in their learners. Such an incident may result in significant difficulty not only to approach the objectives of the lesson but also to be successful in learning and its further application. This research study expects to determine the connection that LLE and critical literacy may have (or not) and how one may serve the other to engage learners in their language learning processes.

The participants of this study are a group of ninth graders, who acting as co-researchers, collaboratively wrote, designed and subsequently launched an institutional journal which contained the writings produced during the research process. In the same way, different strategies to reach the entire scholar community were implemented to spread the production and raise awareness among the community members. In this regard, this project benefited the whole educative community.

Similarly, this study is relevant to EFL once it goes hand in hand with renewed research trends in the field. This investigation responds to the calls that scholars have done to transform the research paradigm into a context-based, critical, and transformative endeavor. More precisely, Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) support critical research as it creates opportunities for justice and empowers learners to fight against the systems of oppression. Meanwhile, Granados (2018) highlights researchers who are shifting from technical research questions to the examination of

social, economic and cultural realities that accounts for participants and their contexts, and therefore envisions language learning beyond the linguistic function.

In line with this point of view, this study is also important because research studies that position language educators as passive receivers of knowledge instead of mediators of contexts able to renovate English language teaching, has led Kumaravadivelu (2016) to assert that language education urges the need for:

Doing proactive, rather than reactive, research with the view to reducing exhaustive and exclusive dependency on center-based knowledge systems Unlike reactive research that is mostly limited to testing and applying the received wisdom, proactive research involves paying attention to the local exigencies of learning and teaching, identifying researchable questions, producing original knowledge, and subjecting it to further verification. (p.82)

Herein, the proactive nature of this investigation aiming at bringing critical literacy into the English classroom contributes to the understanding of different ways of experiencing language learning; such alternatives have to do with the author's ideas about the recognition of context realities and the production of original knowledge. In this case, the understanding of social and environmental issues affecting this group of ninth graders and their community to advocate for the connection between critical literacy and LLE.

In the same line of thought, this study connects to the national policies defining language teaching in Colombia since it presents a flexible model adapted to the learning context. Along similar lines, De Mejía (2004) explains that the Minister of Education recognizes the importance of allowing institutions to adjust language teaching to the concerns of the different communities. An issue which goes carefully together with the initiative of involving participants in the co-

researching affair of examining their local inconveniences as a means of exploring both the language and the world.

This investigation also intends to contribute to the academic field in several ways. Initially, this idea seeks to call on the need of including new teaching and learning approaches that contemplate critical literacies for engaging language learners. Then, this initiative expects to provide learners with some linguistic insights for the benefit of those who approach and broadly interpret the world. Besides, this research aims at expanding the local, regional and national EFL field since few research reports can be found at the national level and almost nothing has been done locally and regionally on the connection of LLE and critical literacies. Besides, this study attempts to reach the academic community by divulging the findings and providing free access for future local, national, and international research on the topics.

Chapter II

Literature Review

To understand the connection between LLE and critical literacy, it is necessary to revise the key constructs underpinning this study. Thus, this section defines learning engagement, LLE, and critical literacy to support and shape this research from a theoretical perspective. In other words, this chapter presents the different interwoven concepts that hold the abovementioned research question and objectives, to relate the existent theory to the application of this research study.

Learning Engagement

This concept relates to the notion of “engagement” in a learning process; it implies the multiple ways in which learners engage with the construction of knowledge. In line with this point of view, Marks (2000) affirms, “this study conceptualizes engagement as a psychological process, specifically, interest, investment, and effort students expend in the work of learning” (p.155). More often than not, this investment in learning goes hand in hand with the social support students receive from their family, peers, and teachers. Then, this definition positions engagement as a holistic concept that goes beyond the mere cognition, as it includes other essential factors mediating students’ willingness to cope with learning.

In the same line of thought, engagement deals with social relationships enabling or hindering learning. Under such circumstances, Coates maintains (2007) “Engagement is seen to comprise active and collaborative learning, participation in challenging academic activities, formative communication with academic staff, involvement in enriching educational experiences, and feeling legitimated and supported by [...] learning communities” (p.122). The latter evokes a more in-depth insight of the concept as it reflects the necessity of understanding learning from the

social point of view. In this sense, Marks (2000) also claims that “Perceiving class work to be authentic and experiencing forms of social support enhance engagement for all students” (p.171). Hence, as this author asseverates, the social support students experience when exceeding learning to the collaborative atmosphere also moves students to engage with learning.

Student learning engagement. Literature on the subject of engagement also defines this concept concerning students’ relatedness to embrace the learning experience. This term has been borrowed from Furrer and Skinner (2003) when they describe “relatedness as a self-system factor underlying children’s engagement and school performance” (p.149). In light of this, student engagement has been described as a social affair taking place within the classroom context, that allows teachers and learners to be aware of the characteristics of this phenomenon and recognize whether it is present or not in the class dynamics. As a result, Reeve (2012) expresses:

Student engagement is a relatively public, objective, and observable classroom event. That is, teachers can see whether or not a student is paying attention, putting forth effort, enjoying class, solving problems in a sophisticated way, and contributing constructively into the flow of instruction (p. 167).

Student engagement gives an account of the variable learning actions happening in the classroom. These actions define students’ embracement of the opportunities they have to gain positive learning experiences. More precisely in Trowler’s (2010) words “Student engagement is concerned with the interaction between the time, effort and other relevant resources invested by both students and their institutions intended to optimise the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students and the performance” (p.2). Thus, student engagement, as conceptualized by these authors comprises an indicator of the student’s achievement regarding learning outcomes.

Learning engagement and achievement. A significant number of researchers highlight a definite connection between the learning engagement of students with their academic achievements (Mahatmya, Lohman, Matjasko, and Farb, 2012; Akbari, Naderi, Simons, and Pilot, 2016). Learning engagement has also been defined as the means to attain learning-related outcomes. In this respect, Skinner and Pitzer (2012) mention “engagement is the direct (and only) pathway to cumulative learning, long-term achievement, and eventual academic success” (p.24). To a certain extent, learning engagement is viewed as a predictor of students’ success when it comes to reaching learning goals.

Controversially, the relationship between learning engagement and achievement has also been examined in regards to the measurement procedures implemented to characterize achievement. Following Fredricks’ et al. (2004) insights:

The correlation between engagement and achievement varies depending on how achievement is assessed. Behavioral engagement is likely to be associated with teacher grades and scores on tests that tap basic skills, whereas links with cognitive engagement are more likely to emerge when tests measure synthesis, analysis, and deep-level understanding of content. Although these problems make it difficult to draw firm conclusions, there is evidence from a variety of studies to suggest that engagement positively influences achievement. (p.71)

In this line of thought, the apparent connection between learning engagement and achievement leads researchers, teachers, and stakeholders to emphasize the understanding of the concept of learning engagement. In fact, the importance of learning engagement relies on the positive effect it might have on students’ achievement. However, achievement evaluators need to pay close attention to the measurement procedures they implement to assess learning to avoid biases playing against the reliability of results.

Measuring learning engagement. It is a common concern among researchers who have invested time in designing different frameworks to measure the degree to which learners engage with their learning processes (Fredricks et al., 2004; Appleton, Christenson, Kim, and Reschly, 2006). Concerning the approaching framework to measure learning engagement, Betts (2012) suggests:

The three types of engagement, behavioral, cognitive, and emotional, might facilitate the construction of three different measures of engagement with each focused on a single type. However, it would also seem appropriate to identify specific aspects of each general type that could constitute a subcomponent, or subdimension, of the general type. (p.787).

This entails deciding among the subcomponents defining each one of the types of engagement. This subdivision depends on the context-specifications, the engagement strategy, and the object of engagement to be measured. Because of that, this research study presents further definition of the subcomponents of engagement considering the context of participants, the approach of critical literacy as the engagement strategy; and the English language as the engagement object.

With this in mind, it is also important to explore some of the engagement strategies that researchers implement to enhance LLE, and how such approaches vary depending on the context and the different research purposes. To illustrate this idea, Kaminski (2019) advocates for the use of multimodal texts to engage students with language learning. This strategy relies on alternative modes such as songs, drama, picture books, among others, to present and construct meanings with young learners. From this experience, the author concludes that the different elements provided by the multimodal texts helped learners to decode meaning; as a result, students were able to engage in this practice, and they embraced language learning.

In the same manner, Lambert, Philp, and Nakamura (2017) explain how shifting from teachers to learners generated-content benefits students' LLE. This strategy consists of allowing learners to add significance to the language learning tasks by making meaning of their lives and experiences and therefore deciding the time, talent, and energy to be devoted to learning. In this order of things, researchers propose a framework to measure engagement from the behavioral, cognitive, and social dimensions. These researchers assert that the strategy of using learners-generated content is of paramount importance to the concept of engagement. Then, when students have the possibility of creating their content, their LLE improves.

Some other engagement strategies existing in the EFL field have to do with the use of social networks in academic contexts, and the assessment for learning. Regarding the use of technology in language teaching Akbari, et al. (2016) theorize on the influence of the different virtual forms of communications on students LLE; these authors maintain that social networks are appealing to learners. As a result, qualitative and quantitative data indicate that these platforms have positive effects on students' engagement. By the same token, Parsons and Taylor (2011) declare that assessment for learning entails the use of formative assessment to engage students in discussions about their learning processes. In this case, the use of portfolios leads to improved measures of engagement since it allows learners to decide and organize learning according to their needs. This engagement strategy proves that language learning must be redirected towards learners' further development instead of standardized testing.

Again, to measure engagement, it is also necessary a distinction of the styles of engagement varying from one learner to the other. Coates (2007) proposes a typological model of students' engagement styles. According to the author, this typology consists of intense, collaborative, independent or passive engagement. This scholar emphasizes the idea that none of these engagement styles defines learners as such but how they engage with learning. In that order,

these manifestations of engagement are not time and context enduring. On the contrary, according to the author, research on the subject of engagement in particular contexts will be necessary to draw into conclusions regarding variables of engagement styles. Besides, the type of data to measure learning engagement needs to be discussed. In reality, Akbari et al. (2016) explain that learning engagement consists not only on qualitative but also quantitative features. In this sense, learners reveal engagement concerning observable and non-observable phenomena. More precisely, these authors assert “students spent both physical and mental energy in their activities. Some of these activities may be measurable by qualitative methods while measurement of other activities relies mostly on quantitative methods” (p.3). In this sense, some of the aspects of learning engagement such length and typology rely on quantitative methods to measure data, while factors attained to the core constructs, emotions, social interactions, and cognitions, depend on qualitative methods to examine information.

The multidimensional nature of learning engagement. To a significant degree, this research proposal envisions learning engagement as an integrated construct which cannot be studied unconnectedly. This goes following Fredricks et al. (2004) when they state that:

Behavioral engagement draws on the idea of participation; it includes involvement in academic and social or extracurricular activities and is considered crucial for achieving positive academic outcomes and preventing dropping out. Emotional engagement encompasses positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school and is presumed to create ties to an institution and influence willingness to do the work. Finally, cognitive engagement draws on the idea of investment; it incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills. (p. 60)

In that order, for this research, engagement is an interrelation of the main components, behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. Each one of these tenets providing significant insights for the understanding of learning engagement and its connection with critical literacy within the framework of this study. To a more conducive setting, the literature on the subject suggests that behavior, emotion, and cognition can be operationalized to agree on the indicators of engagement facilitating its measurement. In this regard, Fredricks et al. (2004) state, “behavioral engagement encompasses doing the work and following the rules; emotional engagement includes interest, values, and emotions; and cognitive engagement incorporates motivation, effort, and strategy use” (p.65). These descriptors position the developmental constructs of engagement as observable phenomena so that decisions about teaching can be taken from accurate feedback.

Learning engagement and similar notions. The term engagement is often related to other essential constructs attempting to explain learning-related attitudes. Under such circumstances, Svalberg (2009) to “unpack the meanings of engagement” (p. 5) refers to the notions of involvement, commitment, and motivation. To do so, this scholar establishes differences and similarities among the mentioned terms. In this work, the author asserts that even though involvement shares some essential features with engagement, such as alertness, commitment is similar to engagement regarding positive attitude, and motivation has to do with engagement as it entails learners’ autonomy. Engagement is different from these notions once it possesses some unique characteristics including “focused attention” and “action knowledge” which in turns describe the learner who builds up knowledge from cognitive, social and emotional endeavors.

Learning engagement and motivation. As stated above, these are strictly related terms attaining some similarities but equally holding a significant difference. In such a way, Reeve (2012) explains that “the distinction between the two constructs is that motivation is a private,

unobservable psychological, neural, and biological process that serves as an antecedent cause to the publically observable behavior that is engagement” (p. 151),-that is, motivation is an inner process taking place in the learner’s mind, while engagement is an outer behavior occurring along with the lived experiences of the learner.

In the field of language learning, motivation can be defined as a precursor of learning engagement. Motivation drives the initial steps of the student towards a particular learning goal. In this respect, Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) point out that “Motivation serves as the initial engine to generate learning and later functions as an ongoing driving force that helps to sustain the long and usually laborious journey of acquiring a foreign language” (p.153). More often than not, motivation refers to the moving power guiding the learning endeavor; such a power materializes in a learning-related attitude formally acknowledged as learning engagement.

In line with this point of view, theorists have focused on defining learning engagement as a means to evoke motivation. Skinner, Connell, and Wellborn (2009) suggest that “for motivational theorists, of most interest are conceptualizations of engagement that have at their core definitions that encompass students’ constructive, enthusiastic, willing, cognitively-focused participation in learning activities” (p. 226); in other words, researchers need to examine the factual manifestations of engagement; by this, we mean the operationalized components of engagement are crucial to report findings concerning the motivational factors mediating learning.

In this order of things, the private nature of motivation comes to life through the public features of engagement. Researchers such as Masgoret and Gardner (2003) agree on the following:

The motivated individual expends effort, is persistent and attentive to the task at hand, has goals, desires, and aspirations, enjoys the activity, experiences reinforcement from success and disappointment from failure, makes attributions concerning success and/or failure, is aroused, and

makes use of strategies to aid in achieving goals. That is, the motivated individual exhibits many behaviors, feelings, cognitions, etc., that the individual who is unmotivated does not. (p.173)

In such way, the behaviors, emotions, and cognitions that the motivated learner proves encompass the three components of learning engagement.

The integration mentioned above prevails the connection between motivation and emotional engagement. Some scholars refer to this connection in terms of the relationship between motivation and emotions. According to Méndez (2011), “given that language learning is a socially constructed process, the diversity of emotions experienced is a crucial aspect impacting on the motivational behavior displayed by foreign language learners” (p.46). Essentially, the role of emotions in language learning is to animate the motivational factors enabling learning engagement to take place within students’ learning processes.

Language learning Engagement

Language learning engagement embraces one of the main issues under the scope of this study. Thus, it results relevant to consider this tenet to understand what it is and how it relates to the research purpose. In view of that, Svalberg (2009) asserts that “In the context of language learning and use, ‘Engagement with Language’ (Engagement) is a cognitive, and/or affective and/or social state and process in which the learner is the agent and language is object, and may be vehicle (means of communication)” (p.3). What is new from this concept is the transition from the before mentioned behavioral to social engagement. Alternatively, this scholar presents a scheme of the outstanding characteristics of LLE; this might serve to explain this conversion.

In this regard, Svalberg (2009) defines LLE in terms of states and processes to refer to some of the conditions determining an engaged learner and how these conditions are developed. The author suggests that cognitive engagement is represented by a state of “heightened alertness

and focused attention” while its process is driven by “focused reflection and solving problem.” On the subject of emotional engagement, the state reflects a “positive orientation towards the language,” and the process indicates the “willingness to interact with the language.” Concerning social engagement, the state describes “behavioral readiness to interact,” and the process focuses on “initiating and maintaining interaction.” Again, social engagement approaches the behavioral disposition students might have to invest in learning.

Indeed, this detailed description reflects the nature of this research study daring to conceptualize engagement as an interwoven concept including cognitive, emotional or affective and social features to explain language learning related processes and indicate the extent to which students are or not investing in learning.

Language learning engagement and particular contexts. Considering that institutions have, within their autonomy, particularities based on their orientations, resources, alliances, and approaches, it is pertinent to state that the concept of LLE is closely connected to the notions of time and space. By this, we mean, students’ level of engagement depends on the classroom events and how teachers and learners approach the different learning situations. In this regard, LLE is far from being a global construct applicable to every setting. On the contrary, it is a multidimensional concept that needs to be examined under the light of the unique features inherent to each learning environment.

In this order of things, it is of paramount importance deepening on the relationship between LLE and the learning context. In this respect, Philip and Duchesne (2016) maintain that the notion of LLE is linked to the place, conditions, language needs, and intentions in which the language teaching and learning take place. The author affirms, “LLE must be operationalized by the researcher, with consideration of contextual factors such as the setting, the task, and the

participants” (p.20). In this view, it is essential to connect LLE with its intentionality, the type of activities, the learning and teaching strategies implemented before, during, and after the pedagogical practice. In this sense, it is relevant to consider the importance and significance of LLE depending on its application; the participant’s needs and wants and the interactional contexts that could be involved.

Taking into account the issue described above, LLE can be attributed to specific learning situations and contexts. Let us consider the different scenarios within the Colombian educative public sector. Most of the school learners around the country face different realities. Think about a learner from the capital, or rural areas, their social and economic conditions, background knowledge, and lived experiences. Indeed, Cruz (2018) asserts that in communities such as the rural sector in which the English language is alien to the everyday life of students, critical pedagogies support local attempts to position teaching and learning processes as socially relevant acts.

More precisely in the learning and teaching context, educative institutions are critical agents in enhancing LLE. In an investigation developed on student engagement and academic performance, Pineda, Bermúdez, Pava, Suárez, and Cruz (2014) take educative institutions as spaces where well-articulated programs may serve as a mean of engaging learners and avoiding desertion. They assert that as follows:

Student engagement is also associated with the policies and practices of an institution to encourage student participation in the programs and services offered. From this perspective, engagement is presumably strengthened to the extent that the institution designs and organizes learning opportunities that encourage students to invest more effort and dedication in the performance of cognitive tasks and in social participation. (p.3)

In this view, LLE does not only depend on the learner's effort and commitment to his/her process, but it interplays with external factors as institutional programs and additional services like alliances with governmental organizations and/ or private institutions.

In the same line of thought, Fredricks et al. (2004) state that LLE is based on the opportunities that the language itself may offer to the learner. They refer to language engagement and context particularities as "routes to student engagement [...] social or academic and may stem from opportunities in the school or classroom for participation, interpersonal relationships, and intellectual endeavors" (p. 61). From this perspective, learning engagement also depends not only on the above-developed dimensions, but it also integrates other facts as classroom settings; the opportunities of participation, the relation among participants involved, and the type of language practices that may occur in the foreign language classroom.

Language learning engagement and collaborative learning. Regarding the role of context and its implications in LLE, other salient features need to be analyzed. This is the role of collaborative work as a determinant factor for engaging learners in the language learning process. Frederick et al. (2004) agree on the fact that collaborative learning plays an essential role in language learning. They highlight that "[...] the construction of knowledge is enhanced in interaction with peers. In this sense, dialogue, discussion of issues and assignments and active participation in collaborative projects facilitate the exchange of knowledge and favor mastery of subject content" (p. 4). Under these circumstances, it can be said that collaborative activities provide opportunities for language learning through well-planned social practices with clear objectives, which may result in students' engagement. These involve two out of the three dimensions that encompass classroom interaction and collaborative learning. In other words, the social and emotional components of engagement.

Similarly, it is necessary to highlight the role of small groups over whole class discussions as a mean of proportioning learning with adequate learning scenarios for collaboratively analyze, propose, and enact on specific learning issues. Brook and Thruston (2018) reported reliable evidence based on a study they conducted. They affirm “middle school students are more likely to engage actively and academically and less likely to be off task when they are placed in small groups and pairs than when the teacher engages students in whole class or individual instruct” (p. 58). This conclusion illustrates the role of collaborative learning in LLE. These authors exemplify the correlation of language engagement in participants enrolled in classroom tasks with a partner or a small group over whole class or individual tasks; the latter demonstrated not to engage learners at the same level.

Language awareness. Among a range of definitions, Language Awareness (henceforth LA) has been interpreted in many forms, most of them referred to as explicit knowledge about the language or linguistic forms and functions of the language. It is precise to mention the basic tenets of the concept where its denotation on language consciousness is evident. Garret and James (as cited in Anh, 2016) stress that “language awareness refers to ‘explicit knowledge about language and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching, and language use” (p.43). It is necessary to mention that LA does not belong merely to the concepts of language linguistic knowledge and structures; Svalberg (2007) explains in a compilation and analysis of LA that “depending on the orientation of the research or classroom practice, LA work will draw to differing degrees on sociocultural, critical, linguistic, cognitive and general educational theory” (p. 302). In this sense, LA can be seen from diverse perspectives and applied to the research or practical field depending on the educative inclination and need.

To understand the construct of language engagement as a multidimensional concept, it is precise to mention the importance that the cognitive, social and emotional components interplay

within the construction of LA. Svalberg (2018) proposes, through a more holistic approach, a model denominated Engagement With Language Model (EWL) in which the author rescues the implication of language engagement on the construction of conscious knowledge about language and language learning. Through this model the author suggests that LA is a “cyclical process during which learners draw on their existing Language awareness to construct new or enhanced LA” (p. 23). This refers to the understanding of the language itself as mean of engaging with the learning practice. In other words, this model advocates the previous notions and insights of a foreign language that an individual would turn to for giving places to others, for engaging in language learning.

Connecting the concept of LLE, some proposals have been attempted. One important concept is subsequently mentioned in Anh (2016) works when he states LLE using in diverse contexts that foreign language. The author asserts that “fully engaged individuals have a positive and attentive attitude towards language(s) and are willing to interact with other interactants” (p.44). What can be concluded from the previous extract is not only the relation of LA (conscious knowledge of the language), but it also reveals the relationship it has with the social interactional and emotional aspect of language engagement. It means, that a learner who is cognitively engaged with learning foreign language experiences other to aspects of engagement social interaction and emotional, through his/ her willingness of using it for social interaction.

The nature of language learning engagement. As it was previously mentioned, the interrelated components of engagement need to be operationalized to measure the construct of engagement within the context of this research study. In terms of the framework to characterize the different components of LLE, Svalberg (2018) mentions the following:

Its ecology includes numerous interacting factors. Tiredness, state of health, emotional state, and task design might affect cognitive EWL. Affective EWL could be influenced by task topic and by

cognitive and social factors such as personality type, self-perception, group dynamics, and so on.

Social EWL, finally, would be sensitive to affective factors stemming from friendships, power differences in the group, and shared or different values. (p.23)

In this regard, the first set of subcategories define external factors affecting cognitive engagement, the second one refers to both personal and social features influencing affective or emotional engagement, and the third one refers to interaction-related activities mediating social engagement. Subsequently, a similar approach to categorize the components of engagement is the one introduced by Lambert, Philp, and Nakamura (2017). In this sense, the authors present a set of indicators strongly emphasizing on the measurement of engagement with language use. As a result, the scholars assert that cognitive engagement has to do with the attention and mental effort invested into task content and devoted to clarifying meaning. Meanwhile, social engagement refers to the responsiveness and willingness to be involved in the conversation. Considering the authors' ideas LLE needs to be operationalized in terms of attention, effort, willingness to clarify doubts, responsiveness, and the desire to participate in social interactions.

In the name of the learner, there are also some features to be considered to ensure a deeper understanding of what it entails to be engaged with language learning. Once more in Svalberg's (2009) words, "cognitively, the Engaged individual is alert, pays focused attention and constructs their own knowledge. Affectively, the Engaged individual has a positive, purposeful, willing and autonomous disposition towards the object [...] Socially, the Engaged individual is interactive and initiating" (p.6). These features constitute some of the different subcategories of the components of LLE. With this in mind, authors defining different factors for the operationalization and measurement of LLE support the following framework for the examination of this concept:

The cognitively engaged student demonstrates an effort to learn, persistence, focused attention, willingness to contribute to the class discussion, and use of metacognitive strategies. In the same vein, the socially engaged student shows a desire to share opinions, co-construct knowledge, work in groups, and mediate interactions with peers and teachers. Meanwhile, the emotionally engaged student seems enthusiastic about the class, interested in the class topics, and responsive to share emotions arising from the class discussion, activities, cognitive effort, and social interactions.

Critical literacy

Critical literacy principles direct learners towards the search of solutions for the local inconveniences that they determined in their immediate contexts. The intention is to provide participants educational scenarios to propose, critically, transformative solutions for some local issues affecting their school and surroundings. In that order, this section deepens on the understanding of what critical literacy entails, and examines the implication of the construct in education, teaching and learning, language learning and as a mean of social transformation.

Understanding critical literacy. Critical literacy is often related to the notions of analysis, reflection and social transformation. This goes hand in hand with Luke (2004) when he asserts, “the term of critical literacy refers to the use of the technologies of print and other media of communication to analyze, critique, and transform the norms, rule systems, and practices governing the social fields of everyday life” (p.6). In this way, critical literacy represents a means for bringing such analytic and reflexive processes to the lived experiences of participants to attempt transformative practices aimed at benefiting their contexts. What is more, Cervetti, Pardales, and Damicomcited (as cited in O’Byrne, 2018) coincided on the pertinence of critical literacy in education. They affirm:

Individuals can accept, reject or reconstruct the ideologies, presented in a text to support their own life experiences [...] in this manner, critical literacy empowers students to embrace their own conceptual perspectives and enables them to more critically evaluate other aspects of their lives. (p.2)

This idea highlights the relevance of advocating for an authentic learning practice linked to the particular time and context that recognizes students' unique experiences and encourage them to make meaning of learning. Besides, when students make meaning of their learning experience and explore their living conditions, they embrace the possibility of questioning the position of their community in relation to other national and global organizations. More precisely, Norris, Lucas, and Prudhoe (2012) define critical literacy as a way of “encouraging readers to question, explore, or challenge the power relationships that exist between authors and readers; by examining issues of power and promoting reflection, transformative change, and action” (p. 59). Considering that the aim of the present investigation is to determine the relationship between LLE and critical literacy, the latter may serve as a possibility for reflecting, proposing and acting through the learners' compositions that question social contexts and their significant problematics. This idea links to Freire (1972) who stresses the importance of critical literacy in education for engaging in praxis; inviting educators to move their learners for sustainable reflection and action on the transformation of the world.

Critical literacy principles. To broaden the framework for classroom critical literacy practices, McLaughlin and DeVogd (2004) distinguished four principles for the implementation of this approach. They highlight “Critical literacy focuses on issues of power and promotes reflection, transformation, and action” (p.54). This somehow encourages learners in this case readers to use questioning as a manner to engage in deep reflection, and state actions for transformation. Under the scope of this pedagogy, learners adopted critical perspectives to

understand and reflect upon their local issues. As a result, the profound words they wrote became the actions they proposed to empower the voice of their community and appeal for transformation.

Similarly, these authors maintain that “Critical literacy focuses on the problem and its complexity” (p.54). They describe how this approach involves going beyond the mere recognition of problems to the search for alternative ways of understanding peoples’ situations. In the name of this pedagogical intervention, participants walked through the identification of their community issues, to the co-construction of multiple perspectives to better acknowledging their constraints.

The scholars suggest that "Techniques that promote critical literacy are dynamic and adapt to the contexts in which they are" (p.54). This principle remarks on the importance of considering the context for the design of proper techniques, depending on the particularity of each setting. Concerning this intervention, teachers designed strategies specially planned for the participants, and informed by their experiences, problems, and ideas about possible solutions. This research preserved great sensitivity towards participants' background, considering their role as co-researchers and the aim to explore alternative ways of engaging with language learning.

Finally, these writers explain "Examining multiple perspectives is an important aspect of critical literacy" (p.55). This refers to the different voices that students might adopt to embrace problems from a more critical perspective. In reality, students participating in this project complemented their voices with those people equally holding relevant information. That recognition of the others' point of view allowed learners to complete the whole picture of the different situations affecting them.

Critical literacy in teaching. Critical literacy is seen as a resource of high relevance at the moment of planning, structuring, and proposing in the various teaching practices. In this

regard, Cruz (2018) declares that “critical pedagogy allows to exalt alternative and locally grounded attempts to make English teaching socially relevant, especially in communities where English appears to be far removed from their everyday life” (p. 67). The author points out the relevance of embracing critical literacy in the classroom to guide language teaching. In the same breath, Lewison, Leland and Harste (2008) coincide on the notion of critical social practice as “disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on the sociopolitical and taking action to promote social justice, and describe a ‘critical stance’ as consciously engaging, entertaining alternate ways of being, taking responsibility to inquire and being reflexive” (p.6). These authors encourage teachers to challenge traditional classroom practices and use language learning as the pretext to equip learners with the necessary tools to fight against power relationships controlling their community, giving them opportunities to construct and negotiate meaning collectively, revise learners’ assumptions, and question the implications of classroom practices. In this sense, critical literacy represents a valuable approach for learners and their learning process. It also contributes to the transformation of a setting where social problems affect communities from different perspectives. Then, critical literacy supports the purpose of providing learners with academic opportunities that examine social and environmental inconveniences with critical lenses for exploring possibilities of change.

Critical literacy in learning. Connected to the ideas of critical literacy and teaching, it is the concept of critical literacy and learning. Critical literacy has served to language learning as a pedagogical approach that supports understanding, reflection, and practice. As Contreras and Chapetón (2016) report in their study about the impact of implementing collaborative learning in a social and dialogical perspective, there are enormous possibilities to incorporate and articulate EFL syllabus contents within the students’ realities to help them to understand and reflect upon those realities and become active agents. It is the inclusion of pedagogical practices that call upon

reflection on the local realities and that encourage learning experiences that not only engage learners in the subject matter but also involve them in the ideas of transformation and proposition of innovative practices.

In the same line of thought, the critical incidents lived in the learners' classroom may serve to inform contextualized curriculums and practices. Vasquez (2004) expresses on this issue:

A critical literacy curriculum needs to be lived. It arises from the social and political conditions that unfold in communities in which we live. As such it cannot be traditionally taught. In other words, as teachers, we need to incorporate a critical perspective into our every-day lives in order to find ways to help children understand the social and political issues around them. (p.1)

This author found that curriculums can be negotiated even though learners are 3 to 5-year-old; once critical literacy is connected to the learning practices; it allows the learners to integrate knowledge with daily life situations. Critical literacy suggests a context-sensitive approach where students can use their living conditions and their everyday life to inform their practices and enrich their learning processes while going beyond language linguistic structures and forms.

Critical literacy and language learning. So far, the relationship between critical literacy in teaching and learning has been discussed. In this sense, it is also important to relate critical literacy to the notions of language learning. According to Pennycook, Kubota and Lin (as cited in Luke and Dooley, 2009):

In TESOL, critical approaches have been informed by sociological, ethnographic and applied linguistics research on language policy and education for second language learners. This includes ongoing work on the international spread of English, research on the social and political implications of language education and on educational equity for linguistic and cultural minorities. (p.2)

This implies a broader spectrum of the construct of critical literacy regarding education; specifically, language learning. The transformative views of critical literacy open possibilities of reflection, critique, and change on the diverse problems that are not alienated from scholar contexts. Social and political scenarios that directly affect learners and their communities are suitable pretexts for tackling language lessons in the classroom. These not only serve as a vehicle for revising linguistics features of the language but as a means for understanding learners' realities and providing them with critical resources for better confronting their lives.

Along similar lines, Van Duzer and Florez (1999) claim that critical literacy helps learners to move beyond the development of basic literacy skills such as decoding, predicting, and summarizing, but a source of asking them to become critical consumers of the information they receive. What is more, Jordão and Fogaça (2012) stress the importance of critical literacy practices in language learning. They assert the fact that critical literacy serves as the basis of a discursive view of the world, attributes a fundamental role to language in the process of understanding or interpreting learners' experiences. In this relation, the tenets of critical literacy advocate the discursive competencies that interplay in the process of language learning.

Critical literacy to advocate social transformation. To explore the notions of social transformation in educative contexts, some authors have explained the value of critical literacy. Let us consider the proposal of Comber (2017) who calls for alternative teaching approaches as a mean of refusing on standardized programs that replicate “poor literacies.” Instead, the author states that “[...] children growing up in poverty need access to the most complex and salient forms of literate practices possible in order to contest the way things are and to work to represent their communities for justice” (p. 16). This idea accounts for the significance of adding alternative approaches to the learning practice. In this sense, critical literacy becomes a current

practice allowing learners to take the language beyond the classroom and raise awareness about common constraints affecting a community.

In line with this point of view, critical literacy practice permits more than reflecting on the social issues that learners may concern. It is acting, proposing, what can be defined as attempts of transformation. In this regard, Lankshear and Knobel (2009) maintain:

Critical literacy is not a matter simply of reading the world but also of writing the world. In addition to textual engagement, there must also be material engagement. This is not something ‘in addition’ to literacy. It is part of literacy, because literacy is embedded in social practice and mediates social practice. In some moments, literacy work is predominantly textual. But, to the extent that this is critical textual work intended to address material circumstances in the world, it must ultimately be part of a larger cultural practice of acting on the world beyond the symbolic level alone. (p. 71)

These authors use the expression more than words to call for literacy practices aimed at acting beyond the symbolic level. From this perspective, acting on the social concerns that affect learners’ realities is a means of moving from prescribed educative programs that perpetuate poor literacies, practices that do not allow the understanding of complex issues that affect whole communities; on the contrary, critical literacy practices would take social issues as perfect scenarios for doing both expanding learners’ visions of their realities and enhancing LLE.

Chapter III

Methodological Design

This chapter presents the methodological design implemented for this research study, which relies on the principles of the qualitative approach. This design, at the same time, evokes the characteristics of (PAR) as the inquiry strategy for deepening on some of the participants' local inconveniences. In this order of things, this chapter presents a detailed description of the two cycles associated with this pedagogical intervention attempted to determine the connection between LLE and critical literacy. This section also explains the data gathering instruments supporting this investigation, in this case, focus group interviews, a questionnaire, and students' artifacts. It also illustrates how these tools enlightened approaching findings.

Research approach. QR is the research approach selected for this investigation since it privileges the interpretation of data from a holistic perspective. For better understanding of the role of QR, it is necessary to deepen on the concept and its articulation with the present investigation framed within a descriptive and interpretative research paradigm. In this regard, Gillis & Jackson (2002) advocates to QR as a means of integrating the methods and techniques for observing, documenting, analyzing, and interpreting characteristics, patterns, attributes, and meanings of human phenomena under study. Similarly, Mason (2006) asserts that qualitative methods are focused on the human experience and the meanings ascribed by individuals living the experience; broader understanding and deeper insight into complex human behaviors that occur as a result. In this regard, Gilbert (2001) maintained that qualitative researchers aspire to uncover the world through another's eyes, in the discovery and exploratory process that is deeply experienced. In the same line of thought, Creswell (2014) states qualitative research as an approach that explores and understands the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

Considering the above, it is precise to restate the pertinence of the core principles of QR for this research study that intends to determine the connection between LLE and critical literacy in the language classroom. Through a pedagogical design based on the most salient social and environmental problems experienced and claimed by ninth graders at Juan Bautista la Salle High School.

Type of study. Considering the previous stances on qualitative research, the strategy inquiry for this study is PAR. Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) state that PAR allows participants to understand their social and educational practices, and how they are the product of particular material, social and historical circumstances reproduced in everyday social interaction in particular settings. Regarding group work and PAR, Miskovic and Hoop (2006) coincide that the shared experience of participating provides the language and opportunities to articulate the direction for ongoing research and establish possibilities for solutions or action within the organization or group. Moreover, Kindon, Pain, and Kesby (2007) state that research in PAR typically goes through a cycle: Planning, Action, Reflection, and Evaluation. The cycles can be met every time, or on the contrary, save the evaluation until the action is complete. In the section of instructional stages, the cycles implemented for this research study will be widely detailed.

Participants. The participants selected for this research study are a total of 34 ninth graders from Juan Bautista la Salle, a high school located in the municipality of Florencia, the capital city of Caquetá. Additionally, we include ourselves as participants since our roles are active teachers, researchers and material developers. The participants for this study consist of a group of 17 females and 17 male students aged between 13 and 15 years old. Regarding language level, results thrown by the Maloca test, a bimonthly examination applied in the school to all English language learners, show that the participants are not highly proficient in the second language (L2), in this case, English, that is, they demonstrate limited command since most of the

time students support their utterances on their native language, body language, or the language teacher needs to recast and provide guidance during their interventions.

Students' participating in this study have diverse learning styles; most of them related to sensory preferences, namely visual, auditory, and tactile stimulation (Oxford, 2003). Indeed, visual stimulation prevails among students' inclinations, they seem more likely to engage in class activities when these include pictures and videos. A questionnaire applied at the beginning of the school year to inquire on students' learning styles, apart from this research study, corroborates this information. Besides, the personality type also plays an important role when it comes to defining the learning characteristics of these participants. In this classroom, extroverted students seem to enjoy multitasking work while introverted students prefer small group configuration (Oxford, 2003).

Regarding students' learning background, they have been enrolled in English classes since primary school, as dictated by the Colombian policies. Few of them have attended language institutes where they have been able to reach a slightly better English level. In secondary education, these students receive three hours of English class in a week; most of the class time has been devoted to the grammar lessons and the reading tasks demanded by the school curriculum.

Another important issue to mention is the fact that most of the students are part of a low-socioeconomic condition. Consequently, the school and neighborhoods experience social problems related to micro-trafficking, drug consumption, stealing, beggary, and environmental concerns such as river pollution and waste disposals, issues that the students face every day in their immediate context.

The criteria for selecting the sampling retakes the technique of convenience sampling proposed by Dörnyei (2007). The group of participants was carefully selected because they met

some qualities corresponding to availability and accessibility that were definitively appropriate for this study. What is more, the students were willing to participate in the research study; they were motivated to publish an institutional journal to be read for their classmates, members of their institution and people from other institutions as well.

Our participation in this research study as language teachers can be defined as active. In this sense, all the implications that teaching and guidance entail took place during the language lessons. The pedagogical intervention followed the stages of a regular lesson: recalling students' previous knowledge, presentation of the topics, developing the proposed activities for making the students familiar with the themes, and the writing process: planning, editing, revising and evaluation of the writings; this means that in all the stages of the research study, our role as language teachers was of permanent support and accompaniment to the students.

The role of language teachers is definitively linked to the role of researchers. Both processes, teaching, and researching, were carried out at the same time. The role of researchers in this study encompasses all the rigorousness that researching in language teaching and learning implies; the integration of teaching and researching interplayed in the stages that follow this study based on the cyclical model of PAR; planning, action, reflection, and evaluation.

As already stated, our role in the research study embedded many facets; in this case, the role of materials developers. Given that, we evoked the principles of material development that highlights the importance of interweaving its theoretical foundations and the theories that embrace the implications of language teaching and language acquisition in EFL contexts.

For this study, we proposed two workshops. They were based on the responses of a pre-intervention questionnaire provided by the participants that enlightened us for taking decisions on the themes and other constraints of the research. As Nuñez and Téllez (2015) stated, "contextualized, tailor-made, or customized materials are those specially developed for particular

learners, in a given context, where the learning and teaching processes take place” (p.15). In light of this, the two workshops were designed specifically on the purpose of this research study, considering the participants' contributions, the main inconveniences they exposed and their contextual realities. At the same time, the workshops were informed with the principles of LLE and critical literacy practices, core principles in language teaching and learning and main constructs for this research study.

Data gathering instruments. This section describes the data collection tools and procedures designed and implemented for this research project. Herein, data collection instruments and implementing procedures are described and related to the research purpose. Besides, considerations in regards to the design and application of data collection tools are taken into account to advocate for ethical principles.

Focus group. The main concern regarding this data collection tool was to describe practices that engage students in language learning. Focus group has been defined widely as an effective tool for qualitative research studies. Marshall and Rossman (2006) coincide that during a focus group, the researcher creates a supportive environment in which discussion and differing points of view are encouraged. In the same line of thought, Semenova, Naumova and Shwartz (2013) state for focus groups the following: “a group of interacting individuals having some common interest or characteristics, brought together by a moderator, who uses the group and its interaction as a way to gain information about a specific or focused issue” (p.13). Focus groups suggest a great opportunity to deepen on students’ insights about the issue under discussion, in this case, the relationship between critical literacy and LLE.

An initial and a post-intervention focus group interview were applied collectively to all the participants during two different moments of the study at the school library. The aim of the initial focus group interview was to describe how the participants perceived LLE before the

pedagogical intervention took place. The intended data to be collected were students' ideas, perceptions, aptitudes, and attitudes about the language and LLE, (see appendix A). The post-intervention focus group interview was planned describe possible variations of students' responses, and the degree to which students engaged (or not) with the language learning after the critical literacy pedagogical design, (see appendix B).

Questionnaire. This data collection tool was designed to explain how critical literacy intervenes LLE for the students that participated in this research project. Nigel, Fox, and Hunn (2009) affirm that questionnaires are a very convenient way of collecting useful comparable data from a large number of individuals. In the same line of thought, Patten (2016) confirms the usefulness of implementing a questionnaire as a data collection tool. The author proposes questionnaires as an effective way to collect data for the easiness of tabulating information, its anonymous nature, and confidentiality to the responders and the low investment required to implement it. In this sense, a post-intervention questionnaire was proposed for this study.

The general structure of the instrument combines the principles of critical literacy and the multidimensionality of language engagement: cognitive, social and emotional. Two questionnaires were applied in this research study; the first one focused on inquiring about students perceived problematics in their school and community. The intentionality of this instrument was to select the topics for the workshops attained to the pedagogical intervention, (see appendix C). The second questionnaire consisted of eight open-ended questions and four semi-open questions intending to gather relevant information about the participants' insights about critical literacy practices and how those engaged them in language learning. The participants were invited to reflect upon the experience of planning, writing and designing an institutional journal. Their responses served as vital information supporting the second research objective and the resulting analyses led to preliminary conclusions, (see appendix D).

Students' learning artifacts. The students' artifacts for this research encompass the final writings of the students obtained from the workshops and the final version of the institutional journal composed by the students' writing proposals. The aim of analyzing the students' artifacts was to explain issues that support the critical literacy macro-strategy constructed to enhance LLE at Juan Bautista la Salle High School.

Students' artifacts provided this research with valuable insight and opportunities for reflecting upon the way in which they embraced critical literacy to engage in language learning. Matsumura, Slater, Junker, Peterson, Boston, Steele, and Resnick (2006) describe artifacts as "raw records of classroom practice, which reveal teachers' instructional efforts and students' learning products" (p.9). What is more, Burns (2010) states "classrooms are full of all kinds of written documents [...] any of these can become a means for collecting data and identifying key issues" (p.91). To this respect, the pieces of writing produced by participants were considered relevant to analyze the main factors that mediate LLE and critical literacy.

Thus, the pedagogical intervention was based on two workshops. These emerged from the responses of a pre-intervention questionnaire proposed as a means of involving the participants in the overall design of the study. This questionnaire aimed at identifying topics that interested participants for researching and deepening on.

Ethical considerations. Concerning the ethical considerations for planning and conducting this research study, a concern form was delivered and approved for the participants involved in the study, their parents and school administrators. This consent form briefly stated the purpose of the study and its academic, social and personal implications under the consideration of the principles of research; minimized chances for misleading results, ethical acceptability, protection and assurance of dignity and welfare of all participants, as well as those who may be affected by the results of this study, (see appendix E).

Instructional Design

The instructional design underpinning this study suggests what Kumaravadivelu (2001) has called a context-sensitive methodology; herein this practice aimed at bringing critical literacy into the classroom, to determine its connection with how participants engage in learning English as a foreign language. To a significant degree, this instructional design gives an account of the pedagogical strategies implemented with the purpose of alleviating the problem of LLE in a classroom which appears mainly reduced to the notion of academic performance. With this in mind, students participating in this process embarked in the experience of planning, writing and designing an institutional journal to raise their voices while envisioning language learning as a cognitive, social and emotional act.

Pedagogical intervention. The pedagogical intervention of this study consisted of implementing two class workshops designed within the approach of critical literacy. Thus, this approach was intended to guide participants in the process of writing pieces of critique to reflect upon their local realities. The themes of the workshops were selected through the analysis of students' descriptions of the problems affecting their neighborhoods, school and surroundings. It is worth mentioning that the first workshop was presented to students in a printed way while the second one was delivered online, to add variety to the tasks and favor the different learning styles.

This pedagogical intervention also focused on the research and design of the journal "JUBASA Revolution," (see appendix H) a school newspaper created by students with the intention of presenting their critiques and proposing solutions to address the issues concerning their community; about this, Hashemi^a and Mirzaei^b (2015) avow:

Journal writing is a means of self-expression, and has been used in many disciplines [...] and remains a valuable teaching/learning tool in many classrooms, because it not only teaches the students to write, it also encourages them to share their experiences and ideas (p.104).

Therefore, the writing of this journal was planned to enlarge critical literacy practices to the construction of a reflective and inspired means of communication where students used the foreign language to express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas, and raise awareness among other people living under the same conditions. The research process of students was experienced along with the implementation of the workshops, as they included the guidance for participants to identify, inquire and write their critical reflections. In this sense, the refined versions of students' local inconveniences, developed through the workshops, constituted the essence of the journal.

The co-researching affair of students expanded beyond the production of the journal. Participants invited different educative communities to read and comment on their work. Under these circumstances, participants followed the path of their journal through a Facebook group where readers were encouraged to present their views towards the students' reflections, to contribute to the understanding and look for solutions of the local issues they have in common.

Taking into consideration that LLE; is a multi-dimensional construct where the cognitive, the emotional and the social components interrelate; the workshops implemented through this intervention include the pedagogical principles that account for LLE. In that order, the practice of complementary skills, reading, and writing, attained critical literacy convey the pedagogical philosophy linked to cognitive engagement. As a result, workshops have been designed to guide participants towards the embracement of profound reading abilities as well as reflective writing. In line with this point of view, Sairsingh (2017) declares:

Ultimately, it is about recognizing the power of the active reader to change the script and thus, the message, by presenting alternative perspectives that have either been underrepresented, or

occluded, all while paying close attention to the conventions of English language to produce coherence, lucid, and intelligible responses (p.34).

Understanding reading and writing as powerful tools, provide learners with the chance of reexamining the position that their community inhabits in the long societal chain. This practice moved the impetus of leading current reading and writing processes where the main concern is beyond conceiving these abilities as learning outcomes. Instead, they are seen as the mediums to achieve the goal of raising in participants the awareness needed to transform realities.

Subsequently, this pedagogical intervention has also considered students' emotional intelligence as a core component of foreign language learning. Concerning this, Mendéz (2011) stresses that “Supporting students’ emotions in language learning classrooms can help students to cope with feelings inherent to language learning experiences and to the development of a positive attitude towards themselves as language learners” (p.44). Hence, the pedagogical philosophy essential to an emotional engagement under the scope of this research has maintained a remarkable interest in enacting participants to recognize their emotions as part of the learning process.

Given that, workshops offered learners invaluable scenarios to explore and share their emotions. Those that emerged from the task of reevaluating their realities and bringing into life the problems described in texts through the analysis and comparison of their living conditions. Indeed, the institutional journal is also replete with students' emotions when reflecting upon the issues constraining them. In this regard, Dewaele as cited in Ross and River (2018) expresses “sharing emotions, whether in face-to-face interactions or through written communications, is a crucial social activity” (p.107). Thus, the double role of students as researchers and participants has intended to allow them to explore emotions from the perspectives of both insiders and outsiders.

Similarly, the attention given to students' emotions in light of this pedagogical design has also attempted to transcend the limits of those emotions directly attained in the classroom context. Therefore, reading and writing have served as a window to supposedly transport students outside the classroom so that they experience and record new emotions. Again, based on Ross and River's (2018) work "Shifting the contextual focus away from the formal classroom environment toward the dynamic complexity of life outside the classroom demands that researchers engage with a greater range of emotions in situations which have significance for individual language learners" (p.104). Hopefully, the fact that participants have embarked on inquiring about their localities has raised different emotions to be examined with the intention of gaining more intuitions on the subject of LLE.

Lastly, collaborative learning has guided the pathway of social engagement. This has been the pedagogical philosophy informing workshops designed from social interaction, teamwork, and collaboration. Sun, Liu, Luo, Wu, and Shi (2017) explain:

This type of learning requires students to articulate their own points of view and listen to the views of others to create knowledge and meaning. When students share the same goal in a collaborative situation, they can learn from each other through group discussions and reach agreements on their own learning goals. (p.575)

This perspective is central to this pedagogical intervention as it reflects the features of a critical approach that positions learning and engagement as social phenomena. Because of this, workshops were implemented in groups, where each student adopted a role and contributed to the construction of common knowledge while developing social skills. Furthermore, students working in small groups as well as joining in huge group debates, allowed us to analyze the role of social interactions in the achievement of rooted LLE.

All in all, this pedagogical intervention although informed by several philosophies does not suppose a division among the constituting cores of LLE. On the contrary, each one of these principles facilitated the design of integrated critical literacy workshops aiming at wholly engaging students in their co-constructed processes of learning.

Theory of the nature of language and language learning. The theory framing this study connects to socio-cultural perspectives and current philosophies on critical literacy practices. Before discussing these theories, learning must be addressed to provide a context for the socio-cultural standpoint fitting this investigation. To begin with, learning, as Freire (1972) claims, is beyond any transference of knowledge. On the contrary, it is a process of co-constructing the world. Thus, educators are demanded to transcend the boundaries of teaching to allow learning to take place in light of people's realities. Learning as envisioned in this study became an opportunity for participants to transform classroom practices into the social experience of connecting their world to the construction of common knowledge.

To understand the nature of language defining this research, it is necessary to examine the connection between language and knowledge briefly mentioned before. Through this pedagogical intervention, learners constructed knowledge and empowered language, in light of their social and environmental conditions. Morgan and Wyatt-Smith (2000) point out that the relationship between language and knowledge in the name of critical literacy positions teachers as enablers of learners' emancipation from passively adopting texts and realities.

Thus, language is a means to absorb social practices. It is central to any activity involving both inner and outer processes. Because of this, language has been embraced as a channel for reflection, awareness, and transformation to take place, in the complex process of enhancing LLE. Nonetheless, integrated findings evolving from the application of critical literacy might

lead to changes in students' language proficiency, as a result of the exposure to reading and writing processes.

Language learning within the scope of critical literacy refers to the dual relationship between learning the language and learning through the language. What is more, this approach entails the beneficial contract resulting from using the word to explore, analyze and critique authentic samples. In such way, learners appropriated language to attempt social transformation following Bacon's (2017) ideas when describing language learning:

Integrated language learning: This approach asks not only how critical engagement can facilitate language learning but also how language learning can contribute to critical engagement. By asking what kinds of language or metalanguage learners use to engage in critical literacies, instruction is geared specifically toward such language and the ways in which it shifts across a broad range of genres, contexts, or academic content areas. (p.17)

In reality, this approach gives an account of the emancipation processes described above. It implies the liberation expected from practices aimed not only at mastering the language but also adding significance to language learning processes. Then, the understanding of language learning under the lenses of critical literacy enabled the implementation of a pedagogy where the cognitive nature of language is still recognized, along with the emotional and social principles converging in language construction.

Methodological approach underlying the pedagogical intervention. It relies on critical literacy; in this sense, this approach was expected to guide students to embrace social and environmental issues from a critical stance. Therefore, participants were encouraged to adopt reading and writing as acts of freedom, to fight against local issues constraining them. To implement critical literacy practices in this specific setting, teachers considered some guiding

principles found in the literature concerning the application of this methodological approach to enrich classroom experiences. In this respect, Park (2011) establishes:

Students bring with them different life experiences. What they know and how they orient themselves to education varies because their experience varies so markedly. Teachers developing pedagogies for critical literacy must face various judgments in order to cope with these different experiences and levels of knowledge. (p.46)

Particularly, this pedagogical intervention attempted to maintain a balance among participants' experiences directing learning processes in the classroom. To achieve this goal, learners negotiated themes they connected with their living conditions. Ideally, learners sharing similar life situations, surroundings, and school, led to affinity in their experiences. Besides, learners as co-researchers re-oriented their concerns through the research process carried out on the purpose of the institutional journal. For instance, a theme that students projected was discrimination. One of the workshops addressed this issue at a general level. In this regard, students focused on different forms of discrimination such as nicknames, mother discrimination, and lookism. Those related topics helped this pedagogical intervention to manage students' interests.

Perhaps, the most significant components of the methodological approach guiding this pedagogical intervention were the reading and writing process that students experienced along with their participation in the class workshops. Such process allowed learners to understand the problematics that they face day to day in their school and their community, from the perspective of other people confronting similar situations. Concerning social issues, participants examined the particular case of discrimination to a famous journalist in Colombia to derive into discrimination issues existing in their school.

Regarding environmental problematics, learners analyzed some tragedies affecting different populations in the country, such as the Mocoa's landslide that affected hundreds of people in the department of Putumayo; and the Quimbo hydroelectric power station that left many species and families without a home. In this sense, the parallel between the national panorama and the students' community led them to inquire on the possible solutions they could provide to alleviate the problematics that they encountered and raise awareness among citizens.

Connection of the pedagogical intervention with the research question. As stated previously, critical literacy was the approach adopted to enable cognitive, social, and emotional engagement to take place in the classroom, and therefore determining the connection between LLE and critical literacy. The workshops designed in light of critical literacy and participants' local inconveniences supposed the scenarios for this research to gather factors mediating students' LLE. Likewise, philosophies underlying reading and writing practices, emotional intelligence and collaborative work, interacted under the aegis of the students' institutional journal, which compiled their reflections regarding the issues examined along the workshops.

Instructional phases. These phases entail the implementation of the cycles linked to PAR. According to Kindon, Pain, and Kesby (2007), the phases consist of planning, action, reflection, and evaluation. Besides, the literature on the subject reports the existence of initial cycles of PAR, before those referred above. In this respect, Kelly (2005) proposes some preliminary steps prior to the action research cycle. These steps include community assessment, community partner, resources, written consents, and formalization with the community partner. With this in mind, this section proposes a detailed description of the different cycles developed through this research, counting the arrangement of topics, the objectives of each session and the development of workshops.

Initial steps. They began with the assessment of the community and the partner finding. To do so, teacher-researchers gathered information regarding students' perceptions about foreign language learning, their interest in the subject and their commitment to learning. The data were collected through the application of feedback cards with a purposive sample of five students. Results shown by this examination showed that students' perceptions characterized foreign language learning as a difficult and insipid process. Similarly, students reported little interest in learning the foreign language; rather they maintained that their commitment to learning was mostly related to the academic performance they need to have in school. Essentially, students' responses along with the revision of the literature on the subject and the examination of institutional documents relevant to language learning evidenced that the problem affecting that particular community was related to the concept of LLE.

Under such circumstances, the problem was shared with students in such a way they could confirm their willingness to participate in a study aimed at alleviating this issue. In fact, the main intention of this discussion was to prepare learners to propose solutions for the problem. In doing so, teachers-researchers conducted an initial focus group aimed at collecting ideas and deepening on students' perceptions regarding the issue of LLE. The answers students provided on this focus group allowed teachers-researchers to propose the implementation of critical literacy as an alternative to students' desire of living a context-related experience. As a result, teachers-researchers stated the research question including both LLE and critical literacy to determine existing connections among these concepts.

Teacher-researchers examined resources available to conduct this PAR study. Time, technological devices and facilities were studied to establish proper procedures for the implementation of future cycles. In the same way, teacher-researchers informed parents about the purpose, benefits, risks and confidentiality issues arising from the study. Also, the institutional

stakeholders received information about the research as a manner to request authorization for the intervention. Once parents and stakeholders approved students' participation, teachers-researchers formalized technicalities about the research process with the community partner. Teachers and students arrange the time to devote to workshops, data gathering and meetings; they also discussed students' roles as co-researchers. Finally, they offered clarifications concerning students' inquiries about the research to open the course of both cycles corresponding to the workshops; "Discrimination is real" and "JUBASA moves on."

Cycle one “Discrimination is real.” To determine the themes for the pedagogical intervention participants completed an initial questionnaire. This instrument provided insights on the issues that concerned students the most and that were related to their immediate context. Based on the information collected and having revised the literature corresponding to LLE and critical literacies, teachers-researchers designed a series of two workshops; selected depending on a hierarchical number of students' similar concerns. The first workshop, named “Discrimination is real” (see appendix I) reflected students' ideas on topics of inequity, segregation, and aggression, especially in the school context. The second workshop, “JUBASA moves on,” related to environmental issues affecting students principally in their neighborhoods. So far, this section focuses on describing the cycle linked to the first workshop. Insights on the second one will be provided in a further section.

Hands-on work. Started with the implementation of the first workshop. This material consisted of three lessons each one serving the purpose of scaffolding students reading, reflecting and writing process. The first and the second lessons were applied weekly corresponding to three hours of English class. Meanwhile, the third lesson focused on writing took two weeks to accomplish. Workshops were developed in groups, advocating for collaborative work, social and

emotional implications coming to life through the interaction with others. Then, this section describes the three initial lessons experienced in the framework of critical literacy.

Lesson 1. Get ready: Know the concept and vocabulary. This section was the first pedagogical encounter participants had with this pedagogical design. The objective of this section was to guide students to familiarize with the concept of discrimination and related vocabulary. It is worth mentioning that the statement of the objectives for the different lessons was done under the light of Bloom's (as cited in Thompson¹ and O'Loughlin², 2015) learning objectives model "to classify the cognitive level an instructor expects a student to use when learning or answering a question" (p.494). Given that, learning outcomes maintained a sequential development useful to the construction of students' critical perspectives expected from the application of these workshops. Particularly, this lesson proposed a set of activities aimed at sensitizing students about discrimination issues, practicing topic-related vocabulary and establishing expectations for the forthcoming work.

Lesson 2. Read: Get informed, analyze and reflect. This fragment focused on allowing reading practices linked to critical literacy to take place. This lesson expected learners to accomplish three objectives. To get informed about discrimination issues. To analyze discrimination in Colombia from a critical point of view. And to reflect upon discrimination issues affecting their school. These objectives defined the way students needed to walk through to construct in deep reflection processes, starting from a general understanding of discrimination to further analysis of the national and local instances suffering similar situations. Activities developed in this lesson attempted to enhance students' interaction with the critical literacy text, as well as to inspire them to position their own opinions and thoughts on the subject. This section was a means to raise awareness in students about discrimination affecting societies somehow reflecting similar power relationships to the ones they experience at the classroom level.

Lesson 3. Write: Research and contribute. Perhaps it was the most significant lesson for students as it allowed them to take actions against different forms of discrimination affecting them. This lesson had as objective to critically express in a piece of writing the main ideas and stances on a topic concerning their classroom. Otherwise, data collection tools designed to gather useful information to support the research question and the objectives stated for this investigation were applied along with the implementation of the three lessons.

Analysis of the first cycle. Following the cyclical model of the study, teacher-researchers proceeded to analyze and reflect on the information collected. This reflection stage was key to decision making about the selection of themes and the dynamics of workshops. This analysis suggested the evaluation of the initial implementation not only on the overall process but also on the students' responses, improvement, desires, and perceptions on the topics. This evaluation phase included the analysis of students' assessment of learning materials to estimate learners' objectives achievement, the efficacy of activities and the accuracy of in-class procedures. This evaluation processes served the purpose of re-orienting the second workshop so that biases affecting results could be controlled.

To analyze the first cycle, students completed an assessment rubric consisting of eight statements describing how they perceived cognitive, social, and emotional engagement and the practice of critical literacy after their encounter with the first workshop, "Discrimination is real." Herein, participants chose among two possible options to confirm or neglect each affirmation. Some of these statements accounted for the cognitive engagement as they inquired on the effort that students invested in learning, the extent to which the pre-task exercises helped them to prepare for the class activities, and the opportunities they had to improve their work. On the issue of social engagement, some other prompts illustrated students' perceived opportunities to initiate interactions with peers and teachers, as well as give and receive feedback while developing the

workshop. Additional statements interrogated students' emotions arising from the class activities and the topics to advocate for emotional engagement.

Concerning the practice of critical literacy, the assessment rubric explored students' perceptions about the controversiality of the issues studied during the workshop, and how the topics led them to envision and propose alternatives for social transformation. Similarly, this form described the purposes ascribed to each lesson to invite learners to evaluate the achievement of their objectives. To do so, learners selected between two options to validate the different targets, or on the contrary, let teacher-researchers know that they still needed more work.

The assessment rubric also inspected general aspects of the workshop, such as the design, colors, and pictures. Besides, this form evaluated each one of the lessons once learners were asked to confirm if these interrelated sections accomplished the goals of helping them to get ready, motivating them to think differently and guiding them to write and contribute to the class discussion.

It is worth mentioning that the data collected for the analysis of the first cycle corresponds to eight samples since participants developed and assessed the workshops in small groups. With this in mind, teachers-researchers designed a frequency chart that included the different aspects that students evaluated. This chart detailed both the frequency of affirmative and adverse responses (see appendix F). The results thrown by this examination show a positive affiliation towards LLE and critical literacy. Moreover, students also reported a high frequency of positive answers related to the achievement of objectives and the lesson goals.

This evaluation processes demonstrated a slightly higher negative tendency towards two aspects of the first workshop. Initially, three out of the eight groups that assessed the process reported that they needed to keep trying to communicate in English with peers and teachers, as well as engage in the feedback task. This discovery led to adjustments in the forthcoming

workshop, which gained a stronger focus on the social dimension of engagement procuring improved opportunities for peer and teacher interaction. Comparably, the same number of groups reported that they need to keep trying to feel passionate about the workshop topics. Again, this idea supported changes for the second workshop, then, to advocate for students' emotional engagement, teachers-researchers added significance to the subsequent themes once these referred to well-known environmental problematics that somehow reflected students' immediate reality.

The evaluation of the writing process attained to the development of the abovementioned workshop went further the application of the summative assessment approach. On the contrary, this pedagogical intervention applied an alternative method to evaluate students' written production. In doing so, peer and teacher feedback played a pivotal role in guiding learners to reach the lesson objectives. Under such circumstances, this process moved beyond the assessment of the writing skill in terms of numbers or grades as learners had the opportunity to refine their work as they engaged in feedback tasks. Such alternative approach to assess students' written production considered the experience of peer feedback as included in the learning material, students' perceptions in regards to the first workshop and the teacher feedback to follow up students' investment in learning from the cognitive, social and emotional dimensions.

Cycle two “JUBASA moves on.” This cycle described the restart of the PAR process, denominated the second cycle. This pedagogical revival was provided to students through ICT. This time, teacher-researchers proposed an interactive blog called “JUBASA moves on,” this learning resource was accompanied by the motto "save the world through the world," to illustrate students willingness to face environmental issues in their surroundings. Then, this interactive blog allowed learners to post their final writings and receive comments on the themes they wrote

about. It is important to realize that this workshop also followed the scaffolding nature of the previous one. This helped learners to embrace their environmental concerns from a reflective stance, recognize their complexity and examine them from multiple views.

Hands-on work, a second chance. This phase entailed the implementation of the second workshop, also consisting of three lessons focused on reading, reflecting and writing. Herein, variations in the application procedures were related to time. Hence the evaluation presented the necessity of implementing the workshop on a shorter period. To achieve this goal, students and teachers met on extra sessions aimed at fully completing the activities described in the workshop, as well as the small-scale research study of participants.

Lesson 1. Get ready, set, go. This was the first section, designed for students to meet the interactive version of this new workshop. This lesson has as objective to appropriate the concept of environmental issues and discover the vocabulary needed to read about the topic. In other words, this segment focused on guiding learners to understand the concept of environmental issues while visualizing national environmental tragedies comparable to those in their community. Activities for this lesson included online games for practicing vocabulary, exercises for brainstorming ideas and a folder to share pictures displaying environmental issues in their surroundings.

Lesson 2. Get informed, read and discuss. This lesson aimed at providing students with a media version of the issue under discussion along with the main text to be examined during the lesson. This segment, also proposed three objectives projected to students, initially to get informed about environmental issues affecting the planet. Then, to reflect and state an opinion about the human actions affecting the environment. Last, to promote efforts to limit environmental impact. In this connection, this set of objectives directed the process of

accompanying learners while expecting the practice of critical literacy to succeed. The activities presented in this section of the blog included a checklist to relate problems described in both the media and written texts with the local issues they encountered. Besides, there was a comprehension exercise to compile the alternatives views that learners adopted from the reading, followed by the reflection part where participants promoted efforts to raise awareness about the subject discussed.

Lesson 3. Go local, research and contribute. This excerpt allowed learners to follow a guideline for deepening on their community environmental issues to posteriorly state their findings and insights about the topic on a piece of critique. The objective of this lesson was to critically state an opinion about environmental issues affecting their community. This segment provided a valuable set of writings to be published in the institutional journal. The activities displayed in this lesson mainly focused on providing learners the accompaniment needed for them to examine their local situations to arrive at their final versions of their writings.

Institutional journal “JUBASA Revolution.” This segment refers to the artifact resulting from students' efforts to analyze, reflect and transform the different manifestations of social and environmental constraints existing in their communities. This journal included some of the insightful texts that participants wrote during the implementation process. Learners also defined technicalities related to the name, layout, and style of the journal. Besides, they provided photos illustrating their words. As a result, teachers-researchers in collaboration with participants produced the final version of the institutional journal “JUBASA Revolution” to be shared with surrounding communities.

Actions for transformation. These actions describe the effort that researchers and co-researchers promote to transform the difficulties they encountered through this study. In that order, several educative institutions joined in reading and discovering the powerful voices that

ninth graders from Juan Bautista la Salle high school were sharing to the world. This stage summarizes the transformative actions that participants took to fight discrimination and environmental issues in their surroundings. These actions were trailed by an initiative to follow the path of readers' thoughts in regards to the journal. In this sense, participants created a Facebook group to invite readers to share their comments and ideas to alleviate the issues equally constraining them.

Analysis of the second cycle. This section described the final evaluation of the pedagogical intervention, including data gathered from the participants to assess the pedagogical intervention in connection to students' LLE. This evaluation stage served to complete the information needed for the approaching detailed analysis expected to provide an answer for the research question. With the intention of evaluating the pedagogical design, teachers-researchers implemented a post-intervention questionnaire focused on examining the role of critical literacy when it comes to intervening LLE.

Considering that, during the pedagogical intervention students enrolled in a collaborative writing process, in which they joined forces to research, outline and compose some pieces of critique, to reflect and call for transforming social and environmental issues affecting their community. The abovementioned questionnaire inquired on students' insights about such writing process and the critical literacy practice that they experienced during their participation in this study. Results thrown by the analysis of this questionnaire as well as the examination of the institutional journal "JUBASA Revolution" served to assess the writing process that students experienced.

Teachers-researchers applied an alternative assessment approach to assess the writing outcomes displayed in the institutional journal. In this order of things, peer and teacher feedback as well as students' self-defined interaction with the pedagogical design were considered to

follow up the participants' writing process and therefore allow them to reflect upon their learning process and the extent to which they reached the learning objectives. With this in mind, linguistic aspects attained to writing were not considered since the aim of this investigation was to determine the connection between LLE and critical literacy, an intention far from the skill-based model of evaluation.

More precisely, the writing process accompanying this pedagogical intervention consisted of encouraging learners to select a topic-related issue affecting their school or community, to posteriorly follow the workshop's guidelines to collect information from other people to support their reflections. Students worked in groups to outline the ideas that they wanted to address and propose an alternative for alleviating the salient problematics that they encountered. In doing so, both workshops, "Discrimination is real" and "JUBASA moves on" allowed learners to integrate into feedback exercises, especially the second cycle in which students had the opportunity to interchange writings, as an arrangement resulting from the analysis of the initial stage of the intervention. To a significant degree, this writing process characterized by its scaffolding nature, herein, learners reflected, produced, and corrected their work until each group arrived at the final version of their reflections.

In the same order, teachers-researchers designed an initial focus group interview to deepen on students' perceptions and attitudes towards LLE prior to the pedagogical intervention. These data provided this research with significant insights that supported the statement of the problem and led teachers-researchers to establish comparisons between LLE as understood from this group of ninth graders, prior and after the practice of critical literacy. In the same vein, a post-intervention focus group interview was implemented to describe variations in students LLE after they participated in the two workshops and embraced the writing process linked to the

pedagogical intervention. Ultimately, results regarding the evaluation of the information gathered from this particular pedagogical design will be provided in Chapter IV devoted to data analysis.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

Chapter four covers the analysis of the data gathered from this research study and presents the findings subsequent to the exploration of LLE in connection to critical literacy. The data collection instruments used in this research study included an initial focus group interview, a post-intervention questionnaire, students' artifacts, and a post-intervention focus group interview. The data analysis procedure corresponding to this research study follows Creswell (2014) model for data analysis in qualitative research: organizing and preparing data for analysis, coding the data, generating categories, interrelating categories and interpreting the meaning of categories. The categories emerging from this research study enclose participants' perceptions of LLE and critical literacy as an attempt to holistically engage students in language learning; and an approaching critical literacy macro-strategy for the enhancement of language learning engagement. All of the above to derive on the conclusions that explain the connection between LLE and critical literacy.

Data Analysis Procedure

This section aims at explaining the procedures used to analyze and interpret the data collected for this research study. In this sense, most of the data were analyzed implementing the software program ATLAS.ti, which serves as a reliable tool for categorizing and examining data. Similarly, one of the questions of the post-intervention questionnaire were analyzed using Umaña's (2002) hierarchical tris method to reduce data and establish salient terms that describe students' participation in this study. Besides, "JUBASA Revolution" the institutional journal emerging from this pedagogical intervention, was manually analyzed to refer to the macro-strategy used on the purpose of enhancing students' LLE. Data resulting from this examination

served to illuminate and contrast the information gathered on the purpose of exploring LLE as intervened by the pedagogical intervention.

The analysis detailed in this section was carried out through a series of steps and procedures following Creswel's (2014) model for the analysis of qualitative research studies. This interactive model leads to analyze information through a bottom-up process to move from the simple to the complex steps. These steps seek to enhance the identification of codes, derive codes into categories, and target the research results.

The analysis and interpretation procedure started with the organization and preparation of the data collected. In doing so, teacher-researchers transcribed the records of the initial and final focus group interviews, as well as the physical versions of the post-intervention questionnaires. In addition, terms emerging from the first question of the post-intervention questionnaire were classified according to the frequency-relevance relationship encountered among students' responses. Meanwhile, the institutional journal "JUBASA Revolution" that includes the final versions of students' reflections was analyzed on the basis of theory and previous findings to picture students' LLE as intervened by the critical literacy practice.

The second step consisted of coding the data. Herein, the software program ATLAS.ti was used to generate preliminary codes. The resulting list of codes was divided into columns labeled with the names of "major", "unique," and "leftover" topics. The process of segmenting the information led to the proposition of first-order conclusions; these were listed according to their similarities and discrepancies and grouped into subcategories.

The third step entailed grouping the above-mentioned subcategories into the research categories. In doing so, teacher-researchers considered affinity among results to generate the second-order conclusions. The last step involved interrelating and interpreting the meaning of categories. To do so, second order conclusions were discussed to advocate for the final findings

and conclusions of this study, results were analyzed under the light of current theory on the subject. Furthermore, excerpts of students' ideas are included to support findings. Such comments have been originally presented in Spanish. However, teacher-researchers' translations into the English language accompany each example. It is also worth mentioning that comments did not suffer significant modification, excepting those cases in which there was a need to clarify meaning.

The following graphic (table 1) illustrates the question and objectives stated for this study. The diagram connects each objective with one of the categories or second order conclusions emerging from the data analysis. Besides, the schema relates the second order conclusions to different subcategories that explain the findings of this investigation. These results describe how ninth graders at Juan Bautista la Salle high school perceive LLE. Initially, the diagram accounts for a preview of students' perceptions and attitudes towards LLE before the pedagogical intervention. Then, this illustration describes students' participation in the critical literacy pedagogical design as the co-constructed experience of language learning. In the same vein, this first category concludes that LLE is the integrated component of the classroom experience.

The diagram presents critical literacy as an attempt to holistically engage students in language learning to explain how critical literacy intervenes LLE for this group of ninth graders. The first subcategory of this section evokes students' self-defined interaction with the critical literacy practice. The second subcategory alludes some challenges that students' report in regards to the practice of this critical approach. This category concludes that the practice of critical literacy took learners from the mere exploration of their context to the empowerment of reflective writing processes.

The last category described in this diagram aims at appraising the use of a macro-strategy to enhance students' LLE through the critical literacy practice. This evaluation suggests that the

approaching macro-strategy led students to make meaning of learning while acting beyond the symbolic level. By this we mean, raising awareness among school and community members and proposing actions for transformation. Similarly, the assessment of the critical literacy macro-strategy revealed that journal writing is an opportunity for critical engagement. These findings led teachers-researchers to propose a model for the enhancement of LLE in Juan Bautista la Salle high school.

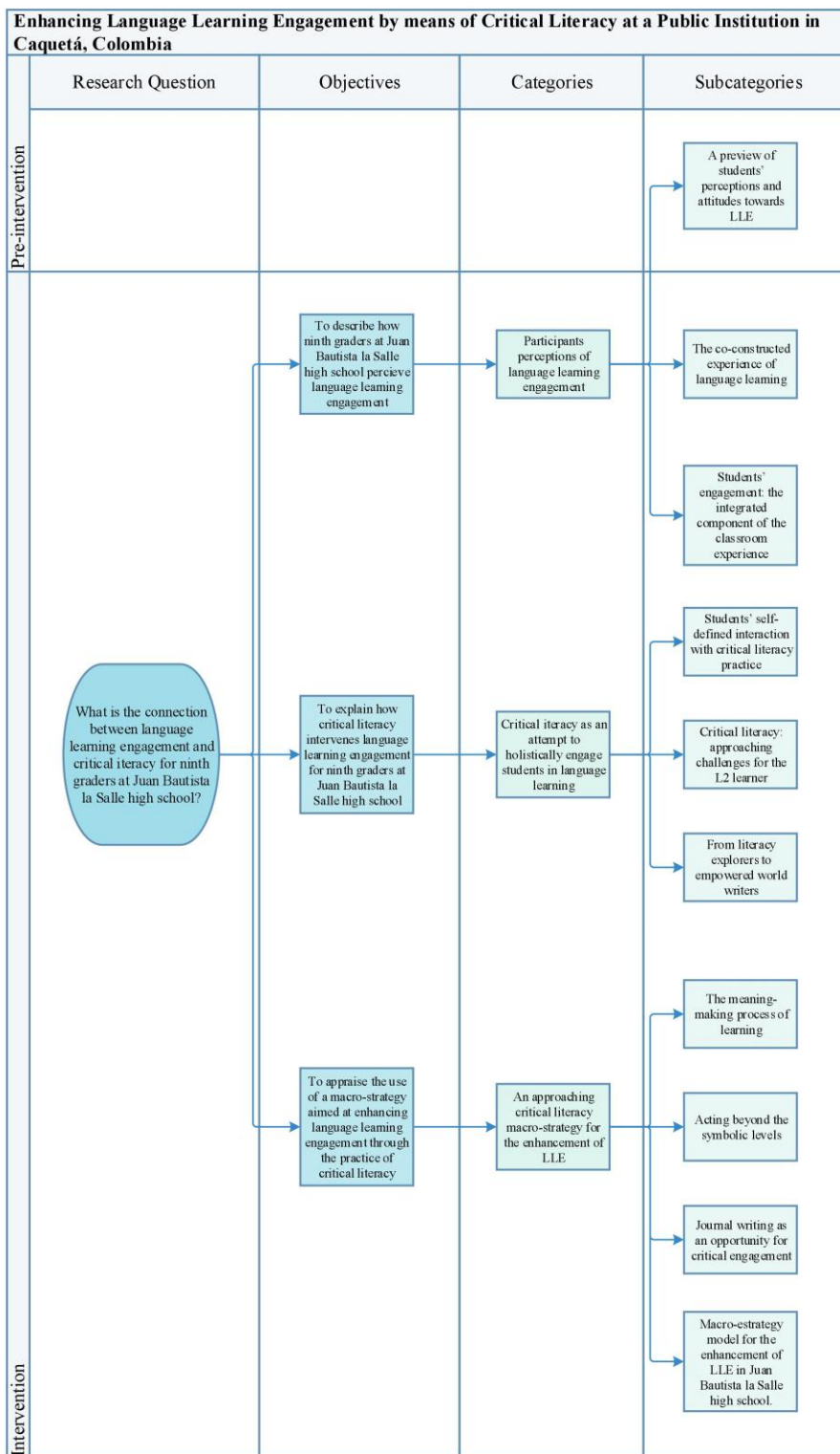


Table 1. Enhancing language learning engagement at a public institution in Caquetá, Colombia.

Participants' Perceptions of Language Learning Engagement

This category refers to students' perceptions and attitudes towards LLE previous to their participation in this pedagogical design. The data reported in this section corresponds to the application of an initial focus group interview. This category also illustrates students' concept of the LLE experience arising from the application of a post-intervention focus group interview. This interview was done with the purpose of relating possible variations (if any) on the way in which participants perceived LLE after the critical literacy pedagogical design took place. This segment aims at approaching the specific objective of identifying and describing how participants perceive LLE within their school context. Findings portrayed in this section describe a preview of students' perceptions and attitudes towards LLE. Similarly, results suggest that students perceive this concept as the co-constructed experience of language learning and the integrated component of the classroom experience.

A preview of students' perceptions and attitudes towards LLE. This subcategory accounts for the way students perceived cognitive processes, feelings about the language, and their recognition as social beings. These ideas correspond to the concepts of cognitive, emotional, and social engagement; results portrayed in this section come from the application of an initial focus group interview aimed at describing students' perceptions and attitudes towards LLE before their participation in the pedagogical intervention.

It is worth mentioning that the coding of these data was guided by the principles of a deductive approach to inspecting the viability of concepts in regards to students' responses. Initially, cognitive engagement derives from students' insights into the language learning process; it entails students' recognition of learning. In this regard, Fredricks et al. (2004) affirm "Cognitive engagement draws on the idea of investment; it incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills"

(p.60). This section is devoted to describe the preview of students' perceptions and attitudes towards LLE as a manner to inspect their level of engagement before any pedagogical intervention to take place.

The following paragraphs describe findings that evoke students' eagerness to focus on learning and the relationship between cognitive engagement and academic achievement to provide a better description of the cognitive component as perceived for these students. In this sense, students' eagerness to focus on learning has to do with the ownership participants report about learning and how that sense of commitment affects their language learning process. It entails the knowledge-related actions that students are willing to adopt to approach learning. Students' focus on learning goes hand in hand with the importance they give to the language. In this sense, for participants to appreciate the language, it is crucial to understand what the language is for. To exemplify this idea, one of the participants observes:

A mi antes como que no me gustaba, aprenderme esas palabras ¿para qué? Yo voy a vivir acá ¿sí? Pero pues mi mamá decía que era importante para los negocios y para viajar, entonces ella me ha apoyado para aprender. [Initial focus group interview, August 2018]

[I did not like English, learning those words, what for? If I will live here, right? But my mother said that it was important for business and to travel, then she has supported me to learn.]

This participant demonstrates being reluctant to learn something considered unnecessary. This problem has to do with the reasons that students encounter to learn the language; as Al Rifai (2010) states “language acquisition theory ensures the crucial importance of a further affective variable, motivation, which is actually a cluster of factors that energize behavior and give it direction. [...] Motivation involves the learners' reasons for attempting to acquire the second language” (p. 5216). For students to invest in their construction of knowledge, they need to be

clear about whys and wherefores of learning. In that order, students decide whether to take initiatives to focus on learning or not; and what sort of strategies serve their purposes the most.

As a result, critical literacy may serve as an alternative approach to add significance to students' learning motives. The abovementioned excerpt from the initial focus group interview demonstrates how learners call for improved practices able to energize their LLE. In this order of things, providing learners with the opportunity to explore their school and community while using the English language to raise awareness, as well as advocate for social transformation supposes an invaluable opportunity to enhance LLE in this particular context.

Findings also suggest that some of the participants assert that English is something that will recover sense in professional or college life. This is the case of a student who expresses:

De igual manera debemos aprender y tener en cuenta cómo expresarse, cómo pronunciar las cosas porque llega un día o un momento de que de pronto uno se encuentre con alguien con el que obviamente tenga que hablar inglés y uno sin saber que responderle o sin saber que nos está diciendo, entonces siempre hay que tener en claro que debemos aprender el idioma inglés. [Initial focus group interview, August 2018]

[In the same way, we must learn and take into account how to express, and pronounce things, because there is a day or a moment in which maybe we meet someone who we have to address in English, and one without knowing what to answer or what is he/she telling you. Then, we must always consider that we might learn the English language.]

Controversially, participants do not perceive the possibility of using the language inside the classroom or with classmates. Or as an opportunity to learn about the world from the perspective of a second language. Instead, English language learning for students reflects the outcome rather than the process. Again, in Svalberg's (2009) words, LLE is a "[...] a cognitive, and/or affective and/or social state and process in which the learner is the agent and language is

object, and may be vehicle (means of communication)” (p.3). These results are overemphasized by the fact that students’ responses on the importance of language learning divide into enrolling in college, traveling, and trading with foreigners. Surprisingly, language applicability within the school context is alienated from learning practices.

The relationship among students’ cognitive engagement and their desire to achieve academic goals is also an issue under consideration. Students seemed to be equally interested in both learning and performing well academically. Nonetheless, when asking students about what concerned them the most learning or the grade, a participant answered:

En la clase de lectura usted dio los tres textos, entonces usted dijo que quien quería la lectura en inglés y yo fui el único que levante la mano, porque yo quería aprender, y algo que no me pareció fue que usted dijo que el que escogiera la de inglés le daban nota y ahí si como unos 5 o 6 levantaron la mano. [Initial focus group interview, August 2018]

[During the reading class, you gave three texts, then you asked who wanted to read in English, and I was the only one who raised the hand because I wanted to learn. Something I did not like, was that you said that for the ones who choose the English text, you were giving a grade, at that moment from 5 to 6 students raised their hands.]

In this case, grades for these students enhance their willingness to appropriate learning. As Finlay (2006) suggests; “However, evidence of a relationship between cognitive engagement and achievement is much stronger, [...] [it] does not eliminate the possibility of a bi-directional influence between outcomes and engagement: it is most likely that they influence each other” (p.4). It implies for those students who don’t seem cognitively engaged the possibility of achieving outstanding outcomes may eventually enhance their engagement. Similarly, those who appear engaged have broader opportunities to attain better academic results; once the grade is inherent in their learning process.

On the other side, emotional engagement explains the affective-related aspects intervening students' learning processes. For Fredricks et al. (2004), emotional engagement is the composition of learners' values, feelings, and emotions, both positive and negative, towards the class, the teacher or the school itself; it defines students' disposition to embrace tasks. In this case, students' feelings about the lessons relate to their preferred topics and activities; several students correlate the implementation of games and group work, and the variety of class topics; to positive feelings and attitudes such as interest, willingness to participate, confidence and ease.

One of the participants reports:

Yo prefiero una clase dinámica, chévere, donde usted de verdad se motive a poner atención y de verdad aprenda algo nuevo, a una clase donde le pongan un texto, donde le pongan unos espacios donde usted tenga que estar ahí sentado, mirando a la profesora, una clase insípida que no lo motiva a uno. [Initial focus group interview, August 2018]

[I prefer a fresh and dynamic class, where you feel motivated to pay attention, and where you learn something new. Instead of a class where you receive a text, to fill in the blanks, where you have to sit, looking at the teacher, I mean an insipid class which does not motivate you.]

Students link the positive and negative feelings emerging from the class dynamics to the increase or reduction on the desire of using the language; the attaining of better academic outcomes, and the cognitive engagement. Once more in Fredricks' et al. (2004) words, when they attempted to characterize the multidimensional nature of the concept of engagement; "For instance, it is likely that emotional engagement leads to increases in behavioral and cognitive engagement, both of which mediate subsequent achievement" (p.83). For these students, feelings and emotions emerging from the class dynamics mediate their attitudes towards language learning and language use.

Another group of students also referred to the counterpart of emotional engagement. Therefore, regular classes, as one of the participants mentioned referring to a teacher-centered class focused on basic grammar where activities consist of filling in the blanks do not enact them to participate and commit to learning. Concerning the negative feelings coming from this sort of classes, students highlight fear to make mistakes or to fail the course, discomfort, and little desire to engage in classroom practices. Meanwhile, a student reported that certain activities for instance, memorization and spelling in front of the class, were highly demanding for her. This caused that the student felt less and unable to achieve a learning outcome.

Me sentía un poco bruta en esas actividades en las que teníamos que aprendernos un texto en inglés de una o dos páginas y debíamos leerlo delante de todos mis compañeros, con el temor de que me iba a equivocar, o a pronunciar mal o deletrear. Yo pensaba que iba a perder la materia de inglés por una palabra entonces no me sentía cómoda por eso. Nunca llegue a mostrar interés por el inglés donde estaba, [...] en una ocasión llore, porque me sentía con mucho temor de que no pudiera leerlo. [Initial focus group interview, August 2018]

[I felt stupid in those activities in which we had to memorize a one- or two-pages English text, and we must read it in front of my classmates. I was afraid of making mistakes, mispronouncing, or misspelling. I thought I was about to fail the course because of a word, and I felt uncomfortable. I never showed any interest in English, in that place. [...] Once, I cried because I felt terrified of being unable to read it.]

To explain this, Comber^a and Kamler^b (2004) maintain that “The intention of the research, however, is not simply to celebrate what children can do and ignore what they cannot. Rather, our outgoing aim is to produce demonstrable learning outcomes that can be sustained into new curriculum challenges” (p.307). This suggests that the main focus of learning cannot be forcing students to achieve goals at the expenses of their affective sphere. Alternatively, demonstrable

learning outcomes mentioned by the author can be interpreted as reasoning objectives that allow students to experience language through learning from a more approachable perspective.

In the same line of thought, participants conceptualize English as a possibility to achieve professional goals, get better jobs, and communicate with other people. Nonetheless, these participants do not maintain that these reasons are enough for them to engage with language learning. For instance, one of the participants argues:

Si claro, nos sirve de mucho, pero en muchas ocasiones a no todos nos va bien en el inglés porque no es un idioma que nos motive siempre, pero de igual manera debemos aprender. [Initial focus group interview, August 2018]

[Yes, of course, it serves a lot, but not in all the occasions we do well in English because it is not a language that always motivates us, anyways we must learn.]

These understandings as explained by students relate to the feelings of lack of interest, little commitment, and fear to practice the language, resulting in a reduced emotional engagement; even in the cases in which students describe the English language learning a “must.” Because of that, Lally (2002) claims, “Most language acquisition research concentrates solely on student performance. However, consideration of students’ beliefs and perceptions can help teachers create language-learning environments that are more student-focused and engaging to the learner” (p.927). As a result, considering learners’ perception about their learning and the language is a way to close students to an alternative experience of engagement.

The case of social engagement, as a construct, refers to students’ search for opportunities to work collaboratively to build up the language and practice inside and outside the school. It is the recognition of learner as social beings, who embrace not only the mother tongue but also a different language to explore the world. According to Fredricks’ et al. (2004), “Social Engagement was essentially linked to interaction and to learners’ initiation and maintenance (or

not) of it” (p.12). Indeed, excerpts of students’ responses propose that even though they find occasions to initiate interactions, they do not concentrate on maintaining these contacts, principally because of the limitations of the language command. Again, for these students to gain enough confidence and expand the language domain, social engagement cannot represent only the ultimate goal. On the contrary, it might be seen as a fundamental articulator of the process of learning a language. To do so, learners need to engage in negotiating interactions within the classroom, discussing the language and adopting stances, so that these interactions become a means for learning to take place.

The analysis of the initial focus group interview has provided information to describe how these students perceive LLE, from the perspective of the cognitive, emotional, and social components. The results thrown by this analysis show that there is not a scenario where one of these fundamental tenets separates from the others. Under these circumstances, students’ understandings of the language-related factors, their social recognition, and the emotions emerging from the learning experience, influence the attitudes that they adopt in regards to learning processes.

The co-constructed experience of language learning. This section deals with students’ perceptions of the concept of LLE as intervened by critical literacy practice. Then, responses to the post-intervention questionnaire account for the variations of students’ LLE after their participation in this research study. Formerly, students attribute a strengthened focus on learning and language related attitudes to the dialogical nature of this pedagogical intervention. As Shin and Crookes (2005) assert “During the dialogical engagement between teacher and students and students themselves, the life experiences of students are emphasized, through which the students begin to recognize each other as sources of knowledge” (p.114). Once participants embarked on the inquiry, analysis, and reflection of their local inconveniences, they began to construct a safe

space for the interaction and the awareness about the language and the world. This example illustrates how students describe this dialogical relationship:

Pues lo que más me gustó fue que convivimos con nuestros compañeros, tuvimos la opción de escucharnos los unos a los otros, me gustó mucho la parte dinámica porque hace mucho que no teníamos como esa comunicación. Ósea, en un juego todos querían participar, eso era algo que pues casi nunca se había visto en este grado y pues me gusto también porque tuve la opción de mejorar más mi proceso en inglés, entonces a mí la verdad me parece un proyecto muy divertido y pues ojalá se dé la oportunidad de mostrarlo a otras personas. [Post-intervention focus group interview, February 2019]

[Well, what I liked most was that we shared with our classmates, we had the chance to listen to each other, I liked the dynamic part very much because it has been a long time since we had that communication. I mean, in a game everyone wanted to participate, that was something that had almost never been seen in this grade and I liked it because I had the option to improve my English process, so I think this is an enjoyable project and I hope to have the opportunity to show it to other people.]

Comments such as this demonstrate students' strong emphasis on the social component of engagement. According to Luke (2012) through dialogical exchange teachers and learners interrogate social relationships. Herein, learners embrace knowledge construction while teachers learn from the experience of participating in such contexts. In contrast to the results reported in the previous section, students' encounter with the critical literacy practice mediated their willingness and effort to initiate and maintain peer interaction.

In the same vein, the collaborative work taking place along the class workshops and the journal design accounts for the existence of a social force moving students' impetus to co-construct learning. Then, making meaning of the situations that learners examined through the

critical processes of reading and writing about their school and community gave place to a strengthened level of social engagement. Regarding this, one student comments:

Pues como el proyecto era en un grupito, entre todos nos pusimos a buscar en el diccionario y también con su apoyo y el apoyo de la otra docente que nos estaba colaborando a la hora de elaborar los textos. Entonces, si uno tenía una duda o alguna complicación no era sino acercarse a usted. La creación del proyecto fue más que nada el trabajo en el equipo, porque cuando uno no se relaciona con las demás personas, cuando uno no tiene como esa capacidad de expresar lo que siente pues no va a ser posible que usted vaya y pregunte algo por que le da pena o algo similar. [Post-intervention focus group interview, February 2019]

[Well, as we carried out the project in groups, we used the dictionary and also with your help and the other teacher who was supporting us to construct the texts. Then, if one had a doubt or any complication, it was a matter of asking for your help. The creation of the project was principally teamwork because when one cannot relate with other people when there is not any chance to express feelings, it is not possible to ask anything because you feel ashamed or something like that.]

This participant explains how collaborative work among teachers and learners facilitated the language learning process. More precisely, the writing tasks emerging from the practice of critical literacy. In line with this point of view, Imai (2010) affirms, “Collaborative learning involves social interaction where learners work together to achieve task goals. Emotions associated with such distributed cognition are expected to emerge in the goal achievement process” (p.283). This idea expresses the multidimensional nature of learning engagement; in this case, the social component entails the reciprocal relationship between mediating and being mediated by both emotional and cognitive engagement. In this regard, critical literacy is the learning approach able to explain such relationship as it demonstrates important contributions to the enhancement of the components of engagement, in this particular case, social engagement.

In a friendly tone, students also highlight the significance of transcending from the traditional class dynamics to an enriched learning experience in which common social issues that concern the group and are dealt with, expressed and discussed with the critical literacy strategy proposed in the workshops. Dotterer and Lowe (2011) comment on this issue:

When students feel they are in an environment that is enriching and supportive, they may be more likely to engage mentally and behaviorally in the learning environment. Further, this type of environment also might be more enjoyable, which may contribute to adolescents' desire to pay attention and engage in learning. (p.1657)

According to the author, enriched learning contexts are valuable scenarios for students to actively engage from the cognitive, social, and emotional point of view. Considering this, one of the questions of the post-intervention focus group interview inquired on the aspects that students like the most from their participation in this project. This excerpt emphasizes a student's understanding of the learning context associated with this pedagogical intervention.

A mí del proyecto me gustaron tres cosas: el tema, la forma en la cual lo realizamos y el objetivo detrás del proyecto. Lo primero son los temas porque son temas muy interesantes y son temas que vivimos a diario en nuestra sociedad y la forma de realizarlo porque era más dinámico éramos en grupo y nos podíamos escuchar uno a otros y el objetivo era porque a pesar de que era algo dinámico, hacíamos algo divertido, aprendíamos y ese es el objetivo principal de todo, si el aprendizaje. [Post-intervention focus group interview, February 2019]

[From the project, I liked three things: the topic, how we carried it out and the objective behind the project. First, the topics because these are interesting and we daily live these topics in our society. How we carried out the project because it was more dynamic, we worked in groups, and we could listen to each other. The objective because even though it was dynamic, we had fun, we learned, and learning is the principal objective of everything.]

In this particular case, the enriched learning context of critical literacy enhanced cognitive and social patterns of engagement. In doing so, positive feelings emerged from students' involvement in the learning context, and these feelings enacted students' willingness to invest in their learning. Philp and Duchesne (2016) believe that the high interest in class topics activates students' cognitive engagement. Meanwhile, Lambert, Philp, and Nakamura (2017) assert that students' eagerness to listen to their peers has to do with the social component of engagement. Similarly, Skinner et al. (2009) maintain that positive feelings such as enjoyment relate to emotional engagement. Then, as this student describes, the manifestations of engagement converge in the learning process. Svalberg (2009) explains that the integration of the cognitive, affective, or emotional and social components of engagement enacts language learning.

Students' engagement: the integrated component of the classroom experience. To overlap with the previous section, this subcategory presents findings illustrating how the components of engagement interplay within this research study. Again, Svalberg' (2009) ideas of engagement define language as the object and vehicle of communication. In this sense, language-related attitudes refer to the language as the object while communicating, reflecting, and making meaning of messages to language as the vehicle. To exemplify this idea, one student expresses the object-vehicle relationship of language.

Me parece que los temas son muy importantes porque son problemáticas que suceden hoy en día que deben ser tratadas y que nosotros debemos aprender de ellas y de paso al escribir nosotros textos en inglés aprendemos a tratar mejor esos temas y a aprender inglés, entonces dos en uno. [

Post-intervention focus group interview, February 2019]

[I think that the topics are essential because these are problematics occurring today, these problematics must be faced and we have to learn from them. At the same time, while we write

texts in English, we learn to deal with those topics better, and we also learn English. Then, two-in-one.]

In this case, language as the vehicle is driven by the student's idea of using the language to fight existent problematics. Similarly, language as the object reflects the learner attitude towards the writing task and language learning. So far, this analysis has shown how the state/process of engagement involves the cognitive, social, and emotional components. These findings will be expanded in a further section aimed at discussing how critical literacy intervenes LLE.

Previous analysis of the relationship between LLE and academic achievement threw that before this pedagogical intervention, students' primary motive to engage in classroom tasks were grades and scores. However, after students' participation in this study, changes regarding this perception are evident. The concurrence of students' responses shows that even though they still care about obtaining positive achievement outcomes, there is a stronger focus on learning; this way, students acknowledge the reciprocal effect of learning on their academic scores. This excerpt exemplifies this idea:

Pues por mi parte tuve dos motivaciones y una fue académica que fue sacar una buena nota, que pues de eso dependía el área del cuarto periodo y la otra fue aprender a elaborar los textos correctamente para poder entenderlos y tener la capacidad de elaborar un texto sin tanta ayuda de la docente ¿sí? Ósea como lo que me quedo a mí, lo que aprendí del proyecto poder utilizarlo en diferentes formas. [Post-intervention focus group interview, February 2019]

[Well, I had two motivations; the academic was to get a good grade because it defined the results of the fourth term. The other one was learning to write the texts correctly, to understand and develop a text without so much help from the teacher, I mean, that is what I got from the project, I can use what I learned in different ways].

This comment explains how this student understands the grade as a result of his learning. In this case, obtaining a good score is not his principal concern, but he believes that a side-factor of learning will be succeeding in academic outcomes. Considering this, Guthrie, Wigfield, and You (2012) point out that “There now is clear evidence that students’ motivation and engagement mediate the effects of classroom practices on student achievement outcomes. That is, the impact of classroom practices on student outcomes depends upon the level of student engagement in classroom activities” (p.630). The extent to which this classroom experience engaged participants in language learning influenced their academic achievement. Thus, students cognitive, social, and emotional engagement played an essential role in their learning agency and thereby their achievement outcomes.

The results of this analysis suggest that despite the effects that participants report on their learning and academic achievement; they have also faced difficulties that somehow interrogate students’ ability to cope with learning challenges. In this respect, engagement might contribute to expanding students’ persistence and desire to invest in learning. Skinner et al. (2009) maintain, “[Engagement] positive pole encompasses enthusiastic willing effortful exertion, interest, concentrated attention, and persistence in the face of difficulties and challenge, sometimes referred to as “hands-on” and “heads-on” learning” (p. 227). Herein, engaged students demonstrate a willingness to adopt positive attitudes towards learning challenges and difficulties. This is the case of a student who observes:

Pues la verdad yo al principio si me sentía demasiado nerviosa, como asustada pues porque yo casi al inglés no, nada , nada que ver, pero ya luego con la ayuda de la profesora, me fui soltando fui aprendiendo y pues ya me sentí un poquito más tranquila y pues, ósea todos esos nervios fueron pasando debido al estudio, al empeño que le iba poniendo y pues antes no me leía ni un

parrafito ahí en inglés y a mí me parece que ahora ya interpreto más la lectura en inglés y pues ya se mas vocabulario y hablar mejor. [Post-intervention focus group interview, February 2019]
 [The truth is that at the beginning I felt really nervous, I was scared because I had almost nothing to do with the English language, but then with the help of the teacher, I started to improve and to learn. Then, I felt a little calmer, and all those nerves ceased due to the study and the effort that I was doing. Before I did not read a paragraph in English and I think that now I read more in English, I know more vocabulary and I speak better].

This student reveals that the practice of critical literacy allowed her to ask for the teacher support to overcome language learning difficulties, in this case, nerves to practice the language. In this sense, the learner engaged in language learning while making a conscious effort to invest and improve her English level. Skinner and Pitzer (2012) refer to students' capability to cope with learning challenges as everyday resilience. They explain that when students master this kind of strategies, they are more likely to enlarge motivation and skills across the high school experience. The authors also highlight that students' engagement in peer and teacher interaction, as well as the use of autonomous resources, lead to reengagement with the learning process.

In sum, the results of this analysis present significant variations on students' perceptions about LLE before and after their participation in this pedagogical intervention. Whereas in the preview of students' perceptions and attitudes towards LLE, there was a strong focus on the negative pole of engagement. The subcategories subsequent to the implementation of critical literacy demonstrate a strengthened interplay between cognitive, social, and emotional engagement. In reality, one of the major deviations of engagement in the initial stage relies on the lack of evidence to attribute a communicative purpose to language learning. A result of the connection between critical literacy and LLE is the fact that students shifted their unidimensional view of language; to the understanding of both object and means of communication.

Another important variation has to do with the association between LLE and academic achievement. Initially, achievement outcomes were the students' principal motives to accomplish class activities. Meanwhile, as students engaged in language learning they benefited from a positive effect on academic achievement. Similarly, concerning the social component of engagement, findings suggest that students embarked in collaborative work leading to an expanded opportunity to maintain interactions and support learning in their peers and teachers.

Whereas original ideas of students' emotions refer to negative feelings and attitudes such as boredom, lack of interest and even fear; enjoyment and interest describe the positive emotions arising from students' participation in this pedagogical design. These feelings corroborate that for these ninth graders, the practice of critical literacy led to an enriched learning experience.

Critical literacy as an attempt to holistically engage students in language learning

This research category deals with the findings arising from the application of a post-intervention questionnaire to inquire on students' insights regarding critical literacy practice. The subcategories emerging from this analysis include students' self-defined interaction with the critical literacy practice; critical literacy: approaching challenges for the L2 learner; and from literacy explorers to empowered world writers. All of the above to explain how the approach of critical literacy intervened LLE within this research study.

Students' self-defined interaction with critical literacy practice. This subcategory describes an important group of terms that students allude as indicators of their interaction with the critical literacy practice. These terms emerged from the initial question of the data gathering instrument corresponding to this category. Herein, teacher-researchers followed Umaña's (2002) framework to reduce and analyze data. Then, 32 common terms from students' responses were selected and bounced back to the participants who reduced data to the 16 most relevant terms,

posteriorly to eight, then to four, then to two and finally to one relevant term. According to the author, this technique allows researchers to consider the frequency-relevance correlation of terms to identify core representations corresponding to the participants' insights.

To report findings concerning the frequency-relevance relationship among data, teacher-researchers implemented Reyes' (2018) categorization model. Words defining students' interaction with the critical literacy practice were categorized according to the significance that students ascribed them in each one of the frequencies (frequency 16, 8, 4, 2, 1). Based on the author's ideas, teacher-researchers implemented a frequency table (see appendix G) to approximate students' self-defined interaction. Such illustration allowed this research to represent frequency one in the subsequent word cloud (diagram 1) to demonstrate students' frequent-relevant insights regarding their participation in this study.

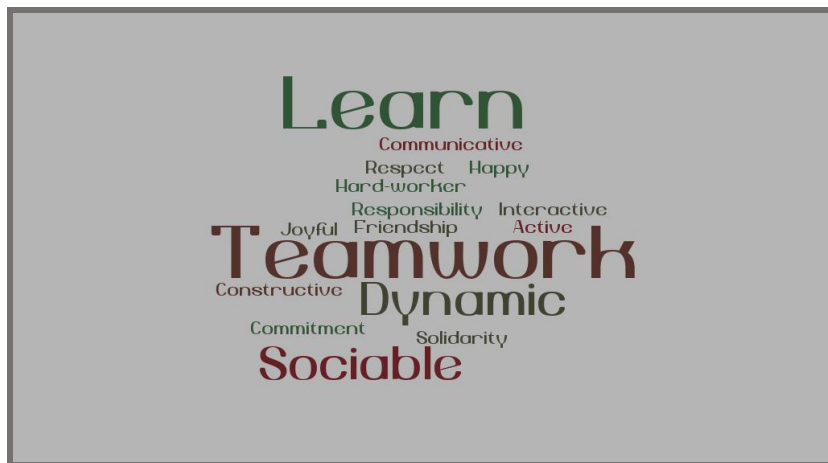


Diagram 1. Students' self-defined interaction with critical literacy practice.

The ideas portrayed in this analysis evidence that participants principally related the critical literacy practice to the notions of teamwork, learning, dynamics, and sociability. Considering that, these notions connect to the components of LLE. The terms teamwork and sociable can be analyzed together due to similarities among concepts. Teamwork evokes students' LLE from the social point of view. Svalberg (2018) affirms "Engagement at group

level may generate affordances from which private speech and other types of individual engagement emanate. Forms of EWL other than easily observable interaction may thus contribute to restructuring of knowledge” (p.25). The fact that participants prevailed teamwork over other terms leads this study to consider that critical literacy played a crucial role on behalf of social engagement and the possible correlations it may have with the other constructs.

The term sociable also connects to the construct of social engagement. Based on Philp and Duchesne’s (2016) ideas “learners are likely to be more effective in language learning when they are socially engaged: that is, when they listen to one another, draw from one another’s expertise and ideas, and provide feedback to one another” (p.10). This analysis suggests an influence of social engagement on students’ language learning. However, this is an issue that needs to be deeply analyzed in further sections.

In this respect, students positioned learning as a relevant indicator of their participation in this research study. Christenson, Reschly, and Wylie (2012) comment on the relationship among engagement and learning “Student engagement refers to the student’s active participation in academic and co-curricular or school-related activities, and commitment to educational goals and learning. Engaged students find learning meaningful, and are invested in their learning and future” (p.817). Participants made meaning of the connection between critical literacy and learning, once they recognized the latter as a key factor describing their interaction with the pedagogical design.

From the participants’ perspective, dynamics also relates to the practice of this critical pedagogy. In such way, Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, and Kindermann. (2008) state that “Dynamics refers to the internal and external causal feedback loops that serve to promote or undermine the quality of children’s engagement in school over time” (p.765). Herein, dynamics may serve both purposes enabling or challenging engagement, then, this term becomes overriding

to the study of students' language-related attitudes. The terms addressed in this subcategory are the initial glance to the complete spectrum of the critical literacy intervention. Some other terms such as communicative, commitment, friendship among others, also contributed to the understanding of how critical literacy intervenes students' engagement. This meaningful set of terms brings to life the multidimensional nature of the concept of engagement including the social, emotional and cognitive components.

Critical literacy: approaching challenges for the L2 learner. The discoveries of this category have to do with some language-related difficulties emerging from the implementation of critical literacy in this particular context. Thus, reading and writing are imperative to the construction of critical literacy; this fact suggests that the challenges that students encounter when embracing these processes may influence language learning. This is the case of a participant who declares:

“La verdad casi no he aprendido a leer en ingles ya que a veces se me dificulta mucho porque no conozco algunas cosas.” [Questionnaire on critical literacy, October 2018]

[The truth is that I have not learned to read in English at all since it is sometimes harsh to me and I do not know some things].

Following Huh's (2006) and Park's (2011) ideas, the degree to which texts require an effort from students to truly engage on the reading task is an issue worthy of attention. In reality, learner's language ability and experiential background are crucial aspects to consider when attempting to explore critical literacy in the classroom.

Obstacles that the L2 learner faces to appropriate critical literacy, such as limited command of the language, may lead to learning disengagement. This term has been borrowed from Skinner et al. (2009) when they assert:

Conceptually, the opposite of engagement is disengagement, which implies the absence of engagement, including the absence of effort or persistence. Hence, disengagement is typically operationalized as passivity, lack of initiation, and giving up, sometimes accompanied by the emotions of dejection, discouragement, or apathy (p.226)

Considering the above, it is pertinent to examine how the characteristics inherent to disengagement account for disengaged students or low levels of engagement. More precisely in Reschly and Christenson's (2012) words "The parallel for engagement may be that having low engagement is different from being disengaged/disaffected" (p.13). In this sense, further examination of this concept will be required to determine students' disengagement levels. However, the present study coincides with these authors' ideas when they state that researchers decide whether to focus on a single component, engagement or disengagement, or on the contrary measure both concepts. This research study aims at determining the connection between the concept of engagement and the approach of critical literacy.

From literacy explorers to empowered world writers. These findings evoke the multiple ways in which participants conceive critical literacy to intervene in their LLE. Initially, several students encounter that their participation in the two workshops enhanced awareness of local realities in their immediate contexts. Jordão and Fogaca (2012) affirm on this issue "Perceiving language use as a social practice which is also cultural, contextualized and heterogeneous can lead to the awareness of our active role in society and to a legitimate experience of citizenship" (p.76). Critical literacy led students to adopt an active role in their community when conceiving ideas to prevent and act towards their most common local issues. The following comment illustrates this idea:

Es importante porque son temas que están siendo realidad en la vida cotidiana y esto de mirar y enfatizar en estos temas es muy bueno porque así podemos prevenir y saber cómo actuar sobre la discriminación y el medio ambiente. [Questionnaire on critical literacy, October 2018]

[It is important because these topics are a reality in our daily life, observing and emphasizing on these topics is great, this way we can prevent and be prepared to act when dealing with discrimination and environmental issues].

In this case, deepening on the problematics directly affecting students' and their communities added significance to the educative process as it allowed students to mirror themselves through the texts. Then, the exploration of a revolutionary form of literacy, reading, gave birth to an empowering way of fighting against local constraints, writing.

Students also emphasized how critical literacy stands for the practice of writing as an act of freedom. The institutional journal "JUBASA Revolution" was the means for students to raise their voices and become critical agents of change. Concerning this, Huang (2012) reports:

when an explicit connection is made between writing and social issues, students were able to construct themselves as writers who use English literacy to assert their membership and participation in the global village and thus cross the boundaries of the classroom into the broader world. (p. 291)

To exemplify this idea, one of the participants reveals the feelings that emerged from her participation in the process of writing the journal. This student compares her previous language learning episodes to the dynamic experience of working in groups to state an opinion. Under such circumstances the student reported:

Me sentí entusiasmada porque fuimos el único grupo que eligieron para el proyecto y además porque eran ejercicios muy dinámicos, no eran como los de siempre donde nos pasaban fotocopias y lean y traduzcan, sino que en el periódico que nosotros creamos teníamos la opción

de dar nuestra propia opinión y era más dinámico y en grupo. [Questionnaire on critical literacy, October 2018]

[I felt enthusiastic because we were the only group that the teachers selected for the project. Besides the exercises were dynamic, they were not the same activities in which we received a photocopy, and we had to translate. On the contrary, in the journal that we wrote, we had the option of giving our opinion, it was more dynamic, and we work in groups].

To corroborate the ideas described in the previous testimony, another student describes his participation in the workshops and the institutional journal “JUBASA Revolution.” Then, when asking students about how the co-researching process in which they were immersed allowed them to become a world reader and writer, this student explained:

Cuando realizamos el proyecto con las tabletas y leímos toda la información, nos abrió la mente para inspirarnos y realizar informes acerca del tema, así hicimos que todo el colegio se enterara del proyecto y dejaran de dañar el medio ambiente. [Questionnaire on critical literacy, October 2018]

[When we carried out the project with the tablets, and we read all the information, we got inspired to write about the topic, this way we made possible that the whole school knew the project and stopped harming the environment].

The testimonies provided by the students illustrate how critical literacy intervened LLE during their participation in both workshops. These findings suggest that the critical literacy pedagogical designed advocated for each one of the components of LLE. In this regard, students reflected their social engagement as they highlighted group work and collaboration as mediators of the learning process. They also explained how the positive feelings arising from renewed forms of embracing reading and writing processes accounted for both cognitive and emotional engagement.

Furthermore, critical literacy draws students' attention to their role as writers who appropriate the word to contribute to the world; (Freire and Macedo, 1987). Regarding this, one of the participants explained:

Me ha permitido convertirme en una escritora porque hemos mirado problemáticas que tenemos en nuestro entorno tanto escolar como familiar o en el lugar donde vivimos y hemos propuesto proyectos para una solución. [Questionnaire on critical literacy, October 2018]

[It has allowed me to become a writer because we have observed the problematics that we have in both our school and family contexts or in the place we live, and we have proposed projects for a solution.]

The significance of critical literacy embeds in the power of the word “writer.” The latter evokes this student' self-recognition as an active contributor to the awareness and look for solutions to salient problematics encountered in her community.

In this respect, factors mediating students' writing processes and their engagement with language learning are worthy of attention. Once again, Huang (2012) affirms “Their examples demonstrate how the students not only engaged in knowledge construction by learning more about the topics but also knowledge transformation in amending their original understanding and questioning societal assumptions of the issues” (p.293). The social nature of the reading and writing tasks enables students' cognitive engagement. This is the case of a student who explained:

Las actividades de la clase de inglés son cada vez un poco más avanzadas y eso es bueno para mi aprendizaje porque así he ido mejorando mas mi nivel de inglés. Yo creo que escribir acerca de temas que conozco, digamos en el caso de la quebrada La Perdiz que es la queda cerca de donde yo vivo, me ayudo a que todo fuera más fácil y a que yo me motivara más. [Questionnaire on critical literacy, October 2018]

[[The activities of the English class each time are more advanced, and it is good for me because that way I have improved my English level. I think that writing about topics that I know, for example, the stream La Perdiz, which is near to where I live, made everything easier and motivated me a little bit more].

The ideas described above play an important role in explaining students' writing endeavor in connection to both processes, knowledge construction, and knowledge transformation.

In the same vein, writing also attaches a social dimension. In this regard, the process of writing critical reflections elicits the social nature of engagement. According to Ahn (2016) "Through meaningful engagement, one displays the knowledge of and awareness of language(s), willingly interacts with language(s) and/or other individuals, participates in social interactions, and further identifies and reflects oneself as a user of multiple languages" (p. 44) Writing in collaboration with other peers, interacting with the second language and making meaning of common concerns respond to the features of socially engaged learners;

For instance, learners participating in this project worked in groups to inquire in their community by interviewing people about common environmental problematics affecting them. In this sense, students chose the situation that called their attention the most and outlined their ideas for the critical reflection. While doing so, participants also proposed alternatives to alleviate such issues. That was the case of a group who proposed a pacific mobilization to create awareness among citizens and ask for governmental solutions. Meanwhile, students accompanied their small researches and critiques with salient pictures that illustrated their environmental concerns.

Concerning the correlation between the cognitive nature of the writing process and its social dimension, these components of learning engagement need to be viewed as mutually reinforcing each other and therefore analyzed together. De Larios and Murphy (2001) explain "the study of cognitive processes in isolation from the contexts in which they occur may tum

these processes into meaningless patterns of behavior since the writing task and the writer's response to it are framed by social relationships” (p. 27). Findings of this study suggest that the writing processes within critical literacy have somehow mediated both the cognitive and the social engagement attitudes of these group of participants.

Similarly, emotions arising from the implementation of critical literacy in the classroom are also imperative to this study. From the participants' viewpoint the critical literacy pedagogy uncovered feelings that support their reflective praxis. Whereas some students relate these feelings to the topics studied in class, some others refer their emotions to past experiences. This is the case of a student who expresses:

Los temas me provocan mucha tristeza pues me duele ver cómo somos también recuerdo cada insulto que decían de pequeña, recuerdo cómo me hacían bullying y me despreciaban de pequeña.

[Questionnaire on critical literacy, October 2018]

[The topics cause me a lot of sadness because it hurts me to see how we are, I also remember every insult people told me when I was as a child, I remember how they bullied me and despised when I was little.]

Comments such as this led this research study to consider the extent to which emotions emerging from the critical literacy practice benefit or hinder students' LLE. Then, this study agrees with Pekrun and Linnenbrink (2012) when they explain that emotions are central to students' engagement. Emotional engagement distinguishes among positive and negative emotions enabling or triggering engagement. Topic emotions emerge from the contents covered in the classroom; these emotions can affect students' interest and motivation and therefore, learning.

Despite the above mentioned, several students found that the practice of critical literacy helped them to improve their language skills. As a result, one of the students reported in the post-intervention questionnaire that:

[El proyecto] *Me ha ayudado a mejorar mi critica cuando leo un documento se me facilita mucho más, en mi opinión ahora también puedo escribir mejor sin tener que usar tanto el traductor.*

[Questionnaire on critical literacy, October 2018]

[The project helped me to improve my reflection processes, now when I read a document, it is easier, in my opinion, I am also able to write better without having to use the translator that much.]

Following Bacon's (2017) ideas, students' engagement with critical literacy practices seems to be more significant in the case of English language learning. According to the author, the fact that multilingual students face academic content in the language they are learning strengthens their linguistic competences and uncovers the power relationships surrounding their educational context. In view of that, the following excerpt indicates the extent to which students consider that the critical literacy design enhanced their linguistic competence.

[El proyecto] *Me ayudo a conocer y aprender más el tema, pero en ingles me ayudo a mejorar mi vocabulario, escucha, lectura y escritura.* [Questionnaire on critical literacy, October 2018]

[The project helped me to know and learn more about the topic, in English it helped me to improve my vocabulary, listening, reading and writing]

This student refers to the affiliation among learning the contents embedded in the critical literacy practice, in this case, social and environmental issues and improving language skills. As stated previously, Skinner and Pitzer (2012) affirm "As a result, engagement is the direct (and only) pathway to cumulative learning, long-term achievement, and eventual academic success" (p.24). These findings suggest that students who engaged in language learning through

pedagogical design improved their linguistic competence. This idea leads to further analysis of the relationship between learning engagement and academic achievement.

All in all, critical literacy meaningfully intervened LLE in this particular context. From the participants' viewpoint, the practice of critical literacy created opportunities for teamwork and social interaction; these are activities that enlighten the social component of engagement. The fact that students conceptualize learning as a primary signifier of the practice of critical literacy alludes its relationship with the construct of cognitive engagement. Similar liaisons between critical literacy and cognitive engagement are students' ideas regarding their improved language skills. In the same context, dynamics illustrate the different class events pivotal of teacher-students interaction and peer interaction, in the form of feedback. Thus, the extent to which classroom dynamics challenges or enables students' LLE is an issue worthy of attention.

Critical literacy also represents significant challenges describing the encounter that the group of L2 learners had with this renovated pedagogical approach. These challenges mostly connect to the language related difficulties uncovered through the processes of reading and writing. The ways in which these challenges affect (or not) students' LLE is an area that requires further corroboration. From another point of view, critical literacy also allowed students to move from the exploration of basic literacy skills to the empowerment of world writing processes. In doing so, students conceived awareness of the local realities affecting them and embraced the journal writing as an act of freedom, which in turns connects to the social and cognitive components of engagement. Students' participation in this project equally accounted for students' emotions emerging from the practice of critical literacy to advocate for the emotional component of engagement.

Approaching Critical Literacy Macro-strategy for the Enhancement of Language Learning Engagement

The last category of this study focuses on the development of a macro-strategy for the enhancement of LLE as informed by the practice of critical literacy. This strategy consists of a scenario where the cognitive processes of reading, reflecting, and writing along with the social and emotional factors of learning converge in the social practice of inquiring on local inconveniences. In doing so, this study explains the side factors emerging from the exploration of the process of writing an institutional journal. Findings reported in this section suggest that the institutional journal supported both LLE and the recognition of salient problematics in a particular community. To complete the picture of this macro-strategy, this study analyzes students' artifacts, draws connections with previous findings and relies on existing theory on the field of LLE, critical literacy and social practices. Under such circumstances, this section attempts to appraise the use of a macro-strategy aimed at enhancing students' LLE through the practice of critical literacy.

The meaning-making process of learning. Previous findings regarding students' perceptions of LLE demonstrated that for students to engage in language learning, it is important to make meaning of the purposes, topics and strategies related to learning. The recognition of local inconveniences is a workable means to add such meaning to students' effort. In this particular case, the purpose of learning accounts for the necessity of contributing to the local development, meanwhile topics addressed during the pedagogical intervention represent a context-sensitive version of learning. Similarly, former ideas of students' participation in this project proved their appreciation of the learning strategies implemented during the practice of critical literacy.

The meaning-making process of learning goes hand in hand with Kumaravadivelu's (2001) ideas regarding the post-method pedagogy. In light of this, the principle of particularity evokes the recognition of participants' profound concerns, leading to the design of contextualized workshops allowing them to explore and reflect upon their local issues. Then, as Kumaravadivelu (2001) puts in "[...] Language pedagogy, to be relevant, must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu" (p.538). As a result, particularity has enabled this study to appraise a macro-strategy attempting to explore the issues that concern this particular group of learners and contribute to the alleviation of their problematics.

The critical literacy macro-strategy goes from students meaning-making of their local inconveniences to the appreciation of learning-related issues. Regarding this, students stated their critical stances on some social and environmental issues that eventually they approached through written compositions. According to Lankshear and Knobel (2009) "For learning in a classroom to be 'efficacious', it is necessary that what a person (whether child or adult) does now as a learner be connected in meaningful and motivating ways with 'mature' (or insider) versions of related social practices" (p.64). This journal encouraged learners to appreciate language learning as it connected to the meaningful task of raising their voices to criticize and reject local problematics.

In light of this, learners addressed social problems related to discrimination issues in the school. Then, they work collaboratively to explore how common forms of discrimination, such as lookism and gender discrimination, affected students from Juan Bautista la Salle high school. Similarly, students also examined environmental problematics touching their neighborhoods. In this respect, learners reflected upon salient cases of water contamination and waste disposal in the city. In both cases, students empowered the role as writers to propose alternatives to transform

these social and environmental situations. For instance, in the institutional journal, learners proposed lectures and workshops to stop bullying in school and a pacific mobilization to invite people to protect the environment.

The digital version of the journal “JUBASA Revolution” exposed students’ understanding of the social and environmental issues affecting them. For example, learners’ understanding of discrimination patterns includes lookism, bullying, racism, sexual, and gender discrimination. Besides, the environmental problematics that the participants encountered describe water pollution in different streams, namely, La Perdiz, La Sardina, and Villa del Recreo. They also detailed a particular case of human waste disposal in La Amazonia neighborhood. This particular excerpt illustrates students’ ideas of racial discrimination in the school context.

In our school students and the society usually discriminate gays for their sexual orientation. This is a problem that needs to be viewed closely through the lenses of acceptance, respected and tolerance. [Are you victim of sexual discrimination? excerpt taken from JUBASA Revolution Journal]

This comment uncovers students’ consciousness of discrimination forms in their school. Therefore, recognizing and problematizing this issue demonstrate students’ support to the group of students suffering sexual and gender discrimination. Craig and Smith (2014) affirm that schools are responsible for the creation of policies on the purpose of reducing the cases of sexual and gender discrimination. The authors explain that such policies may lead to improved school performance in the whole school community. As a result, “JUBASA Revolution” became a significant advocator of school policies aimed at preventing and reducing this form of discrimination among students, and therefore strengthening academic achievement.

It is worth mentioning that “JUBASA Revolution” was the resulting product that compiled students’ critiques on the social and environmental issues that they encountered in their school

and community. The first section of the institutional journal corresponds to the critiques that the participants wrote during the first workshop, “Discrimination is real.” To do so, students identified discrimination patterns in the school and selected a topic-related issue to address their written composition, some of the themes that students discussed in the social segment of “JUBASA Revolution” are lookism, bullying and racial discrimination.

The writing process behind these significant reflections was described by the workshop dynamics and oriented by the teachers-researchers. In this sense, the first lesson of the initial workshop aimed at familiarizing students with the concept of discrimination and related vocabulary. Whereas, the second lesson had the purpose of inviting learners to analyze discrimination in Colombia from a critical point of view. The second stage of the first workshop, by this, we mean the reading phase, was vital to raise awareness among the participants about the controversial issue under discussion. This initial encounter with the practice of critical literacy gave place to the writing process addressed in the third lesson.

Considering the above, the final unit of the workshop had the objective of encouraging learners to state a reflection about a topic-related issue found in their school. Perhaps, this closing lesson was the most demanding section of the workshop in terms of effort, time, and commitment. Nonetheless, the scaffolded nature of the activities described in the workshop supported the writing process. In this order of things, students collaboratively defined their discrimination problem, stated the causes that they encountered for this inconvenience, related possible consequences, reflected on how their problematic affected other members of the school, provided examples to illustrate their point of view and proposed an alternative to transform the problematic.

Once learners completed the pieces of their critique, they assembled their composition into a coherent whole. To do so, they received peer feedback through a writing checklist provided in

the workshop. Similarly, they also accepted teacher feedback during the complete writing process. Again, after learners accomplished the different stages of the writing process, they came up with the final versions of their critique. This time, they included an appealing title to summarize their understanding of the problem and catch the reader attention.

The second section of “JUBASA Revolution” accounts for environmental problematics found in the participants’ community. The writing process behind the critiques displayed in this fragment of the journal shares essential similarities with the already mentioned process of writing about social issues in the school. Participants also experienced the writing task all over the second workshop, “JUBASA moves on.” Again, the first lesson was planned to get learners acquainted with some environmental catastrophes affecting the country, as well as familiarize with the new vocabulary. The second lesson focused on inviting learners to reflect on the consequences of the human activity on the environment once more to raise awareness among the participants and therefore abet a reflexive and analytic point of view.

The final lesson of the second workshop guided students’ renewed writing process. This time, learners inquired on environmental problematics affecting their community, selected a particular situation, gathered information from the community members, and started the scaffolded writing exercise. In this opportunity, participants followed a writing guideline that suggested them to state the central problematic, include details describing the issue, relate possible causes, anticipate consequences, provide real testimonies, and propose workable solutions. It is important to realize that these writing criteria, as mentioned above, were displayed in an appealing mind map and accompanied by pertinent examples.

Lastly, when the participants arranged their writings, they shared their compositions on the online blog created for this workshop. The intention was to initiate peer feedback aimed at helping learners to refine and gain the most of the practice of writing. After students submitted

the final versions of their environmental critiques, these were included in the institutional journal, and teachers-researcher embarked on the exercise of collecting the following data needed to answer the research question.

Along with the understanding of social issues in the classroom, the analysis of students' critiques alludes the power relations that participants depict in the institutional journal. The following definition of bullying exemplifies these power relations.

The bullying is a physical and mental abuse, of the one reasons or causes, is that the aggressor feels more than the victim for many motives. [Bullying, excerpt taken from JUBASA Revolution Journal]

The critical viewpoint stated by these authors speaks for itself. Learners understand the implications of power relations in their classroom. In this particular context, they refer to a type of aggression that goes from the physical to the psychological forms. Sergiu (2010) concludes on Michel Foucault's views of power relations "[Power] is not localized exclusively in certain institutions or individuals, but it is rather a set of relations dispersed throughout society" (p.3). Accordingly, the authors of the critique reflect on the power that the members of their school, who with a self-concept of superiority, pursue on their classmates.

Another form of discrimination identified and approached by participants is the lookism. Davis (2007) highlights the potential role of education in recognition of this situation:

Students could examine how different aspects of a person may become involved in recognition, and begin to question which of these are fundamental to their true worth. They could also learn how value judgments about physical appearance are tied, often ephemerally to the practices of a particular culture. Personal, social, moral and citizenship education could embrace such issues. Drama and literature would also seem to have obvious potential here. (p. 825)

Concerning this, the practice of critical literacy guided students in the construction of value judgments. To some extent, supporting students to be aware, reflect, and reshape social relationships may contribute to a conducive school climate. According to the participants, discrimination based on physical appearance would bring fatal consequences for the bystanders. The following piece of writing alludes this idea:

For example, the students of the institution discriminate to the fat people for their physical appearance, this causes consequences like the rechase for the people, and suicide. [The lookism is a problematic in school, excerpt taken from JUBASA Revolution Journal]

The author's critical interpretation leads them to position lookism as a generalized concern that affects their institution. They also state that this issue potentiates negative consequences since many times, physical discrimination enlarges rejection and harassment among school members.

On the subject of environmental issues affecting the school and the community, ninth graders acknowledge that one of the most salient problematics is water pollution; specifically, in the case of rivers and streams. The following idea reveals learners' constraints:

In the municipality of Florencia- Caquetá there is a stream called the Perdiz. This stream is one of the problems of environmental contamination in our city. This problem of contamination affects the people, animals, and plants. [Contamination in the stream la Perdiz, excerpt taken from JUBASA Revolution Journal]

This entry denotes learners' understanding of a local environmental issue that affects their community. What is more, it evidences their critical posture regarding the side factors that water pollution brings to their community.

Similarly, students wrote about environmental problematics impacting their neighborhoods. In light of this, Fisman (2005) explains, "making a conscious effort to have

students apply knowledge to their home environment may be an effective strategy for building local environmental awareness” (p.48). This pedagogical intervention invited learners to analyze, reflect, and inquire on their home problematics. As a result, students proposed solutions attempting to have an effect on their immediate environments. Regarding this, a group of students claims:

For this reason, there were consequences that affected to the community, for example, the bad smells, reduction of streams and the reduction of fishes. The testimony of a local resident to says us that, the waste of the new constructions caused stream pollution. [Stream pollution in Villa del Recreo neighborhood, excerpt taken from JUBASA Revolution Journal]

From the writers’ reflection, the vast preoccupation about the negative consequences related to water pollution in their neighborhood is evident. The journal writing served students to express concerns and feelings related to the problematics of their community while making meaning of learning. Álvarez (2016) points out, “Language learning is a process of meaning-making in which different modes of communication intervene beyond the linguistic mode” (p.108). Herein, the journal encompassed a new form of communication where students used the second language to advocate for social transformation.

Acting beyond the symbolic levels. The reflection process linked to the practice of critical literacy has been the initial step into the understanding of social and environmental issues embedded in the participant’s community. Meanwhile, students’ effort to uncover local problematics has led them to embark in the process of approaching solutions for their concerns. Both, reflecting and proposing alternatives for transformation evoke the nature of critical literacy. The following lines describe participants’ proposals to call for changes as a manner of acting beyond the symbolic levels. This is an idea borrowed from Lankshear and Knobel (2009) when they assert:

In some moments, literacy work is predominantly textual. But, to the extent that this is critical textual work intended to address material circumstances in the world, it must ultimately be part of a larger cultural practice of acting on the world beyond the symbolic level alone. (p.71)

On the purpose of acting beyond the symbolic level, participants included in their critiques initiatives to shift local ideologies naturalized within their communities. This journal explained the practices that reflect people's misunderstanding of the world and lead to specific behaviors such as polluting waterbodies with toxic disposals.

The practice of critical literacy has allowed students to encourage readers to take part in the local initiatives proposed in the journal. Regarding the ideologies of reconstruction, and retaking that Cervetti, Pardales, and Damico (as cited in O'Byrne, 2018) attain to critical literacy in education. Participants empowered with critical elements, aim at recovering social and environmental lost scenarios with different conceptual perspectives that take them to critically evaluate aspects of their lives with sustained opinions. In the following extract, the authors proposed an alternative that involved the general community in the recovery of the green spaces of La Amazonía neighborhood, a place where waste disposals have caused vegetation deterioration and animal disappearance.

The solution we students of JUBASA propose is become aware people by campaigns to protect the environment. [Human waste disposal in Amazonia neighborhood, excerpt taken from JUBASA Revolution Journal]

Given that, the promulgation of the voices that emerged from the critical analysis and reflection in the classroom, is considered as imperative to the transformation of paradigms and behaviors among the members of the school and the community. Such practice entailed a renovated form of critical literacy that enacted ninth graders to contribute to the development of their community and embrace language learning. Barno (2014) asseverates, "Literacies, in all her

glorious forms, promote dialogue and engagement, offer validation of our many selves, mirror our experiences, and offer windows into the wider world” (p.39). In the case of this study, dialogue and engagement have been experienced through the implementation of the already mentioned macro-strategy that includes students’ proposals to advocate for substantial change.

Journal writing as an opportunity for critical engagement. Perhaps, critical engagement is the most explicit way of converging the results coming out from the purpose of practicing critical literacy to promote LLE. On the subject of critical engagement, Bacon (2017) expresses “critical literacies, enacted through a variety of pedagogies and techniques, can motivate and inspire critical engagement among teachers and learners alike across a vast array of age groups, cultures, and pedagogical contexts” (p.23). Learners, as agents of social change, illustrated the relationship between language learning and critical engagement. Participants developed critical elements that allowed them to integrate their knowledge about the world and their understanding of the language to meet awareness and transformational needs in their community. In reality, the practice of critical literacy opened up space for learners to permeate and fight against the problematics that concerned them the most.

Critical engagement associates with the action-taking process consisting of understanding, reflecting, and inquiring to accomplish transformational goals. It reflects students’ recognition of the socio-political relationships influencing their local realities. This example illustrates this idea:

One of the solutions what we propose to improve the quality of the environment is to make a mobilization peaceful for that the local government give the community a solution. [Stream pollution in Villa del Recreo neighborhood, excerpt taken from JUBASA Revolution Journal]

As stated in the literature review chapter, critical literacy in teaching connects to Lewison, Leland and Harste's (2008) ideas when they define the critical social practices as means of "disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on the sociopolitical and taking action to promote social justice" (p.6). Consequently, participants invite their community to protect the environment and raise political awareness. This initiative not only involves the academic factors related to the understanding and reflection, or the language use but also their self-recognition as social agents minded to take actions.

In the subject of discrimination in the school context, students proposed inner initiatives to promote sensitization among the school members. The following idea is an example of this initiative:

For this to stop happening we should talk to the students of JUBASA about the issues and make campaigns to avoid bullying in the institution. [Bullying, excerpt taken from JUBASA Revolution Journal]

This excerpt highlights the necessity of halting misleading behaviors that affect the self-integrity of students, and the intention of the authors to represent people who face bullying in their every day. Comber (2017) explains "[...] children growing up in poverty need access to the most complex and salient forms of literate practices possible in order to contest the way things are and to work to represent their communities for justice" (p. 16). In this respect, this pedagogical intervention placed learners to lively identify forms of discrimination, understand the roots, reflect, and call for social transformation.

The consolidation of this institutional journal represents a meaningful resource for English language learning. This writing endeavor has served the purpose of understanding language as a socially relevant tool that allows learners to raise their voices, act beyond the symbolic levels and advocate for critical engagement. Regarding language learning and critical engagement, Cruz

(2018) points out, “Critical pedagogy allows to exalt alternative and locally grounded attempts to make English teaching socially relevant, especially in communities where English appears to be far removed from their everyday life” (p. 67). The social nature accompanying this approach to language learning, redefines students’ possibilities to make meaning of the learning experience while communicating with their community.

In the same light of thought, “JUBASA Revolution” journal has served a valuable arena for students to undergo their language learning processes. Jordão and Fogaça (2012) assert the significance of critical literacy practices in language learning; “[critical] literacy is embedded in a social practice and mediates social practice” (p.71). This is, language learning interweaves with social practices. Through this connection, language learners projected ideas, thoughts, feelings, and emotions. These practices also highlighted the communication processes that individuals embraced while learning the language. Indeed, JUBASA Revolution journal has allowed learners to retake their social and environmental concerns, to do both, support their language learning and prospect local transformation.

To summarize, JUBASA Revolution journal encouraged learners, who in their roles as researchers, planners, and writers, demonstrated to develop critical insights on specific themes. Considering the literature review chapter, Norris, Lucas, and Prudhoe (2012) affirm that critical literacy is a way of “encouraging readers to question, explore, or challenge the power relationships that exist between authors and readers; by examining issues of power and promoting reflection, transformative change, and action” (p. 59). The macro-strategy for the enhancement of language learning described along the previous lines has explained the significance of making meaning of the learning process, acting beyond the symbolic level and providing opportunities for critical engagement.

All of the above on the purpose of enhancing LLE. In reality, the institutional journal supported learners to express their interest in becoming critical agents, critique power relations, and break the status quo of naturalized behaviors within societies. To do so, students embraced the ideologies of transformation and appreciated the importance of raising awareness about the countless inconveniences affecting their community.

Macro-strategy model for the enhancement of LLE in Juan Bautista la Salle high school. Based on the previous analysis and considering the authorities that support the constructs of critical literacy and language learning engagement, this study proposes a diagram framing the elements that constitute the critical literacy macro-strategy. Initially, this model refers to the meaning-making process as the significant element that enables students to appreciate the purpose, the topics, and the strategies embedded in language learning. Authors attain enormous relevance to this element as it is imperative to LLE.

Furthermore, acting beyond the symbolic level means the proposition of alternatives through local initiatives that call for the juncture of communities procuring common objectives. This element helps learners to recognize themselves as social agents who contribute to the development of their community while engaging in language learning. The last element combines the results of practicing critical literacy to engage in language learning. This idea leads to the proposition of critical engagement as the process of valuing local issues to engage in language learning from a critical point of view.

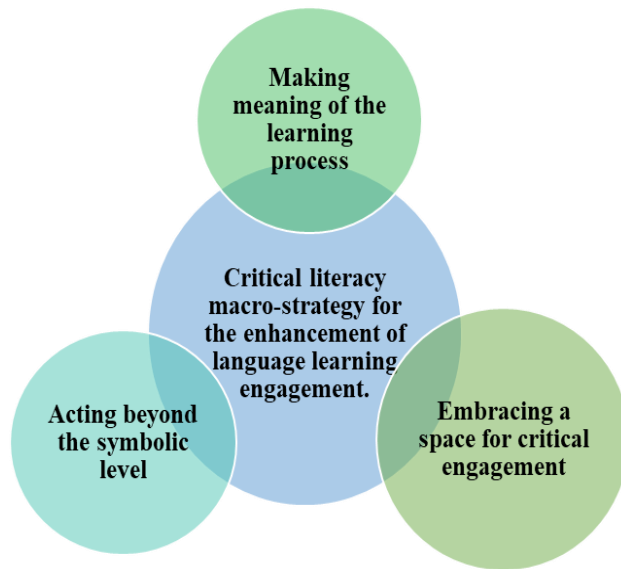


Diagram 2. Macro-strategy model for the enhancement of LLE in Juan Bautista la Salle high school

Chapter V

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

This concluding chapter revisits significant findings emerging from the PAR implemented with the purpose of determining the connection between LLE and critical literacy. These conclusions explain how the interwoven components of engagement, cognitive, social and emotional interplay in language learning. Similarly, this segment explains salient contributions of the practice of critical literacy in the classroom to attain engagement, learning and transformative goals. Chapter V also draws attention the pedagogical implications arising from the application of a critical literacy macro-strategy to enhance LLE and the possible benefits it may bring to the EFL field.

Conclusions

For Juan Bautista la Salle high school, a context where academic performance seemed to be the core of institutional concern, defining and examining the components of engagement resulted in a highly relevant issue. This investigation provided ways of explaining students' language-related attitudes and the effects that cognitive, social, and emotional engagement has on particular notions such as academic achievement and language improvement. Nonetheless, this research study not only focused on the educational view of learning but also on the transformative philosophy underpinning the practice of critical literacy. In this order of things, this study attributed a particular importance to societal attempts, namely raising awareness and local transformation.

To overlap with the ideas described above, for this research study academic achievement resulted an indicator of the learning process of the participants as it reflected their summative learning. However, this cognitive dimension was far from being a unique representation of

learning. According to Skinner and Pitzer (2012), “engagement is the direct (and only) pathway to cumulative learning, long-term achievement, and eventual academic success” (p.24) Following these ideas learning was intervened by the concept of engagement. Therefore, this investigation proved that for educative institutions to achieve their learning goals, it is necessary to consider the extent to which classroom practices engage students from the cognitive, social, and emotional point of view.

In this respect, critical literacy, significantly contributed to the enhancement of cognitive, social and emotional engagement. Then, this investigation demonstrated that the implementation of such alternative practices, especially when these account for the particularity of each learning context, lead to enriched learning scenarios in which the English language recovers sense among students’ experience. With this in mind, the practice of critical literacy in the public sector may also energize the suggested curriculum, the basic learning rights, and the standards for competences in English that the Colombian educative policies demand. In doing so, educators will envision students as co-constructors of learning and practitioners of a second language that holds a reflective and transformative purpose.

Considering that this investigation uncovered important variations between how students approached cognitive, social and emotional engagement prior and after the pedagogical intervention. Participants of this study drew a parallel among regular classes and the critical literacy practice, to reflect upon their language learning-related attitudes. Again, Svalberg (2009) points out, “as a construct, the notion of engagement could provide ways of explaining why some linguistic or language-related behaviours and attitudes seem to facilitate language learning and learning about language/s more than others” (p.2). Findings suggest that the practice of critical literacy positively intervene LLE. In light of this, students’ perceptions about the language

classes and therefore, their attitudes shifted from lack of interest, little commitment, and fear to practice the language to a forceful willingness to maintain and initiate interactions.

The latter attributed a dialogical nature to the concept of engagement; this is, the practice of critical literacy strongly focuses on peer interaction and collaborative learning. In this regard, Shin and Crookes (2005) assert, “During the dialogical engagement between teacher and students and students themselves, the life experiences of students are emphasized, through which the students begin to recognize each other as sources of knowledge” (p.114). Regarding the cognitive dimension of LLE, this study enlightened that some of the participants’ previous language-related episodes accounted for the weakness of their engagement as they were unable to explain the whys and wherefores of learning. Meanwhile on the issue of social engagement, such episodes failed to provide learners with opportunities to involve and learn from social interactions.

In reality, the context-sensitive nature of topics, the customized class dynamics, and the challenging features describing the process of reading and writing strengthened students’ cognitive, social and emotional engagement. In this sense, the practice of critical literacy to address social and environmental problematics affecting the students’ school and community added significance to the language learning process of this group of ninth graders.

Concerning students’ perceptions regarding LLE before and after the pedagogical intervention, this study attests a differentiated understanding of cognitive engagement. In the initial stage, students’ effort and commitment to learning was mainly mediated by academic performance and scores. Nonetheless, students’ interaction with the critical literacy practice led to an awareness of the reciprocal relationship between learning and academic achievement. Unexpectedly, the various sources of data corresponding to this investigation support that participants ascribe improved language skills to their participation in this research study.

On the other hand, the multiple ways in which critical literacy intervened LLE emphasized on some language-related difficulties emerging from the pedagogical intervention. This idea described students' approached challenges to engage in the writing process attained to critical literacy. A paramount concern among teachers-researchers was the degree to which such language-related difficulties led to students' disengagement, (Skinner et al., 2009). Though, previous results regarding students' perceptions of LLE suggested participants' strengthened abilities to cope with learning challenges. Such abilities can be defined as students' resilience. In this regard, Comber^a and Kamler^b (2004) maintain, "The intention of the research, however, is not simply to celebrate what children can do and ignore what they cannot. Rather, our outgoing aim is to produce demonstrable learning outcomes that can be sustained into new curriculum challenges" (p.307). Further pedagogical implementations based on critical literacy may revisit opportunities to enhance coping strategies along students' learning process. Otherwise, challenges to approach language learning from the reflective praxis could drive students to language learning disengagement.

Indeed, the collaborative nature of engagement is overemphasized by the writing process accompanying this pedagogical design. As students embarked on the critical literacy practice, they reflected upon their local inconveniences, inquired on the issues affecting them; and intervened such problematics. All of the above, through the social practice of writing. In light of this, De Larios and Murphy (2001) explain "the study of cognitive processes in isolation from the contexts in which they occur may turn these processes into meaningless patterns of behavior since the writing task and the writer's response to it are framed by social relationships" (p. 27). Writing about home issues seemed to enhance cognitive engagement as it demanded learners' focused attention, time, and effort to accomplish academic tasks. Social engagement as it was mediated by peer interaction and enacted peer interaction not only among learners but also with

their community. And emotional engagement as it allowed learners to explore feelings responding and maintaining both the social interaction and the cognitive attempt.

In contexts where the second language lacks a rationale, it is difficult to support its contributions to the lives of the people involved in learning. The practice of critical literacy demonstrated to advocate for the significance of language learning. Jordão and Fogaca (2012) explain, “Perceiving language use as a social practice which is also cultural, contextualized and heterogeneous can lead to the awareness of our active role in society and to a legitimate experience of citizenship” (p.76). To overlap with the ideas described above, awareness of local realities illustrated a possibility to support the language learning motives. The fact that students used the second language to read, write, and transform salient problematics in their community allowed learners to engage in language learning holistically.

The examination of the macro-strategy proposed with the purpose of enhancing LLE through the practice of critical literacy revealed the different ways in which educative communities would benefit from learning practices based on particularity. Kumaravadivelu (2001) explains “[...] Language pedagogy, to be relevant, must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu” (p.538). The contextualized practice of journal writing resulted relevant in guiding learners to make meaning of their learning process. In doing so, students embarked in a real-life experience focused on acting beyond the symbolic levels.

The converging element of the process of ascribing meaning to learning and experiencing the context-sensitiveness of literacies; emphasizes on the idea of critical engagement. This notion connects to Comber’s (2017) insights “[...] children growing up in poverty need access to the most complex and salient forms of literate practices possible in order to contest the way things

are and to work to represent their communities for justice” (p. 16). In this case, journal writing represented a pure form of literacy. This practice surpassed the scope of classroom engagement and involved learners in the lived experience of questioning literacies as a manner to critically engage in language learning.

Overall, the connection between LLE and critical literacy does not describe a one-way path to learning. On the contrary, this study demonstrated the reciprocal relationship between the interrelated components of language learning. LLE proved to explain language-related attitudes inspired by the practice of critical literacy. The latter was able to provide an enriched learning experience that advocated for cognitive, social, and emotional engagement. In this particular context, this promising approach to language teaching seemed to reorient practices towards a holistic understanding of the components of engagement.

Pedagogical Implications

This research study responded to the necessity of exploring renovated forms of language learning. In this context, institutional efforts to enhance language learning maintained a strong focus on academic performance. In this regard, the study of LLE resulted in an essential contribution to the understanding of language-related attitudes emerging from the application of a particular approach to language learning; critical literacy in the case of this study.

The participants of this study benefited from the research on the connection between LLE and critical literacy. They enrolled in a contextualized language learning experience. Meanwhile, they embraced the reflective process aimed at questioning and transforming local realities. In doing so, learners reported improved language skills and played an important role as agents of change in their community.

Juan Bautista la Salle High School also benefited from this investigation since “JUBASA Revolution” constituted a corpus of students’ academic productions. These reflections also served to expand the awareness task envisioned by the participants. As long as the institution and neighbor contexts engaged in reading the institutional journal, the participants’ voices recovered meaning among readers. As a result, students’ initiatives to transform local problematics transcended from the classroom context to the vivid scenarios of people.

On the academic field, this research expanded the work on LLE. According to Storch (2008), little has been done on the subject. Similarly, this study contributed to the understanding of language learning in underprivileged contexts. This study also proposed a macro-strategy for the enhancement of LLE through the contextualized practice of critical literacy. This initiative may result in enlarged learning experiences able to challenge the concept of engagement.

Concerning teacher-researchers, this avenue provided a solid background to understand language teaching not only from the cognitive perspective but also from the social and emotional perspective attained to learning. Similarly, the implementation of critical literacy broke the status-quo of the teaching activity and encouraged teacher-researchers to re-orient classroom practices towards engaging scenarios.

Limitations

The limitations of this study relied on the time devoted to the pedagogical intervention and data gathering process. Unexpected changes in the school schedule led teacher-researchers to re-program the inquiry agenda in several occasions. Of utmost importance is the fact that critical literacy interrelates to other subject areas such as arts, social, and environmental sciences. These areas were expected to contribute to the holistic understanding of students’ realities and support the participants’ researching and journal design process.

Further Research

Recommendations for future research include the analysis of the factors mediating students' coping strategies, disengagement, and reengagement attitudes in the case of language-related difficulties. Alternative research avenues can examine the feelings attained to students' facing challenges, when it comes to language learning and language use. In light of this, future research might also consider the degree to which limited language hinders both LLE and critical literacy practice. Altogether, these ideas may contribute to the operationalization of the counterpart of engagement, in the specific case of language-related difficulties. In reality, examining this issue may provide teachers expanded ways of addressing disengagement attitudes in the classroom.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Initial Focus Group Interview

Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés

Universidad Surcolombiana

LLE Focus Group Interview

SRQ1 How do ninth graders perceive LLE at Juan Bautista la Salle High School?

<p>Emotional engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Creen que el idioma inglés es importante para sus vidas, o no? ¿Por qué? • ¿Escuchan en su hogar que el idioma inglés es importante para sus vidas? ¿qué opinan de esto? • ¿Crees que el inglés que se les está enseñando en el colegio será de utilidad en el futuro, o por el contrario no será de mucha utilidad? • ¿En qué situaciones cotidianas utiliza o ha necesitado el idioma inglés en su vida? • ¿Les gustan las clases de inglés? Si o no ¿por qué? • ¿Qué tipos de actividades y clases disfrutan más? <p>Ahora hablaremos un poco sobre sus clases de inglés:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Los temas que se abordan en las clases de inglés son interesantes y de su agrado, y les permiten mantenerse enfocados o por el contrario son simples y aburridos? • ¿Les gustan las actividades en las clases de inglés, se sienten positivos y participativos o por el contrario negativos y desinteresados sobre estas? • Si su respuesta es negativo y desinteresado, ¿qué tipo de actividades les gustaría hacer durante la clase de inglés? • ¿Se sienten entusiasmos por participar en las actividades que se proponen para la clase de inglés o por el contrario sienten aburrimiento y pereza durante las actividades? • ¿Se sienten nerviosos o ansiosos cuando participan en actividades que involucren usar el inglés o, por el contrario, se sienten confiados y
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	<p>relajados cuando participan en la clase?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Buscan oportunidades para interactuar durante las clases de inglés o por el contrario prefieren mantenerse callados?
<p>Cognitive engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Es importante para ustedes obtener buenas notas en la clase de inglés, o no? • ¿Describirían su desempeño en las clases de inglés como excelente-bueno-regular- insuficiente o malo? ¿a qué se debe esto? • ¿Las actividades y temáticas desarrolladas durante las clases de inglés son interesantes, relevantes y o por el contrario son superficiales y vacíos? Expliquen su respuesta • ¿Cuál creen ustedes que es el grado de dificultad de las actividades desarrolladas en la clase de inglés, fáciles, intermedias, difíciles? • ¿Están relacionados los temas abordados en las clases de inglés con actividades, situaciones o problemáticas de vidas diarias? Den ejemplos de estas.
<p>Social engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Con qué frecuencia usan el inglés aprendido durante las diferentes clases para hablar con sus compañeros? • ¿Buscan oportunidades para practicar con sus compañeros en el salón de clase sobre los temas trabajados? • ¿Buscan e implementan algunas estrategias/ recursos para mejorar su nivel de inglés por su cuenta? Por ejemplo: escuchar canciones en inglés- ver series y películas en inglés- aplicaciones- lectura-video juegos, entre otros. • Cuando leen en inglés y no conocen algunas palabras, ¿qué hacen para entenderla, y que su lectura tenga sentido? • ¿Hablan con sus familiares, amigos y conocidos acerca de lo visto en las clases? • ¿Buscan escenarios distintos del salón de clase para practicar y aprender más el idioma inglés como hablar con turistas nativos, las redes sociales?

Appendix B: Post-intervention Focus Group Interview

Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés

Universidad Surcolombiana

LLE Focus Group Interview


SRQ1 How do ninth graders perceive LLE at Juan Bautista la Salle High School?

SRO1 To describe how ninth graders at Juan Bautista la Salle High School experience LLE.

<p>Emotional engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Les gustaron las actividades que se desarrollaron durante las clases de inglés (con el workshop impreso y el workshop online), se sintieron positivos y participativos o por el contrario negativos y desinteresados sobre estas? • Si su respuesta es negativo y desinteresado, ¿Por qué sucedió esto? • ¿Se sintieron entusiasmados por participar en las actividades que se propusieron para la clase de inglés o por el contrario sintieron aburrimiento y pereza? • ¿Se sintieron nerviosos o ansiosos cuando participaron en actividades que involucraron el idioma inglés o, por el contrario, se sintieron confiados y relajados? • Los temas (discriminación y problemas medio ambientales locales) que vimos en las clases de inglés ¿fueron interesantes y de su agrado? ¿Estos temas les permitieron mantenerse enfocados o por el contrario fueron simples y aburridos? • Después de haber sido parte de este proyecto, ¿se ha sentido motivado por su propia cuenta a aprender y usar el inglés en algunos aspectos de su vida? ¿Cómo? ¿En qué momentos? ¿Cuéntenos qué han hecho al respecto? • ¿Qué fue lo que más les llamó la atención o que más les gustó de todo el proceso?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Durante el desarrollo de las actividades, fue importante para ustedes obtener buenas notas en las diferentes actividades o tuvieron otro tipo de motivación para aprender?

<p>Cognitive engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Cómo describirían su desempeño en las clases de inglés, excelente-bueno-regular- insuficiente o malo? ¿a qué se debió esto? • ¿Consideran que los temas abordados en las clases de inglés son situaciones o problemáticas de sus vidas diarias? • ¿Así pues, creen que este tipo de temas deberían ser parte de las clases de inglés que se dan normalmente en el colegio? • ¿Consideras que lo aprendido en las dos unidades es útil para su proceso de aprendizaje y serán aplicable en sus vidas? • ¿Considera que la lengua inglesa es o será importante para sus vidas? ¿En qué tipo de situaciones? • ¿Cuál fue la parte más desafiante o difícil de este proceso?
<p>Social engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Usaron el inglés aprendido durante las diferentes clases para comunicar ideas, pensamientos con sus compañeros, o usaron español incluso cuando sabían palabras, frases y podían hacerlo en inglés? • ¿Cómo solucionaron las dificultades que se les presentaron durante las clases de inglés? palabras desconocidas, frases y oraciones que no entendieron, textos largos, ¿entre otras? • ¿Hablaron con sus familiares, amigos y conocidos acerca de lo visto en las clases? • ¿Buscaron oportunidades para interactuar (compañeros de clase y docente) durante las clases o por el contrario prefirieron mantenerse callados y dedicarse a otras actividades? • ¿Han buscado oportunidades fuera del salón de clase para practicar y aprender más del idioma como hablar con turistas, nativos, las redes sociales u otras maneras? • ¿Cuáles creen que son las ventajas o desventajas de trabajar con otros compañeros?

Appendix C: Questionnaire on PAR




Cuestionario inicial

Nombre: _____ Fecha: _____ Edad: _____


Este cuestionario tiene como propósito tratar temas propios de su comunidad, le pedimos que por favor nos proporcione información completa.



1. Describa que es lo que más le gusta de su colegio, su barrio y los principales centros deportivos, recreativos y de esparcimiento (cachas de fútbol, gimnasios al aire libre, parques) de su comunidad. Mencione cuáles son las actividades que usted disfruta realizar allí.



2. Enuncie las principales problemáticas, dificultades o necesidades que ha observado en los lugares que mencionó anteriormente.







Lluvia de ideas



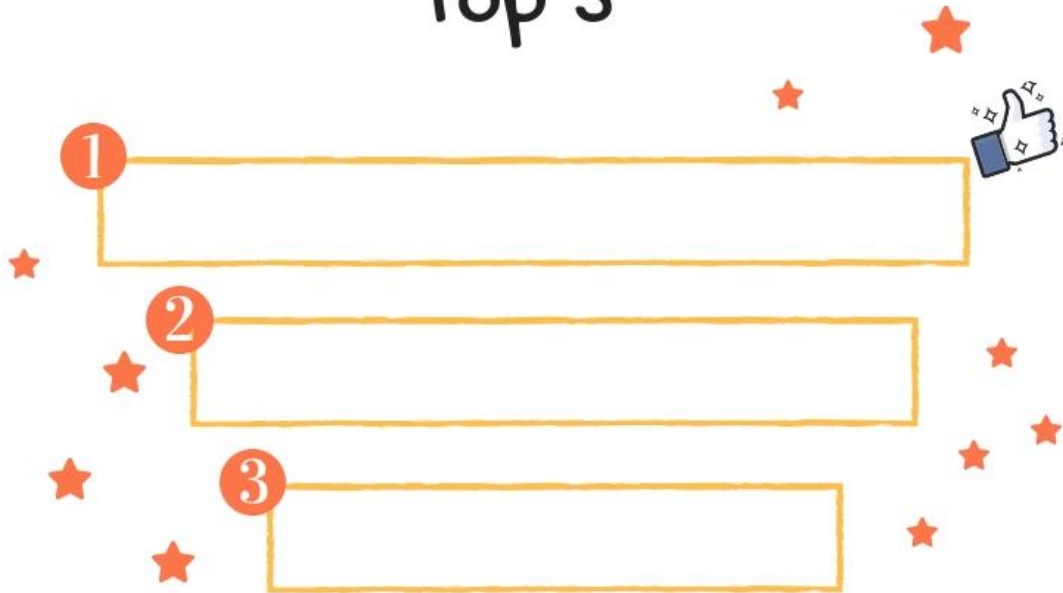



2. Haga un top 3 de las problemáticas que más llaman su atención y que le gustaría investigar durante las clases de inglés.

Top 3



A graphic for a 'Top 3' ranking. It features the title 'Top 3' in a large, black, handwritten-style font. Below the title are three horizontal rectangular boxes, each outlined in orange and numbered 1, 2, and 3 from top to bottom. The numbers are inside red circles. The boxes are surrounded by several red stars of varying sizes. To the right of the top box is a blue thumbs-up icon with a white hand.

3. Haga un mapa señalando el lugar donde se concentra la problemática número uno que usted mencionó.



A large, empty rectangular box with an orange border, intended for drawing a map. In the top right corner of the box is a blue location pin icon with a white circle in the center.

4. ¿Cómo dicha situación lo afecta a usted, a su familia, a sus compañeros del colegio o a la comunidad en general?

5. ¿Cómo cree usted que podríamos, desde el salón de clase, mejorar esta situación problemática?

6. Si usted quisiera indagar acerca de la situación problemática que encontró ¿a qué personas de su comunidad les pediría información?

7. ¿Qué le gustaría saber acerca de esta problemática? escriba algunas posibles preguntas que usted les haría a las personas que identificó en su comunidad.

The graphic consists of a central orange cardboard box with a white question mark on its front panel. Surrounding this central box are four empty rectangular boxes with orange borders, arranged in a 2x2 grid. These boxes are intended for students to write their responses to question 7.

Gracias por su participación, sus respuestas son muy valiosas para esta investigación. Esperamos desde la clase de inglés poder abordar las problemáticas que hacen parte de nuestra realidad.

Appendix D: Questionnaire on Critical Literacy**Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés****Universidad Surcolombiana****Cuestionario de Post-participación**

SRQ 2 How does critical literacy intervene LLE for ninth graders at Juan Bautista la Salle High School?


SRO 2 To explain how critical literacy intervenes LLE for ninth graders at Juan Bautista la Salle High School

Fecha: _____ **Edad:** _____ **Grado:** _____

NOTA: Este cuestionario tiene como propósito recoger información necesaria para el desarrollo del proyecto de investigación en el que usted está participando. La información que usted suministre será estrictamente confidencial y de ninguna manera afectará su desempeño en el área de inglés.

Por favor responda claramente las siguientes preguntas.

1. Sugerencia: Escriba dentro del recuadro un listado de palabras que para usted definen la forma en la que ha trabajado dentro de este proyecto.



2. ¿Cuál considera usted que es la importancia de trabajar temas de su interés como discriminación y medio ambiente en las clases de inglés?

3. ¿Cómo se relacionan las temáticas tratadas en clase con su entorno escolar y familiar?

4. Además de practicar la lectura y escritura en inglés ¿Qué otros beneficios le pueden traer su participación en los talleres de lectura y el diseño del diario institucional?

5. Describa qué tanto le ha gustado leer, analizar e investigar temas críticos para su entorno social, use los emoticones para complementar su respuesta.



Mucho



Medianamente



Poco



Nada

6. ¿De qué manera el nivel de dificultad de las actividades presentadas en clase de inglés, le ha permitido o no mejorar su aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera?

7. Describa qué tanto ha disfrutado el trabajo con su grupo de investigación use los emoticones para complementar su respuesta.



Mucho



Medianamente



Poco



Nada

8. ¿De qué manera su participación en este proyecto le ha permitido o no, convertirse en un lector y escritor acerca del mundo?

9. ¿De qué manera la forma en la que usted ha participado en este proyecto le ha permitido o no, contribuir al desarrollo de una mejor sociedad?

10. ¿De qué manera, a través de este proyecto, ha podido usted dar su punto de vista para que los demás conozcan su opinión acerca de los temas que le interesan? Use los emoticones para complementar su respuesta.



Mucho



Medianamente



Poco



Nada

11. ¿Qué sentimientos le provocan algunos de los temas tratados en clase de inglés?

12. Describa qué tanto su interés por aprender inglés ha incrementado a través de su participación en este proyecto, use los emoticones para complementar su respuesta.



Mucho



Medianamente



Poco



Nada

Appendix E: Consent Form

Formulario de Consentimiento Parental

Promoviendo el compromiso con el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera inglés, a través de la alfabetización crítica

Por favor lea este material en el que se informa la naturaleza de esta investigación, y la manera en la que su hijo/a va a participar, si usted así lo autoriza. La firma de este formulario indicara que usted ha sido informado y que da su consentimiento, tal y como las normas institucionales lo requieren. De modo que es usted quien decide, previo al inicio del proyecto, si acepta que su hijo/a participe o no en el mismo.

Propósito

Su hijo/a esta siendo invitado/a a participar voluntariamente en el proyecto de investigación denominado Promoviendo el compromiso con el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera inglés, a través de la alfabetización crítica. El propósito de este proyecto es entender la conexión entre el compromiso que tienen los estudiantes por el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera inglés, y el uso de orientaciones alternativas como la alfabetización crítica. Así pues, el objetivo principal es ver como su hijo puede comprometerse integralmente, desde el enfoque emocional, social y cognitivo, con el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera; una vez se utiliza la alfabetización crítica como medio para lograr este cometido.

Criterio de selección

Su hijo/a esta siendo invitado a participar en este proyecto porque él o ella hace parte del grado noveno uno, en la institución educativa Juan Bautista la Salle, lugar donde se desarrolla este estudio.

Procedimientos

Si usted acepta que su hijo participe en este estudio, él o ella podrá:

- Participar en talleres desarrollados durante las horas de clase
- Participar en entrevistas grupales, llevadas a cabo dentro del horario escolar
- Contestar una serie de cuestionarios basados en el desarrollo del proyecto
- Llevar un cuadro de desempeño individual (provisto por los investigadores)
- Desarrollar una investigación grupal enfocada en un tema de interés propio
- Elaborar un periódico institucional colectivo

Riesgos

La decisión de participar o no en este estudio no afectará la nota del estudiante, así como tampoco se verá segregado de la clase. Este estudio no representa mayor riesgo para su hijo/a, sin embargo, es importante que sepa que puede que su hijo/a se sienta incomodo a la hora de ser filmado, o con la presencia de los investigadores en el salón de clase. No obstante, para minimizar este fenómeno, los investigadores harán todo lo posible para hacer sentir cómodo al estudiante con su participación.

Beneficios

Su hijo/a hará parte de un proyecto significativo, que le permitirá experimentar el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera, a través de un enfoque alternativo. Además, su hijo/a será cocreador de un diario institucional, investigado y elaborado por los mismos estudiantes.

Confidencialidad

A todos los participantes se les asignara un seudónimo para proteger su identidad. Solo los investigadores tendrán acceso a los datos recolectados. Dichos datos, incluyendo fotografías y videos, serán usados solo con propósitos investigativos, los datos serán confidenciales y no serán presentados de forma que su hijo/a pueda ser identificado/a.

Costo de participación y compensación monetaria

La participación en este proyecto no tiene ningún costo. Igualmente, su hijo/a no recibirá ninguna compensación monetaria por su participación.

Contacto

Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de esta investigación puede comunicarse al celular 3209483342, profesora Arlin Prada Arias.

Autorización

Dejo constancia de que fui informado, de los métodos, riesgos y beneficios de este Proyecto. Así pues, al firmar este formulario autorizo a mi hijo/hija a participar en este proyecto, de igual modo consiento la grabación de entrevistas, observaciones de clase por parte de los investigadores y registro fotográfico.

Nombre del estudiante

Padre o Acudiente

Fecha

Constancia del investigador

Dejo constancia de que he explicado la naturaleza de este estudio. Certifico que la persona que firma este consentimiento conoce los riesgos y beneficios de participar en este proyecto.

Firma de la investigadora

Fecha

Firma de la investigadora

Fecha

Appendix F: Assessment of the first cycle, frequency chart

Statements	Group frequency	
	Yes, I do	I need to keep trying
Cognitive engagement		
I feel prepared to develop the activities because the pre-tasks helped me to get ready.	7	1
I have time to reflect, produce and correct my own work.	8	0
Social engagement	Yes, I do	I need to keep trying
I have the opportunity to communicate in English with my classmates, teacher and other people, as well as give and receive feedback, while developing the workshop.	5	3
Emotional engagement	Yes, I do	I need to keep trying
I feel connected and comfortable with the topic and the activities presented in the workshop.	8	0
feel passionate about the topics because they are related to my life.	5	3
I feel motivated to take responsibility of my own work, because the workshop encourages me to try, learn and improve.	8	0
Critical literacy practice	Yes, I do	I need to keep trying
The texts present controversial issues, which help me perceive my reality from another viewpoint.	8	0
The topics of the workshop motivate me to reflect, analyze and propose alternatives for change.	8	0
Lesson objectives	Done	It needs more work
To familiarize with the concept of discrimination and topic related vocabulary.	7	1
To get informed about discrimination issues.	8	0
To analyze discrimination in Colombia from a critical point of view.	7	1
To reflect upon discrimination issues affecting my school and community.	8	0
To state in a piece of writing the main ideas and stances on a critical topic.	7	1
The lessons	Yes, it does	It needs to keep trying
I like the design, colors and pictures.	8	0
Get ready: The lesson helps me to know new vocabulary, relate it to my life and use it in new situations.	8	0
Reading: The lesson offers a good topic which motivates me to reflect and think differently.	8	0
Writing: The lesson guides me in the process of writing, provides me opportunities to improve and let me contribute to the class.	8	0

Appendix G: Frequency table of students self-defined interaction

Students' self-defined interaction with the research project	F16	F8	F4	F2	F1
1. Active	14	8	4	1	1
2. Activities	4	2	1	0	0
3. Happy	13	6	2	2	1
4. Friendship	13	5	4	2	1
5. Learn	14	8	6	4	3
6. Nice	15	6	2	0	0
7. Collective	5	1	0	0	0
8. Understand	9	3	1	1	0
9. Communicative	13	7	1	1	1
10. Conscious	2	2	1	0	0
11. Commitment	12	7	2	1	1
12. Dynamic	15	8	5	3	2
13. Joyful	9	6	2	0	0
14. Efficient	8	2	2	1	0
15. Understandable	7	2	1	1	0
16. Entertained	5	2	0	0	0
17. Especial	4	1	0	0	0
18. Equity	8	3	2	1	0
19. Honesty	9	5	2	0	0
20. Interactive	9	4	1	0	0
21. Interesting	12	6	1	0	0
22. Participative	11	7	3	1	0
23. Respect	13	8	3	1	1
24. Responsibility	11	9	6	3	1
25. Tolerance	10	3	0	0	0
26. Hard worker	7	2	2	1	1
27. Teamwork	19	13	12	9	4
28. Confusing	4	2	1	0	0
29. Recreative	5	0	0	0	0
30. Sociable	16	10	6	2	2
31. Solidarity	7	2	2	2	1
32. Constructive	11	3	2	1	1

Based on Reyes (2018)

Appendix H: JUBASA Revolution journal

JUBASA REVOLUTION

Juan Bautista la Salle High School Institutional Journal



About this journal

Jubasa Revolution is a master piece written by ninth graders from a public institution in Caquetá, Colombia. Here, these brave students have raised their voices to discuss local issues related to their community and propose worthy solutions.

Credits

Photography design: Andrea Yasno in collaboration with Daniela Mejía

Social networking: Alejandro Sánchez and Alejandra Herrera

Authors: Grade 901

Teachers: Arlin Prada and Marly Trujillo

Stick to reading

Follow the new trend, read, enjoy and contribute to this amazing work full of reflections coming from students' views of the world.



LET'S MAKE THIS IDEA VIRAL



Find us on Facebook: Jubasa Revolution

SOCIAL CONCERNS



Bullying

The bullying is a type of physical and mental abuse, of the one reasons or causes is that the aggressor feels more than the victim for many motives. In JUBASA there are many situations of bullying because there is much intolerance, rejection towards others students wounding your sentiments. In conclusion, for this to stop happening we should talk to the students of JUBASA about the issues and make campaigns to avoid bullying in the institution.

Sergio R., Jorshua D., Sebastian M. and Johan P.

The lookism is a problematic in school

The lookism is a type of discrimination very present in my school, that affects to students of the institution. For example, the students of the institution discriminate to the fat people for their physical appearance, this causes consequences like the rebase for the people, and suicide. In conclusion the lookism is a problematic very known in my school and my community. We should respect to people without caring their of dress, their tattos. etc

David C., Felipe C. and Julian P.



Racial discrimination in the school

The racial discrimination is something that happens because of the lack of rationalization of a person who does separate a society. When I was little, I bear discrimination for part of my classmates. I felt bad and rejected, but then I had the help of the guidance of the institution and helped me overcome this problem. One of the issues is because people do not accept the differences. The effects that can cause the racial discrimination are suicide, traumatize, depression and low self-stem. To solve this problem in our institution so that students look at all the damage caused by racial discrimination. Make a talk with students of institutions.

Yeris C., Ingrid A, Karen B. and Paula T.

Are you victim of sexual discrimination?

Sexual orientation discrimination and gender discrimination are a reality in the classroom and in the school. One example of sexual discrimination are students of the school Juan Bautista la Salle for their different sexual orientation. In our school students and the society usually discriminate gays for their sexual orientation. This is a problem that needs to be viewed closely through the lenses of acceptance, respected and tolerance.

Valentina A., Vicente P. and Jairo M.



Environmental issues

Contamination in the stream the Perdiz



Sergio R., Karen B., Vicente P. and Jairo M.

In the municipality of Florencia- Caquetá there is a stream called the Perdiz. This stream is one of the problems of environmental contamination in our city. This problem of contamination affects the people, animals, and plants. This affects too the respiration and health. one of the principal causes is throw away dead animals and another of the causes is the contamination in the rivers. The principal consequence of this problem is like of affects the respiration and cause many droughts. One of the testimonies of the people is like the contamination in the Perdiz causes flood and material damage. We the students of JUBASA suggest one campaign of cleanliness to have the stream cleaner.

Stream pollution in Villa del Recreo neighborhood



Luisa L., Angie H. and Andrea Y.

Streams pollution is a problem that the department of Caqueta suffers. In Villa del Recreo neighborhood there is a polluted stream. This a problem that affects the water, the community and the animals in the Villa del Recreo. Therefore, what produced the pollution in the stream was: the new constructions of houses, and throw away trash. For this reason, there were consequences that affected to the community, for example, the bad smells, reduction of streams and the reduction of fishes. The testimony of a local resident to says us that, the waste of the new constructions caused stream pollution. One of the solutions what we propose to improve the quality of the environment is to make a mobilization peaceful for that the local government give the community a solution.

Contamination in "La Sardina" stream



Michael P., Julian P. and Sebastian M.

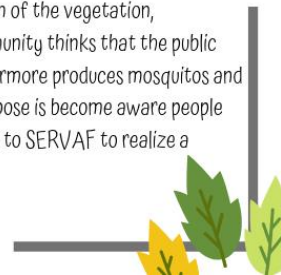
In the municipality of Florencia, we have an environmental problem that affects the community of "Los Comuneros bajos" neighborhood in the "La Sardina" stream. In fact, this stream is contaminated for toxic disposal, for example; plastic, fecal matter and dead animals. This stream brings as consequently, bad smell, destroy farming and mosquitos. We as students of JUBASA suggest to make campaigns for the care of the "La Sardina" stream; besides, educate people.

Human waste disposal in Amazonia neighborhood



Loren A., Angie A., Laura R. and Daniela M.

Human waste disposal in the Amazonia neighborhood is a deep ecological problem, that affects our food, health, and water. Besides, affects people and animals. Likewise, it damages the environment. The causes of human waste disposal in Amazonia neighborhood are bad maintenance of drains, lack of commitment of the public company and lack of human conscience. The consequences of this problem are the deterioration of the vegetation, community and animals. An integrant of the community thinks that the public company take responsibility of the problem furthermore produces mosquitos and moscas. The solution we students of JUBASA propose is become aware people by campaigns to protect the environment and talk to SERVAF to realize a followed maintenance to the sewers.



Appendix I: Sample of workshop

Get ready: Know the concept and vocabulary

Objective: To familiarize with the concept of discrimination and related vocabulary

1. Watch the video “the homeless in the sidewalk” as an example of discrimination, take notes to inform coming activities.

Watching and taking notes



2. Write words that connect with the video and be ready to tape your words on the board.

Ex.

Brainstorming ideas

Snub

Label

Humiliate



3. Collect the words that you and your partners taped on the board, write them on the thesaurus charts.

Collecting words



Thesaurus





4. Use some words to fill in the BINGO card, be ready to play with the class.

Playing with friends

B	I	N	G	O



5. Do you know what discrimination is? Yes No

Read the questions and select your answers.

Answering about yourself



Questions

Have you ever been discriminated?

Have you ever discriminated someone?

Have you ever intervened to avoid discrimination?

Yes	No

6. Use the KWL chart to express what you know and want to know about discrimination. Use the last column to write what you learnt at the end of the workshop.

Contrasting knowledge

Know	Want To Know	Learnt



Read: Get informed, analyze and reflect

Objective: To get informed about discrimination issues
 To analyze discrimination in Colombia from a critical point of view
 To reflect upon discrimination issues affecting my school and community

Pre-reading

7. **Play the tight hands game with your classmates, ask your teacher for a detailed explanation.**

Playing with friends



Remember: Discrimination has two perspectives, one is from the person who discriminates/insider and the other one is from the person who is discriminated/outsider.

While-reading

8. **Read about a discrimination case in Colombia and consider the following advice to improve comprehension.**

Interacting with the text

- Add a happy face sticker 😊 to the points you agree with and a thinking face sticker 🤔 to the points you disagree with.
- Color in green the words that you know
- Color in red the words that you do not know, then look them up in the dictionary
- Color in blue the words and phrases that catch your attention
- Use your favorite color to highlight the most important parts of the text
- Use the margins to write your own questions, thoughts and feelings 📝



Post-reading

9. **Use this log to entry your ideas about the main points of the text.**

Self-reflection



Reflection log	
Title:	
What the text says	What I think about it

