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Developing Reading Skills through a Collaborative Learning (CL) Environment in Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

This research study presents the results of a research project focused on developing reading skills through a collaborative learning (CL) environment in a group of 40 students between the ages of 16 and 18 in a Colombian private school. Hence, the main goal of the research was to explore, analyze and assess the way learners develop reading abilities through CL. Instruments such as a pre-post questionnaires, log, and writing artifacts were used to collect the information for this action research study. Its findings revealed that by using collaborative learning strategies such as: dialectical notebook, double entry journal, jigsaw, pairs and squares and bookends students improved their understanding and comprehension of reading skills; it was an opportunity to demonstrate the impact that reading had when it was developed in CL Also, learners were able to acknowledge their learning strengths, set learning strategies, and use CL strategies that permitted them to enhance reading skills.

Key words: Collaborative Learning, reading skills, adolescents in EFL classroom.

RESUMEN

Esta investigación presenta los resultados de un proyecto de investigación centrado en el desarrollo de habilidades de lectura a través de un aprendizaje colaborativo para un grupo de adolescentes entre los 16 a 18 años de edad en una Institución Educativa privada colombiana con un grupo de estudiantes de onceavo grado. Por lo tanto, el objetivo principal de la investigación fue explorar analizar y evaluar la forma en que los estudiantes desarrollan las habilidades de lectura a través del aprendizaje colaborativo; Para recolectar la información en este estudio de investigación acción, se emplearon un cuestionario, un registro y tres artefactos que fueron utilizados para recopilar la información de este estudio de investigación acción. Los resultados revelaron que la exposición a diferentes estrategias de aprendizaje colaborativo, los estudiantes pudieron reforzar su comprensión y análisis al momento de leer, a su vez tuvieron la oportunidad para demostrar el impacto que la lectura pudo tener cuando se desarrolló en un ambiente colaborativo; también; los estudiantes fueron capaces de reconocer sus fortalezas de aprendizaje, y utilizar estrategias que permitan mejorar las habilidades de lectura.

Palabra Clave: Aprendizajes colaborativo, Habilidades de lectura, Adolescentes y la lengua extranjera.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This research project investigates how collaborative learning as a teaching strategy can develop reading skills in a private institution in an EFL context. This research proposal was implemented in a group of 40-eleventh graders at Colegio Elisa Borrero de Pastrana (ELBOR).

The main goal of this research study was to explore, analyze and assess the way learners developed intensive reading abilities through collaborative learning. The researcher decided to conduct this study due to the lack of commitment that students had when they faced pre-reading, while reading and post-reading activities; in contrast to the enthusiasm these students usually exhibit in listening, speaking and writing activities, they demonstrated little interest reading and analyzing different articles. On the other hand, as the number of students in the classroom was 40 they sometimes got distracted so that their English learning was affected. Therefore, collaborative learning may help students to use more strategies for developing reading skills in a different environment in the English sessions.

Also, this research study wanted to propose that reading is an important skill that should be developed in English as a foreign language. Therefore, because of its importance teachers need more preparation in developing reading skills so that learners could feel more engaged and committed when reading; students may have the opportunity to use reading skills in a collaborative learning environment and learn different strategies and techniques to be use in their learning experience. Also students might use reading as a main skill in order to enhance some others skills.

Most of the English teachers at ELBOR focus their lessons on speaking, listening, and grammar and often overlook reading and writing. The school is more concerned about developing speaking rather than the other skills to become English speakers first and then, during their English learning process students would acquire more complex skills like reading and writing. As a result, students are less interested in improving reading skills and as a consequence they have difficulty understanding main ideas, comprehending open-ended questions and skimming and scanning information. English teachers do also concentrate in the development of speaking: however this teacher-researcher considers that developing reading skills would support language learning because students would improve in vocabulary and comprehension in order to use new words when speaking.

Even though Colegio Elisa Borrero de Pastrana focuses its Proyecto Educativo Institucional (PEI) on the improvement of all language skills, this teacher-researcher considers that reading skills might strengthen listening, writing and speaking skills in different ways. For example while students are participating in a reading activity, they can acquire and learn new vocabulary, understand and develop grammar structures, and as a result they can talk with a classmate and write from different topics based on what they have read previously.

Statement of the problem

The project was developed at Colegio Elisa Borrero de Pastrana, it is one of the private institutions directed by the Ministry of Defense, located in the northwest of Bogota-Colombia.

Colegio Elisa Borrero de Pastrana is ruled according to the principles of the Ministry of Defense in Colombia in which it states that the school principal should meet

with some characteristics and specific tasks. Firstly, he/she must be a lieutenant, captain,

major or colonel. Second, he/she must know the national educational standards, and thirdly,

he/she must implement action plans that foster high educational standards. One of the

action plans implemented during the 2012 and 2013 was the design of a new curriculum in

order to improve students` English language competences based on the national and

international English standards.

  To meet this challenge, the Ministry of Defense increased the number of two-hour

English session to five per week, provided new technological tools such as smart boards,

laptops, recorders, and also provided training to the teachers. However, the school should

be strengthened in some other components for example; the amount of time to develop each

learning unit is not enough. Students usually should learn a minimum of ten topics in eight

weeks; therefore in one week students must master one complete topic in four hours.

Therefore, teachers who have to explain and clarify doubts about the topics are struggling

to help the students to understand the topics, and students who have to learn the topics in a

short time are having problems to master the topics adequately. Students feel overwhelmed

and unmotivated because of the number of topics they have to learn in an academic period.

As part of the support, students need to work collaboratively with their peers in order to

share the topics and clarify their doubts with people who have the same level.

  Moreover, the English program of the school constructs its syllabus according to the

Common European Framework and Ministry of Education standards. Despite the fact that

students should be in B1 level, they are actually in A2. In terms of reading, the Common

European Framework (CEF) proposes that students in A2 must be able to comprehend

sentences and use frequent expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g.

very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). However, at this point students are not able to comprehend sentences, some basic vocabulary is not understood, and frequently they encounter comprehension problems while reading.

Additionally, participants need to receive comprehensible input in English as a foreign language in order to acquire any language skill; most of the students expressed that the ELBOR´s teachers do not use English language constantly, and the information that teachers provide them is not enough to enhance their reading skills. Hence, at the beginning of the research study students presented a skeptical and unmotivated attitude while reading in English, unlike when they were learning to speak or to listen in the foreign language.

As a result of comparing the syllabus´ goals, the Common European Framework, Ministerio de Education standards, the method that the school promotes, and the attitudes that students demonstrated when reading, this study is an opportunity to reflect on the impact that intensive reading could have when it is fostered in collaborative environments.

Before implementing this investigation, the researcher administered a diagnostic test to find out how students perceived their progress in terms of reading in the last years. The test was applied to 40 students who became the participants. The results presented through the instrument highlighted different topics that helped to understand that reading is an isolated part in their English language learning. Firstly, students are more comfortable learning grammatical structures, writing simple sentences and paragraphs, speaking repetition activities, and after that process receiving feedback from the teacher. When students did this daily process, they frequently did not comprehend the vocabulary or how to read the sentences because most of the process they do is to repeat mechanical words. At

the end of each lesson they seemed to be frustrated because they made the sentences but the

lack of reading strategies did not permit the students to have a better performance and

output.

Also, at the beginning of English course, the students showed significant

information about how they have learnt about grammar topics in the last two years at

school (Appendix A) . They mentioned that most of the time teachers presented the topic,

but they did not seem completely prepared to teach a reading lesson. Most of the time,

teachers presented their lessons to enhance grammatical structures and improve writing.

Also, learners complained that they had five hours in the week to learn English, and most of

time teachers used the class time talking; so, the use of speaking in students did not occupy

a significant part of the lesson.

In addition, the information provided by the application of the instrument

(Appendix A) allowed the teacher-researcher to know that the students were able to express

what they liked to learn, how they liked to learn, and what their limitations were when they

were learning English. Although they were starting to use English at the school, they

mentioned that they would like to learn to speak and think a little bit more because the time

is too short. Also, eleventh graders stated that teachers were trying to present more

speaking lessons. However, the students believed they should learn more vocabulary in

order to have a better performance when speaking. Also, they liked to learn with help of

their classmates; teachers sometimes focus their classes on individual work, and they

wanted to learn with company of another peer. And finally learners communicated that one

of the biggest limitations they had is that they did not comprehend reading articles, and they

considered that part of English necessary but boring.

On the other hand, part of the lack of motivation that the students have to learn how to read better in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as participants are in adolescence and they focus their attention more on emotional issues that arise in their lives. than in cognitive factors (Brown, 2007), the ELBOR students are not exception, they prefer to establish good relationships with their peers, to spend more time doing their hobbies such cycling, dancing, going to the cinema, or practicing some sports. Therefore, this research study attempted to capture and hold the participants ´attention through the use of topics which they can have empathy based on their age and likes.

Adolescents from ELBOR needed more intensive reading practice and instructional time to develop their reading skills more thoroughly. Reading in groups may strengthen their relationships and supply their emotional needs. Also it may increase their motivation of reading thanks to the selection the topics are used and the peer feedback from the collaborative learning experience.

In conclusion with all the insights the study participants presented in the diagnostic test (Appendix A), the researcher believes that the students need to increase their vocabulary in order to have more tools to communicate and express what they need and feel in English as a foreign language, also they want to learn collaboratively, and finally, reading needs to be taught more dynamically by giving them more strategies to improve their reading comprehension so that they will benefit from it. So, based on the previous information, the researcher decided to focus this research study on developing reading skills in a group of eleventh grade the students through the use of collaborative learning strategies in order to improve the students` pre, while and post reading. Thus this qualitative action research analyzed the contribution that collaborative learning had in order

to enhance reading skills, in regards to the prior information, the following research

question emerged:

Main question:

- How does collaborative learning contribute to the development of intensive reading skills in English as a Foreign Language in eleventh graders from Colegio Elisa Borrero de Pastrana?

General Objective:

- To describe the possible impact of collaborative learning on the students´ reading skills in the EFL classroom.

Rationale

Through the development of this investigation, the researcher expects to contribute to the field of English as a foreign language learning and teaching because developing intensive reading skills through collaborative learning environments could provide teachers with meaningful insights, answers, results and ideas to resolve problems in English sessions when learners are developing reading activities.

Bearing in mind the Colombian Ministry of Defense and the language curriculum, this study might help to promote collaborative learning. Thus, this research study seeks to describe the possible impact that the students could gain from a collaborative learning experience while they are developing reading skills.

Also, as students sometimes prefer to share with their friends and to practice their hobbies, reading in a collaborative learning experience may integrate awareness to learn reading skills and support to the classroom lessons and texts that are assigned.

In conclusion, with this study, the researcher hopes to discover strategies to make reading a more enjoyable and meaningful experience for the students and teachers so that it will establish various ideas about the usefulness of this technique. This study would provide new alternatives, ideas, and strategies in terms of reading activities, collaboration, and language acquisition in my future teaching practice.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

This report presents three theoretical constructs that frame this study: reading skills, collaborative learning, and adolescents´ language learning in EFL. First, the researcher explored the concepts of reading skills in order to comprehend its principal characteristics and its process. Secondly, this project investigated some insights of collaborative learning from different authors, lecturers and researchers in order to examine how collaborative learning could develop reading skills. Thirdly, the study considered how language learning can be acquired by adolescents while they are reading and working collaboratively.

Development of Reading Skills

In order to create activities that foster the development of reading skills it is necessary to take into account different components within the process. At first, the students should activate their cognitive process. Carrel (1998) explains that reading as a cognitive process must be related to other process such as; "thinking, reasoning, studying or motivational strategies" (p.3). According to this author, reading is a process that involves many actions that the reader performs to have a better comprehension of the text. Good readers use different types of strategies to access a text, but also should readers know how reading strategies work but they should also understand how to synchronize the strategies in order to use them more effectively and efficiently.

Carrel (1998) concludes that to "contextualize and operationalize" are the key actions to be able to read successfully. For this author, reading is a connection of different aspects that the reader might control to get the meaning of any reading. She says that a reading strategy is a flexible tool selected by the reader. Because the reader has the ability

to select the correct strategy, he is improving his attention, memory, communication and learning which are key elements for meta-cognition and motivation (p.3)

Additionally, Cagliari and Das (1997) suggest that the cognitive process involves three different aspects like attention, simultaneous processing and successive process. Firstly, attention involves focus and concentration to avoid any kind of distractions that the students may have in the classroom. According to the authors, attention focuses on self-directing, information selecting and persistence of responding. When the students are reading, they need certain prior information in order to respond to stimulus that can help in their comprehension, so their attention becomes more accurate and precise to direct their knowledge to the reading. Secondly, simultaneous processing integrates simultaneous process. In this process, the student may acquire the ability of making connections between the pieces to have general and specific concepts of certain topics. According to Cagliari and Das (1997) "simultaneous processing is a mental process by which the individual integrates separate stimuli into a single whole or group" (p. 89). Simultaneous processing has strong spatial and logical dimensions for both nonverbal and verbal content. For example when the students are reading in pairs, they can have various ideas in order to establish a concept or construct new ideas. The spatial aspect refers to the perception of stimuli as a whole. In academic setting, simultaneous processing is involved in understanding grammatical statements that demand the integration of words into a whole idea. This integration involves comprehension of word relationships, prepositions and inflections so that the person can obtain meaning based on the whole idea (Cagliari, 1999).

Thirdly, successive process is a cognitive process in which the students are able to apply general information and select concrete ideas to make it more specific. This process

demands respondents to remember or use information that follows in a strict, defined order, especially serial and syntactical information. Cagliari and Das (1997) describe successive processing as "a mental process by which the individual integrates stimuli into a specific serial order that forms a chain-like progression" (p, 93). For example, when the students are establishing and selecting ideas of certain information, their successive process is being concrete and specific, so that they are making a process of selecting information to have a more precise concept. The emphasis on the steps or successive processing is also involved in reading, especially in initial reading or decoding of unfamiliar words.

As a conclusion, the cognitive process in reading has to be developed so that the students can gain the tools to be accurate at the moment of reading and understanding articles, the way the students integrate these three characteristics can make the process of reading easier. Sometimes when the students are participating in a reading activity, teachers focus their lessons on the topic, but they do not take into account the importance of analyzing how to activate their cognitive process. In regards to the research study, a cognitive process can generate certain abilities in students that improve a reading activity, and also the way to develop reading tasks help the students to make more enjoyable their process.

Moreover, Stanovich and Siegel (1994) state that difficulties in reading must be understood in terms of the processes of reading. Reading processes depend on reader´s language and the writing system that encodes that language. The writing system units are converted into mental representations that include the units of the language system, specifically (a) the identification of words, and (b) the engagement of language and general cognitive mechanisms that assemble these words into messages.

Also, Seidenberg (1999) states that reading can be developed in any environment. He mentions that some reading skills begin with a visual input that emerges from immediate visual images that come from the mind of the readers. It permits a good reader to identify and associate what he sees with the information of article that the student is reading. For example if the topic of a reading article is about drugs, and the students have that visual image in their mind, for the student is easy to activate that information in order to associate and comprehend the article. That image becomes a word which is immediately integrated syntactically with an ongoing sentence parse and, semantically with an ongoing message interpretation. To this study the use of images in activities provides relevant information so that the students can gather and comprehend reading articles.

Also, Stanovich and Siegel (1994) support the previous statement by suggesting that visual word identification helps in the process of reading. Beginning with a visual input, a string of letters and some perceptual processes produce the activation of the grapheme units (individual and multiple letters) that constitute words. In traditional models of human cognition, the words are represented in a lexicon, the reader's mental representation of word forms and meanings. Successful word reading occurs when a match between the input letter string and a word representation. As part of this process, phonological units, including individual phonemes associated with individual letters, are also activated.

Therefore, as the learners from ELBOR work through that reading process, their reading comprehension would be strong or weak. This research study intended to find to use appropriate methods as Seidenberg mentions so that it can present new strategies adolescents can use to develop their reading skills, and also to avoid the lack of motivation when the students do not understand a text.

Dole, Brown and Trathen (1996) state that the levels of motivation depend on the impact of the task and the comprehension of the strategy. Hence, the students increase their reading comprehension when they are motivated to accomplish a task. Reading implies that levels of motivation may vary depending on the level of comprehension that the students have. In order to raise their levels of motivation when the students are reading, there are strategies that may help to enhance reading skills in this study such as:

- Identifying text organization and topics: Taylor (1992) suggests that this strategy increases the students' comprehension of the material being read. There are six basic structures that are commonly found in textbooks. Once the teacher has modelled the text structure, the students can follow the organizing pattern to identify important events, concepts and ideas.

- Separating fact from and opinion: Aaccording to Webster's Dictionary a fact is "anything that is done or happens; anything actually existent; any statement strictly true; truth; reality." Whereas an opinion is defined as "indicating a belief, view, sentiment, conception." Obvious indicators of opinion are when sentences include words such as: "Generally, it is thought", "I believe that", "It is a sad day when."

- Understanding the main idea: Duffy (2003) states that this strategy may be helpful to first explain what the main idea is not. It is not the information obtained during the introduction to the text when the title, headings, illustrations etc. are briefly considered, and linked to background knowledge, prior to reading. Although these text features are often useful in scaffolding readers towards finding the main idea, on their own, they are not enough. Readers need to explore the text at a deeper level

in order to confirm or put aside any tentative thoughts about the main idea that the text introduction may prompt.

- Prediction, and inferring meaning: Fielding, Anderson, and Pearson (1990) found that prediction activities promoted overall understanding but only if the predictions were explicitly compared to text ideas during further reading. This suggests that the verification process, in which knowledge and text are compared explicitly, may be as important as making the prediction.

- Exploiting transparent words: Transparent words are the words that have similar spelling or pronunciation in two languages. The transparent words could be divided into two categories: true cognates and false cognates. A true cognate is transparent word which has the same the same meaning in both languages. For example, the English word "International" is similar to the Spanish word "Internacional". A false cognate keeps the same characteristic as transparent but its meaning is not the same in both languages. "Carpet" is a false cognate, for instance. The English word carpet means a thick heavy covering for a floor, usually made of woven wool or synthetic fibers; the Spanish word carpet means folder or portfolio.

- Reading non-text information: this strategy refers to getting the main ideas of the content of a text from the images that go with it. These images could be graphs, pictures, or cartoons. This reading strategy is accomplished by readers when reading in their native language. This strategy relates to what Oxford (1990) has called transferring. She argues that transferring "means directly applying previous knowledge to facilitate knowledge in the target language" (p. 85).

- Skimming and scanning: these reading strategies help the learner to comprehend what is being read. Scanning has to do with looking for specific words or chunks of information. Skimming deals with getting main ideas of text without reading every single word the reader uses these two strategies to get acquainted with the text in a first reading.

- Using linguistic clues: "This strategy relates to the previously gained knowledge of the target language, the learners' own language, or some other language can provide linguistic clues to the meaning of what is heard of read" (Oxford, 1990, p. 90). In this action research, the linguistic clues were contextual references, which are words that replace, indicate or emphasize some other information in the text being read. They are usually used to refer to a previous idea in the text. Some examples of those words are; *it, they, them, I, he, she, which, who, whose, that, such, one, and* demonstrative adjectives such as *this, that, these, and those.*

- Guessing: "helps learners let go of the belief that they have to recognize and understand every single word before they can comprehend the overall meaning" (Oxford, 1990, p. 90). By guessing the learners can predict what the text is about.

Adolescents´ Language Learning in EFL

Today, teenagers are entering in an adult world where reading and writing are essential skills for independence and success. Tolman (2005) states that the students who understand words are better able to get the meaning of words and are better prepared to deal with the increased reading and writing demands across the curriculum and content areas. Therefore, high levels of literacy are needed for most jobs and reading appropriately is almost a prerequisite for advancement in many employment situations. Reading proficiency

is also needed to conduct activities in daily life and participate in community activities. In a complex world, the ability to read is crucial; and adolescents with low literacy skills are especially vulnerable for underachievement, under-employment, and often do not have professional success.

When adolescents are acquiring a new language, they do not follow any structure or instruction; they prefer to interact and talk with their peers rather that improve their reading skills; different to adults who are more aware and worried about learning more structural topics. These differences in both ages emerge from their biological maturation and social needs; therefore, when adolescents are trying to acquire a new language, they should perceive the advantages of comprehending and learning technique when reading. They should know that reading improves their quality of their conversations, reading provides new knowledge in vocabulary, and it will help them to become more involved in discussions. Also, it may stimulate creativity because they can acquire new knowledge and learning to have better ideas, and finally, reading may help them to provide strong opinions about different topics, they may become more critical in their English learning progress.

Also, during adolescence, an individual is growing physically but also developing and defining personality. That means, they are not completely interested in learning a foreign language because they are dealing with different social and emotional patterns that direct them to have certain behaviors and different interests. Brown`s (2007) critical period hypothesis claims that "a biologically determined period of life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire. However, puberty is a critical period for second language acquisition in which people may seem incapable of acquiring a language" (p. 57). Based on this premise, children can acquire and retain more

information rapidly. However, the author states that when the children are becoming older and

begin their puberty, they are not interested in learning a language. Lenneberg (1967) called that

action a "slow process*" (p. 58).*

Moreover, Thomas Scovel (2001) used the term *lateralization* to describe the loss of

plasticity in the brain that prevents adolescents from acquiring language at the same rate as

younger children. Nevertheless, when the individuals become adolescents, they are more aware

of acquiring a second language because external factors pressure them to learn another

language.

During adolescence, individuals undergo many biological and social transformations.

So, learners have physical changes, and they have the pressure to be accepted in a community.

Adolescents in this stage are emotional and influenced by external factors caused by society.

Lenneberg (1967) says that some people in this stage are unbalanced; they tend to be isolated,

and in some other cases they preferred to live in a community. Then, Brown (2007) supports

the last ideas stating that adolescents are influenced by their individuality to: "become more

aware of themselves, more self-conscious as they seek both to define and to understand their

self-identity…they develop inhibitions about this self-identity…[which] are heightened in the

trauma of undergoing critical physical, cognitive, and emotional changes" (69).

Also, Guiora (2008) says that adolescents are learning to understand their own egos and

they are more concerned about having better social relationships than using appropriate

linguistic codes based on their context. Guiora (2008) employs the idea of language ego, as a

representation of the personal identity that just can be visible through the language. Therefore,

the researcher could take advantage of this representation to implement reading strategies with

the students considering their context, so that they can comprehend, establish conclusions, and interact about what they already are living properly.

When adolescents are involved in the learning of a foreign language, it is because they are aware of the importance to start developing certain skills; maybe they want to go abroad, visit a family member, or simply they desire to learn a song that they do not understand. For them all these aspects have the same validity for learning a language. Walqui (2000) explains how "students come from diverse backgrounds and have diverse needs and goals…with adolescent language learners, factors such as peer pressure, the presence of role models, and the level of home support can strongly affect the desire and ability to learn a second language" (p. 53).

Other insight that adolescents demonstrate interest while learning a foreign language comes from peers' pressure. When they are under pressure, they want to highlight their abilities over their peers. Hence, to learn a foreign language for an adolescent is a sight of intelligence, modernism, and fashion. This happens with language as well. If an adolescent is learning English, and he/she is popular for learning it, the most common situation is that his/her group wants the same abilities. Walqui (2000) states that "teenagers tend to be heavily influenced by their peer group in second language learning peer pressure often undermines the goals set by parents and teachers" (p, 63).

Also Brown states (2007) that teenagers acquire different attitudes that can be negative and positive because of the language and culture. These two components contribute to the learning acquisition. Brown (2007) states that "the learning of negative attitudes towards people who speak the second language or toward the second language itself has been proved to affect the success of language learning in adolescents" (p 72). The different attitudes that an

adolescent presents are caused by different cultural contexts, in which language learning can be accepted or rejected by them. It occurs depending on factors such as peer pressure, adolescents` experiences and lack of confidence. Therefore, the research study is conducted to observe the impact that working in groups make generate in the students while they are working in reading activities.

In conclusion, adolescents` language acquisition is a complex process in which the teacher should devote time to create lessons that may involve the students to learn a foreign language. Learning a first language is a natural procedure that each person goes through innately without any effort. However to learn a foreign language is more difficult depending on the learners' age. As a child, second language acquisition is similar to the first in that the learner does not have to think about it. An adolescent must try hard to learn a new language while fighting the usual social and biological implications that are common during this stage.

Collaborative Learning

In recent years, teaching has had some changes; its techniques, methods, and strategies have evolved or adapted to the new technologies, interactions, environments and societies. As part of the teaching methods, collaborative learning (CL) involves groups of students working together to solve a problem, and complete a task, or create a product. Johnson & Johnson (1994) state that collaborative learning prepares the students for the realities that they will be facing when they enter the existing job market. Working in teams will refine students' abilities to reason, as well as increase their understanding of complex ideas and content knowledge. It has become one of the most important and popular educational approaches used by teachers in their classes. It gives the students the opportunity to acquire and share their knowledge with the help of their peers; Brown (2007)

states that most of the time people usually work in groups of two or three, and that is

because most of the humans being feel more comfortable with somebody to create, acquire,

produce and explore new knowledge.

Brown et al (1989) describe CL as an active and constructive process in which the

students could acquire new information through different skills according to their own

abilities. When the students are working in teams, each member has some knowledge to

benefit the rest of the group members in order to achieve a common goal. Also, Brown et al

(1989) state that "Collaborative learning activities immerse the students in challenging

tasks or questions" (p. 63); collaborative learning activities frequently begin with problems

because each student has independent knowledge and a personality. But, instead of being

distant observers of questions and answers, the students become practitioners and

participants in order to present their points of view and to have a common answer.

As Golub (1988) points out, "Collaborative learning has as its main feature a

structure that allows for student talk: the students are supposed to talk with each other... and

it is in this talking that much of the learning occurs." (p 87). When the students are

working together, a positive response to acquire a new learning intrinsically, it occurs

because of the stimulation that the students have at the moment to share information, and

clarify doubts between them.

Moreover, Astin (1985) labels stages when the students are learning collaboratively,

those stages are named as mutual exploration, meaning making and feedback that often

leads better understanding in the students. Firstly, when the author refers to mutual

exploration, he presents it as the act of searching and discovers information from their peers

that can have importance to achieve a collaborative goal. Secondly, "meaning making" is

defined as a construction of knowledge through interpretive interactions with reading and writing. It refers to the act of writing itself is an act of struggle to force language into compliance so as to obtain a desired meaning both for oneself and for one's reader (Astin, 1985). In a collaborative learning environment "meaning making" may help the students to interpret, and construct their knowledge with the support of their friends, they may have the advantage to use a conversation to increase their understanding or writing task for expressing opinion, both skills (speaking and writing) developed in regards to reading topics.

And thirdly, Astin (1985) describes feedback as information provided by an agent regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding. In collaborative learning, the students can provide corrective information, or they can provide an alternative strategy to look up the answer to evaluate the correctness of a response. In collaborative learning, its nature provides in the students constant feedback between them that permits them to construct their knowledge and accept the comments of their peers positively. As Bonwell and Eison (1991) state "feedback invites students to build closer connections to other students, their faculty, their courses and their learning" (p. 35).

Additionally, Collaborative learning is an instructional method in which students work together on an assignment. In CL, the students can produce the individual parts of a larger assignment and then "assemble" the final work together as a team. Collaborative learning can vary greatly in scope and objectives. Students are individually accountable for their work but also for the work of the group as a whole, and both products are assessed.

Also, collaborative learning activities can vary widely depending on the goals that the teacher could have and the context. Some teachers prefer small groups to work, others

prefer big groups. Nevertheless, those activities have same validity from collaborative learning if there is interaction among their peers. Johnson et al (1990) consider that the instructional use of small groups permits the students to maximize their own and each other's learning.

In a collaborative learning environment, the activities are focused on the development of academic objectives and social skills. Based on this, Johnson and Holubec (1990) believe that each collaborative activity should be developed through the following objectives: a) to ensure the positive interdependence of group participants and b) to enable the students to practice different teamwork skills where the students reflect on how they are doing in order to learn how to become more effective in group learning settings. Therefore, CL activities include an element of positive interdependence among group members, in which Collaborative learning preserves individual accountability so that activities include face-to-face interaction among students and with the instructor; also, activities are designed to enhance students' collaborative skills in order to help of processing or practicing new concepts.

The activities that promote collaborative learning and would help this study to enhance reading skills at Colegio Elisa Borrero de Pastrana are dialectical notebook, double entry journal, jigsaw, pairs and squares, bookends:

- **Dialectical notebook**: Kadel and Kedner (1994) described as an activity that follows a sequence to discuss about different topics that come from different readings. Kadel and Kedner (1994) explains dialectical notebook.

  All the students read an article. A pair of students, A and B, shares a notebook for responding to the article. For example, student A chooses and comments upon a

series of excerpts that particularly characterize the article's meaning. Student B then

writes a response to A's commentary; A then responds to both the initial choices

and B's response; and B then completes the sequence by responding to A's last

entry. These steps could be abridged, but the essential ingredient of this activity is

the peer interaction in written form. This writing need not happen during class time;

notebooks could be exchanged in class at each stage. At the end of the sequence, at

the time the reading is scheduled for class discussion, all students will have had

plenty of opportunity to test and react to one another's ideas. (p.132-3).This activity

helps student to extend their analytical understanding about a topic, and then present

it to their peers.

- **Double entry journal**: it is a collaborative learning activity in which

students in groups read an article and write a summary with the main ideas of the

text, and then create question to be answered by other groups. Hughes and Townley

(1994) described the double entry journals:

The left side of a standard notebook page is used for summarizing a given reading

and listing 6-10 major points. The right side is used for reaction to the reading and

answering pre-distributed questions. These journal entries can then be used in group

work to summarize members reactions, to draft a 'burning question' that was not

resolved by the reading, or to summarize the group's discussion for the class. The

journaling forms the groundwork for class discussion and ensures preparation on the

part of the students. (p. 14). As part of language learning, double entry journals help

students to enhance reading and speaking skills in which learners have the

opportunity to work by groups and discuss topics about their own interest.

- **Jigsaw:** this activity particularly suited to situations in which students require practice with content that is easily divided into constituent parts Crowley and Dunn (1992) considered jigsaw

An activity particularly suited to situations in which the students require practice with content that is easily divided into constituent parts. Groups are assigned a specific aspect or element of the concept under consideration (e.g., different aspects of a work of literature, different steps or methods for solving a given problem), and each group member is expected to become an 'expert' on that aspect. The groups are then reshuffled to include one member from each of the previous groups in one new group, and each expert is responsible for 'teaching' their particular area of expertise to the other group members. to new group 1 group 2 group 3 group 1 group 2 group 3 In this activity, the students practice new concepts and methods by, first, reviewing and practicing with peers, and, second, by teaching the material to others. This is not the first time the new group members have heard of the new concept; for them the 'expert's' presentation is further review as well.(p. 34) when students participate collaboratively by summarizing and using the jigsaw, they are able to increase their English level.

- **Pairs and squares** is a CL activity in which students read short article and discuss in a little what they understood. Hughes and Townley showed pairs and squares:

Each student individually spends 5 minutes reading a short article and then students write a short question. Pairs of students then compare and discuss their responses. Groups of pairs (4 students) then compare findings and try to reach consensus for

presentation to the class as a whole. This activity encourages students to gradually

increase the amount of feedback they receive on a particular problem. Individual

accountability is preserved by the initial 5 minutes, followed by practice in

developing consensus. (p, 13)

- **Bookends:** Holubec (1992) said that bookends start to compile what the

  students already know about a topic and what questions they have already

  developed. After the lecture, students are given time to consider what was added

  in the lecture and to go over any questions that have not yet been addressed. (p.

  182)

All these activities advise that each student should have an individual

preparation with an emotional and affective incentive and avoiding retributions in

the grades. In that way, students will be more aware and motivated to develop the

activities. Lowman (1990) says that this self-interest has been found to be stronger

motivation for higher quality preparation than more traditional methods of testing

student preparation.

In conclusion, to involve students in a collaborative learning experience may

enhance their reading skills, and make it more interesting for them it is a learning

environment in which students may reflect about their English process, and also to receive

help and feedback with people who have the same age, level, and live the same emotional

situations.

Chapter Three: Research Design

This chapter presents the design of the research study, the type of study conducted, the context, a description of the setting, the instruments used to gather the collected data, the participants who will be involved in the research to develop reading skills through collaborative learning, validity, reliability, triangulation and ethical considerations.

The following table presents the main data regarding the research:

Type of study	Qualitative Action Research
Setting	Colegio Elisa Borrero de Pastrana, Bogotá D.C.
Participants	40 Students between 15 and 19 years old, eleventh graders
	Researcher's Role: Participant observer
Instruments	Questionnaires
	Logs
	Artifacts

Table 1. Research design Framework

Type of study

An action research framework was applied for this study as a response to a variety of situations that the researcher could identify through observation. Also, it is the methodology the researcher used to conceptualize, implement and evaluate promising practices about how collaborative learning works when developing reading skills. This study considered the principles that guide action research because the teacher-research permits a direct relationship between the researcher and those who are "being observed" (Bartunek, 1993). This form of research is part of a worldview that "sees human beings as co-creating their reality through participation, experience and action" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 206). In addition, action research is performed through a set of social values and may be described as the "pursuit of democratic forms of communication that, in their turn,

prefigure planned social change" (Hamilton, 1994, p. 67) because students through this

study were able to present insights about their behaviors in regard to the collaborative

learning and reading that they are using.

The study *developing reading skills in a collaborative learning environment*

considered the qualitative research processes because they are continuous, evolving and

complex in which a set of activities is completed as suggested by Stringer (1996) the

participants "will find themselves working backward through the routines, repeating

processes, revising procedures, rethinking interpretations, leapfrogging steps or stages, and

sometimes making radical changes in direction" (p. 17). In essence, action research

addresses relationships, communication, participation, and inclusion, and potentially leads

to benefits for all stakeholders involved in the process (Stringer, 1996).

Accordingly, the researcher observed the students when working collaboratively in

reading activities, and then proceeded to implement instruments such as logs,

questionnaires and artifacts to consolidate data to reflect and analyze possible impact of

collaboration on their learning process. And finally, he established some conclusions about

what he observed into the classroom. Also, Nunan (1992) states that action research is

executed in natural occurring settings, using qualitative research as a method; during the

teaching process carried out by the teacher-researcher, he observed, investigated, analyzed,

and reflected about specific problems when students were reading as Nunan (1992)

suggested as a natural process that occurs in a educative setting.

This is an action research study because the purpose if this research was to get

meaningful insights and responses to the initial questions posed and displayed during the

pedagogical intervention, which involved a series of stages that came directly from the data

collection during the pedagogical intervention, the role of the teacher was observer and the

participants were co-researchers.

Settings

This research took place at Colegio Elisa Borrero de Pastrana, a private institution

directed by Policia Nacional de Colombia and Ministerio de Educacion Nacional located in

Bogotá, Colombia. Before the implementation of the research the results of the diagnostic

test (Appendix A) showed, that most of students were in level A2 and just a few students

were in B1 according to the **CEF**. Hence, the institution has determined that learners should

start in the level A2 in order to increase the level equally, and they can have the opportunity

to progress in their English learning with their peers.

Also, the institution follows teaching principles based on humanism and

constructivism; therefore, collaborative learning may improve English language as well as a

tool to increase humanism in students with each session.

Also, ELBOR uses the communicative approach in English classes because this

approach recognizes that all communication has a social purpose in which students have the

opportunity to express their opinions, and to tolerate their errors to a certain extent. Also, it

encourages cooperative relationships among students providing the opportunity to negotiate

meaning.

Additionally, students have to use a textbook throughout the academic year as a

requirement to improve in their language. However, the textbook introduces twelve topics

per period (each period has eight weeks and each week has five hours). So, most of the

students cannot develop the topic adequately because of the number of topics they have to

study and the number of exercise they have to do per each topic. Therefore, this report took

advantage from the textbook to implement its topics so that students accomplish the

objectives of the period, and school´s standards.

Participants

The criteria for selecting the participants emerged from the linguistic needs that the

group had in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). According to the diagnostic test

(Appendix A), some eleventh graders needed to enhance their reading skills and to have

strategies in order to be applied in different exams they should do during the year. So, the

teacher-researcher selected from four 35-40 participants from among four groups of

eleventh grade students, one 30 students group based on different aspects the researcher

observed during the process. Firstly, the group was selected because most of the students

were willing to be participants; their parents signed a consent letter to give permission to

the adolescents to be part of the study (See Appendices B, C and D), and the ethical

considerations so that students which since now they are going to be named participants get

involved about the rules to be part of this study. Secondly, students showed motivation to

enhance their English language and they were always attentive, and participative to

implement the activities. Finally this group had fewer academic problems in other subjects;

hence, the academic coordinator gave the approval to implement the research study with

this group.

The group was composed by 35 eleventh graders, between 16-19 years old.

Eighteen (18) participants are girls and seventeen (17) are boys. This group is interested in

improving their English skills based on the attitudes they always showed in previous

lessons, and the answers they presented in diagnostic test; also they are able to work with

their peers. Furthermore, students were willing to participate in this research and to work collaboratively to develop reading skills.

Researcher Role

The teacher-researcher acted as an observer and participant. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) state that the observer is in charge of formulating thoughtful and well-understanding relationships between the researcher and the research participants (p, 63). Also, the teacher-researcher took part of the activities and observed the outcome of these. The researcher served as a facilitator and collaborator while he was proceeding to test a particular reading strategy and collaborative strategy (Berg, 2001).

Additionally, as a participant and the observer the teacher-researcher had the following functions:

- Researcher: the Teacher-researcher answered the questions of the research, about the study, why it was studied, and how it was studied. (Burgess. 1984) The researcher planned the steps where the methodological procedure is prepared.

- Analyzer: the researcher coded, named, and categorized the phenomena through the close examination of data. (Strauss and Corbin. 1990)

- Verifier: the researcher checked the reliability, and the validity of findings.

- Reporter: the researcher wrote a report to present whose findings. As Kvale (1996) points out: this report is not to be seen solely as a representation of data "seasoned with" the researcher's comments and interpretations: "The interview report is itself a social construction in which the author's choice of writing style and literary devices provide a specific view on the subjects' lived world." (p. 64)

This study was carried out in the first semester of 2013 in ten two-hour sessions. During the implementation, three instruments were applied to gather data. The first instrument, artifacts were used in three different sessions at the beginning, at the middle, and at the end; the second instrument, questionnaire was applied during the implementation, and the last instrument (log) was used at the end of the implementation.

Instruments

This research study used a number of different instruments to gather data: questionnaire, log and artifacts. First at all, in order to know the students´ opinion, the teacher-researcher applied a questionnaire to study the perception about the acquisition of reading skills in their English learning process, and their preferences in terms of work (individually, pair or group work) to validate information (Appendix G). Secondly a log was applied to compare the information and data that participant presented in the questionnaire and the perception that participants may have when they were working collaborative in a reading task. The third instrument used were three artifacts in order to observe the students´ final product after participating from the sessions and to analyze if the main objective of each lesson was achieved. All instruments at the end of the implementation were triangulated bearing in mind the responses taken from the questionnaire, log and artifacts in order to verify and establish conclusions below some more details about the instruments used for this study.

Questionnaires

The teacher-researcher considers that the questionnaire gives useful responses efficiently; also, it is relatively quick to collect data, and responses. (Appendix G) The

students are more objective in the way that they feel more comfortable answering from a

test than answer questions from an interview. The questionnaire was applied at the

beginning of the implementation in which the participants reflect on their first experience

of learning how to read through a collaborative learning environment. Gillham (2008) says

that questionnaires are devices to gather information about people`s opinions in order to

describe how strongly certain populations agree or disagree with a statement given.

Therefore, this instrument was chosen because it allowed the teacher-researcher the

opportunity to analyze the impact that collaborative learning had when learners were

developing reading skills, and to create closed ended and open ended questions in order to

contrast the open questions with the closed ones.

Log

This instrument helps the researcher to gather information from the participants´

opinions. This instrument is useful to the researcher because the log is a way for students to

freely express their ideas and opinions. This log was applied in the last session of the

pedagogical implementation in order to contrast the responses in the log of to those of the

questionnaire.

Barkley (2012) says that a log is essentially a diary of the research written by a

participant, the researcher decided to work with this instrument because it allowed students

to complement the information gathered in the first instrument saying their point of view; it

helped to contrast the data collected from the questionnaire and also demonstrated how

collaborative learning was useful to develop reading skills. (Appendix H)

Artifact

This instrument helps the research study because the participants provided information about their progress of learning how to read in a collaborative environment through the implementation of a final activity. The artifacts collected the data that students produced in an activity at the end of each session. This instrument was applied at the beginning, in the middle and in the last session of the implementation in order to contrast and analyze the students´ progress in reading from the beginning until the end (Appendices I, J and K).

Moreover, Wartofsky (1989) states that an artifact is any product of individuals or groups or their social behavior. Hence, artifacts are the objects or products designed and used by people to meet re-occurring needs or to solve problems.

The artifacts (Appendix I) were taken from the last activity of each lesson in which the main objective was to collect information in order to analyze the participants´ insights when they were working in collaborative environment to improve in their reading.

Ethical considerations

The participants of this study provided the teacher-researcher with a collection of data which directly impacted them. Therefore their individual rights had to be protected and also they needed to be treated with respect, confidentiality, to accept ethical standards. The teacher-researcher followed various rules and practices throughout the study such as:

- Consent letters (Appendices B, C and D): The researcher provided each student a consent letter to be signed by their parents, if they agreed to their student`s participation in the research. A letter of permission to carry out the study was signed by the school principal.

- Confidentiality principles: Each participant's privacy was protected therefore, the researcher kept their names confident.

- The participants´ academic grades were not affected for being part of the project.

- The research complied with Colombian laws and Universidad de La Sabana regulations.

- Use of authentic material: if the researcher does not use authentic material, he/she must inform through references the material that he/she used to develop the research.

Triangulation, reliability and validity

Triangulation is linked to eliminating or at least minimizing bias in findings and thus to increase the confidence in what the researcher is finding as he analyzes the data. Instruments were used at different times by sequence in order to clarify the data and to find the answer to the research questions.

Worthen et al (2003) say that reliability depends on the degree of consistency between two measures of the same component, and also the measure of how stable, dependable, trustworthy, and consistent a test is in measuring the same topic each time. Therefore, the data is collected using different instruments in order to register how consistent the answers of both instruments are. This supported the reliability of the research study. Moreover, Worthen et al (2003) say that validity is the degree to which researchers accomplish the purpose for which they are being used.

Chapter Four: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation

This chapter presents the plan that took place to develop reading skills in a collaborative learning environment. Also the pedagogical intervention seeks to improve and enhance the students` reading skills as mentioned in the theoretical framework such as: identifying text organization and topics; selecting and inferring meaning; scanning and skimming; separating fact from and opinion and understanding the main idea each reading skill implemented in each session individually; all these strategies are generated when students are participating from a collaborative learning environment.

Reading strategies offer to students the possibility of sharing new linguistic knowledge and awake learner´s attention to enhance reading in a collaborative learning environment. Hence, students improve in their reading skills when they are provided by a context that they are familiar, also, students can be committed to read when they have reasons to satisfy their curiosity. In addition, Collaborative Learning allows students to use authentic language in genuine context and increases their knowledge of the world (Pineda, 2001).

This pedagogical planning is generated in different stages starting by the diagnostic test, and finishing gathering data about the insights of developing reading skills collaboratively, it follows the school´s curriculum which is based on the communicative approach as well as the CEF. Hence, all the instructional design was implemented through the content based learning approach in order to develop reading skills through collaborative learning.

Action plan

In order to comply with the design described in this chapter, the reader can make reference to the action plan designed (Appendix F). This served as the guide and as the chronological timeline of this investigation.

For implementing this research, the researcher created five structured lessons plans by selecting topics based on students` interests and the textbook they had to use during their lessons, also the topics were selected taking into account students´ motivation, engagement, social need, and cultural background. Each lesson plan applied in two different sessions for getting a total of ten sessions during two months.

Teaching approach:

Following the teaching approach of the school, the teacher-researcher took into consideration some components of the communicative approach for developing this research. Firstly, it focuses not on the language itself, but rather on what is being taught through the language. In other words, the language becomes the medium through which something new is learned; that means, the approach aims to develop the students' language and academic skills through the content dealt with (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Posner et al (1982) state that experience in foreign languages classrooms has convinced the teacher-researcher that topic-based approaches have the potential to enhance motivation of students, to accelerate students´ acquisition of language proficiency, to broaden cross-cultural knowledge, and to make the language learning experience more enjoyable and fulfilling. Based on this statement, the pedagogical intervention focused the sessions on a variety of reading themes that were applied in a collaborative learning

environment so that students worked in pairs, or groups depending their cognitive needs to improve in their reading skills.

To implement the strategy, the teacher-researcher considered four stages, practices and activities to be carried out at ELBOR. To start, the researcher designed ten sessions that promoted a reading skill that each promoted a reading skill and a collaborative learning strategy. During the ten sessions, the teacher-researcher created materials and activities focused on developing reading skills and collaborative learning activities.

The researcher proceeded introducing the learners to collaborative learning through a variety of reading skills activities. During the intervention the students did not receive any grade or mark, the purpose of this project was to provide students with strategies to improve their reading proficiency rather than being scored or having any kind of incentive.

Five themes were developed for the implementation: Love around the world, Family matters, Stars of music, Music and the mind, and What makes you happy. These themes were the topics of nine collaborative learning activities including mind-maps, pairs and squares, back drawing, dialectical notebooks, jigsaw, blind obstacle course, directions, which are aimed to foster, or enhance, the students' reading skills development. For instance in Session 1, students studied Topic 1 and developed Reading Skill 1 using Collaborative Learning Strategy 1; all ten topics followed the same sequence.

Regarding the instructional method, the researcher focused on two instructional goals: process and product. As the students used a student reading book that is focused on topic-based instruction, it provides in each section reading exercises in different levels in order to reinforce and achieve at the end of the unit a reading skill through scaffolding. For example in the first unit there are exercises about vocabulary, in the second part a while

reading with information and questions that students may associate with the main topic, and

at the end the main article with reading comprehension questions.

To summarize the stages considered for the implementation, the Table 2 lists stages,

strategies, instruments used to gather data, and duration.

Table 2 Instructional design topics

TOPIC	COLLABORATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY	READING SKILL STRATEGY	SESSION	INSTRUMENT TO VALIDATE DATA
LOVE AROUND THE WORLD	Mind maps	Identifying text, organization and topic.	Session 1 (2 hours)	_____
	Pairs and squares		Session 2 (3 hours)	Artifacts
FAMILY MATTERS	Back drawing	Selecting and inferring meaning	Session 3 (2 hours)	_____
	Dialectical notebook		Session 4 (3 hours)	_____
STARS OF MUSIC	Jigsaw	Scanning and skimming	Session 5 (2 hours)	_____
	Blind obstacle course		Session 6(3 hours)	Artifacts and questionnaire
MUSIC AND MIND	Building blind	Separating fact and opinion	Session 7 (2 hours)	_____
	Directions, directions		Session 8(3 hours)	_____
WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY	Journals	Understanding main idea	Session 9 (2 hours)	_____
	Mind maps		Session 10 (3 hours)	Artifacts and log

For each session, the teacher-researcher designed a lesson using the planning format

taken from the course In-service English Language Teaching (ICELT) from Cambridge

University; this lesson plan helped the teacher-researcher to organize the time of the lesson,

to control the class, and to evaluate the teaching process; it takes into account the level and

previous knowledge of students, the teaching matter in a time-frame, the interest of students

towards the lesson, and the teacher to understand to objectives properly. (Appendix E)

Chapter Five: Results and Data Analysis

In this section the teacher-researcher explains the methods and procedures

undertaken throughout the data analysis, the impact of the Collaborative Learning strategies

for developing reading skills in a collaborative learning environment. Also, the researcher

included the findings, and some conclusions of the data analysis that emerged from this

research based on the interpretation taken from the categories and subcategories to answer

the initial questions proposed.

How does collaborative learning contribute to the development of intensive reading

skills in EFL in eleventh graders from Colegio Elisa Borrero de Pastrana?

Sources of data, their validity and relevance

As stated before in the Research Methodology Section, three instruments were

applied: questionnaire, log and artifacts. They provided the research with the necessary data

to answer the research question. The first instrument was tested with the participants to

determine how useful the collaborative learning activities were to develop reading skills.

During each session the participants were requested to do some reading activities by

working in pairs or groups. The researcher validated three sets of data at three stages of the

implementation through the second instrument which were the use of artifacts, they used at

the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the pedagogical intervention.

Data analysis procedures

Firstly, based on the action plan, three topics were chosen to collect and validate

data randomly: FAMILY MATTERS (artifact 1 at the beginning of the implementation),

WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY? (artifact 2 during the middle of the implementation), and

THINK POSITIVE (artifact 3 at the end of the implementation). The selection of those units permitted to the researcher to have a deep reflective analysis about the data. Secondly, as in this section teacher gave the students some vocabulary to use during each session; the participants were able to use the vocabulary to answer the reading questions. Finally, after reading the article, in pairs or groups, they used a collaborative learning strategy: the dialectical notebook (artifact 1), back to back drawing (artifact 2), and blind obstacle course (artifact 3) (Appendix L) in order to enhance a specific reading skill; for example students should improve in inferring meaning (artifact 1), scanning and skimming (artifact 2), and identifying the main ideas (artifact 3).

With the first collaborative strategy, the dialectical notebook (Appendix L) consisted in complementing and supporting the partners' ideas. Therefore student A started to write an idea related with the reading, and student B complemented student A`s idea. This practice was repeated until both students had a complete idea about the reading article.

The dialectical notebook (Appendix L) helped the researcher to analyze several features of the collaborative activities in class that were not expected to happen. For instance, among members of a group, some students managed the process easily, they started to write the main idea of the article and completed the activity but some other students struggled while complementing the article´s idea. When students were doing the activity, they were able to identify main ideas and organize the text based on the reading; they used the vocabulary presented in the pre-reading although they had some grammar mistakes when elaborating sentences.

Moreover, in the second activity (artifact 2), "BACK TO BACK DRAWING" (Appendix J), the group was split in half in order to have two groups A and B, each group

had a different article to read and explained to another group. Then, one student from group

A and one from group B, sat back to back student A explained the article orally while

student B was listening and drawing what student A was explaining then, they changed

roles. Finally they checked their drawings and clarified the main ideas of each article.

During the process of using this artifact to validate data, most of students were able to scan

the text and the main topic of the articles. In addition, they skimmed and associated the

article with the previous scanning process; they understood the main idea and shared their

ideas with the other group. Also, an additional insight that emerged from the collaborative

experience was that they were able to interact in English and talk about the article; they

expressed their points of view and they showed their interest knowing and understanding

what their classmates were saying about the topic.

The third artifact, "blind obstacle course" (Appendix K) students in groups taking

turns assisting one another in navigating an obstacle course; when all the group passed the

obstacles, students organized the paragraphs of an article to make it coherent and cohesive.

Finally, they answered some questions about the article in terms of collaboration this

activity worked well to build teamwork skills, especially the skill of trusting one another,

they presented a great attitude during the session, each participant took a role in order to

prevent any misunderstanding, and all the time they helped each other. In terms of reading

skills, students were able to organize paragraphs they took into account connectors in order

to make the article more logical and coherent, and also they understood the main idea of the

text in order to answer the questions.

Once the teacher-researcher applied the instruments (artifacts), the researcher

needed to gather more information with the instrument. Therefore, the researcher had to

design a chart for artifacts in which the researcher could take notes about the experience in

order to analyze it the easily.

The second instrument to validate data was a questionnaire designed with six

different open-ended questions in order to see the perception students had in the first

session to develop reading skills in a collaborative learning environment. All participants

answered the questions. Therefore, the researcher analyzed students` opinions about the

usefulness of collaborative learning to their reading skills. Most of the students showed

positive insights about the new technique, they did not reject any activity, and they

considered Collaborative learning an interesting technique to foster reading skills. When

the researcher was implementing the questionnaire the school shortened the time of lesson

for that day. Therefore, the researcher had to apply the instrument by pairs and not

individually as it was expected first. However, the school scheduling was not an

impediment to collect the data from the instrument.

The final instrument was a log implemented at the end of the pedagogical

intervention. The main objective of applying this instrument was to reinforce students´

answers taken from the questionnaires and the artifacts in order to triangulate the data. So,

with this log, the researcher was looking to contrast results of the first two instruments and

strengthen the data. Before implementing the instrument, the researcher did one Spanish

version and one English version so that students could select the version they felt more

comfortable to answer with. All forty students selected the English version, but some of

them answered the log in Spanish.

By reflecting on the students'responses, at the beginning they struggled with

vocabulary and some tenses, but during the process they demonstrated that reading articles

collaboratively was a fruitful activity in which they learned vocabulary, pronunciation, and connectors. Most of them acknowledged the ability to comprehend reading articles more easily when working collaboratively; finally, most students understood collaborative strategies as a way of interacting and improving reading while helping each other.

Procedures for data analysis

This section presents the data taken after analyzing the information collected from the instruments. All instruments helped the teacher-researcher to gather data to determine the development of reading skills in a collaborative learning environment. The questionnaire and log enabled the teacher-researcher to observe features of collaborative work while students were reading.

Data Management

To systematize the data, the teacher-researcher followed the stages proposed by Corbin & Strauss (1990): management of data, data reduction, and data display, and data verification for conducting qualitative analysis.

Once the teacher-researcher was in the process of collecting, storing and retrieving data, the researcher opened three files to classify the information. The first one contained the information given by the artifacts, the second stored the questionnaires and the last one had the log information. For the artifacts format, the researcher included the name of the lesson, the objective of the lesson, the reading skill to develop and the collaborative learning strategy to be used, the researcher added his field notes for writing what he observed while the participants were working in a session. The teacher-researcher decided to number the participants using the letter S followed by a number from one to forty to identify the students who participated in the research while students were doing the main

reading activity, the researcher completed the artifact format by taking notes in order to have a better understanding about the students` progress in reading when working collaboratively.

Also, the questionnaire and log format included the data and objective of the corresponding lesson, and the researcher transcribed the students´ answers. Finally the researcher organized the instruments in order of date and numbered them according to the objective of the session.

Data management by research question

In order to continue with the data management and analysis the researcher organized the data by giving colors and levels of importance, as the researcher had the opportunity to "preserve coherence of the material" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007 p. 468). With this approach gather by means of the three instruments questionnaires, logs, and artifacts provided a joint answer around the main research question. Also, this approach permitted the researcher to maintain the focus of the research, and was the main field for initiating data reduction.

Data reduction

One of the procedures for summarizing the data that was collected in this research was through developing a content analysis (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). This was a method for examining and verifying some pieces of written data. The main of objective permitted the researcher to apply content analysis focused on relevant aspects to answer the research questions, and focused on the meaning taken from the questionnaires, logs and artifacts. Given that the questionnaire and log contained a set of open-ended questions, it was possible to extract information from the subjects.

For the analysis of this study, the researcher began the content analysis with samples taken from texts (questionnaires, log, and artifacts), later defining the components of these. Such components were limited words, also referred to as descriptors of patterns that were most frequent. These keywords were highlighted and later organized and/ or managed by subject, instrument and research question.

Then, the researcher was able to better analyze these coincidences by examining how the participants responded it. Thus the researcher presented the words that each participant used when answering to questionnaires and log coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990 p.46). Also, known as an open coding structure, this tool was useful for breaking data into small pieces in search of meaning and later for derivation of concepts. Open coding helped in the analysis identifying, naming, categorizing and describing phenomena found in the questionnaire, log and artifacts.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) stated that open coding is the process of selecting and naming the categories from the analysis of the data. The teacher-researcher attempted to identify patterns in the data and simplify the information in order to select and name the categories from the data analysis. This step allowed to researcher to describe overall features of the study. During the process, the researcher first took the students´ responses from the questionnaire and the log to find commonalities and recurrences; then the researcher compared the responses with artifacts to validate the data of each response. Subsequently, the researcher grouped the patterns discovered.

Afterwards, the researcher analyzed the artifacts and determined the properties and dimensions from the information that could help with the problem of collaborative learning

to see what it could tell about the development of reading skills in the students. Once again, the researcher grouped the codes to reduce data and establish the main category.

After grouping the names from each data (Appendices J, K, L) the researcher combined the patterns provided from the instruments as a way to triangulate the information obtained.

Basically, each word, sentence and paragraph was read in search of the answer to the research question. All this deep analysis served for creating new ideas. Hence the researcher focused on pieces of data that reflected a higher relevance, but whose meaning remained obscure (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Triangulation process and description of data

As this is a qualitative study, the data needed to be validated and reliable. Therefore, the data was triangulated based on a series of multiple data resources (instruments) in order to reveal the insights of developing reading skills in a collaborative learning environment as a phenomenon and promote the validation for the research.

The researcher consistently maintained an ethical role by assigning pieces of incoming data to each data management group; furthermore, action research allowed for the data to be organized in a non-biased manner, Strauss & Corbin (1990) recommend that researchers check for biases by looking back for evidence, incidents, and events supported or refuted the question.

For this reason, as data was being analyzed during the interpretation the researcher was very careful with the questionnaires and the logs. Both instruments provided information about the main question. According to Corbin & Strauss, (1990), this stage helps to avoid biases that could filter in the process of drawing conclusions. Consequently,

the researcher compared and contrasted both instruments´ data to validate the findings. Subsequently, the researcher displayed the main and relevant findings.

During the pedagogical implementation, the researcher was very attentive to the participants` reaction to the class instruction. When the participants displayed a question, observation or comment the researcher paid complete attention of the details, without manipulating the participant`s intervention. As the researcher was also an observer, Hence it was an opportunity for using time for taking notes and posing questions instead of assumptions. Using coding allowed the researcher to be more subjective when facing analysis.

Categories

The core of this study was to describe the possible impact of collaborative learning on the students` reading skills, and to describe the insights about reading in EFL based on a collaborative learning experience. To guide the research, the researcher posed the following research question: How does collaborative learning contribute to the development of intensive reading skills in EFL in eleventh graders from Colegio Elisa Borrero de Pastrana?

After analyzing the data gathered from the instruments and considerable reflection, the researcher grouped the ideas into two main categories and five indicators. In addition, the researcher carefully considered the constructs that helped to direct the analysis: reading skills and collaborative learning.

Displaying collaborative learning strategies pinpoints the relationships that arose between students while they are working together. The indicators "Discussing questions and answers with arguments, Engaging dynamic teamwork, and Accepting and receiving peer feedback" deal with the collaboration process learners have in class when they are

learning a foreign language. During the implementation of the instruments, the researcher

observed that most of the students were willing to work and enjoyed reading

collaboratively because they supported each other and established concrete points of view

about the reading respecting the opinion of their peers.

Intensive reading improvement in a collaborative environment pertains to the

accuracy of participating in a collaborative learning strategy in order to enhance reading

skills. In other words, it showed how students in a collaborative learning environment

improve in different reading competences.

The following categories emerged from the data collection and its results after

triangulating coloring, coding, and classifying the most frequent information that students

presented in their answers in the three instruments, (see Figure 1).
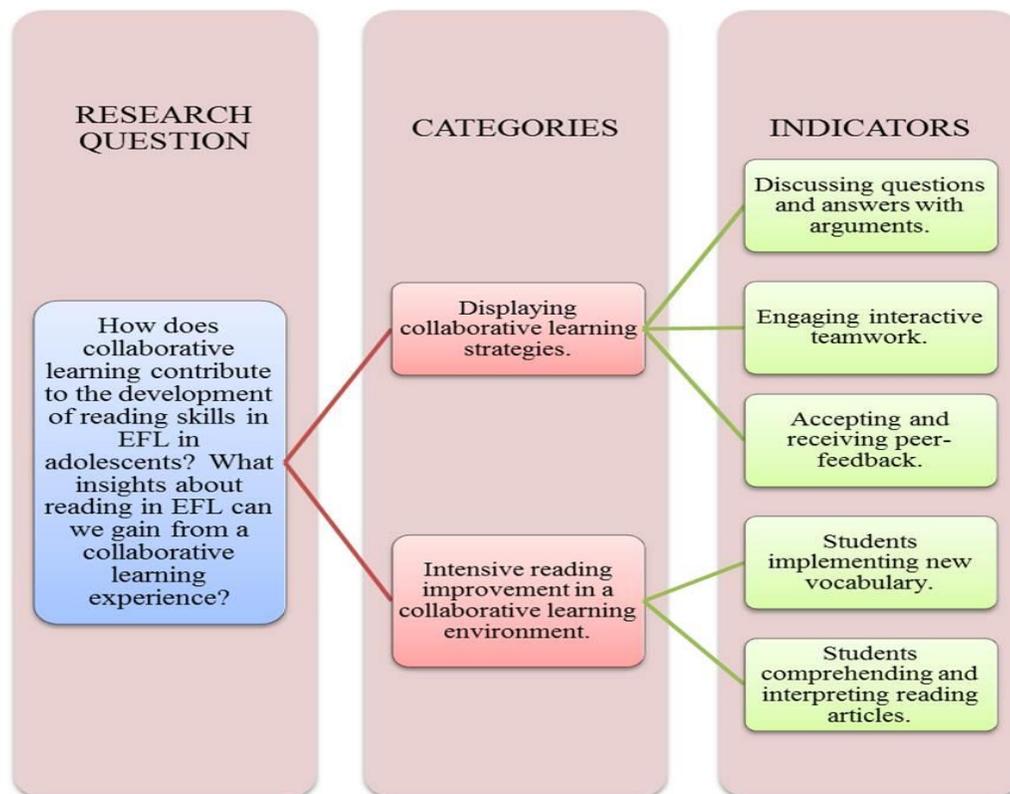
Figure 1: Research question, category 1 and 2 and Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

Category 1: Displaying collaborative learning strategies

The first category makes reference to the one of the processes the students underwent during the intervention. This category is referred to as: "Displaying collaborative learning experience." When referring to this category, there is direct similarity with collaborative learning experiences. This means that the students will eventually be able to recognize the collaborative strategies, and reading skills.

Discussing questions and answers with arguments

The researcher identified *Discussing questions and answers with arguments* as an indicator of category 1 because it refers to the strategies of collaborative learning. It indicated the way students discussed reading articles in order to show their point of view to answer reading questions, to learn new vocabulary, and interpret and interact taking into account the topics. Also it is connected to the different characteristics of CL they considered relevant when working collaboratively in which they expressed positive aspects about collaboration:

Excerpt No 1, Questionnaire (See Appendices G and H)

Students 13-14

*"Claro, es importante dialogar estas lecturas y **conocer la opinión de otras personas**"*

*"Of course, it is important to talk about the articles and **to know the opinion of other people"** (translation)*

Students 19-S20

*"Si, debido a que **se puede debatir** y aprender palabras nuevas entre todos, interesantes así"*

"Yes, because **we can debate** and learn new words between us, it is interesting" *(translation)*

Students 25-S26

*"Si, porque **podemos socializar nuestros puntos de vista** y ayudar a los que no entienden"*

"Si, because **we can share our points of view** and help the people who do not understand" *(translation)*

Participants acknowledged the advantage of discussing something they knew or read about and they could at the same time respect different opinions to increase their understanding. In this case, the participants proved that discussing questions and answers with a peer strengthened their point of view. These students interacted to ask to each other and share answers about the reading in lessons and activities where they had to collaborate.

For instance, in the first artifact (Appendix L), students read two texts about two types of families. They had to select one of the texts to create a collaborative dialectical notebook. In some groups, a student wanted to write about text 1 (Appendix J) and the other about the second, sometimes the one who preferred text 1 seemed to have strong arguments to convince his peer to make the activity with his selection. In some other groups, there was a unanimous selection to start the activity. This demonstrated that collaborative learning activities helped students to discuss reading articles, the participants fostered discussions related to the topic, and they felt engaged showing their peers their own point of view.

The value of a student's contribution to learning in a group is set by the quality of her conversation in discussions. Students with skills in how to learn collaboratively know

to mediate and facilitate conversation, and when to ask questions, inform and motivate the participants in the group, and how to handle conflicting opinions.

In the following excerpts taken from the log students carried out similar responses about discussing questions and answers with arguments, students referred to the collaborative learning as an opportunity to socialize and to convince their partners.

Excerpt No 2, Log (See Appendices H and I)

Student 1

*"Bien porque **todos aportábamos ideas** y nos corregíamos cuando pronunciamos mal"*

*"Good because **everybody provided ideas** and we corrected each other when we pronounced something wrong" (translation)*

Student 4

*"Es bueno leer en grupo **ya que se crean opiniones enteras al tema**. Se forman **discusiones entorno a la lectura**, mayor comprensión, se generan o*piniones de temas al leer, **llegar a una conclusión de acuerdo a lo que se ve y se lee**"

"It is good to read in groups **because there are opinions about the topic**, and **this generates discussion about the article**, better comprehension generates opinions about the article, **to reach a conclusion according to what we see and we read**." *(author's translation from original)*

Student 10

*"Que nos ayudábamos mutuamente y **cada uno tiene ideas diferentes que podemos relacionarlas**…que no todas trabajan cuando se les piden"*

"That we helped each other and **everyone has different ideas that we can relate**…

sometimes not all the people work as it is asked." *((author's translation from original)*

With regard to this indicator, the previous excerpt also shows how the participants

discussed various topics and used arguments to reach a consensus. For example in artifact

1, while students were working in groups, one person decided to become in the leader of

the group in order to manage the rest of the learners and control the activity and the

students decided to accept, respect and trust the leader in order to accomplish the tasks.

Also, they discussed different reading questions respecting each other and listening to their

opinions about the topics.

To summarize, as Elbow and Belanoff (1989) affirm, moving from difference to

agreement is not just a difficulty but also an opportunity to reach full agreement in thinking

plus that of finding a common voice. Opening a collaborative teaching space in which

students can discuss several reading articles or topics provides students the opportunity to

have a personal point of view, and also to establish a clear understanding about the topics.

Engaging interactive teamwork

This indicator describes the different aspects the participants displayed when

working in teams; the researcher observed that they established some patterns of

interaction in order to achieve a purpose. The participants specified different tasks,

distinguished roles, and even controlled time to work in a performance. When the

participants were working on artifact 2 (Appendix I), they had to work in groups to

identify the information of the article in order to have the main idea. Then, they shared

their reading with a different group. During the lesson students decided to assign roles

and each person was responsible for achieving a task. For example, while some students

organized the paragraphs, some others looked up unknown words in the dictionary, and

some others read questions in order to find information that could be significant for the

task. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) stated that "*... a team is a small number of people*

with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance

goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable" (p 45). The

participants proved the success of the reading activity depended on the entire group by

providing a significant role that became and accomplished the task. They were using

team work skills inductively without having a theoretical concept about teamwork.

The following excerpt shows some characteristics that learners mentioned by means

of the first instrument used to gathered data (questionnaire) when working in teams in

which team work is effective for learning, understanding instructions.

Excerpt No 3, Questionnaire (Appendices G and H)

Students 1- 2

*"Demasiado porque **nos apoyamos entre el grupo y opinamos sobre el taller**, creo*

*que uno se siente más seguro de lo que hace y **con más apoyo sabiendo que tenemos***

*__persona con nuestro nivel__. Al igual que **mis compañeros creo que fue algo muy bueno**"*

*"Too much because **we support each other in the group and we give opinions about***

*__the activities__, I think that I feel more secure about what I do, **and with more support***

*__knowing that we have a person with our level__. Also for **my partners and me was very***

__good__" (author's translation from original)

Students 9-10

*"**Alimenta el aprendizaje trabajar con personas** de nuestro nivel, **significa mucho***

__para nosotros compartir con nuestros compañeros__"

"**It feeds the learning to work with people** from our same level, **it means a lot to us to share with our classmates**." *(author's translation from original)*

Students 21-22

*"Si, ya que **es mejor trabajar en equipo y se facilita más la enseñanza en un grupo**"*

*"Yes, because **it is better to work in teams and facilities our learning more"**.*
(author's translation from original)

Apart from the partner´s collaboration with a word they needed, the participants were able to choose the responses and roles in groups and develop their reading tasks. This happened because the students were sufficiently motivated to work in collaborative and reading tasks. Hence, when students are assigning roles independently, they are feeling motivated to develop a task; this demonstrated that team work was effective in developing some other reading competences. Sundstrom et al (1990) suggests that reading tasks need to be motivating for team members to share responsibility and accountability for achievement.

Additionally, the participants needed to listen frequently to each other and help each other to develop mutual knowledge, which enhances communication. Joint decision making and formal and informal interchanges can also enhance communication. Sundstrom et al (1990) stated that a clear communication channel across team boundaries and with the organization ensures the relevance of the team's functioning.

The analysis of the artifacts collected to gathered information also demonstrated the validity of working in teams; it also reinforces the idea that team work enhances students' social competences and learning skills.

Excerpt No. 4, Logs (See Appendices H and I)

Student 1

*"Porque **sentía colaboración** por parte de ellos… la verdad todo me gusto todos*

*trabajaban **juntos y nos ayudábamos en lo que sabíamos**…habían personas que no se*

esforzaban"

*"Because **I felt collaboration** of my group… I honestly like everything, **everyone***

***worked together and we helped in what we knew**… there were people who did not work*

hard. (author's translation from original)

Student 5

*"Nos **apoyamos entre nosotros,** tratamos de corregirnos y de **perderle un el miedo***

***al leer** o hablar"*

*"We **help each other**, we try to correct us and **to lose the fear at the moment of***

***Reading** o talk" (author's translation from original)*

Student 22

*"Nos unimos más como personas, como grupo, como grado, **hacer estos trabajos y***

***actividades nos hace más unidos** en ciertas ocasiones"*

*"We join more as people, as group, as course, **to do these tasks and activities help***

***us to join** (author's translation from original)*

Within a team, assigning roles was influenced by personal expectations and by

organizational and interpersonal factors. Therefore, the support they received from their

partners was flexible enough to accommodate individual differences, personal development

needs and membership changes. Loxley (1997) suggests effective teams require reliable

communication processes, with clearly defined responsibilities and appropriate delegation.

Each learner brought to the team a unique personality and position, which reciprocally

impacted team function when students had an individual assignment and each role provided

to the task and the other members of the team meaningful information about the reading in

order to achieve the main goal of the task.

In summary, by reflecting on the final product taken from artifact 2 (Appendix L),

team work had a significant relevance when developing reading competences.

Collaboration is more efficient to have better outcomes. Students were able to work

together helping each other. Also, having mutual support encouraged them to achieve

common goals.

Accepting and receiving peer feedback

The participants in their responses presented some insights about accepting the

comments of their peers in order to improve in their reading skills. Reflecting on the

students´ progress, they seemed confident when discussing and sharing ideas based on the

articles they read. And also, they were attentive to peers´ feedback. When they were

presenting the activities, the participants checked what they already had done and finally

they commented about their performance. Narciss (2008) defines feedback as "all post-

response information that is provided to a learner to inform the learner in his or her actual

state of learning or performance" (p, 75). In artifact 3 (Appendix K), the participants

worked in groups to write a summary about people who overcame different personal

problems; when they were working collaboratively, they helped each other, but also they

corrected their performance in terms of comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and

pronunciation. This kind of peer feedback had a strong positive effect on learning because

it was done under conditions of respect, responsibility and tolerance.

The following excerpts in which students indirectly mentioned peer feedback characteristics in a collaborative learning environment illustrated this perspective.

Excerpt No 5, Questionnaire (See Appendices G and H)

Students 5-S6

*"**porque lo que yo no sé mi compañero lo sabe**, además de que es entretenido"*

*"**because what I don`t know my classmate know it**, also it is entertained" (author's translation from original)*

Students11-S12

*"Es bueno **contar con el conocimiento y ayuda de un compañero** para así facilitar el aprendizaje y desarrollo de las actividades. Ayude a mi compañero con mi conocimiento, y **nos ayudamos mutuamente** para sacar adelante la actividad. **Mi compañero de grupo afortunadamente fue de gran ayuda**"*

*"It is **good to have with the knowledge and help from a classmate** in order to facilitate the learning and development of our activities. I helped my classmate with my knowledge, and **we help each other** to move forward the activity. **My classmate fortunately was very helpful**" (author's translation from original)*

Students 19-S20

*"Hay ciertas **cosas que no entendía y con mis compañeros he podido trabajar esa parte** de redacción y lectura"*

*"There were **certain things I didn`t understand and with my classmates I could have worked that part** of grammar and Reading." (author's translation from original)*

These learners` responses indicate they increased their abilities to work in groups, and also they promoted a kind environment to correct their performance among them. The

comments they received and gave to their partners were accepted in order to construct

internal schemata and analyze their learning processes. Also students reported that peer

feedback was equally helpful as the teacher´s feedback. In the final sessions, students

provided more ideas and longer explanations and typically included less praise. Also

students progressed in the way they gave and received feedback during the implementation.

Additionally, the participants showed that this kind of feedback helps in their

comprehension and it improved their language skills; over the time, they became experts in

feedback and they felt more confident to provide and give peer feedback.

However, the researcher observed that students had better acceptance when the

comments came from their peers they already had a friendship with they received

comments from before. They had some problems to receive feedback from people they do

not have a close relation.

In the following excerpts the researcher could observe some similar characteristics

that achieve to consolidate students´ opinions about working in a collaborative

environment.

Excerpt No. 6, Logs (Appendices H and I)

<div align="center">Student 5</div>

 *"Nos apoyamos entre nosotros**, tratamos de corregirnos** y de perderle un el miedo
al leer o hablar"*

*"We help between us, **we try to correct ourselves** and to leave out prejudice when
Reading" (author's translation from original)*

<div align="center">Student 10</div>

*"Porque **si no entendía, ellas me podían explicar** para entender mejor, porque me sentía más segura al leer con ellas y **también porque me ayudaban** a pronunciar mejor"*

*"Because **If I didn`t understand, they could explain me** to understand better, because I felt more secure to read with them and **also because they helped me** to pronounce better." (author's translation from original)*

Student 21

*"Porque **nos colaboramos y lo que uno no sabe el otro lo explica"***

*"Because **we collaborate and what I didn`t know the other did"** (translation)*

These responses demonstrate that peer feedback played an important role in corrections and helped students´ performance. In this part of the pedagogical intervention, students showed (indirectly) that collaborative learning indicates feedback, students reinforced the idea that peer feedback can provide information they can use to confirm what they already believe or to change their existing knowledge and beliefs.

Also, the participants showed that peer feedback can construct new knowledge and competences, but also can support prior knowledge about English as a foreign language. When students discussed their performances and gave responses to construct feedback, they were more aware about what they improve. Thus, students are offered the opportunity not only to reflect on the work of their peers, but also on their own work.

Another additional benefit to receiving peer feedback was that students received confirmation that their ideas were meaningful to others as well as having opportunities to profit from the insights of their peers. They were able to offer and receive a variety of perspectives from their own classmates.

Peer feedback as a collaborative strategy indicates that students are able to receive and provide different comments with their peers, and based on the suggestions, they can review their process and improve their weaknesses.

Category 2: Intensive reading improvement in a collaborative environment

The second category named Intensive reading improvement in a collaborative environment describes different aspects of how students developed their reading skills using collaborative learning strategies. It was evident that learners were more aware of the importance of identifying text organization and topic, selecting and inferring meaning, using new vocabulary, and understanding the main idea than before the intervention. In the diagnostic stage, students did not understand main ideas, and they were not aware of how to use vocabulary in a reading text. These aspects contributed to students moving toward the task, that is to say they implemented new vocabulary, and they interpreted and comprehended new intensive reading articles appropriately.

Students implementing new vocabulary

Undoubtedly one of the main difficulties at Elisa Borrero de Pastrana (ELBOR) before carrying out this research was that many students failed to complete a given reading task because of the lack knowledge in vocabulary. The researcher noticed isolated answers from a reading activity, and their lack of vocabulary for giving concrete responses. For instance, in one of the instruments in the needs analysis few students completed the task using adequate vocabulary in their responses.

From the analysis of the artifacts (Appendices I, J and K) which were collaborative reading activities, the participants completed the task satisfactorily even though their writing presented problems in some aspects, but they learnt new vocabulary while they

were reading incidentally. That means, the participants did not have look up some words in the dictionary or they did not have to ask to their peers about the meaning of a word, because they understood the meaning by using their context. In the pedagogical intervention every reading activity was a part of the lesson in which the participants learnt vocabulary before a reading activity. Those vocabulary activities were focused on showing students different unknown words, through the use of images and oral questions, so that participants could infer what the real meaning of the word was, and then they could implement and reinforce its meaning when they started to read.

At the beginning of the implementation, the researcher perceived through the diagnosis that the participants had problems understanding some words in text. However, they helped each other to understand the meaning of a word. One of the strategies they used to understand the words was reading aloud. They read aloud in groups or pairs and they deduced the meaning of each word by helping each other, so their reactions were to contextualize the word to infer the meaning. Therefore, it can be assumed that the participants were able to use contextual inference strategies for vocabulary acquisition in a collaborative environment.

Participant´s responses demonstrated that the different tasks applied during the implementation helped them to acquire and use new vocabulary.

Excerpt No 7, Questionnaire (Appendices G and H)

Students19-20

*"El **aprender vocabulario nuevo** es algo que llamo mucho la atención para* **enriquecer el vocabulario del inglés***"*

*"**To learn new vocabulary** is something that calls a lot my **attention to enrich my lexis**" (author's translation from original)*

Students 23-24

*"Si, **me ayudaban con palabras que yo entendía**, a darles significado o a la pronunciación"*

*"Yes**, they helped with words that I didn`t understand to give it a meaning** and pronounce better" (author's translation from original)*

Students 25-26

*"Nos hemos sentido bien ya que **nuestro vocabulario ha mejorado con el tiempo al igual que la pronunciación y la lectura**"*

"We have felt so good, because **our vocabulary has improved** as the pronunciation and reading" *(author's translation from original)*

The students reported that vocabulary was acquired easily thanks to the collaborative work because it motivates them to learn new words, practice pronunciation, and reading accurately, when students were working collaboratively. They could share ideas about the topic, and also asked questions about terms they did not understand. Hence, they were anxious to know the meaning of the words in order to recognize it in a text.

Also, one of the techniques that the participants used was to make an association between the word and an image; what they did in groups was to watch an image and then pronounce and see the written word so that students inferred the meaning.

Another factor taken from the instrument 1 (questionnaire) was that the collaborative learning helped students to feel engaged and motivated to use new vocabulary; when they worked in groups, they showed commitment with the task and they

attempted to produce new ideas, and understand the vocabulary in order to succeed in the task. Although students did not meet vocabulary learning standards, each group established some patterns of interaction to do the task. In other words, learners implemented their own standards to succeed in their task.

When the participants had a better understanding of the meaning of the vocabulary, they produced a better understanding on the whole meaning of the text. In the next excerpt students reestablished their points of view about how collaborative learning helped them develop new vocabulary in order to increase reading competences.

Excerpt No 8, Logs (Appendices H and I)

Student 2

*"los beneficios son que **aprendí nuevo vocabulario** y entiendo los textos"*

*"The benefits are that **I learnt new vocabulary** and understand the text" (author's translation from original)*

Student 3

*"A la hora de leer entiendo y **comprendo mucho mejor los textos con respeto al vocabulario** y a la hora de pronunciar"*

"During the reading time, **I understand the articles much better in respect of vocabulary** and pronunciation" *(author's translation from original)*

Student 12

"Entiendo el texto muy bien y **añadi nuevas palabras a mi vocabulario**, ellos pueden ayudarme con los significados de algunas palabras"

*"I understand the text very well and **I added new words in my vocabulary**. They can **help me with the meaning of some words**" (author's translation from original)*

Student 22

"Entiendo nuevo vocabulario y mi comprension es mejor"

"I understand new vocabulary and my comprehension is better" (translation)

In this excerpt learners mentioned that reading skills are developed through the techniques they have acquired to understand new words. Naturally, vocabulary learning depends on the learners` strategies and motivation towards learning new words which involves student-centered activities. When students worked in groups, they seemed to be more engaged with the reading activity, and they were more aware they should have learnt. The researcher noticed they were trying to prove to their peers that they were able to understand the reading article, and to provide significant information to develop the activity. Hence, they developed exhaustive exercises to learn vocabulary in order to achieve reading competences.

Also, the participants who were familiar with the vocabulary could help their peers to clarify doubts about meaning. When the participants were working in groups, the researcher observed that some students understood the reading text easily because they identified some words and they could contextualize the main ideas. Therefore, what those students did was to explain to the rest of the group unknown words and how to use vocabulary strategies in order to have a better understanding. This strategy facilitates the students´ comprehension, the acquisition of new vocabulary and helped those students to model different techniques to acquire new vocabulary. This indicates that vocabulary learning is the main aspect in reading a text. The result of this study showed that vocabulary knowledge is an important element in constructing meaning from written passages.

In summary collaborative learning has a strong effect on the vocabulary learning improvement through reading comprehension and metacognitive reading strategies of students.

Students interpreting and comprehending reading articles

The researcher named this indicator *students comprehending and interpreting reading skills* because they improved greatly in the capacity to comprehend a text and establish clear ideas about an article. Similarly, there was a more logical order to comprehend ideas and follow certain sequences for making the reading process more precise. Therefore, comprehension and interpretation played a determinant role in the changes of the formal aspects of reading. The participants were capable of inferring meaning, predicting the topic, asking clear questions, identifying the main idea of an article, and answering questions based on the reading, all of which are important to succeed in reading comprehension.

Looking at pupils' artifacts (Appendices I, J, and L), the researcher observed throughout the implementation that the participants advanced step by step. They were able to identify the main ideas of a text, they associated the title with the main ideas, students between them decided to ask questions, and analyze the text deeper in order to have a better comprehension. When they did not understand a word, they decided to contextualize the words and resolve their questions on their own. In each group, they decided to have a different role in the reading activity so that in each session they became experts by improving reading competences.

In the following excerpt, the participants ´ responses were based on the reflection they made about working in a collaborative environment to develop reading skills.

Excerpt No 9, Questionnaire (See Appendices G and H)

Students 1-2

*"Todo pues pensamos que aprendimos vocabulario y **hubo mejor comprensión** y cosas claves que no sabíamos"*

*"Everything, we think that we learnt vocabulary and **there was better comprehension** and thing we did not know" (author's translation from original)*

Students 13-14

*"Si, porque nos ayudan a **comprender mejor el texto**, son lecturas muy claras las cuales **se entienden muy fácilmente"***

*"Yes, because they help us **to understand better the text**, the Readings are very clear, and **they are easy to understand**" (author's translation from original)*

Students 19-20

*"**He entendido más los temas**, mis dudas a veces son aclaradas y es divertido, ahora se aplicar mejor los tiempos gramaticales y estructuras"*

*"**I have understood more the topics**, my doubts are clarified and it is funny, now I apply better the grammar structures." (author's translation from original)*

Students 21-22

*"Bien, porque **se entiende** lo que quiere decir, como uno **se puede desenvolver en la lectura entenderla e interpretarla"***

*"Good, **because it is understandable the message**, I like how **I can understand and comprehend the readings now**" (author's translation from original)*

The participants learnt new techniques taken from their peers, they took some strategies from students who had more experience reading, and they decided to implement

on their own in order to have a better comprehension most of the comprehension that

students had emerged from understanding the meaning of the words and they were familiar

with the vocabulary. When students had a preliminary knowledge with a word, they were

able to use it and it was less difficult to have a better comprehension.

When the participants were working collaboratively, they resolved the reading task

successfully because what some students did not know, a peer knew it. Therefore, the

interaction allowed the students to have a better understanding.

Also, participants were able to work with other peers who had the same English

level and profile; the fact working with classmates who had the same language needs

permitted the participants to improve in the same language aspects; and also students had

the opportunity to gather the same information, to foster the same topics and skills, and

improve their same weaknesses. In relation to this excerpt, it indicates that students

increased their vocabulary in order to improve their comprehension.

Reflecting on artifact 2 (Appendix J), the researcher observed that the participants

had an active attitude they seemed to be interested in understanding the main ideas of the

text and answered questions about it. The participants interacted among themselves by

establishing clear reading goals; they constantly evaluated their progress by asking

themselves, and comparing their answers. Also, they helped each other to support those

students who had difficulties understanding the text. Also, they were determined to finish

the reading activities and comprehend the main ideas. Guthrie et al (1996) state that the

levels of motivation students bring to a task impacts whether and how they will use

comprehension strategies. In the following excerpt, students presented some insights about

how meaningful collaborative learning was, while they comprehend reading articles.

Excerpt No 10, logs (Appendices H and I)

Student 5

*"Aprendí a **visualizar el texto y coger la idea principal en el momento, a evitar respuestas incorrectas, y a entender el texto**" (author's translation from original)*

*"I learnt **to visualize the text to catch the principal idea in the moment**, to **avoid wrong answers, understand the text**"*

Student 7

"**Entendi mas fácil los textos** aprendiendo de mis compañeros, leo mas y **ahora entiendo mejor el texto** porque mis compañeros me ayudan a hablar y leer mas" *(translation)*

*"**I understand more** so is very easy to learn with my classmates, I read more and now **understand best the text** because my classmates help me to speak and read more"*

Student 8

*"**Entender mejor los textos** y **preguntar por algo que no entienda**, me ayudaron a interpretar **mejor los textos** y agilizo más el aprendizaje"*

*"**To understand the texts better**, and asking for something that I don`t understand, **they help me to interpret the texts better**, and my learning was going faster." (author's translation from original)*

Student 19

"Si porque hemos mejorado el vocabulario y **la comprensión lectora**, *además de* **ayudarnos a interpretar el texto** *de la manera adecuada,* **en comprensión y facilidad para interpretar un texto** o vocabulario tiene amplias ventajas"

"Yes, because we have improved the vocabulary and **Reading comprehension**; also **we help us to interpret the text adequately**. **It has many advantages to comprehend and interpret a text**." *(author's translation from original)*

In excerpt the nine students presented a few answers about the experience they had developing reading skills in a collaborative learning environment. However, in this excerpt the reflections are deeper, and students gave more information to show all the benefits they have received from learning collaboratively.

In the previous excerpt, the participants in a collaborative learning environment were able to monitor their understanding of the text, making adjustments in their reading as necessary. Students helped each other and monitored their progress, and they supported their peer´s process. Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) suggest that comprehension is time-consuming, continuous, and complex activity, but one that, for good readers, is both satisfying and productive. When the participants understood the articles, their final tasks were more precise; participants needed experience reading texts beyond those designed solely for reading instruction, as well as experience in reading articles with a clear and compelling purpose in mind.

Each time students worked collaboratively, they demonstrated some improvement in comprehension, the constant training (by asking questions and shared ideas) in this activity permitted students to have a better performance and product. Yopp (1988) indicated that when students learn to generate questions for a text, their overall comprehension improves. Hence, when students interact with certain topics, their comprehension is more effective and meaningful because it helps students to have a better understanding, their vocabulary increases and their general knowledge has more validity.

As a final remark, the categories and their indicators tell us that collaborative learning helped the 35 participants from ELBOR to enhance their reading skills, in different language aspects such as vocabulary, comprehension, and interpretation. The students' reports indicate that they developed reading skills thanks to the implementation of the collaborative learning activities. At the beginning, the participants in this study seemed skeptical and did not have a common goal; however, with time, the participants increased their interaction and understood that collaborative learning provides information to comprehend reading articles more easily namely, they were aware that collaborative learning enhanced the individual competence because they used reading for a purpose, but also, they increased social competence because they were able to interact with a reading topic, clarify, and understand main ideas.

Also, this research study showed a positive finding to be considered. The participants improved because they were able to collaborate and this allowed them to learn reading skills. Indisputably the collaborative activities were effective in the process of learning reading skills; the participants demonstrated a genuine connection to this study. The process of learning to read in this case was equivalent to the daily routines of the participant. This previous statement became the most meaningful piece of data because each participant applied his reading skills by taking into the strategies that were shown during the study.

Chapter Six:

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

Conclusions

In this chapter, the researcher presents the conclusions and the pedagogical

implications as a result of the data analysis of a research whose objectives were to describe

the possible impact of collaborative learning on students' reading skills in eleventh graders

from Elisa Borrero de Pastrana School, as well as to describe the insights about reading in

EFL based on a collaborative learning experience. The research study applied reading

comprehension exercises taken from the students 'reading book implemented by the school,

but always creating new collaborative learning activities.

After analyzing the data gathered from the two categories: Displaying collaborative

learning strategies and Intensive reading improvement in a collaborative learning

environment, the teacher-researcher observed that most students were willing to work and

enjoyed reading collaboratively. Additionally, the researcher noticed through the diagnostic

test and the questionnaire applied that reading was not a motivating activity for the

participants of the study; in other words, they were not interested in improving. However,

with the implementation of some collaborative learning activities, learners were able to use

previous knowledge and develop a new one reading skill. This was observed during the

implementation of Collaborative Learning activities such as the dialectical notebook, back

to back drawing, and blind obstacles (Appendix L).

The participants were pleased that they could understand a reading text. They also

became aware of their strengths and weaknesses and learned to overcome their learning

language limitations in reading but also to communicate reading information through writing compositions or spoken explanations.

Additionally, it is undeniable that students had some improvement understanding main ideas. After this research the participants were able to use the context to understand a word, or even to understand a paragraph. Also, the researcher identified changes in formal aspects of language and the effectiveness of reading when working collaboratively. The participants of the study improved their vocabulary directly when they participated in vocabulary activities, and indirectly when they inferred meaning of a word by using their own context. Also, participants helped each other to understand main vocabulary and understand the main ideas of each article. The researcher observed that collaborative learning facilitated their reading comprehension aspects and students improved a high level in reading comprehension of the texts they were reading.

In addition, from the analysis of the three instruments used to gather information, the researcher concludes that collaborative learning helped students complete the task and understand how to read. Furthermore, implementing collaborative learning to enhance reading skills was a study that emerged from the students` needs, and also help in the students` learning experience and my teaching practice.

Through the design and implementation of this action research study, the researcher has established that thanks to the collaborative reading activities students had a better comprehension and used different vocabulary to discuss different topics. As Vargas and Abouchaar (2001) suggest collaborative work contributes to democracy inasmuch as it is a participatory opportunity for learners to express their opinions whilst Collaborative work

deals with real situations that affect us directly or indirectly such as the topics that the students read and discussed: think positive, happiness, or family matters.

The researcher observed that when students work in pairs or groups, students were able to develop the activities much faster and the quality of the activities is also better than when they worked individually.

Pedagogical implications

After developing this study, the researcher may conclude that first, language teachers have to take into consideration the students´ weaknesses, linguistic needs and interests in reading to help them improve reading in class. Secondly, the ELBOR teachers should take advantage of students´ personal opinions to trigger critical thinking, collaborative interaction, and reading comprehension. In this respect, the researcher concludes that improving reading skills can be seen not only as a need in the foreign language classroom but also in other fields of study at public and private schools. Thus, the ELBOR teachers can give some reading strategies in the English classes that students could apply in different subjects such as: Biology, Spanish, and Mathematics. Additionally, even though this project was conducted to be applied in a secondary level scenario, it can also be implemented at a primary level and even in university level where the vision and objectives might be the same with the necessary changes depending on the learners´language level.

As students from eleventh grade in Colombia take an national examination before graduation, reading skills help them achieve comprehension on a given topic, also this study can be enhanced to have further practice to have a better score in that exam, and also to enroll in a university abroad or to apply for a scholarship in Colombia. Hence, students may have some elements to succeed in this area.

Limitations

Collaborative learning (CL) has added an advantage at Elisa Borrero de Pastrana´s setting and in that it allowed students to learn from each other and to perceive reading as an entertaining activity. However, the researcher thinks that this study has a limitation in analyzing the way that sessions and implementations occurred. It would have been an equivalence to collect data to see the effects of collaborative learning on a broader scale. That is, to focus on the collaborative learning activities and the reading skills with the same level of importance.

Suggestions for further research

To those teachers who are interested in this research study, it would be suitable to share the insights, strategies, and results of this study so that teacher can see and analyze the potential of these strategies to be explored in many others ways to use it in different subjects. There are still several ideas to explore in the field of reading skills and collaborative learning. One of them is related to implementing this kind of project in some other subjects like History or Spanish. For example, at ELBOR, there are projects which require interdisciplinary collaboration, so it would be interesting to study that idea with some other teachers.

This study could be implemented at private and public institutions to perceive how these participants receive this skill applying the same collaborative learning activities or even implementing new ones. Also, it would be worth inquiring and researching in the opposite direction, that is, with English speakers who want to learn Spanish as a foreign language or some other language.

Also, some schools in Colombia, both private and public might report that students have the same struggle in terms of reading skills. The strategy implemented in this study may be helpful for some other contexts which intend to improve reading skills.

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Appendix A

Diagnostic Test

Student: _____

Apreciado estudiante la siguiente prueba diagnóstica está dividida en dos partes, la primera parte es con el fin de conocer su nivel de inglés y la segunda parte conocer su nivel de comprensión lectora en un ambiente colaborativo, siéntase tranquilo y confiado al momento de responder el test.

PART 1 English test.

Select the answer that you consider the most appropriate.

1. What you do/at the moment?
   a. What are you doing at the moment
   b. What do you do at the moment?
   c. What did you do at the moment?

2. Dawson's in love with Joey.
   a. Isn't she?
   b. Isn't he?
   c. Doesn't she?

3. He _____ in London since July
   a. Has work
   b. Have worked
   c. Has worked

4. I've been here____ an hour
   a. Since
   b. To
   c. For

5. Bit / exciting / the internet / are / more / a / than / computer games.
   a. Computer games are more exciting than a bit the internet
   b. A bit the internet are more exciting that the internet
   c. Computer games are a bit more exciting than the internet

6. How many days did Phileas Fogg take to travel?
   a. He took 80 days to travel around the world
   b. He taked 80 days to travel around the world
   c. He token 80 days to travel around the world

7. He travelled with a man called James Foster.
   a. He didn't traveled with James Foster. He traveled with Passepartout
   b. He didn't travel with James Foster. He traveled with Passepartout
   c. He didn't travell with James Foster. He traveled with Passepartout

8. We bought lots of presents./ we got on the plane
   a. Before getting on the plane, we bought lots of presents.
   b. Getting on the plane, before we bought lots of presents.
   c. Before we bought lots of presents, getting on the plane,

9. While Jake _____ lying on the beach, his friends _____ football.
   a. Was playing-lied
   b. Was lying- was playing
   c. Was lying-played

10. I can't do this homework
    a. I'm going to help if you want
    b. I will help you if you want
    c. I will not help you. If you want

PART 2

Clasifica los siguientes estamentos según tu desarrollo de habilidades lectoras y preferencias de trabajar en un ambiente colaborativo en una escala de 1 a 5; siendo 1 el menos desarrollado en tu proceso y 5 el más desarrollado.

No	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	Routinely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A definite leader who contributes a lot of effort.					
2	Actively looks for and suggests solutions to problems.					
3	Never is publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Always has a positive attitude about the task(s).					
4	Routinely monitors the effectiveness of the group, and makes suggestions to make it more effective.					
5	Almost always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Tries to keep people working well together.					
6	Student lists all the main points of the article without having the article in front of him/her.					
7	Student recalls several details for each main point without referring to the article.					
8	Student accurately locates at least 5 facts in the article and gives a clear explanation of why these are facts, rather than opinions					
9	Student accurately explains how each graphic/diagram is related to the text, and accurately determines whether each graphic/diagram agrees with the information in the text.					
10	Student uses only 1-3 sentences to describe clearly what the article is about.					

Gracias por tu participación. ☺

Appendix B

MINISTERIO DE DEFENSA'S AND SCHOOL'S CONSENT LETTER

Bogotá D.C, 19 de Marzo de 2013

Coronel:

Director Área Educativa
Colegio Elisa Borrero de Pastrana
Bogotá D.C.

Apreciado Señor:

Actualmente estoy realizando una investigación titulada "Desarrollo de habilidades de lectura a través del aprendizaje colaborativo en la enseñanza del ingles como lengua extranjera en adolescentes", dirigida a estudiantes de Grado Noveno de la Educación Básica Secundaria de su respetada institución, la cual intenta contribuir y enriquecer los procesos de aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y al mismo tiempo reorientar las prácticas docentes.

El objetivo de este estudio es describir el impacto que posee el aprendizaje colaborativo en los adolescentes a través del desarrollo de la habilidad de la lectura en el Ingles como lengua extranjera. Cabe anotar que dicha investigación hace parte de mi trabajo de grado de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés con énfasis en ambientes de aprendizaje autónomo de la Universidad de la Sabana.

Por lo anterior, comedidamente solicito su consentimiento y colaboración para realizar mi propuesta de investigación, que se llevará a cabo durante el segundo semestre académico del presente año. Esto implica recolectar datos y analizar los resultados, por lo cual debo tener acceso a los proyectos escritos de

Lectura

Igualmente, a los participantes se les garantizará el uso de nombres ficticios para mantener su identidad en el anonimato, así como estricta confidencialidad con la información que se recolecte. El proyecto no tendrá incidencia alguna en las evaluaciones y notas parciales y/o finales del curso.

Agradezco de antemano su valioso aporte para llevar a buen término mi investigación.

Atentamente,

Docente de Ingles ELBOR

Appendix C

PARENTS' CONSENT LETTER

Bogotá D.C, 19 de Marzo de 2013

Para: _____

Como usted bien conoce, soy el docente de inglés de su hijo (a). A lo largo de los últimos talleres de lectura y como sugerencia de los estudiantes, he podido evidenciar la necesidad de trabajar más los aspectos culturales de la lengua a través del aprendizaje colaborativo.

Teniendo en cuenta que debido a la globalización y a las necesidades del mundo moderno, tenemos en el colegio un gran interés en proporcionar a los estudiantes las herramientas necesarias para que sean capaces de interpretar, comprender y comunicarse efectivamente en inglés.

Para tal fin, tengo pensando implementar desde los talleres de lectura, una serie de actividades colaborativa que promuevan el conocimiento de aspectos interpretativos, mentales y culturales Durante dichas actividades, los estudiantes leerán textos cortos y sencillos, cuyo contenido es netamente cultural; dichos textos serán discutidos desde una perspectiva crítica por todos los miembros durante los talleres de lectura a nivel oral y escrito.

De igual manera, este material servirá de apoyo para mi proyecto de grado de maestría en Didáctica del Ingles en ambientes de aprendizaje autónomo en la Universidad de la sabana.

Durante los talleres de lectura, recogeré información en forma de grabaciones en video, escritos de los estudiantes y notas sobre observaciones de algunos talleres de conversación. Me gustaría contar con su aprobación o permiso para utilizar la información recolectada durante estos espacios, en los cuales aparecerá su hijo (a) _____. Al estudiante se le garantizará el uso de nombres ficticios para mantener su identidad en el anonimato y que la información no tendrá incidencia alguna en el porcentaje del plan curricular de inglés.

Cabe anotar, que esta idea ha sido previamente apoyada por el Capitán JUAN PABLO BLANCO, rector/ director/ coordinador del colegio y usted podrá tener acceso a mis notas de campo, grabaciones o a su análisis en cualquier momento que lo desee o crea conveniente.

Agradezco su atención y en espera de su autorización para llevar a cabo este proyecto,

Atentamente,

Docente de Ingles ELBOR

....

Nombre: _____
Autorizo: Si _____   No _____   Firma: _____

Appendix D

STUDENT'S CONSENT LETTER

Bogotá D.C, 19 de Marzo de 2013

Señores:
ESTUDIANTES GRADO ONCE
Educación Básica Secundaria
Colegio Elisa Borrero de Pastrana
Bogotá D.C

Apreciados estudiantes:

Actualmente estoy realizando una investigación titulada "Developing Reading Skills through collaborative learning in adolescents", dirigida a estudiantes de Grado Noveno de la Educación Básica Secundaria de su respetada institución, la cual intenta contribuir y enriquecer los procesos de aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y al mismo tiempo reorientar las prácticas docentes.

El objetivo de este estudio es describir el impacto que posee el aprendizaje colaborativo en los adolescentes a través del desarrollo de la habilidad de la habla en el ingles como lengua extranjera. Cabe anotar que dicha investigación hace parte de mi trabajo de grado de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés con énfasis en ambientes de aprendizaje autónomo de la Universidad de la Sabana.

Por lo anterior, comedidamente solicito su consentimiento y colaboración como participantes de mi propuesta de investigación, que se realizará durante el segundo semestre académico del presente año. Esto implica recolectar datos y analizar los resultados, por lo cual debo tener acceso a sus proyectos escritos y filmar algunas clases con el fin de conocer y analizar experiencia el proceso de escritura académica.

Igualmente, a los participantes se les garantizará el uso de nombres ficticios para mantener su identidad en el anonimato, así como estricta confidencialidad con la información que se recolecte. El proyecto no tendrá incidencia alguna en las evaluaciones y notas parciales y/o finales del curso.

Agradezco de antemano su valioso aporte para llevar a buen término mi investigación.

Atentamente,

_____

Acepto participar

Nombre
_____
Firma   _____
Grado_____

Appendix E

LESSON PLAN FORM FOR APPLYING STRATEGIES

ICELT LESSON PLAN FORM

Main Aim(s):

By the end of the lesson students will be better able to read, comprehend and analyze reading articles through predictions.

Subsidiary Aims:

- Students will be able to find out some specific information about the article "imagine a no phone world".
- Students will be able to use pros and cons expressing their point of view
- Students will be able to show their ideas about the topic through mind maps.

Personal aims:

- To improve classroom management through the use of mind maps, videos and comparative charts
- To increase students interaction using reading articles.
- To allow students to show their ideas.

Assumed knowledge:

- Students already know how to interact and show their point of view through speaking and writing.
- They are able to comprehend instructions, to follow orders, to use commands.
- They recognize different vocabulary and they know how to use it in different contexts.
- They understand how to use grammar structure in past, present, and future simple.

Materials

Describe all the materials that you are going to use in the lesson, and attach copies/photocopies with their corresponding rationale and proper referring citation.

- Board
- Markers
- video beam
- cardboard
- Readings

Handouts

Anticipated Problems	Planned solutions
Students may not interact between them using their contexts	Teacher will give student a paper with numbers in order to ask them. If is necessary.
Students could use Spanish during the session.	Students may use Spanish if they want to participate. However, teacher first will show confidence to interact about the topic before to start the session.
Students could not know some keywords.	Teacher will write and explain the key words before using it.
Technology in the school is not good enough.	Teacher will prepare technology before the session.

Stage	Aim	Procedure Teacher and student activity	Time and interaction
Leading-in	To predict through an image what is the reading article about.	Teacher will show an image about a blackberry, and then I will ask students about what they think about the image. When they finish to express their thoughts, teacher will start writing separating students' ideas in pros and cons.	6"
Pre-teach Vocabulary:	To write students pros and cons about cell phones taking into account video and students' opinion.	As the students in the first stage predict the topic, teacher will support the topic showing a short video about phone addiction. Then he will ask again to complement the first stage and select the vocabulary that they should use.	5"
Intensive reading (Scanning)	To read the article two times and ask oral questions.	Teacher will start with the reading; then I will give students the reading part. And we will start to read. When students finish reading, they will share their opinions and will make a	7"

reading task Collaborative learning strategy (Mind maps)	To solve a questionnaire or the questions of a handout related with the reading topic and to socialize it.	students will do group work to relate each paragraph with an image in order to perceive their comprehension and they will answer some questions in order to know If students have a concrete thought about what the reading article was about. Then, the activity will be socialized.	8"
Checking understanding of language	To show video to reflect about the use of cell phones.	Teacher will show another short video, but, in this stage the video will be compared with the comparative chart that they did about pros and cons and also with the reading part.	5"
Freer practice.	To create a mind map taking into account reading article.	Finally, teacher will provide to each group with a card board and some pictures. In this part students will create a mind map related with the reading part and the video.	10"
Socialization	To speak and socialize final activity.	And then, groups will socialize mind maps showing what they understood about the article.	10"

Appendix F

ACTION PLAN

ACTIVITY	MONTH	WEEKS			
		1	2	3	4
CHAPTER 1 AND COMPASS	February/2012		▓	▓	▓
	March/2012	▓			
DESIGN OF ACTION PLAN	March/2012		▓		
LITERATURE REVIEW	2012-2013		▓	▓	▓
DESIGN OF INSTRUMENTS AND PILOTING	May/2012				▓
	June/2012	▓			
DESIGN OF PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTION	June/2012	▓	▓	▓	▓
IMPLEMENTATION	July/2012			▓	▓
	August/2012	▓	▓	▓	▓
	September/2012	▓	▓	▓	▓
	October/2012	▓			
MONITORING DATA COLLECTION	July/2012			▓	▓
	August/2012	▓	▓	▓	▓
	September/2012	▓	▓	▓	▓
	October/2012	▓			

ANALYSIS OF DATA	2012-2013		▓	▓	▓
REFLECTION	November/2012	▓	▓	▓	
SHARING FINDINGS	October/2012				▓
	November/2012	▓	▓	▓	▓

Appendix G

QUESTIONNAIRE

Cuestionario

Apreciados estudiantes:

Las siguientes preguntas buscan describir el impacto que posee el aprendizaje colaborativo en los adolescentes a través del desarrollo de la habilidad de la lectura en el Ingles como lengua extranjera. Así que siéntase seguro de que por ningún motivo su nombre será usado durante el análisis del cuestionario

1. Durante la sesión, ¿como te sentiste realizando la actividad programada de lectura?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   ____

2. ¿Qué fue le que mas te llamo la atención de toda la actividad de lectura?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   ____

3. ¿Se te dificultó entender el tema principal de la lectura?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   ____

4. ¿Encontraste interesante y motivante trabajar en grupo?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   ____

5. ¿Hallaste necesario y significativo trabajar en equipo y aportar tus ideas?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   ____

Gracias por tus respuestas.

QUESTIONNAIRE`S TRANSCRIPTION FOR VALIDITY (SAMPLE)

Questionnaire
1. Durante las sesiones ¿Cómo te has sentido realizando la actividad programada de lectura?
S3-S4: Es algo muy creativo además se puede *interactuar* y aprender activamente
2. ¿Qué fue lo que más te llamo la atención en todas las actividades de lectura?
S3-S4: Porque *interactuamos* y comprendíamos mejor la temática en grupo
4. ¿Encontraste interesante trabajar en grupo?
S7-S8: Nos ayuda a aprender y a *interactuar entre nosotros.* S11-S12: *Ya que socializamos sobre este tema* y podemos ayudarnos mutuamente sobre este idioma. S13-S14: Claro, es importante *dialogar estas lecturas* y conocer la opinión de otras personas. S19-S20: Si, debido a que se *puede debatir* y aprender palabras nuevas entre todos, interesantes asi. S25-S26: Si, *porque podemos socializar nuestros puntos de vista* y ayudar a los que no entienden.
5. ¿Encontraste motivante trabajar en grupo?
S9-S10: Si, aclarar dudar y socializar *preguntas* y hablar un poquito en inglés, no hablar solo S13-S14: *Ayuda a conocer lo que las otras personas piensan de la lectura.* S17-S18: Porque *podemos exponer nuestros puntos vista.* S27-S28: Si, porque *hay varias ideas discutiendo un solo tema.*
6. ¿Hallaste necesario trabajar en equipo?
S23-S24: Nos *ayuda a dialogar* y a corregirnos
7. ¿Hallaste significativo trabajar en equipo?
S23-S24: Si, *ya que podías embarrarla y no te iban a decir nada y si estaba mal te corregían.*
8. ¿Pudiste aportar tus ideas trabajando en equipo?
S9-S10: *Se entra en consenso, se pone de acuerdo y se cuestiona.* S17-S18: *Opine lo que yo creía correcto.* S25-S26: *Si, porque mis compañeros me escuchaban y me daban la palabra.* S27-S28: *Si porque mis compañeros me escuchaban y me daban la palabra.*

Appendix H

LOG

1. I feel that collaborative learning was useful when I was reading because
_____
_____
_____

2. The difficulty that I had when I read was
_____
_____
_____ and the benefits were
_____
_____
_____

3. After the activities I liked reading with my classmates because
_____
_____
_____
And I don`t like reading because
_____
_____
_____

4. The advantages that I perceived when I was working collaboratively were
_____
_____
_____ and disadvantages
_____
_____
_____

5. I feel that I improved in my reading because
_____
_____
_____

Thank you... ☺

LOG TRANSCRIPTION FOR VALIDITY (SAMPLE)

Logs
1.   I feel that collaborative learning was useful when I was reading because
S4: *Es bueno leer en grupo ya que se crean opiniones enteras al tema.*
S14: Porque he aprendido más vocabulario y *me he soltado un poco más.*
3.   I liked reading with my classmates because... and I didn't like
S4: *Se forman discusiones entorno a la lectura,* mayor comprensión...
4.   The advantages that I perceived when I was working collaboratively were... and disadvantages.
S7: *in the class we laugh and learn new topics*...
S10: Que nos ayudábamos mutuamente *y cada uno tiene ideas diferentes que podemos relacionarlas*...que no todas trabajan cuando se les piden.
S11: *Que todos tenemos ideas que aportar y eso fortalece al grupo.*

Appendix I

ARTIFACT 1

ARTIFACT 1						
TOPIC	READING SKILL STRATEGY			COLLABORATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY		
FAMILY MATTERS	Did students accomplish with the reading skill strategy? Identifying text organization and topic	1 2	Yes	Did students accomplish with the collaborative learning strategy? Dialectical notebook	1 2	Yes
		3 4	Yes		3 4	Yes
		5 6	Yes		5 6	Yes
		7 8	Yes		7 8	Yes
		9 10	Yes		9 10	Yes
		11 12	Yes		11 12	Yes
		13 14	Yes		13 14	Yes
		15 16	Yes		15 16	Yes
		17 18	Yes		17 18	Yes
		19 20	Yes		19 20	Yes
		21 22	Yes		21 22	Yes
		23 24	Yes		23 24	Yes
		25 26	Yes		25 26	Yes
		27 28	Yes		27 28	Yes
		29 30	Yes		29 30	Yes
TEACHER COMMENTS	Students were able to identify main ideas and organize the text based on the previous reading; they used the vocabulary presented in the pre-reading. However, they had some problems when elaborating sentences (Grammar mistakes).			Students were able to work in groups and elaborate their own ideas they use collaborative work as a strategy. However, some students talked when I was explaining the activity and I had to explain the activity more than once.		

Appendix J

ARTIFACT 2

ARTIFACT 2						
TOPIC	**READING SKILL STRATEGY**			**COLLABORATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY**		
WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY	Did students accomplish with the reading skill strategy? Scanning and skimming	1 2	Yes	Did students accomplish with the CL strategy? Back-drawing	1 2	Yes
		3 4	Yes		3 4	Yes
		5 6	Yes		5 6	Yes
		7 8	Yes		7 8	Yes
		9 10	Yes		9 10	Yes
		11 12	Yes		11 12	Yes
		13 14	Yes		13 14	Yes
		15 16	Yes		15 16	Yes
		17 18	Yes		17 18	Yes
		19 20	Yes		19 20	Yes
		21 22	Yes		21 22	Yes
		23 24	Yes		23 24	Yes
		25 26	Yes		25 26	Yes
		27 28	Yes		27 28	Yes
		29 30	Yes		29 30	Yes
TEACHER COMMENTS	Students were able to scan the text and the main topic of the article. Also, they skimmed and associated the article with the previous scanning process; they understand and use vocabulary to talk about the article.			Students were able to learn through collaboration, they interacted in English and talk about the article while one student was drawing about what they talked. Finally the student who was talking saw the drawing so that the learner could perceive if there was clear their explanation.		

Appendix K

ARTIFACT 3

| ARTIFACT 3						
TOPIC	READING SKILL STRATEGY			COLLABORATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY		
THINK POSITIVE	Did students accomplish with the reading skill strategy? Understanding the main idea	1 2 3 4	Yes	Did students accomplish with the CL strategy? Directions, Directions	1 2 3 4	Yes
		5 6 7 8	Yes		5 6 7 8	Yes
		9 10 11 12	Yes		9 10 11 12	Yes
		13 14 15 16	Yes		13 14 15 16	Yes
		17 18 19 20	Yes		17 18 19 20	Yes
		21 22 23 24	Yes		21 22 23 24	Yes
		25 26 27	Yes		25 26 27	Yes
		28 29 30	Yes		28 29 30	Yes
TEACHER COMMENTS	At the beginning students were more motivated to participate in the activity than making the reading exercise. However, they started to work on the reading when they noticed that they have to organize some paragraphs to understand the main idea and also to answer the questions.			Students understand the activity, and they presented a great attitude during the session, each participant took a role in order to prevent any misunderstanding and all the time they helped each other. However, there were some students that gave all the responsibility to other partners when making the reading part.		

Appendix L

PRODUCT ARTIFACTS FOR VALIDITY

Dialectical Notebook
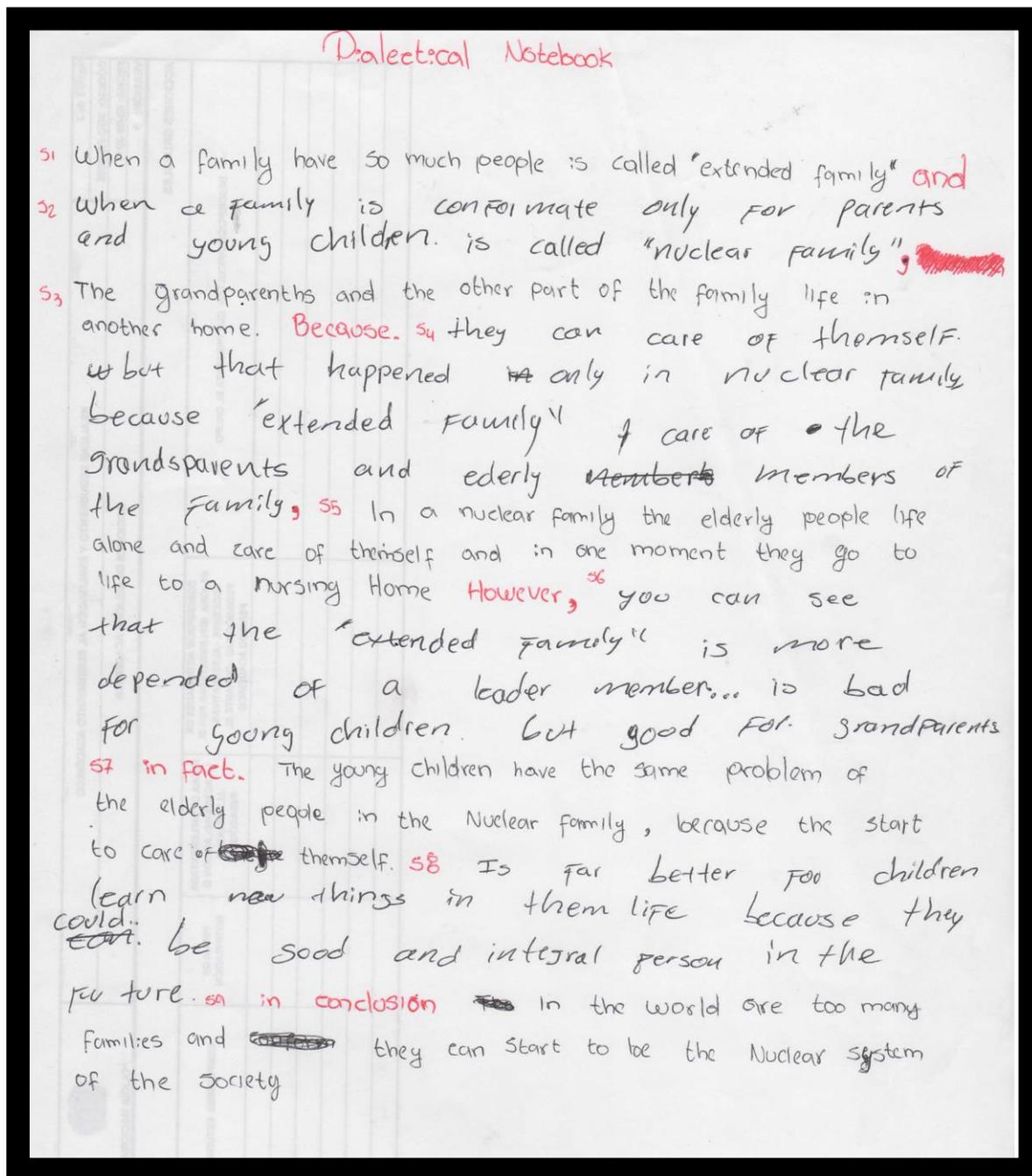
Back to back drawing: student A
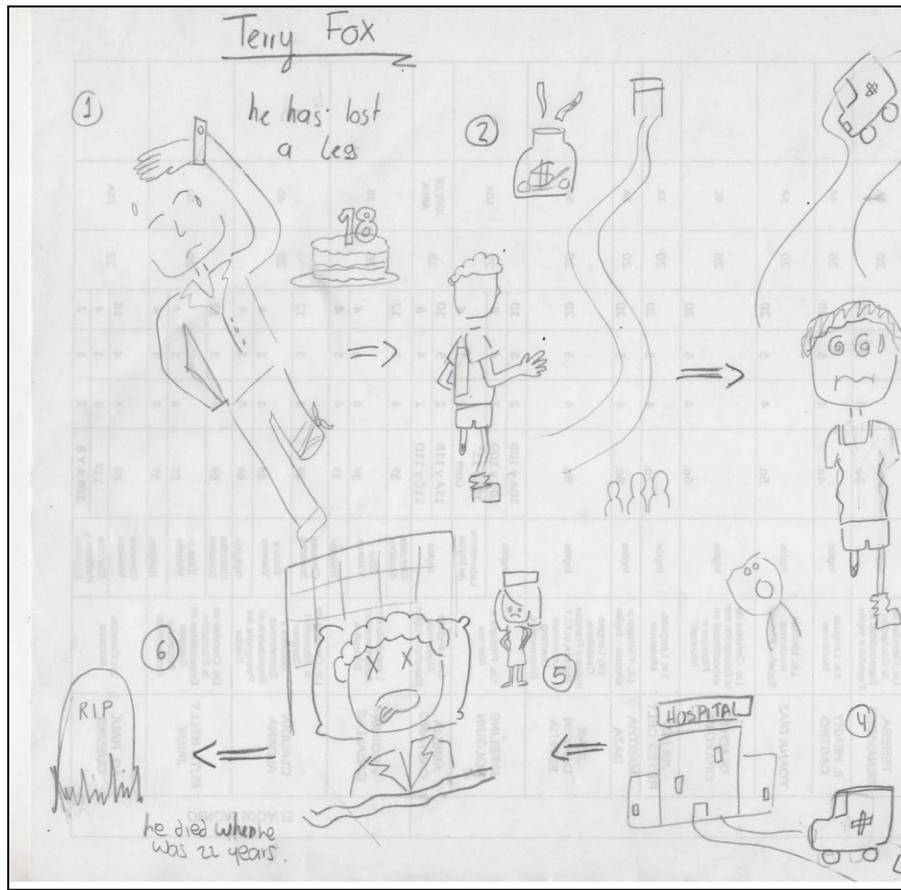
Artifacts' Transcription Samples

ARTIFACT 1	STUDENTS 1 AND 2
DIALECTICAL NOTEBOOK	
Friends and family finder is one way of find to the partner ideal, the person of your dream, all is possibility with the service online of "friend and family finder" you can be happy with help us. The website is very interesting because Is help ask the friend and the parents, all think that our website is the best at world because the people love us.	

ARTIFACT 1	STUDENTS 3 AND 4
DIALECTICAL NOTEBOOK	
That is service online, friend an family find is a real website, you can pay for find something about your ancestors. In some were websities this are free, and also it's the more better website for find all that you want; you can find persons or many friends and other that you can find is a date with other person; you can friendship our relations, for every this you can pay online for $100, will be happy for find thing about your family.	

Back to back drawing: Student B