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Enriching Language Teaching Awareness

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Con la revista ENLETAWA JOURNAL, se pretende divulgar la producción escritural en respuesta a la cualificación docente del pensamiento científico, mediante la muestra de diversos avances y resultados de los procesos investigativos que realizan cada una de las diferentes cohortes de la Maestría en Docencia de Idiomas.

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1

# Editorial

The Master Program in Language Teaching at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC) has published the Enletawa Journal for the last eight years. The publication is invested in the dissemination of academic work in applied linguistics and in fields associated with scientific and aesthetic perspectives to the study of languages. During this time, our journal has undergone several transformations which signals its constant efforts to adapt to the increasing demands posed by information technology advances, national and international research agencies and an audience whose academic specialization is rapidly increasing.

One recent innovation in our journal is the editorial committee's decision to make of Enletawa a biannual publication starting with this issue. This change in our journal's publication frequency seeks to increase its visibility and to allow for its faster distribution to our readers. In preparation for the new challenge that biannual publication implies we have invited more of our colleagues to join in our journal's endeavors. It is a pleasure to welcome Colombian professors: Camen Helena Guerrero (Universidad Francisco José de Caldas) to the Editorial Committee and Lisseth Rojas (Universidad Surcolombiana), Jairo Enrique Castañeda (Universidad de la Salle), Alexandra Botero, (Universidad Pedagógica Nacional), Yakelin Salinas (Fundacion Universitaria Los Libertadores), Leidy Marcela Chacón, Fredy Alonso Dueñas Macías, Martha Pardo Segura, (UPTC) to the Editorial Review Board. Additionally, several international professors have accepted our invitation to become part of the journal's scientific committee. They include: Igbak Abdul Oader Al Balushi (College of Applied Sciences, Oman), Trudie Clark McEvoy (University of Arizona, USA), Denise M. Osborne (University at Albany, Suny, USA), A.G. Rud (Washington State University, USA) and Brian G. Hibbs (Dalton State College, USA) as part of the Scientific Committee. We greatly appreciate the support of all our new committee members.

The collection of articles included in this issue includes four research articles and two reflective papers. The first research paper shares a study conducted by Javier Díaz and Carlos Ernesto Duran. Their article, "The collaborative portfolio: Exploring reading skills through peer tutoring" emerges from their undergraduate final research paper and focuses on their experience as peer-tutors in a public university research group. Duran and Díaz study describes how portfolios became a mediation tool to leverage the tutoring relationship established between them and their tutees to foster these first semester students' reading skills. The second article, "De petits promoteurs de la vie saine" des émissions de radio pour entendre, se faire entendre et apprendre le français", also originated from authors' undergraduate final research work. Manuel Fernando Dimas, Nadia Carolina Alezones and Henry Ernesto González examine the impact that recorded radio transmissions have on third graders development of French oral skills. Their study exemplifies possible curricular interconnections between French and other school subjects which can become powerful strategies to leverage young students' language learning.

Two rural schools are the sites where the last two research studies included in this issue were conducted. Julie Natalie Parra explored how Chevano tenth graders restore their resilience experience after a natural disaster in their



hometown. By using narratives as a pedagogical design and part of her research approach, the author determined that storying allowed participants to “look themselves in the mirror” and to “dare themselves”, meaning that they expressed hope despite the adverse circumstances they had lived. In her article, “Blogging as an EFL practice beyond the classroom”, Rosa María Amado shares her findings concerning students’ English learning by means of this web 2.0 application in rural Boyacá. Her study informs us about teachers efforts to keep abreast in the use of pedagogical resources despite the challenges that geographical location can pose.

Closing our first biannual issue, *Enletawa Journal* features two reflective articles. The main characters in Miguel Angel Sanabria’s manuscript are student teachers in a “Escuela Normal” in Boyacá. The prospective teachers participated in a peer-editing cycle designed by Sanabria under the principles of process writing and formative assessment. In addition to illustrating how the author conceived and implementing the model, the article reveals his considerations regarding participants’ views about their English writing development. Our second article in French, “L’éloignement de la famille: repartir à zéro vers le vide”, written by Carolina Sierra Díaz, focuses on her analysis of three novels: *Disgrace* J.M. Coetzee (2008), *The Trial* Franz Kafka (1983), *The Human Stain* Philip Roth (2000) and *Mon cœur à l’étroit* Marie Ndiaye (2007). Specifically Sierra discusses detachment, debt transmission and silent suffering in families as themes to guide alternative readings of these novels.

The editor, editorial and scientific committees, and review board of *Enletawa Journal* welcome you to our first biannual issue. The journal is always inspired by our growing audience that guides the decisions we are constantly making to increase the quality of our publication. We are sure this new issue will generate plenty of scholarly reflection in our readers.

John Jairo Viáfara González  
Editor

## CONTENTS

Editorial

### Research Reports

The collaborative portfolio: Exploring reading skills through peer tutoring ..... 9  
*Javier Enrique Díaz Araque*  
*Carlos Ernesto Durán Blanco*

“De petits promoteurs de la vie saine” des émissions de radio pour entendre,  
se faire entendre et apprendre le français ..... 25  
*Manuel Fernando Dimas Sierra*  
*Nadia Carolina Alezones Niño*  
*Henry Ernesto González Ruiz*

Blogging as an efl practice beyond the classroom ..... 37  
*Rosa María Amado Cepeda*

Restory a resilience experience after a natural disaster ..... 51  
*Julie Natalie Parra Espinel*

### Reflective Papers

L'éloignement de la famille: repartir à zéro vers le vide ..... 67  
*Diana Carolina Sierra Díaz*

Student-teachers as editors and writers: a pedagogical design to examine  
peer edition through formative assessment ..... 83  
*Miguel Ángel Sanabria Mariño*







## The Collaborative Portfolio: Exploring Reading Skills Through Peer Tutoring

**Javier Enrique Díaz Araque - Carlos Ernesto Durán Blanco**

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### Abstract

Our research emerges as an alternative to adopt the use of portfolios in EFL Licenciatura programs. As tutors in a peer-tutoring university project, we explored tutees' English reading skills as they used a collaborative portfolio with us, their tutors, during their free time. As a result of this research, we determined that the portfolio emerged as a "planner for tutees' reading skills", allowing them to establish objectives for boosting their comprehensive skills. Furthermore, the portfolio became an "enhancer of collaborative roles" between tutees and tutors. Finally, the portfolio allowed tutees to explore their own reading skills by supplying them with reading experiences.

**Key words:** Portfolios, peer tutoring in EFL, reading skills in EFL, collaborative learning, tutor, tutee, university tutorial sessions.

### Resumen

Nuestra investigación surge como una alternativa para adoptar el uso de portafolios en los programas de Licenciatura en inglés como lengua extranjera. Como tutores en un proyecto de asesoría universitaria entre pares, exploramos, las habilidades de lectura de inglés de nuestros consejeros, mientras ellos empleaban un portafolio colaborativo con nosotros, en su tiempo libre. Como resultado de esta investigación, se determinó que el portafolio se convirtió en un "planificador de habilidades de actividades de lectura", que les permitió a los estudiantes tutorados establecer objetivos con el fin de reforzar las habilidades de comprensión lectora. Por otra parte, el portafolio se convirtió en un "motivador de roles colaborativos" entre los tutorados y tutores. Por último, el portafolio permitió a los tutorados explorar

sus propias destrezas de lectura contribuyendo sus experiencias lectoras.

**Palabras clave:** Portafolio, tutoría entre pares, habilidad lectora, aprendizaje colaborativo, tutor, estudiante tutorado, tutoría universitaria.

## **Introduction**

Nowadays the great dilemma in education is to find appropriate strategies to successfully involve students in the learning process. This quest for new strategies demands time and research from teachers. Portfolios can be considered among the options teachers have at their disposal to involve students in meaningful learning processes. Portfolios can provide opportunities for students' to become involved in different English practice tasks and reflections when they work on their own, with a teacher or a a tutor.

In the case of this study, portfolios were used between tutors and tutees in a university context. The research sought to explore alternative learning strategies used with first semesters EFL student-teachers who took advantage of the tutorial spaces provided in a reasearch group. While working as tutors, we, the researchers, had firsthand experience in the tutorial work and we became interested in investigating the way in which tutees learnt a foreign language. Specifically, we wanted to examine how tutorial materials, or portfolios in this case, could be used to support tutees foreign language reading. As tutors we had seen that tutees needed didactic resources which

contributed to their learning efficiency and encouraged their independent study. Moreover, we observed that reading was not an activity students were very familiar with due to their lack of motivation or just the lack of guidance in how to employ appropriate reading strategies.

Bearing in mind the previous considerations, this study's guiding question examines what the role of a collaborative portfolio is in exploring tutees' reading skills in peer tutoring. Specifically, the study sought to determine what the use of a collaborative portfolio tells us about tutees' reading skills development and how tutees and tutors 'collaborative work by means of a portfolio support tutees' reading skills. In the following section, we continue by reviewing the literature associated with the main concepts that guided our study.

## **Tutoring at University Settings**

In our perspective a tutorial is a self-learning space supported by a tutor where people learn new skills by using a step-by-step process that ensures progress through levels of difficulty and understanding. This space is often times structured within a tutoring model which follows a logical sequence in order to enhance an individuals'

learning opportunities. The previous concept considers pivotal features in these interactions, namely, the guidance (Álvarez, 2004), personalized and self-directed orientation in the learning process (Viáfara & Ariza, 2008).

Tutoring models have been present since the beginning of academic history. Rodríguez (2004) reviews three common models for tutoring: academic, personal development and professional development models. The first one is strictly concerned with the academic progress of students. The role of the tutor is to guide students as they complete specific course work or assignments. The second one is focused on students' backgrounds and their personal and career development needs: the "personal development model." It seeks to support students' talents and potential to face life challenges. Finally the last one is designed to make sure students acquire the appropriate professional training necessary to enter the job market.

The roles tutors performed in this study involved the three previous tutoring models. The roles of tutors implied responsibility and commitment to guide the tutorials, being a support for tutees concerning their academic work, and offering advice regarding personal issues and their future professional lives. Tutors also motivated their tutees, encouraging them to make progress in their learning process. Tutees were responsible for their attendance and commitment to the group. So each participant contributed to the group through their respective roles.

According to Rodríguez (2004), tutoring is a critical component of university training.

Rodríguez (2004) also identifies several qualitative elements of tutoring:

- A tutor can foster and facilitate the intellectual, emotional and social development of the student. Tutors can motivate students to continue their course work and explore other learning opportunities within their fields of study.
- Tutoring can be personalized and in this way the attention that students receive is tailored to the student's individual learning style and preferences.
- Tutoring can provide better access to appropriate educational resources and professional mentors that might otherwise be unavailable to an individual student.

Moreover, in the case of this study, another feature worth highlighting regarding university tutoring was its interactive character, though. The tutor, who was in certain ways more experienced than the tutee, guided the tutoring process by contributing and supporting, with new learning skills, the tutee's engagement in tutoring led the tutor to grow at various academic and personal levels.

The interactive character of university tutoring is associated with what is known as peer tutoring. According to Mynard & Almarzouqi (2006) peer tutoring is the reflection of an action taken by learners in order to help each other. In this space, a tutor (experienced learner) takes charge of another learner (tutee), giving him/her some tutorials, extra classes or scheduled time to monitor the pupil's performance in a specific area or subject.

Another aspect we would like to remark on, in relation to peer tutoring, is that within this approach, learners are capable of assuming a position of independence and self-regulation. And when they work cooperatively; they can become aware of the responsibility they have, for their own learning when being supported by others (Beasley, 1997).

Velandia (2007), states that a tutor has to increase the confidence of the tutees. They help them learn autonomously and assure that effective learning takes place. It means that the tutor has to help the tutees to find a course in which they can work on their own based on the principles of a tutorial session which consists of giving solutions to immediate needs.

### **The Role of Portfolios in Peer Work and Tutorials**

In this study, tutees used portfolios to organize, plan, reflect upon and potentiate their learning while they collaborated with their tutors. Portfolios are defined as collections of samples of students' work throughout a specific period of time. Portfolios emerge as a strategic tool to analyze and track the process of learning. Cristancho (2003) mentions that portfolios are tools to promote engagement on significant learning through reflection. Castro (2002) refers to portfolios as an authentic tool to promote students' autonomous work.

Portfolios can also contribute to create a collaborative relationship between learners and others acting in the capacity of guides (Valls, 2008). In the case of tutors and tutees, this pedagogical tool can foster

negotiation between these participants concerning its organization, evaluation and content, among others. In their description of pedagogical experiences employing portfolios at the university level, Viáfara and López (2011) remark that their success in introducing these tools into their teaching practices involved, not only the collaborative attitudes their students and they adopted to make decisions about portfolio use, but also the cooperative work they engaged in with other faculty. Portfolios not only contribute to the collaborative nature of peer-tutoring, they can also enhance the independent learning that university tutoring allegedly buttresses. Klenowski (2000) describes a portfolio as "a work that involves personal engagement with important learning processes and an opportunity for the learner to achieve a personal unique accomplishment." By preparing a resourceful, flexible and purposeful guide to know how to employ portfolios and enhancing metacognitive strategies, teachers or learners' instructors can foster students' discipline to engage themselves in autonomous learning (Viáfara & López, 2011).

### **The Reading Process and the Reading Strategies**

Reading is an ability that has become one of the most important factors contributing to success in many fields today. Two essential conditions necessary for reading to become a meaningful process are, first, readers' development of a like for it and second, readers' involvement in a communicative experience through the reading experience. Goodman (1967) argues that the reading process has to do more with a social practice

in which there are three agents involved: a reader, a context and a text. In that sense, reading is defined as an interactive process in which readers must develop certain cognitive skills build meanings. According to (Cook, 1993), when using reading skills, readers can grasp the meaning in writing, building comprehension and independence. Writing implies more than a mechanical process of decoding and transcription. This process involves understanding, examination and analysis of writing, generating genuine comprehension and one's own insights as a reader.

When readers work in grasping the meaning of a text, they employ a myriad of strategies or styles. Among them, Pugh (1978) and Gardner (1979) list "receptive reading" which involves a quick reading of the text to search for information and "reflective reading" in which readers, not only engage in becoming informed about issues of their interest, but also reflect upon the content of the text. Likewise, two additional and widely known strategies are "skimming", in which readers move quickly through the text in order to identify main, and "scanning", which might be more time intensive because readers must look for specific information.

In addition, strategies also include "underlining", defined by Feathers (2004) as an initial tactic used by readers to monitor and assess the information. Asking questions encourages readers' ability to dig into the text in order to build more substantial understanding. Another strategy identified by Erten & Williams (2008) is dictionary use. This tactic helps readers to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

## Research Design

During our experience in the tutorials program, we looked for an appropriate type of research for our project. We finally decided to follow the principles of qualitative research. According to Dick (1992), qualitative research methods were developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena. Moreover, qualitative researchers' aim is to gather an in depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. Since we wanted to focus our project on educational context, we considered the environment of tutorial spaces could be investigated by means of this approach; in doing so, we could explore more about tutees and the way in which they behave in tutorials in relation to our topics of interest.

### Context, population and participants

This project was carried out at a public university located in the center of Colombia. Participants belonged to The Modern Languages Program in the faculty of education at this university. They attended tutorial sessions provided by tutors associated with a research group called RETELE. The group has implemented a tutorial model to support student's autonomous English learning in the Modern Languages Program (Viáfara & Ariza, 2008, Ariza & Viáfara, 2009). This model consists of the three basic tutorial function models. The first one is formed by three principles: supporting the development of skills and knowledge in the foreign language, encouraging tutees' growth at the personal

and academic level, and enhancing their development of learning-how-to-learn strategies. The second component proposes a way in which tutorial sessions can be carried out to promote self-learning. The third aspect reveals the ideal profile of tutors.

The four participants were first and third semester tutees. They were new to the tutorial program and they were between 18 and 22 years old. Regarding their English level, they were beginners. They had different personality types and were willing to take advantage of extra opportunities when offered. They were in an intermediate socioeconomic level and came from different regions of Colombia.

The tutors and researchers were also students in the Modern Languages Program. When they implemented this study, they were in 10<sup>th</sup> semester which is the programs last semester. They had been part of the tutoring program associated with RETELE group for three semesters. One of the tutors was born in Bucaramanga and the other in Cucuta.

### Data Gathering and Analysis

To obtain the information, we employed different instruments: interviews, audio-video recording, surveys, journals (by tutors and tutees) and students' artifacts that were part of their portfolios. These instruments enabled us to gather the information we needed to conduct an in depth study of the phenomena we were interested in.

**Interviews.** For our research we used semi-structured interviews. The purpose of these

interviews was to access interviewee's perceptions by asking questions concerning their perceptions about the role of portfolios in their reading strategies development and in their collaboration with tutors during tutorial sessions. We audio and video recorded most of the interviews; in the cases of audio, we used a small tape recorder to interview and in the case of video, we used a digital camera. We captured six interviews with each tutee. These interviews were done every two weeks and according to the tutorials' schedule.

**Surveys.** Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, L. L. (2011) refers to field notes as a sense-making activity wherein researchers write down important issues. We, as tutors, employed this technique to gather information about what was happening in the tutorial sessions. The information gathered included tutees' reactions when they were reading or gestures they made and comments they made about the reading workshops. These notes were taken during or at the end of every tutorial session.

**Students' artifacts: the portfolio.** The portfolio was developed by tutees with their tutors' support during a five month period. The portfolio was used to collect evidence and at the same time to evidence tutees' level of achievement in reading skills. Thus, each section of the portfolio provided information we needed to answer to our main question. The portfolio included all the activities tutees did during this research study: reading activities, journals and personal improvement plans (PIP's). Concerning reading activities, the portfolio contained nine reading workshops designed to support their development of this skill. The

workshops were conducted once every two weeks. Each one of the workshops consisted of four practices; these practices were distributed in pre, during and after reading activities and one practice was focused on a collaborative practice in which the tutor and tutee worked together on a specific task according to a reading text. In addition, the workshops included a reading tip which was expected to help them reflect upon this skill and generate ideas about how to use the reading strategies.

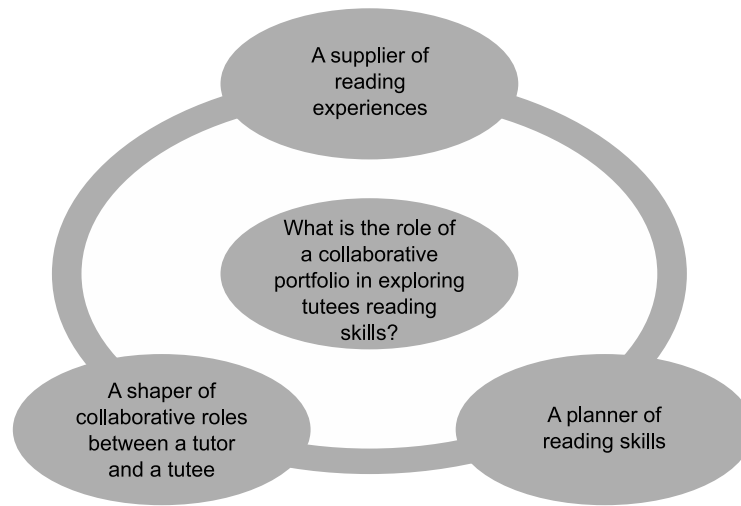
Another section of the portfolio was the journal. Stevens and Cooper (2009) refer to a journal as evidence of a thought process and a very valuable tool of reflection. In these journals, tutees reflected upon the portfolio process, the reading process and their collaboration. Also the tutors wrote journals to record all the events and experiences they had when having tutorials. They shared insights with their tutees about their impressions regarding tutors' learning and their own learning experiences during the tutorial.

The personal improvement plan was a section in which, according to the tutee's needs, we negotiate and agree upon objectives to work on in the sessions and in weekly activities in order for tutees to practice and reinforce any topic they felt they needed help with.

## Data Analysis

To analyze this data we used grounded theory, according to Morse, (as cited in Oktay, 2012, p.14) grounded theory is a reflective process upon the information researchers have gathered. By means of this technique data can be conceptualized and a theory to explain findings can be built. Thus for selecting and identifying information we employed color-coding so we could identify patterns and assigned a different color to similar patterns. We used this technique as we searched for information in the various instruments which answered each sub-question.

We started by analyzing the interviews. Then, by means of the same procedure, we continued with the surveys. We selected the outstanding information and by means of colors we codified the information obtained. Finally, we analyzed the tutors' journals and students the portfolios (students' artifacts) and also read the tutees' journals. Once we had the codification, which was employed to effectively reduce the quantity of information we would be analyzing, we compared all the codified information and then we categorized it into groups. In order to do this, we repeated the process until we established the final categories and subcategories which are exhibited in the figure below.

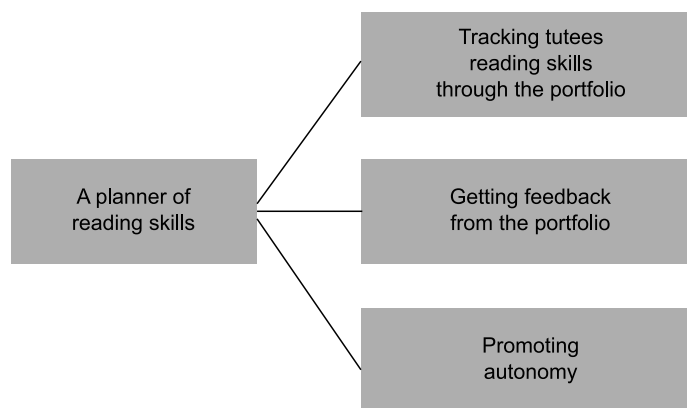


**Graph 1:** Categories established to answer the research questions

### The collaborative portfolio: a planner of reading skills

Through the process of analyzing data, most of the information pointed to the way in which the portfolio acted as an instrument that guided students to become involved in

reading activities. This category responds to the sub question: What does the use of a collaborative portfolio tell us about tutees' reading skills development? Figure 3 represents the sub-categories we identified as part of this first category.



**Graph 2.** The Collaborative Portfolio: A Planner of Reading Skills



When working with the portfolio, as participants mentioned in the interviews, students were guided to propose some goals for the week. For instance, one of the most common reading goals tutees proposed to work on during the week was to look for several readings of their interest or articles or magazines and to look for new words, expressions and so on. They told us they enjoyed learning experience. Likewise, the process described before is related to the section included in the portfolio aptly named Personal Improvement Plan (PIP). In the following section, we included some tutees' interview responses and their testimonies about how they had used the portfolio in their learning process related to reading skills:

*Trazándome o poniéndome pequeños retos semanales los cuales trato de cumplir  
I established short weekly aims and I tried to reach those. (Fuji, Interview, October, 2010).*

*Si uno va a planear el objetivo en el PIP, por ejemplo, "conocer más vocabulario" entonces en la lectura lo primero que hago es hojear, hojear. La analizó e infiero que es lo que he aprendido en este portafolio. (if I am going to plan the objective in the PIP for instance, to know more vocabulary, so then the right thing I do while reading is skimming. I analyze and interpret what I have learnt by means of the portfolio) (Samy, Interview September, 2010).*

In figure 2, showed above, we can see that from this first category other relevant sub-categories emerged.

**Subcategory 1: tracking tutees' reading skills through the portfolio.** Some of the issues we discovered were how the portfolio guided and helped tutors and tutees' themselves to monitor tutees' reading in their English process from the beginning until the end of the project. During this monitoring, it was evident that the tutees were acquiring, step by step, new reading skills using the portfolio as a support. The following includes comments we obtained from the tutees discussing this issue:

*He tenido tiempo para revisar mi portafolio a medida que pasaron todos los talleres, me doy cuenta que si es una buena estrategia, por ejemplo saque un libro de la biblioteca, y en este libro aplique lo que había visto en el portafolio. (Along tutorial I have had time to work in my portfolio, I realize it is a good strategy, for example I am reading a book and I am applying what I saw in the portfolio). (Candy, Interview, November, 2009)*

As tutors we noted how tutees took advantage of the reading strategies they were provided in the portfolio to improve their reading skills.

**Subcategory 2: getting feedback from the portfolio.** In this project the concept of reflection was taken by tutees as self-evaluation or the thinking generated from feedback. This process of reflection was a constant issue while working with the portfolio; tutees used the portfolio, taking into account each new reading experience they encountered after a tutorial session, to reflect on their reading process as well as sharing with their tutors their experiences while registering up all this information by means

of journals. Oftentimes, in the tutorial sessions, they told us about how, through the portfolio, they received feedback about their reading process and how much they thought they had improved:

*Mis escritos como reflexiones, me han servido porque hoy me doy cuenta de todo el proceso... Por ejemplo al leer veo y digo interesante la forma en que he mejorado... (My writings as reflections have supported me, I can follow all my process... for instance when reading I can observe how I have improved).* (Tutees' journal, Fuji, October, 2009)

Subcategory 3: promoting autonomy through portfolio planning. One part of the portfolio was the planning of some weekly goals set in the personal improvement plan (PIP). In doing so, students could organize their learning experiences and reinforce their English reading process. Apparently, this led students to work autonomously through their comprehension of texts. In this regard they commented:

*Es importante reconocer la importancia del trabajo autónomo y es por eso que gracias a la planeación de objetivos del portafolio uno se da cuenta cuán importante es practicar, tomar consciencia de la capacidad que uno puede tener (it is important to realize the relevance of the autonomous work so then planning objectives in the portfolio we noticed how practicing is a purposeful aim and we become aware of the skills we may have).* (Candy, Survey, May, 2009).

In addition, we perceived what might be some

evolution in students' self-determination when working with the portfolio. At the very beginning of this process, students came to tutorials with low motivation towards reading; however, through the tutorials students increased their interest in reading which led them to start reading by themselves.

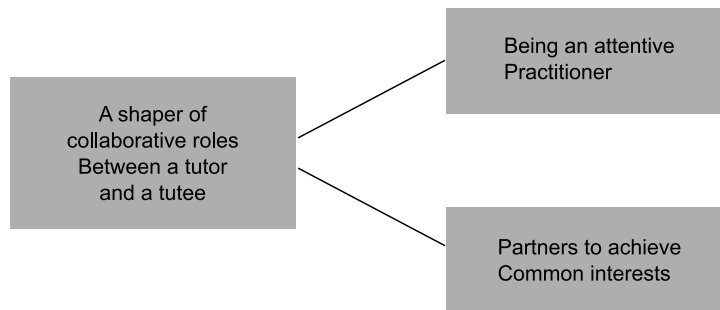
For instance, we posted a question in which, half way through the study, we asked a tutee (Sultan) about his reading process. At that point, we had evidenced through tutorials and interviews that tutees had begun to develop positive regard for reading. The following question was posed to Sultan once we observed he was reading a book on his own in the university library:

*Tutor: ¿Qué lo motivó a leer el hombre elefante? (what was your motivation to read the elephant man?)*

*Sultán: "Primero que todo para aprender mucho más, aprender vocabulario, lo hice también para tratar de profundizar más en el trabajo que estoy haciendo... como segundo para ver si lo que veía en el portafolio me servía para... me motivo eso y la lectura" (first of all I am doing it to learn much more, to learn vocabulary, I also did it because I wanted to enhance my efforts, secondly, I am doing it to see if the work that I was doing with the portfolio had really supported me... it motivated me and the reading too)* (Interview, May, 2009, Sultan ).

Next, we will discuss the role that the portfolio had in relation to the tutees and tutors' collaborative work. Figure 3 includes the sub-categories which are part of this second set of findings.

*Category 2: a shaper of collaborative roles*



**Graph 3.** The Portfolio as a Shaper of Collaborative Roles

Another important aspect we established by working with the portfolio was the way in which the portfolio brought tutors and tutees together in order to work on achieving some goals associated with the tutees' reading process. This subcategory serves as a response to the subquestion: How do tutees and tutors work collaboratively by means of a portfolio to support tutees' reading skills development?

We used the word "shaper", to define the portfolio's role, meaning that this pedagogical tool "gave form" to tutees and tutors' roles. Bearing in mind the previous statement, we needed to focus on the fact that both the tutors and the tutees had duties concerning the development of the sessions. For instance, the tutors provided a range of options for the tutees to consider and decide which of these choices were the most suitable for their process while tutees knew they had to be attentive and participate in discussing those options with tutors, in order to increase their chances of learning.

Various types of collaboration emerged as mediated by the portfolio. The evidence of

this is seen from the very beginning when they developed the portfolios together. Next we have a tutor's comment which demonstrates the role the tutee adopted at certain times.

*Elaborando el portafolio fue algo interesante ya que cada uno, dio su granito de arena, por ejemplo a mi no me gusta la decoracion y eso, pera a ella ( the tuttee) si, asi que ella aporto la creatividad y yo la organizaci3n... (creating the portfolio was something very interesting since we both collaborated, for instance i do not like decorating but the tutee does, so she decorated the portfolio and i help to organize it). (Tutor's journal, November, 2009).*

Subcategory 1: being attentive practitioners. Talking about the collaborative roles played in this process, we wanted to emphasize what tutees considered an important role they played as they became involved with their tutor and the portfolio. This is seen in the following remark in response to a question about how they had worked together, both

tutor and tutee, to build the portfolio; Candy commented:

*“Pues con la ayuda que me brinda Jorge (her tutor) he podido descubrir habilidades y fortalezas que pensé no tener” (so then with the support Jorge has given me I have been able to discover new skills that I thought I did not have) (Candy, Survey, April 2009).*

Being attentive practitioners, means that, while the tutees were working with the activities proposed in the portfolio and taking into account the tutors' advice, they became aware of key aspects in their learning process.

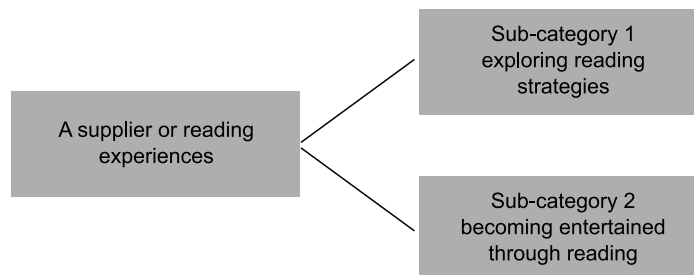
Subcategory 2: partners to achieve common interests: Data collected reveals that collaboration and friendship were key issues in tutoring sections. The main objective we had in common was that the tutees could explore reading skills through the portfolio. The portfolio allowed us to be more in contact with the tutees. This interaction created by the portfolio, throughout the different reading workshops, generated an environment of confidence. For instance,

tutees seemed to ask questions spontaneously or felt comfortable bringing expressing doubts in the tutorial sessions; they regarded us a guides but also as peers.

*Desde un principio los dos hemos sido muy responsables con nuestro trabajo, estamos trabajando colectivamente, nos colaboramos el uno al otro (from the beginning, we both have been very responsible with our work, we have been working collaboratively, we collaborate with each other) (Sultan, Interview May 2009).*

The concept of collaboration is also seen in the elaboration of the workshops since both tutors and tutees work together in developing some activities. We as tutors supported tutees by guiding them in their reading process, working together in the personal improvement plan and motivating them to enhance their reading skills through the portfolio.

In the upcoming pages, we will discuss the last category (see Figure 4) concerning the role the portfolio had in relation to the tutees' reading skills.



**Graph 4.** The Portfolio as a Supplier of Reading Experiences

Category 3: a supplier of reading experiences. A Supplier of reading experiences refers to the opportunities that the portfolio provided tutees to become acquainted with and practice reading strategies. This category attempts to answer the subquestion about how tutees' reading skill development can be tracked by the portfolio.

At the beginning tutees engaged texts through their interpretation skills, imagination and creativity. With this portfolio experience, they incorporated reading strategies that facilitated their reading understanding into their already existing repertoire. Working with their reading workshops, tutees could gain expertise in comprehending written texts. In addition, we noticed how through the portfolio and the reading workshops tutees gained insights into their own reading skills. Next, we have some of their comments:

*Las diferentes actividades como subrayar, encontrar las diferentes ideas principales... nos ayudan a que realicemos mejor el proceso de lectura" (the different activities like underlining, extracting the main idea... they help us to create a better reading process.)* (Fuji, Survey, June 2009).

*Cuando empecé con este proceso y con el primer taller de lectura que hice, me di cuenta que tenía algunas habilidades pero que tal vez me faltaba despertar más mi interés por la lectura y comprometerme más con ello" (when I started with this process, and with the first reading workshop I attended, I realized I had some skills and that I needed to motivate myself to read and to be more committed to it).* (Candy, Survey, June 2009).

Subcategory 1: exploring reading strategies in tutees. At this point of the data analysis, we established a first sub category in relation to how reading strategies were used by tutees during tutoring by means of the portfolio. During the tutorial sessions, we taught them reading tips which they could use in the workshops. Although we noticed that they already knew some of them, they did not know the names of the ones they were employing. At the end of sessions, they always gave us their own opinion about the strategy and the impact it had on their reading process.

In addition we noticed how through the implementation of these reading strategies the tutorial work was becoming more effective; developing the reading workshops, the portfolio was connected with the personal improvement plan (PIP) since the tutees used it to establish goals.

Another section of the portfolio named "tutees' entry reflection" reveal how tutees reflected on the reading process and how the implementation of these reading strategies enhanced the process.

One of the most common strategies tutees used while reading, was related to *getting a global idea from a text*; tutees thought of reading as extracting the main ideas of the content to have a global comprehension of a text. Here we have, two tutees responses to questions in relation to a reading about a story:

*Hice como una lectura global del texto y logre comprender (I used a global reading of the text and I was able to understand)* (Sultan, Journal, June 2009).

*Primero ver la lectura, y tratar de analizar de que se trata, por lo menos hay nos dan claves y uno va armando sus ideas y trata de construir (first scan the reading and try to analyze what the text is about, sometimes clues are provided by the text then we structure different ideas and try to build)* (Sultan, Journal, June 2009).

Tutees also used other reading strategies, such as *re-reading, contextualization and activation of previous knowledge* which they considered useful for understanding a text. Concerning these strategies they expressed: *“Cuando voy a leer pues leo una vez, y a la segunda o tercera entiendo el texto.”* (When I am going to read I read it over once, after the second or third reading I can understand the text). (Candy, Journal, June, 2009).

In addition, tutees reflected upon their use of strategies, for instance *skimming and scanning strategies*: They said: *“He aprendido sobre el skimming y el scanning, esto me sirvió para saber en profundidad de una lectura”* (I have learnt about skimming and scanning, it has helped me to deepen my understanding of the reading). (Sammy, Interview, June, 2009).

Now, we would like to explore the second subcategory which has to do with the tutees level of comfort with working on the reading activities during the tutorial sections.

Subcategory 2: becoming entertained through reading: Tutees found reading to be not only a cognitive activity which required discipline, but also an entertaining way in which they enjoy themselves and cultivate a attitude of inquiry. Through the different workshops, we came to realize how the

tutees enjoyed their practice in the reading workshops and in this sense they improved in the process.

For instance, in one of the last workshops we prepared for tutees, we asked them about their impressions about reading, up to this point, they commented: *“Tuve la oportunidad de conocer más de la lectura y hacer de este un hobby para todos los días”* (I had the chance to interact more with the reading and to make it a daily activity). (Fuji, Interview, June, 2009).

Another important aspect of this point is that reading also became for tutees and, we would say for us too, a learning experience and a way to develop our mental creativity: *“Entonces uno empieza a imaginarse la historia, uno se va metiendo en la historia, uno dice esta lectura está buenísima, y despertar la creatividad mental y el interés”* (then we imagine the story, we start going through the text, and we said... this reading is good and it increases our mental creativity and interest.) (Samy, Interview, June, 2009).

Taking into account the last tutee comments we observed the way in which the portfolio, the reading workshops and the collaboration helped tutees explore their reading skills.

## Conclusions and Implications

One of the main roles of the portfolio was as a motivator for tutees' to engage in the reading process. In every single tutorial in which we worked with the portfolio, tutees told us about the impact that the portfolio had had on them. Motivation is an issue we want to highlight. We could see that throughout this process when the tutees felt motivated to

read, they did not perceive the learning process to be monotonous and they were encouraged to be more autonomous.

The portfolio also served as a framework for the design and planning of different activities in which they expressed interest. This allowed them to seek out different strategies to strengthen this communicative skill. In addition, through planning, tutees could track their reading process and be monitored by their tutors. After each tutorial session, they received feedback from the tutors. We as tutors are convinced that preparing a plan for the tutoring activities and allowing our students to develop a plan, as well as sharing with our students about our learning experiences, helped us all to remain focused on the learning.

In addition to being a motivator and a planner, the portfolio brought together the tutor and the tutee through their collaborative work. In this case, we defined the portfolio as a “shaper of participants` roles”. The portfolio helped tutors and tutees to establish some functions in their cooperative interaction. Tutees learned to be responsible for the tasks they committed to develop in tutorials, but most importantly tutees learned how to work in a team with their tutors and find the support and the role model they needed to enrich the reading process.

The last role we observed in the portfolio relates to how this tool led tutees to develop various mechanisms for confronting the text comprehension process. In the different reading worksheets, interviews and observation data we collected, we noticed that tutees explored different reading strategies such as: scanning, skimming,

making inferences and underlining. In many cases, tutees were not aware of their use of these mechanisms. During this process, they became familiar with them. As a result of the familiarization with these strategies, their reading process was enhanced and their interest in reading increased in such a way that at the end of the process with the portfolio they enjoyed reading while adopting new reading habits.

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## “De petits promoteurs de la Vie Saine” des émissions de radio pour entendre, se faire entendre et apprendre le français

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### Résumé

Cet article a pour objectif, présenterle projet “ De petits promoteurs de la vie saine ” qui a été réalisé à l’Institution Éducative “ Silvino Rodríguez, siège San Antonio ” avec les élèves de CE2. C’est un travail de recherche qui est basé sur des émissions enregistrées de radiopour promouvoir l’utilisation de la langue française, et améliorer la compétence communicative des élèves,en particulier la compréhension orale et la production orale. Les émissions de radio portent sur des sujets mis en rapport au projet transversal : “ Styles de vie saine ” de l’Institution Éducative.On a pu constater que l’enseignement et l’apprentissage d’une

### Abstract

This article aims to present the project “De petits promoteurs de la Vie Saine”, which was carried out in the Institución Educativa Silvino Rodríguez sede San Antonio with third graders. It is a research project based on recorded radio emissions to promote the use of the French language so students improve communicative competence in regards to oral comprehension and oral production. These radio emissions include topics related to the cross-project “Healthy Lifestyles” of the Institution.

It was found that the teaching and learning of a new language become more meaningful

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langue deviennent plus significatifs quand la langue est un moyen pour accéder à d'autres connaissances. Dans ce cas, le français a été au service du projet transversal de l'institution.

**Mots-clés :** Langue française, styles de vie saine, radio, communication, compétence communicative.

## Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo presentar el proyecto "De petits promoteurs de la vie saine" que fue llevado a cabo en la Institución Educativa Silvino Rodríguez, sede San Antonio, con estudiantes de tercero. Este es un trabajo de investigación basado en programas de radio que buscan promover que los alumnos utilicen la lengua francesa, para mejorar la competencia comunicativa, en particular la comprensión y la producción oral. Los programas de radio incluyen temas relacionados al proyecto transversal de la Institución "Estilos de vida saludable". Se encontró que la enseñanza y aprendizaje de una lengua, se hace más significativo cuando ésta es un medio para acceder a otros conocimientos; en este caso, el francés estuvo al servicio del proyecto transversal de la Institución.

**Palabras clave:** Lengua francesa, estilos de vida saludable, radio, comunicación, competencia comunicativa.

when the language is a means to access other knowledge; in this case, French was serving the cross-project of the Institution.

**Keywords:** French language, healthy lifestyles, radio, communication, and communicative skill.

## Introduction

La production orale et la compréhension orale ont toujours été quelques-unes des principales difficultés à l'heure d'apprendre une nouvelle langue étrangère. Les élèves sont souvent découragés à cause du bas niveau de compréhension de la langue et à cause des problèmes communicatifs à l'heure d'interagir ou de s'exprimer en FLE (Français langue étrangère). Ils évitent d'utiliser la langue étrangère parce qu'ils n'ont pas d'espaces pour mettre en pratique leurs connaissances. En plus, ils ne font pas confiance à eux-mêmes, et se sentent intimidés par le professeur quand il utilise une langue différente à la langue maternelle.

De plus, nous croyons erronément que l'enseignement d'une langue étrangère est isolé des autres sujets académiques. Mais, bien au contraire, l'enseignement d'une langue étrangère, dans ce cas le français, ne cherche pas seulement des objectifs linguistiques. C'est ainsi que l'un des objectifs de l'enseignement des langues est faire converger les objectifs langagiers et éducatifs des institutions.

D'ailleurs, bien que l'institution propose de différents projets qui cherchent à contribuer à la formation intégrale, humaine et sociale des élèves, ces projets-là ne se développent pas de manière régulière et continue, faisant alors, que les résultats ne soient pas positifs.

C'est pourquoi on a décidé de contribuer au développement du projet " Styles de vie saine " à travers nos leçons de langue française. C'est là où ce projet devient important puisqu'il reprend et renforce les sujets liés au projet transversal. On a travaillé des sujets en langue étrangère d'une manière beaucoup plus attrayante pour les apprenants: la radio. Ainsi, les élèves ont eu un rôle beaucoup plus actif et participatif dans le processus. À travers les émissions de radio, on a visé à améliorer les problèmes les plus fréquents en ce qui concerne la compétence communicative, en faisant que les élèves s'habituent à parler en français et à pratiquer les habitudes propres des styles de vie saine.

### **Description du Problème**

Dans le cadre d'une éducation ayant une vision humaine et un sens social, l'Institución Educativa Silvino Rodríguez développe de différents types de projets. L'un d'entre eux aborde des styles de vie saine. Ce projet cherche à promouvoir la création de conditions et d'espaces appropriés pour le développement intégral des élèves au sein du contexte familial, scolaire et social.

Pendant les observations réalisées la première semaine lors d'un stage à l'école Silvino Rodríguez, siège San Antonio à Tunja, on a pu constater que ces projets n'ont pas

un suivi approprié. Alors, on a décidé de lier le projet scolaire " Styles de vie saine " avec l'enseignement du français à travers les ateliers de radio, en proposant comme question principale de la recherche : dans quelle mesure les émissions de radio, peuvent-elles améliorer la compétence communicative du français, chez les élèves de CE2 A de l'Institución Educativa Silvino Rodríguez siège San Antonio?

Ainsi est né " De Petits Promoteurs de la Vie Saine ". L'intention principale a été de recueillir ces aspects et de renforcer les habilités communicatives des élèves car celles-ci sont très faibles. En plus, on a voulu éveiller la prise de conscience vers l'importance d'avoir des styles de vie saine et créer des espaces de communication et d'interaction en français pour que les élèves s'habituent à écouter la langue française à travers la radio.

Alors, l'enseignement du français est une opportunité d'importance capitale pour aider l'institution à atteindre ses objectifs. De plus, on veut s'éloigner de l'idée que l'enseignement de la langue porte seulement à atteindre des objectifs linguistiques. Selon le CECR, la langue n'est pas une fin mais un moyen, elle est un outil pour apprendre d'autres sujets non linguistiques. C'est là où la radio joue un rôle important; en tant qu'outil qui fait converger l'enseignement du français et le développement de styles de vie saine, pour améliorer les aspects contribuant à l'épanouissement plein des enfants et la solution des problèmes communs en classe de langue étrangère, tels que l'interaction, la compréhension orale et la production orale.

En outre, dans le contexte colombien, certains élèves vivent des situations complexes qui les empêchent d’avoir une vie saine (économiques, familiales et même culturelles). Il existe des problèmes de malnutrition, de propreté et de sédentarité qui font que les élèves ne soient pas à pleine capacité d’avoir une bonne performance cognitive pendant les cours.

### **Cadre théorique**

Selon la proposition de ce travail de recherche, il est fondamental de tenir compte des concepts suivants: la compétence communicative, la perspective actionnelle et la radio comme stratégies pédagogiques et communicatives.

### **La compétence communicative**

La compétence communicative est l’ensemble de normes grammaticales et de niveaux linguistiques (le lexique, la phonétique et la sémantique) que l’on doit suivre dans une communauté déterminée. Il faut tenir compte des règles d’utilisation de la langue selon la culture d’une population spécifique. Selon Hymes (1971) :

La compétence communicative se rapporte avec le savoir “ quand on parle, quand on ne parle pas, avec qui on parle, où on parle, de quelle façon on parle ”; c’est-à-dire, qu’il faut tenir compte des énoncés sociaux appropriés et non seulement de la cohérence grammaticale.

Pour améliorer le concept existant, il a proposé quatre critères qui rassemblent les

théories linguistiques avec la culture pour pouvoir établir si la communication :

- est formellement possible et dans quelle mesure (règles grammaticales – culture)
- est faisable selon les conditions normales d’une personne (mémoire, perception, etc.)
- est appropriée et dans quelle mesure (situation dans laquelle on se communique).
- est réelle (est utilisée par les membres de la communauté).

Canale (1980) considère que la compétence communicative se conforme de quatre sous-compétences entrecroisées : linguistique, sociolinguistique, discursive et stratégique.

Van Ek (1986) ajoute une compétence de plus, la compétence socioculturelle, accompagnée de la compétence sociale. Il remarque l’importance de l’aspect culturel et du contexte social au moment de parler de compétence communicative. On coïncide qu’il est nécessaire de tenir compte de différentes situations agroupées par un contexte déterminé et qui peuvent répercuter au moment de communiquer.

Selon le Cadre de Référence Européen, les compétences communicatives de la langue comprennent les compétences linguistique, sociolinguistique et pragmatique et celles générales de l’individu : savoir, savoir-faire, savoir être et savoir apprendre. Il est nécessaire d’équilibrer les quatre savoirs pour avoir un développement complet et satisfaisant visant à compléter la compétence dans sa totalité.

## La perspective actionnelle

La perspective actionnelle cherche à éduquer pour l'action; elle ne voit pas l'élève comme un simple usager de la langue mais comme un acteur social. L'élève apprend à agir en société, à vivre et à interagir avec les autres dans un contexte social particulier, en accomplissant des fonctions et en dépassant des situations données par l'environnement même (Conseil de l'Europe, 2001 cité par Puren, 2013).

De plus, la perspective actionnelle comporte deux visions qui aident à accomplir ses objectifs à différentes échelles : l'approche par les tâches et la pédagogie par projets. Ces deux démarches aident à faire la transition de l'école au social, de la société-classe à la société extérieure réelle, de l'action à l'intervention. Alors, il s'agit de la relation qui s'établit entre l'acquisition de connaissances et son application ou répercussion dans la société. C'est l'apprentissage d'une nouvelle langue au service ou en fonction de la société, " c'est l'apprentissage envisagé comme une activité sociale et l'élève comme un acteur social [...] comme un citoyen critique, responsable et solidaire " (Rosen, 2009).

Dans la perspective actionnelle les élèves et les enseignantes doivent être capables de communiquer, de s'exprimer, d'interagir, d'apporter, de cohabiter et de co-agir, ce qui mène à bien se connaître entre eux et à partager des valeurs, connaissances et perspectives (Puren, 2014). Il faut prendre des caractéristiques et des sujets liés aux problèmes à résoudre, liées à leur quotidienneté pour faire le travail plus significatif, actif et productif.

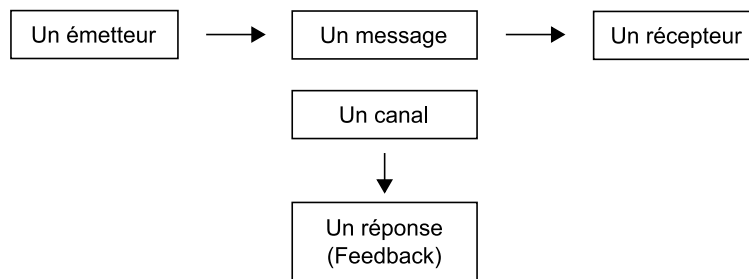
C'est pourquoi cette théorie prend de la force dans ce projet, car les émissions de radio sont culturelles et éducatives ; elles constituent une tâche linguistique et sociale (Merchan et Galeano, 2013), l'intervention des élèves et l'alternatives des élèves pour mettre en pratique leurs connaissances linguistiques et celles qui concernent les styles de vie saine. Tout cela devient le point de convergence entre la langue et le factor social travaillé, correspondant aux sujets du projet " Styles de vie saine ".

## La radio

Il est nécessaire, dans ce projet, de reconnaître la radio comme une stratégie pédagogique et comme un moyen de communication pour apprendre la langue française. La radio, sous un point de vue interculturel et sociale (approche actionnelle), peut être une de réponses pour surmonter l'apathie à apprendre une nouvelle langue, pour se débarrasser des barrières linguistiques et pour se rapprocher aux contextes éloignés (Pardo, 2014).

Nous devons remarquer que les émissions de radio se développent sous l'autorisation de professeurs et de directeurs de l'Institution. En plus, étant donné que l'Institution ne disposait pas d'une station d'émission, les stagiaires se sont occupés des scripts, et de trouver les espaces appropriés pour organiser et réaliser les enregistrements et les émissions.

Par ailleurs, on doit citer Shannon et Weaver (1949) avec leur modèle de communication classique où ils présentent la théorie du transfert de l'information de la manière suivante :



**Image 1.** Le modèle canonique du processus communicationnel inspiré du proposé par Shannon et Weaver (années 40) depuis la théorie mathématique de l'information. Maria Cristina Mata (2012). La radio: Una relación comunicativa. Revista académica de la federación latinoamericana de facultades de comunicación social, Pag. 2.

L'illustration précédente, nous permet de mieux conceptualiser les sujets impliqués dans le processus radiophonique. Les émetteurs sont les élèves de CE2 A qui transmettent le message, dans ce cas les sujets mis en rapport aux styles de vie saine ; et les récepteurs sont les élèves de tout l'établissement scolaire.

Il est aussi important de souligner les processus de radio comme le fait Mata (2012), la radio comme une relation communicative, la radio comme une pratique significative et la radio comme expérience culturelle. Dans ce projet on peut observer la relation communicative avec des sujets immergés dans le processus communicatif, en créant des nœuds de confiance et des sujets d'intérêt entre ceux-ci, comme pratique significative. On peut voir aussi, qu'à travers la radio, on génère des progrès quand il s'agit du développement du discours. De même, les élèves peuvent travailler la communication comme expérience culturelle.

### Cadre méthodologique

Ce projet a été mené à bien à l'Institución Educativa Silvino Rodríguez siège San

Antonio. C'est une école publique d'éducation primaire à Tunja, Boyacá. L'Institution cherche à éduquer ses élèves d'une manière intégrale et avec une vision humaine. C'est pourquoi elle a appuyée l'idée de bien développer la compétence communicative chez les élèves et de promouvoir l'apprentissage du français avec les styles de vie saine. Elle est toujours ouverte aux nouvelles stratégies et alternatives pour améliorer la qualité d'éducation et de vie des élèves.

### Méthodologie de la Recherche

#### Type de recherche

Le type de recherche action cherche à identifier une problématique et trouver une solution possible. Selon Kemmis et McTaggart (1988) la recherche action est autoréflexive puisqu'elle permet que les participants s'impliquent dans leurs propres pratiques sociales ou éducatives afin d'améliorer la compréhension de ces pratiques et la manière dont elles sont effectuées. La recherche action comporte 4 étapes: la planification, l'action, l'observation et la réflexion.

## Population et échantillon

Les participants choisis pour développer ce projet sont les élèves de CE2 de l'Institution. C'est un groupe de 36 élèves, dont 19 filles et 17 garçons, avec un tranche d'âge qui va de 8 à 10 ans..

## La planification

Dans cette étape et après une observation, nous avons trouvé une situation problématique par rapport à l'apprentissage de langues étrangères. Alors on a préparé un plan d'action afin d'atténuer cette problématique. On a décidé de travailler la radio comme stratégie pour améliorer les défaillances langagières des élèves (compréhension et production orale) de la main d'un des projets institutionnels " Styles de vie saine ".

## L'action

Elle correspond à l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre de 4 ateliers, qui sont liés au projet transversal " Styles de vie saine " sur l'alimentation saine, le soin de l'environnement et l'importance de faire du sport. Après l'application des ateliers, on a fait l'émission de radio étant le résultat pour évaluer le progrès des élèves pendant le processus. Les émissions de radio n'ont pas été en direct parce qu'il s'agissait de la première exposition des enfants au français. Elles ont été enregistrées et plus tard éditées. La diffusion des émissions a été faite pendant la récréation afin d'impliquer tout l'établissement.

## L'observation

En premier lieu, elle est devenue un outil essentiel pour identifier la situation

problématique de ce travail et de plus, elle a aussi été utilisée pour collecter et analyser l'information correspondante aux résultats de l'application des ateliers.

## La réflexion

Cette partie de la recherche action est mise en évidence après avoir les résultats de l'application des ateliers. On a analysé l'impact pédagogique de la radio comme stratégie pour améliorer la compétence communicative par rapport à la compréhension orale, à la production orale, et aussi à l'appropriation et à la prise de conscience de pratiquer des styles de vie saine.

## Collecte de données

Les instruments mentionnés ci-dessous, ont été utilisés dans le but de nourrir les caractéristiques du problème de sorte que l'on puisse analyser et améliorer quelques aspects ou les défaillances qui se produisent. De même, ces instruments nous ont aidé à collecter des données portant sur les résultats de l'application de cette stratégie. Ces instruments sont:

**Les observations.** Selon Richards et Lockhart (1996), les observations sont un moyen pour recueillir des informations à propos de l'enseignement. Ils étaient des outils essentiels pour collecter de différentes données indispensables pour faire ce travail de recherche et pour guider l'élaboration du plan d'action. À travers les observations on s'est rendu compte des principales faiblesses des élèves et leurs rôles (actif-passif) dans les différents cours, leur participation et leur discipline.

**Les interviews** . Elles sont des moyens pour recueillir d'information sur les différentes dimensions de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage (Richards et Lockhart, 1996). L'interview a été faite au professeur responsable du cours, à l'oral et à la fin de tout le processus. Avec cet instrument, on cherchait à déterminer les défaillances et les limitations les plus courantes en cours de langue étrangère, les causes possibles et l'évaluation du processus. L'interview a permis aussi de faire un parallèle entre le niveau langagier des élèves, au début et à la fin du projet, en mesurant leur degré d'amélioration.

**Le journal de route** . C'est un récit en première personne sur l'expérience d'apprentissage ou d'enseignement de la langue où on note les événements les plus importants (Bailey, 1990). Nunan (1992) souligne que les journaux sont des instruments introspectifs qui révèlent des indications précieuses à propos des facteurs psychologiques, sociaux et culturels impliqués dans la langue. Ces journaux ont permis de suivre attentivement les processus des élèves et de préciser les facteurs qui ont une incidence là-dessus, en permettant de proposer de différents moyens pour surmonter ces aspects.

### **Conception Pédagogique**

Cette proposition pédagogique présente les émissions de radio comme une manière de faire que les élèves améliorent leur compétence communicative et constitue

une opportunité pour promouvoir l'utilisation de la langue française dans l'institution. Pour atteindre cet objectif, les enfants doivent développer des ateliers à fin de travailler la langue.

Les ateliers proposés pour ce travail sont liés aux sujets du projet transversal “ Styles de vie saine ” tels que l'alimentation saine, le soin de l'environnement et l'importance de faire du sport. Le premier a été divisé en deux pour simplifier le processus d'appropriation des élèves. Toutes les activités et le matériel utilisés ont été planifiés pour faciliter la mécanisation du contenu chez les élèves et pour atteindre une bonne performance langagière pendant l'émission.

Ce projet de recherche comporte 4 ateliers et 2 étapes préparatoires. La première est une étape linguistique qui inclut le développement des sujets liés au projet transversal. La deuxième est une étape d'exécution, qui implique l'atelier de réalisation des émissions.

### **Résultats**

Toute l'information et les résultats ont été analysés à la lumière de 3 catégories d'analyses : le développement de la production orale, le développement de la compréhension orale et la portée des objectifs du projet transversal. Ces catégories ont été établies selon les objectifs et le niveau d'efficacité ou de compétence des élèves par rapport à la compétence communicative.



Atelier	Compétence communicative (développement de la production orale)	Compétence communicative (développement de la compréhension orale)	La portée des objectifs du projet transversal
<p><b>1</b> Après l'application du premier atelier et en tenant compte de ses objectifs, nous avons atteint de bons résultats.</p>	<p>Les élèves de CE2 A ont utilisés les structures d'une manière satisfaisante. Telles structures étaient " c'est la/le " " Je dois manger de la/!... ". En plus, ils devaient prononcer d'autres structures pour compléter l'information liée à l'alimentation saine et ils l'ont bien fait, avec une bonne modulation et intonation. Le vocabulaire dont ils se sont appropriés est lié aux fruits.</p>	<p>Les élèves ont bien compris les structures de ce premier atelier, ce qui montre un bon développement de la compréhension orale. Bien que le processus fût un peu lent au début, ils ont répondu d'une manière satisfaisante aux consignes et aux questions faites par les professeurs par rapport au sujet planifié.</p>	<p>Les élèves se sont bien appropriés de l'importance d'avoir une alimentation saine et de manger quotidiennement des fruits dans leur environnement scolaire et familial.</p>
<p><b>2</b> Après l'application de l'atelier N° 2 et en tenant compte des objectifs proposés, les résultats obtenus étaient satisfaisants.</p>	<p>Les élèves ont bien appris toutes les structures car celles-ci étaient les mêmes de l'atelier précédent. De plus, ils ont bien mécanisé le vocabulaire concernant les légumes, grâce à la similitude de prononciation avec l'espagnol. En outre, les structures relatives à la réflexion finale étaient appropriées.</p>	<p>Les élèves ont montré un bon discernement des actes de paroles prévus pour l'atelier. Ils se sont bien appropriés des structures et du vocabulaire pendant les différentes activités. Il y a eu de la place pour une participation active et un bon développement de l'habileté d'écoute grâce à la reprise de contenu.</p>	<p>Les élèves ont bien compris l'importance de la consommation des légumes ; ils ont compris que notre corps a besoin de vitamines et de minéraux essentiels, présents dans les légumes, pour un bon fonctionnement de l'organisme et pour prévenir les maladies.</p>
<p><b>3</b> Après l'application du troisième atelier, les résultats atteints n'ont pas été satisfaisants.</p>	<p>Durant le développement de cet atelier, les élèves ont eu certaines difficultés pour bien réaliser l'émission de radio à la fin de l'atelier. Ils n'ont pas eu de performance satisfaisante comme les ateliers précédents. La prononciation et l'appropriation du contenu n'ont pas été satisfaisantes à cause du degré de complexité en termes des structures et du vocabulaire. Ceci était : " Je dois séparer les ordures, je dois recycler, je dois réduire, je dois réutiliser " " le plastique, le verre, les déchets alimentaires, le papier, le carton ".</p>	<p>La compréhension orale des élèves n'a pas été bien développée au cours de cet atelier. Ils n'ont pas bien répondu aux différentes structures proposées, notamment à la question " Qu'est-ce que je dois faire (pour prendre soin de ma planète)? ". Il y a eu beaucoup d'exercices de mécanisation et même un peu de traduction afin d'atteindre une bonne appropriation.</p>	<p>Les élèves ont pris conscience de prendre soin de la planète et de mettre en pratique les 3 Rs écologiques : réduire, réutiliser et recycler. Nous avons réussi à réveiller l'intérêt des enfants vers le soin de l'environnement et de la communauté.</p>
<p><b>4</b> Pendant l'application de l'atelier N° 4, nous avons obtenu de bons résultats.</p>	<p>Dans ce dernier atelier les élèves de CE2 A ont réussi à faire l'émission. Ils ont mécanisé rapidement le contenu par rapport aux sports. Les actes de parole ont correspondu à dire aux autres le sport qu'ils faisaient d'habitude, en utilisant les structures : " Je fais du/de la... " et elles ont été correctement prononcées. Ils ont bien répondu (en français) à la question des professeurs, en utilisant les structures et le vocabulaire étudiés.</p>	<p>Le développement de la compétence de compréhension orale chez les élèves pendant cet atelier a été remarquable. Ils ont démontré une bonne compréhension des structures proposées. Le processus de compréhension du contenu a été rapide, ce qui a contribué au développement de la compréhension orale.</p>	<p>Les élèves ont bien compris l'importance de faire du sport quotidiennement et les avantages qu'il apporte à notre corps, la vitalité, l'énergie et la prévention du sédentarisme.</p>

## Conclusions

On a pu constater qu'il y a eu une amélioration de la compétence communicative des élèves de CE2 A, en particulier, par rapport à la production orale, puisque l'on a réussi à développer les ateliers et les émissions de radio.

En ce qui concerne la compréhension orale chez les élèves, la classe comprenait ce que leurs professeurs et camarades disaient en français.

Les élèves ont compris l'importance d'avoir des habitudes de vie saine, à travers chaque émission. Il y a eu une prise de conscience considérable car ils ont commencé à manger des fruits et des légumes, ils faisaient du sport et prenaient soin de la planète.

On a mis en évidence une augmentation de l'intérêt pour apprendre la langue française grâce aux émissions de radio.

Les élèves ont bien profité des espaces proposés pour les émissions de radio. Ils ont écouté les émissions et comme celles-ci ont été diffusées pendant la récréation, les autres enfants de l'école se sont motivés par l'apprentissage de la langue et par la radio.

La radio, de pair avec la langue française, est un moyen attrayant pour sensibiliser les autres et encourager son apprentissage et l'interaction communicative.

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## Blogging as an EFL Practice Beyond The Classroom

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### Abstract

This small research project aims to explore how the use of a blog can benefit students' learning processes in a rural school. Materials such as texts, videos, and even links for connecting with other similar sites were provided to students in order to employ blogs as a language exposure platform for English learning. Data was collected by means of students' narratives (opinions) regarding their use of the blogs and informal observation of students' engagement in the process and of their artifacts. As a result, findings indicate that the use of blogs became a useful aid to support language learning due to the contact participants established with the foreign language in the learning process; incidentally blogging enhanced students' participation and interest in their own learning.

### Resumen

Esta pequeña investigación tiene como objetivo explorar, cómo el empleo de un blog puede beneficiar el proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes en una escuela rural. Materiales tales como textos, videos e incluso los enlaces para la conexión con otros sitios similares, fueron examinados con el fin de utilizar los blogs como una plataforma de exposición en el aprendizaje del idioma extranjero inglés. Los datos fueron recogidos por medio de la narrativa de los estudiantes (opiniones) sobre el uso de los blogs, observaciones informales y producciones de los estudiantes. Como resultado, la información indica que usar blogs podría llegar a ser un recurso útil para ayudar a los estudiantes con su proceso de aprendizaje del idioma debido a la importancia que tiene estar en continuo

**Key words:** Blogging in education, Exposure and Foreign Language Learning, and Virtual Learning Environment.

contacto con el inglés; incidentalmente, esta clase de experiencia incrementa la participación e interés de los estudiantes en su propio aprendizaje.

**Palabras clave:** Blogs en educación, Exposición y Aprendizaje del idioma extranjero, Ambientes virtuales de aprendizaje.

## **Introduction**

Modern computer technology has made language exposure possible in new and rich EFL learning experiences. The development of viable software designed to enhance communication, building meaning and knowledge construction has made possible a variety of activities and opportunities for learning that extends the walls of the classroom and offers different perspectives depending upon the agents involved. Consequently, technological literacy has become an important issue in teaching and learning processes, the use of web based education is an interesting tool; in which learners have the chance to discover, learn and reinforce their knowledge. Therefore, this initial research inquiry into this kind of pedagogical tool is designed to analyze the impact it has on teaching practices, due to the necessity of providing our students with opportunities to be in contact with the foreign language.

Accordingly the work with blogging provided students with opportunities to watch and

analyze videos as a means to reinforce some linguistic aspects taught in classes. Students had the chance to listen to a variety of language registers which can not only contribute to their development of listening skills but also to an increase in motivation.

After the need analysis, it was necessary to search for alternatives to help learners with their language process improvement and it was found that using blogs has been a relevant strategy to get students involved in meaningful communication, to augment purposeful language use and to enhance of positive attitudes toward English learning (Fageeh, 2011; Wu, 2006). Accordingly, a "tutor blog" was created with different activities to encourage students to use the target language based on the premises stated by some authors about the usefulness of blogs in the EFL process. This paper will focus on the English blog as a strategy for language exposure and will discuss the findings according to the analysis of its impact in the foreign language process.

## Literature Review

### Blogging in education

Blogs are similar to web sites in that they contain links to be explored and other standard features; including videos, music, chatting and profiles among others. An important characteristic of blogs, however, is that they contain postings, which are text entries, similar to a diary or journal, which include a posting date and may contain comments by people. A blog is a type of journal which is associated with internet applications to post information. In blogs people are allowed to navigate freely according to their interests. Moreover a typical edublog, a type of blog, combines oral and written text, images, photos, videos, and even links for connecting with other similar sites or important blogs. An edublog can be seen as a possibility for offering a reader knowledge and culture.

There are three kinds of edublogs, the class blog, the learner blog and the tutor blog. In the class blog, both students and teachers can post any kind of information and make comments about them. The learner blog makes reference to a personal journal that each student builds on the web. In the tutor blog, as its name implies, the teacher acts as the tutor or administrator, posting the activities and content related to a lesson's specific purpose and syllabus (Campbell Model, 2003, p. 2-3)

For this study, a tutor blog was created to offer students the opportunity to discuss topics outside of the classroom where every learner has an equal opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions. The blog

manager in this case provides the activities in the blog which offer some authentic reading, writing and listening skills practice. Wu (2006, pp. 72-73) states that "the weblog is a new arrival as an educational technology (...) it has more advanced and convenient unique features and functions in comparison with other tools in education."

Thus, the tutor blog provides focused opportunities for language exposure and practice, provides verbal language exchange and class information and encourages knowledge exploration. The idea being that the more contact with the target language, the more opportunities learners have for language practice. Ismail, (1991, pp. 2-3) points out that "the role of language contact is a determining issue for success of the foreign language learning process; the exposure is directly proportional to the development of language abilities". Edublogs may enhance personal learning and teaching process through one's own experiences. They may provide immediate feedback, personalized learning styles and enhance participation according to their needs and desires (Nguyen, 2008, p. 135). For EFL teachers, blogs can be used to inform students about class requirements, post handouts and give homework assignments which may support language learning process in different ways as stated by some authors. Nguyen, for example argues that "internet technology facilitates the ten principles of critical pedagogy introduced by Crookes and Lerner (1998), learners perceive, reflect and act on it". Students accept and comprehend language easily when they use computers. In terms of syllabus design and materials development, the author continues by saying that "blogs

can be considered as an opportunity for an active learning process that can stimulate and motivate students for being closer to their language learning process, due to its interactive nature” (2008, p. 139).

Through the use of blogs, learners can read, observe, listen and comment as they are attentive to others’ comments. They can include new postings with their teachers’ help and they can have access to other related networking sites which provide them with opportunities for personal language improvement. Blogs seem to be a suitable tool for teachers because they provide students with practice designed to enhance their receptive and productive skills.

### **Virtual learning environment**

Virtual interactive learning has changed learning by offering students meaningful content designed to allow to personalize the learning experience through the use of flexible tools and resources managed, not only by the teacher, but also by the learner (Harwood, 2010). It is closely related to Ausubel’s (1983) theory of “meaningful learning.” In this vein, it relates to the adequate pedagogical framework, strategies and techniques that make knowledge profitable and facilitate the language learning process. That is why main users and learners of online materials change their role; they do not merely reproduce knowledge but instead they produce their own and participate according to their needs and desires; thus, students’ role is transformed into the role of active participant. Students have the chance to interpret and analyze learning according to their own experience. They have unfettered

access to resources and content so they can work at their own pace. Students not only learn from teachers, they also learn from classmates and from class resources which are transformed into meaningful input (Cuesta, 2010, p. 198).

EFL learners operate independently, hence they can individualize their learning according to their way of analyzing, interpreting and acting in relation to different information and emerging situations, thus transforming the teacher into a process facilitator. This process is replicated in classroom practices as well as outside of it. Gros & Silva assert that “technology builds chains between teaching and learning in the online and state process in the classroom” (2005, p.11).

Computers facilitate the gathering of information as well as the provision of opportunities for communication and language development. Teachers as guides, who support the learning process, help learners to get in contact with different kinds of information. This information is explored by learners as they build their own meaning and knowledge. In this sense, virtual learning focuses on discovering rather than instruction. This might make knowledge apprehension purposeful leading pupils to take responsibility for their own goals. In addition, students are likely to develop individual strategies while teachers help them to identify values and ways of learning. Beer, Clark & Jones state that “online learning environment facilitates the interactions required for learning and therefore have an influence on students engagement” (2010, p.76). This is why; blogging is considered a way to develop



English skills and to access technological tools.

### **Exposure and second language learning**

EFL learning process is a challenging, not only for rural area students, but also for teachers. The difficulties arise from a lack of student exposure to the target language, their low interest in taking a more active role in the process limited time for completing lessons. Learners are not often exposed to “primary linguistic data” (Ismail, 1991), meaning language input is presented in small doses for a few hours a week. For instance an appropriate lab is not made available to students and feel like they do not have opportunity to use language. In this sense, using EFL edublogs could be an innovative tool to motivate students to participate in their own language learning process.

The World Wide Web (internet) is a source of content which allows for interaction among students, teachers and the target language. Likewise it could be used as a window to the world outside the classroom, thus presenting different types of relevant materials which teachers could take advantage of in multiple ways according to students’ necessities and desires. Nguyen also states that “authentic material and language is easily available for EFL language learning and teaching of the web” (2008, p. 135). Varied materials and communication enhance students’ participation and language awareness.

Another important aspect of working with technology is that this resource can enhance free and spontaneous language development. In self-directed virtual

environments language is not taught or guided directly; students have the chance to exercise and build their reading, listening, and comprehension abilities. Based on Vigosky’s ideas, McLeod (2007, p.10) asserts that “language is a faculty of human beings, it is a result of a willful desire of interaction and communication, and people in general use it for a specific purpose”. Similarly to the first language acquisition process, learners do not use language unless they need it for a specific task; in this way, they acquire, correct and reinforce aspects of language through actual interactions.

### **Research Design**

#### **Context and participants**

This pedagogical experience was carried out in a rural school called: “Luis Manuel Parra Caro” located in Sativa Norte, Boyacá. The participants were eighth and ninth graders whose ages range from 15 to 17 years of age. They worked actively on the activities proposed, in and out of class. The school’s main objective is to teach students using an integrative teaching practice, so they can become member of society. Thus, language itself must be learned from a variety of communicative approaches in order to augment students’ personal language development. Likewise the school seeks to enhance students’ ability to use technology as an academic tool for gathering information and knowledge.

#### **Type of study**

According to the nature of this pedagogical experience, a qualitative- interpretive case

study was developed. In this vein, the study was developed considering the local social reality of the context under study and knowing the way by which it was constructed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The researcher was a participant-observer interested in examining a unit of analysis related to the usefulness of edublogs in rural students' EFL practice in Sativa Norte. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences and how they construct knowledge as well as meanings through what they live (Merriam, 2009).

"Qualitative research involves analyzing and interpreting texts and describing patterns of a phenomenon" (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p.7). This study was explorative and interpretative since it was an initial inquiry into the topic and I intend to provide possible explanations for the phenomenon in question. Accordingly, Merriam, (2009) states that reality is socially constructed; that is, that there are multiple interpretations of a single observable aspect and within the exploration and observation, researchers may construct knowledge and explanations of different phenomenon.

### **Data collection instruments**

The primary data for this study consisted of students' comments regarding their experience when participating in the EFL blog by means of narratives. Scholars also called these narratives "testimonials." Quick notes presented in an anecdotal way are also described as "narrative/anecdotal approach" and refer to participants' narrative report of what was done during a lesson and their opinions and comments. Students

expressed their comments and reactions using short paragraphs (25 students). The students' artifacts, in this case students' blog production, was used for data analysis. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) state that any kind of students' production can be employed as a main resource to assess students' performance.

### **Instructional design**

Regarding the pedagogical intervention, the edublog was based on "ADDIE's model" as a required plan for online course materials, analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation stages, (Cuesta, 2010, p.183). In the initial stage some interviews were conducted to establish students' needs and desires. The analysis revealed that there was a need for opportunities to use the language outside the classroom and that there was a lack of exposure to the target language.

The project was carried out in three main stages. First, the creation of the EFL web blog for the school and the documentation process concerning the target issue; second, the socialization and implementation of the blog structure within the school community; third, the analysis of students' narratives about their experience when using the EFL blog. Permanent evaluation has been carried out regarding content and strategies to reshape the EFL blog when necessary, so that students maintain interest in working on answering posts.

Taking into consideration the previous perspective, it was necessary to look for opportunities in which students could be in contact with the target language and they could use it to communicate in a relevant

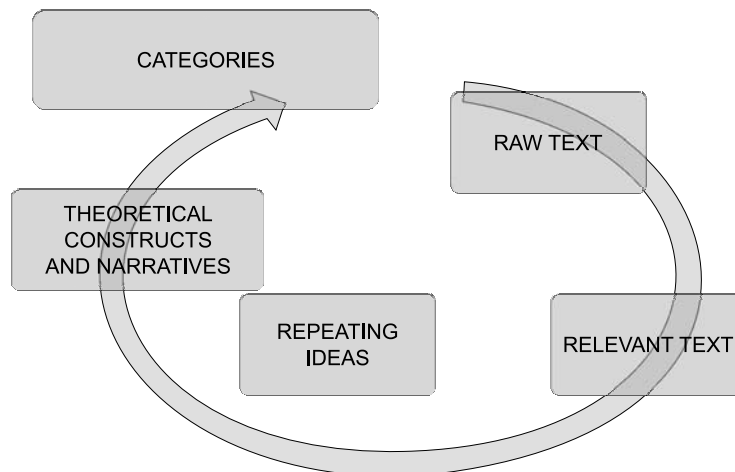
way. Thus a “Tutor Blog” was created as pedagogical mediation: <http://lumapark-englishday.blogspot.com/2011/05/blog-post.html>. This study set was used to analyze the impact this pedagogical tool could have in the foreign language learning process.

The activities that were posted on the blog had to do with school events videos and photos. Students commented about these events. In addition, karaoke videos of English songs worked within classes, some videos of short funny tales and educative videos which were used for homework also

became part of the resources integrated to the blog. The blog was part of a bigger project called, “My school is connected to English”.

### Data Analysis

The data analysis followed the process suggested by Taylor, Powell & Marcus: understanding, valuing, categorizing, tracing connections, interpreting and concluding concepts and comments (2003, p. 2-5). After collecting data, the process of analysis started by considering raw data and ended by integrating theoretical narratives to build the categories as the next figure displays.



**Figure 1.** Data Analysis Procedure.

### Findings and Discussions

Generally, the pedagogical experience, examined using an explorative study, reveals that in spite of some difficulties, i.e. time constrains, internet accessibility and connectivity, the blogs became a useful strategy to expose participants to the English

language. The three main aspects which emerged from the analysis are explained below according to students' perceptions and comments. By using EFL blogs, students were in contact with the language and this led students to increase their engagement and language awareness which facilitated their EFL language learning.

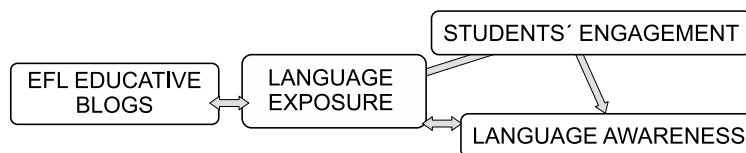


Figure 2. Findings

## Student’s engagement

There are a number of definitions of “engagement.” Some of these include references to participation, motivation, academic goals and behaviors learners develop through different stages of a learning process in an isolated way. And according to the blogging experience analysis, all of those aspects are related to the concept of “engagement”. These aspects support one another. The different behaviors that learners’ exhibit, like attendance, motivation, attitudes and aptitudes, can be an indicator of teaching quality in the learning task and academic achievement as well (Beer, Clark & Jones, 2010, p. 76).

At the beginning of the process students exhibited some resistance to participation; learners regarded the computer as a work tool which posed certain difficulties when they tried to use it. It was not a resource for learning and enjoyment. Most of them had limited technology skills and their access to internet was limited. Only some of them had internet access or even computers at home; while the school lab had limited internet access too. Nevertheless; with the passage of time, students showed an increasing level

of interest and asked for help in order to participate in the blog activities; some students only listened to the videos and music while others commented them.

Learners were encouraged to participate in the EFL blog. They showed interest and argued that through entering the blog they could establish certain kind of communication because they looked forward to seeing what was new there. Learners stated that blogging was useful and entertaining and it could contribute to their learning in a variety of ways, such as providing opportunities for increasing vocabulary learning, reinforcing grammatical aspects, and improving language as well as technological skills: “... *I liked to comment in the blog and I learn English and technology and vocabulary with the blog and my friends...*” (Excerpt taken from N.4)<sup>1</sup>

The data indicates that students believe they learnt from the material and from their classmates. They said that the blogging experience motivates and facilitates the learning process which echoes Cuesta’s statement: “technology should be the means by which educational processes are enhanced”. She points out that, by means

Translations by the author:

<sup>1</sup> “...me gusto comentar en el blog y aprendo English y technology y vocabulario con el blog y mis amigos...”

of blogging, pupils learn from their teacher and classmates because blogging becomes a potential aid for involving students in language learning outside the classroom, (2010, p. 186). Similarly this participant commented: "... *I learned from my classmates and the videos because I understood something they were saying and that makes me happy...*" (Excerpt taken from N. 2) <sup>2</sup>

Some students also stated that it was important for them to see photos and videos edited by themselves. Learners were engaged with the visual and audio material. They stated that the videos and songs were relevant for them and they had the intention to continue blogging because they wanted to observe what was new.

### Language awareness

Blogs and other social networking sites provide new opportunities for language awareness and encourage students to participate by providing comments. Thus, they use and produce language through meaningful activities. Students also said that blogging was an interesting opportunity to exchange information with peers outside the classroom, without paying attention to time and place constrains: "*I like to write in the blog and besides I can read the comments and see the videos several times when I want...*" (Excerpt taken from N. 16).<sup>3</sup>

The role of input and output is highlighted throughout students' voices: students said

it was nice to watch videos and read the comments many times; they understood the meaning through the images and they also used it to communicate their ideas. Students were worried about their language skills when commenting; they made use of different strategies like using dictionaries, using internet tools, asking for help, and imitation. In addition, they made use of language from the videos or classmates' comments to communicate in the target language suggesting that this blogging activity encouraged them to be in charge of their own learning at solving language problems to fulfill the desire for participation: "... *I searched in the internet and I understood some expressions of the videos which I watched many times and then I tried to write with my words what I wanted people read.*" (Excerpt taken from N. 12). <sup>4</sup>

By using blogs students begin a process of language improvement and they can be more motivated. Aljumah (2012, p. 101), says that "blogging motivates writing", so that, "blogging exposes students to a wider audience for their writing". Blogs also promote comfortable interaction for students because they are in control of their writing confirming that publishing encourages them to aim at producing high quality texts. (Zhang, 2009, p. 69).

Students argued that blogging is an interesting English practice activity, because they felt free to participate with comments; made their own effort, using different strategies to express what they wanted, and

<sup>2</sup> "...aprendí de mis compañeros y de los videos porque entendí algunas cosas que estaban diciendo y eso me pone contenta..."

<sup>3</sup> "me gusta escribir en el blog y además puedo leer los comentarios y ver los videos varias veces cuando quiera".

<sup>4</sup> "busque en el internet y entendí algunas expresiones de los videos que vi muchas veces y luego trate de escribir con mis palabras lo que yo quería que leyeran".

felt that error corrections were not the focus of the activities. In the blogging platform teachers forget about teaching the language. However, they observe and monitor the process and students take charge of their own personal language learning process (Dieu, 2004, p. 27). The author also remarks that “blogs work best as a long term assignment that help students to improve their overall fluency and competency, not just as a standalone activity”.

This kind of language awareness helps students to become more responsible in their language learning, blogs facilitate practice and negotiation of meaning, and it enhances students’ independence from teachers’ control. Blogs can be a very valuable pedagogical tool that may promote student-centered learning shifting from passive to active participation. (Cuesta, 2010, p. 189).

Bloggng provides for opportunities to acquire language through experience and practice. Learners had direct contact with language within meaningful communicative activities and contextualized meaning. Pedagogical practices move beyond classroom language assignments. Zhang, states that “blogs enrich learning experience and provide an opportunity for learners to shift from surface to deeper levels of learning” (2009, p. 63). In addition, self-assessment is understood as a part of language awareness. Students reviewed their blog entries after publishing and they recognized they made mistakes and some of them even corrected them.

## **Language exposure**

Some of the students made use of only one internet tool, translators. They were not very mindful of their language use; they only wanted to complete their homework and they did not pay attention to language use, grammar and vocabulary. Conversely, other students valued working with the blog because they had the opportunity to be in contact with the language: “... *in the bloggng I used translator, but I understood some things from videos and I reinforced the songs that we learned in lessons... I learned with the translator, too*”. (Except taken from N 16).<sup>5</sup>

Language exposure is considered as a very important for foreign language learners. Direct contact with the target language can prepare students to exercise their receptive and productive skills, making their understanding and production easier. By bloggng in English, students had varied opportunities to be exposed to the target language and they chose what to comment guided by their own personal desires. Students could check the blog to read comments from classmates and made an effort to write appropriately their own. They watched videos and had time to navigate through other links related to the target language. Fageeh, asserts that blogs are considered as “an available genuine context for EFL learners who have limited opportunities to be exposed to the target language in an authentic environment” (2011, p. 32-33). With the use of the blog

<sup>5</sup> *En el bloggng utilize traductor, pero entendí algunas cosas de los videos y repase las canciones que aprendimos en clase... con el traductor aprendí también...*

students had the opportunity to access other similar edublogs whose activities they enjoyed.

Learners highlighted the importance of language exposure since most students are not usually exposed to the target language; they mostly had contact with English in the classroom and rarely outside of it and they considered blogging was a good strategy for listening:

*“it was good to listen in English to improve pronunciation and the pronunciation gets better listening several times”.* (Excerpt taken from N 17).<sup>6</sup>

*“...the part of the videos and the songs were important since in my house I don't have a computer and I don't listen to anything in English...”* (Excerpt taken from N 20).<sup>7</sup>

Through constant exposure to the language, students began to understand some linguistic aspects, and working with the blog helped them to reinforce some grammar rules and increased their vocabulary. Students generally spoke the target language in the classroom, but they rarely spoke the language anywhere else. Therefore technological presentations could aid in exposing learners to the foreign language thus facilitating their learning process, (Higgins, 2009).

To conclude, the analysis and interpretation of the data shows, mainly, two important aspects: that the use of an EFL blog as a classroom practice outside the classroom

can enhance a student's language learning process. Learners become more responsible and demonstrate a high interest in their own participation. By means of their work with a blog, students are offered greater exposure to the language, and this exposure may help them to better understand some language aspects.

## Conclusions

The 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher needs to be aware of the shifting conceptions of language learning and teaching. The role of the teacher should still be important in regards to selecting, designing and providing students with opportunities and activities to meet their goals and engage their interests. It is necessary to work with relevant topics and activities that catch students' attention. Aljumah (2012) points out that a weblog is one of the new applications on the web 2.0. This application provides genuine language use because it is the type of activity people become involved in real life. So that, teaching must focus on what to learn and what for to learn.

Clearly students must be encouraged to develop their own learning strategies and that they must have a dynamic role in the pedagogical process. It is expected that learners will construct individual knowledge through different information resources. Online teaching opportunities must be centered on learners while teachers act as tutors and facilitators. Blogs provide educational benefits, like giving students opportunities to express themselves and

<sup>6</sup> “... fue bueno escuchar en inglés para mejorar pronunciación y la pronunciación se mejora escuchando varias veces”.

<sup>7</sup> “... la parte de los videos y canciones fueron importantes ya que en mi casa no tengo computador y no escuchamos nada en inglés...”.

reflect upon their and others' comments. By incorporating blogs in language teaching and learning process, the teacher can guide students in building their understanding and train themselves to making greater use of technological tools. The authentic and readily available language presented in blog materials is one of the potential pedagogical benefits of using technology in education. Blogs offer endless possibilities for exposing students to the target language. EFL blogging can guarantee free access to information and varied opportunities for language production.

In regards to the research question, "how can an EFL blog, as a language exposure platform benefit students' learning process and objectives?", it is possible to say that the kind of edublog, discussed in this research article, benefits in great measure the pedagogical process. It provides opportunities to encounter language varieties and incidentally, students are exposed to language produce by speakers whose English is their first, second or foreign language. Despite the limitations that blogging can pose for language learners, blogs can support students' engagement and language awareness which are crucial aspects of the language development process.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

Although there are many successful methods for supporting language learning, and each one of these methods exposes learners to language in different ways, technology could contribute by providing students with useful linguistic input. This input goes beyond the classroom. Lessons

can be full of comprehensible presentations involving the target language but that is not enough. Students' learning opportunities need to be reinforced through other practice opportunities.

The World Wide Web is changing, not only does it give us access to information but it allows for interaction which promotes the creation and sharing of information rooted in specific contexts. Thusly, education needs a focus on literacy skills, language and technology, and education should prepare learners for new challenges and offer them the skills and abilities needed to be successful in our changing world. Therefore planning, creating and adopting an EFL blog can offer different ways of introducing and encouraging learners to continue learning and to be motivated for language use and language awareness beyond the classroom.

It is important to highlight that the main benefit offered to students was enhanced input and practice of their receptive skills within a process of language exposure and learner engagement. It is also relevant for this study to highlight some important aspects to improve when this kind of projects are implemented. For instance, teachers need to work to ensure that sufficient feedback about comments are provided in order to provide additional opportunities for language use. In this project, it was evident that there were not enough chains of interaction among students. Therefore, as part of the teacher's role, it is important to apply strategies like correcting before posting, to plan assessment strategies with a specific criterion, to drill some editing skills and to provide more chains of interaction. It is also necessary to continue working to



keep students' motivation for free participation in the way of comments. It is also crucial to bear in mind that it is an ongoing process where consistency and innovation are imperative.

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## Restory a Resilience Experience After a Natural Disaster

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### **Abstract**

As an attempt to describe a resilience process after a landslide through narratives, this research study aims at analyzing, interpreting and describing how Chevano tenth graders restory their resilience experience after a natural disaster in their hometown. This inquiry was carried out with students at López Quevedo School in Jericó - Boyacá, Colombia. The information was gathered through students' narratives, students' interviews, and researcher's field notes. Narratives made part of a pedagogical intervention to explore student's ways of coping with tragedy, and they allow students' voices to be expressed. It was revealed that students needed to share their stories to achieve a process of resilience but it was important to give participants the time to start that process. Moreover, they needed to be involved in a

### **Resumen**

Como un intento por describir un proceso de resiliencia después de un deslizamiento de tierra a través de narrativas, este proyecto de investigación tiene como objetivo analizar, interpretar y describir cómo unos estudiantes Chevanos de grado décimo relatan sus experiencias de resiliencia después de un desastre natural ocurrido en sus lugares de origen. Ésta investigación se llevó a cabo con estudiantes del Colegio López Quevedo en Jericó - Boyacá, Colombia. La información fue recogida a través de narrativas, entrevistas y notas de campo. Las narrativas hicieron parte de una intervención pedagógica para explorar las maneras en que los estudiantes hacen frente a una situación adversa, en ese sentido las narrativas permiten que las voces de los estudiantes sean expresadas.

social context they felt they made part of as well as in a routine in which they could set apart the negative thoughts and feelings of sadness from their present experiences.

**Key words:** Resilience process, disaster-related event, narratives.

A través de éste estudio se reveló que los estudiantes necesitan compartir sus historias para alcanzar un proceso de resiliencia, pero que es importante brindarles el tiempo necesario para empezar el proceso, esto significa que los estudiantes deciden cuándo hacerlo. Adicionalmente, necesitan hacer parte de un contexto social que les brinde un sentido de pertenencia así como de una rutina en la cual los estudiantes Chevanos puedan apartar de sus experiencias actuales los pensamientos negativos y los sentimientos de tristeza.

**Palabras clave:** Proceso de resiliencia, deslizamiento de tierra, narrativas.

## Introduction

Cheva is a town located in a mountainous region at 3200 meters above sea level; this town was affected by a landslide in 2011. Comité Regional para la Prevención y Atención de Desastres (CREPAD) argues that the main causes for this natural disaster were mainly three, its location in a mountainous region, the instability of the ground and the heavy rains of the year.

Due to the fact that my participants were affected by a landslide in Cheva on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011, this study investigates how Chevano tenth graders restory their resilience experience after a natural disaster in their hometown. A group of seven students, three male and four female, who were studying at the public institution López Quevedo in Jericó - Boyacá, Colombia and who belonged to Cheva were engaged to talk about their stories after the hard situation to

analyze the process of resilience they followed after it.

The main motivation for me as a researcher to develop this study was the desire to know the experience some students faced after the natural disaster that happened in their hometowns since some of these students acted in a different way from the students who were not affected by the disaster. This interest awoke after doing a direct observation of those students' attitudes not only in the English classes but also when they were in their breaks or participating in school sports. Information told by participants in relation to their experiences after the landslide suggested that keeping together and having a positive view about what happened in their towns became crucial to overcome the hard situation. This perspective they had made me think about resilience as the social construct of my research.

## Theoretical Framework

In this section I intend to discuss the relationship between resilience and restorying past experiences through narrative texts as the main focus of this study. Information is pertinent because it inform us the way people recover from a crisis by telling their stories.

### Narratives from a language education perspective

From the perspective of language education, narratives are used in studies of educational experience. Clandinin and Connelly (2013) claim that the notion that narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world explains the view that education is the construction and reconstruction of stories; teachers and learners are in their own and other's stories . In this sense, working with Chevano students listening to their experiences after the natural disaster helped both the students and the researcher to reconstruct their life experiences.

Additionally, telling stories is also a meaningful tool to help in the process of resilience. McLean and colleagues (2007) assert that telling negative stories is deemed a more powerful catalyst for creating positive perceptions of self. It means that reflecting on the detail of a disruptive life event helps shape self-identity much more effectively than a positive story, which more commonly serves to educate. Studying participants' resilience process helps us to understand how those adverse situations contribute for them to become stronger than they were before and face bad situations with a serene attitude and looking at all the perspectives they can use to overcome crisis.

## Resilience

Resilience is seen by different authors as a return time to a stable state following a perturbation. Henderson and Milstein (1996) argue that the idea of resilience refers to the fact that people can bounce back from negative life experiences and often become even stronger in the process of overcoming them (p.3). There are several factors that have an impact on the resilience or vulnerability of the person who faces adversity. According to Kotliarenco (1997) a risk factor is a situation or circumstance that decreases the person's ability to be resilient and increases vulnerability. In addition, a protective factor is a situation or circumstance, skill or characteristic that acts as a means for the individual to be resilient. It increases resilience and decreases vulnerability.

## Voice

Several educational researchers refer to the voice as the research participants' voice. However, more scholars (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002; Gudmundsdottir, 2001) within the narrative approach use the term voices rather than voice because they recognize that the narratives are in part personal stories shaped by the knowledge, experiences, values and feelings of the persons who are telling them. At the same time, there are also collective stories that are shaped by the addressees and the cultural, historical and institutional settings in which they occur (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002, 2005). During this study, those collective stories emerged when the researcher and the participants co-constructed their experiences in the place where the facts

happened. This means that the specific place which awakened the participants' stories lodged them as a vivid film in their memories.

The process of claiming voice is, therefore, basically an interaction between the individual's beliefs and experiences and past, present and future external voices. In the study, there came together the voices of each participant. That voice reflects the interaction between intermental and intramental processes (Vygotsky, 1978). The notion of intermental processes refers to the social sphere; it is the fact that the landslide was a meaningful social event which affected the participants' lives. Furthermore, the notion of intramental processes refers to the inner psychological sphere. In this way, narratives connect the individual and their social context, and therefore, a multitude of voices are present within an individual's stories. Along the storytelling process, each participant told their story from the view they experienced the adversity (intramental process). However, the version of each participant was different although the natural disaster was the same for all (intermental process).

### **The importance of narratives in the process of resilience**

Referring to the emotional aftershock, narratives play an important role in the process of resilience, Riessman (2000) stresses that "Where storytelling can elucidate personal life events and their meanings, it can also serve to reveal something about both conflicting and shared social understandings" (p.11). Denning (2002) asserts that the power of a story to

bring about change comes not from the story itself but from the reactions that it creates in the minds of the listeners. In this respect, when participants shared their experience after the landslide, they created a sense of catharsis in which they recreated their lives.

### **Family and school as network support**

Social support has been identified as a significant component in resilience, and the maintenance of relationships is a component of social support (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Most children adapt and grow through traumatic experiences with care and support from family, friends and teachers. Parents as well as friends encourage people in adverse situation to express their aftershock emotions to help them to re-build and re-evaluate their experience and look for new alternatives to overcome it.

In relation to the community as well as educative centers contribution, Pianta (2006) asserts that school is seen as a context for child development which implies a dynamic and integrative process. Eccles and Roeser (1999) highlight that when teachers are in contact with vulnerable people they need to keep regular routines and activities as much as possible. In this respect, school systems play a central role due to the fact that in the aftermath of disaster, people in a community often look to the reopening of the school as an important symbol of recovery and normalization (Masten & Obradovic, 2006).

So when working with vulnerable people, as Chevanos were, teachers can use effective coping strategies to foster supportive relationships, and helping children

understand the disaster event. They were encouraging teenagers to talk about disaster-related events, strengthening teenagers' friendship and peer support and emphasizing teenagers' resilience.

Encouraging adolescents to talk about disaster-related events was applied when I built relationships with the participants working with them in Cheva, which was the place where they felt comfortable. Moreover, I used "strengthening adolescents' friendship and peer support" in order to promote children's relationships with peers to cope with difficulties and to help decrease isolation. When I as researcher shared time with the participants, they not only felt confident with themselves but also developed supportive relationships with their teachers and classmates. Besides, another strategy I used was "emphasizing teenager's resilience". It focuses on their competencies in terms of their daily life and at other difficult times. Through narratives, participants felt free to tell their stories. In that way, they were following a process of resilience because they saw the same situation from different perspectives and regarding their future most of the time.

## Research Design

This work emphasizes on the educational research; it refers to the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; learners, teachers, and researchers are storytellers and characters in their own and others' stories. Consequently, this project is also framed in the method of narrative inquiry. This one refers to a process of collaboration involving mutual storytelling and re-storying where the researcher needs

to be aware of constructing a relationship in which participants' as well as researcher's voices are heard. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) explain that "qualitative researchers seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning" (p.1). Then, this project fits within this approach because it sought to study the ways humans experience the world.

At the beginning of 2012, I decided to start the action plan. So, I invited participants to be part of my research. First, I had informal talks with them in order to explain the objectives of the investigation as well as its confidentiality. Second, it was necessary to use consent formats that the participants filled in and signed. In these consents, they agreed to participate freely in the inquiry. As a third step, I had to share a long time with them in order to gain their confidence for them to share with me as a researcher their concerns in relation to their experiences with the landslide. Nonetheless, the process of getting confidence was long because I could not press them to tell me any information.

## Setting and participants

This project took place in Cheva, the real place where the disaster happened. Also, the study was done in places away from school because participants stated that they preferred to collaborate with the project if we developed it in places familiar to them, their hometown and surroundings.

A group of 10<sup>th</sup> graders who belonged to Cheva community were chosen for the development of this project. They were selected bearing in mind that all of them were affected by the natural disaster happened in

2011 and they lived similar experiences which affected their lives meaningfully in many social, personal and economic aspects. Although seven students were involved in the project, not all of them were constant in the process because of their personal activities that is why I did not take them as active participants in my investigation. There were five participants two female and three male who were active and constant in the process and they became the participants who provided me with the data for the inquiry. Their ages ranged between 16 and 20 years old. They were studying 10<sup>th</sup> grade at López Quevedo School. Most of the participants lived in rural areas and belonged to the low social stratum.

Bearing in mind my professional ethics as researcher, I could not reveal the real names of the participants involved in this inquiry. Thus, each member received a nickname according to the initial syllable of their names or how people called them at school. I explored in depth what happened with the chosen participants' process during the writing of narratives. These participants were identified as follows: Romeo, Mandy, Crisavacu, Dufev and Luxmy.

### **Data collection techniques and instruments**

As the aim of this inquiry was to characterize Chevano tenth graders' restorying of their resilience experience after a natural disaster in their hometown, then it was important to know the participant's perceptions, feelings and voices they hold about their lives, their hometowns and the resilience process they faced after the landslide; also, how they made them evident through narratives.

To collect and triangulate data I used different techniques like observation, interviews and oral and written stories. Among the instruments used there were field notes of the shared experiences, transcription of storytelling and transcriptions of interviews.

**Story Telling.** Clandinin and Connelly (1995) say that many stories are told by participants in a narrative inquiry as they describe their work and explain their actions. Participants used their stories as a way of communicating their assumptions in relation to a fact happened in their hometown. Through narration of life stories as well as storytelling, participants in this research narrated specific moments of their lives related to the landslide itself, the way in which they perceived it, and in some way the process they followed to overcome the situation.

**Interviews.** Kahn and Cannel (1957, p.49) describe interviewing as "a conversation with a purpose". The aim of interviews was not only to gather data about the life experiences narrated by the participants which are accounts of events that happened before, during and after the landslide but also to verify information participants wrote in their narratives.

**Transcription of tape - recordings of visits to places.** Bailey (2008) suggests the use of audio tapes as it is possible to go back to research issues long after the actual event. The main objective for transcribing what participants said was to describe its reconfiguration. Then, I used this instrument because it provided me the possibility to have the actual words generated after each



visit to the places where the landslide occurred and I was able to check the actual content of the visits even long after they had taken place.

**Field notes.** Clandinin & Connelly (1995) state that “Field records collected through participant observation in a shared practical setting are one of the primary tools of narrative inquiry work” (p.5). I employed this instrument in a continuous way in order to register textual words and expressions about the participants’ process of resilience. In that sense, the researcher’s notes are an active recording of her construction of events (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). The notes are an active reconstruction of the events and those events are recorded with the researcher’s interpretation.

## Intervention

This research study had a procedure that was applied as a strategy to encourage participants to narrate their stories in relation to a natural disaster that happened in 2011 with the aim to understand the process they faced to overcome that situation. I decided to work with the model proposed by Clandinin & Connelly (1988), they consider two basic developmental phases of narrative research: Beginning the Story and Living the Story.

Before explaining each one of the stages and phases I want to make reference to the environment created to carry out the different phases and stages of the research. Smith (2001) argues that environment goes beyond a physical part, it is understood as the spatial relationships which can indicate types of functions, interactions, or inhabitants and it may also provide

backgrounds, props or memories. When the research started, I realized they considered the physical place as more than a simple piece of land. I understood that by studying people’s stories, we may come to understand the place of our projects in the way people interpret and know the world (Smith, 2001).

## Phase 1: Beginning the story

The first step for starting the process is that the researcher listens to the participants’ stories; the researcher needs to be aware of constructing a relationship in which participants’ and researchers’ voices are heard. (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988).

**Stage 1 - Sensitizing.** The purpose in this stage was to familiarize participants with the use of narratives, also, to awaken participants’ interests in telling their stories. To carry out this stage, we agreed on the use of Spanish in order to better understand the concerns they provided along the process.

**Stage 2 - Mapping the territory.** The researcher as well as the participants took long walks by the places affected by the landslide. For developing that stage it was necessary for the participants to trust the researcher and to feel confident enough to tell the stories of those places they remembered. In those long walks, participants told me how they remembered those places, and they described them.

## Phase 2: Living the story (Work on coping strategies)

The second relevant step refers to Living the story. This step becomes more complex

because people involved in it become part of the process and narratives of the participants and the researcher become, in part, a shared narrative construction and reconstruction throughout the inquiry. (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988).

**Stage 3 - Encouraging teenagers to talk about disaster-related events:** Teenagers needed an opportunity to discuss their experiences in a safe, accepting environment. During those meetings, students let me know their personal concerns about the natural disaster that happened in their hometown.

**Stage 4 - Strengthening teenagers' friendship and peer support:** It is about teenagers' relationships with peers and teachers in order to cope with difficulties as well as to help decrease isolation. Participants kept a relationship among themselves that became stronger after the natural disaster. Playing the "believing game" participants felt confident to write or tell freely if they had experienced changes in relation to their daily, social or even academic lives after the landslide. Clandinin & Connelly (2000) describe the sense of collaboration as the "believing game". It is a way of knowing that involves a process of self-insertion in the other's story as a way of coming to know it and as a way of giving voice to the other. Then, both the participant and the researcher were involved in the project as main actors of it.

**Stage 5 - Emphasizing teenagers' resilience:** In the process of resilience the use of narratives was essential for healing themselves because they could express

their thoughts and emotions emerging from the experience they lived with the landslide.

## **Data Analysis**

For interpreting the findings that resulted from the process I carried out when I analyzed the information gathered I decided to use narrative analysis because of two aspects; first, it focuses more directly on the dynamic of the interpretation process (Ezzy, 2002), second, narrative analysis begins from the standpoint of the storyteller. Moreover, narrative analysis contextualizes not only the sense-making process by focusing on the person, but also studies the world through the eyes of one storyteller and applies a theory of time.

## **Procedures for the data analysis**

To develop the data analysis process, I took into consideration Riessman (2007). He sets the content analysis as a way to do that process. It focuses on the events and experiences described in the narrative in order to present a holistic picture of the participants' experiences after suffering a natural disaster. Having the research question always in mind, I searched for ways to organize data. In this sense, I agree with Shope (2006) who states that "When you are preparing for a journey, you own the journey. Once you've started the journey, the journey owns you" (p.165). This means that I (researcher) was investigating meanings of experiences about Chevano participants but, at the same time, the research process itself was a series of experiences because the researcher and the participants shared their experiences to build a new one.

To analyze and validate data I used three instruments storytelling, interviews and field notes. In the first place, the transcripts of storytelling and interviews. They revealed the idea of overcoming bad situations and preparing themselves to have a process of resilience in order to face their present and future. In the second place, the analysis of field notes. They helped me to corroborate information in participants' written production or said in the interviews. The transcriptions of interviews as well as the field notes helped me to validate data.

After the validation was completed, I continued the content analysis with reading through each theme separately and coding further for subthemes and categories that emerged. After reading each file for several times, I realized that there were some elements narrowly interconnected which allowed me to associate meaningful patterns for reducing information to label categories and create topic groups. This is when the topic codes, as defined by Richards (2005) were converted to analytical codes that portray meanings in context and express new ideas. To do the triangulation part of the process, I made a contrast among narratives, interviews and field notes to establish common patterns concerning the process of resilience and finding. Some names that helped me to focus the categories of the research were: "Looking myself in the mirror and daring myself".

### **Category 1: Looking at myself in the mirror**

The present category aims at explaining the relationship among the experiences participants lived during and after the

landslide and their process of writing narratives to reflect about those hard experiences. For this reason, this category includes two main themes. They were the journey of a hard experience and my house beyond a simple territory. I decided to group those themes in this category because all of them are similar to the extent participants reflect upon themselves facing this adverse situation. The first topic is connected to the specific vivid moments and consequences left and the way they seem to bounce back from those shocking moments. The second one has to do with the meaning of their home beyond a simple structural place.

According to the analysis of data gathered from narratives, interviews and field notes. I could notice that from the beginning of the process participants expressed they wanted to be part of the project; however, they suggested they wanted the project to be developed in their hometown. They argued that in Cheva, they felt the support that the family could give them. Moreover, they said it was easier for them to express when they are in places where the hard situation happened.

The following excerpt shows that participants considered my work as important but they thought it was going to go well because it was developed in the place where the disaster happened: *"Teacher, este trabajo va a salir bien porque vamos a contar nuestras historias en el lugar exacto donde pasaron las cosas"*. *Researcher's FN, #1.*

Taking into consideration the notes I took along the walks, I reread them giving sense

to the experience itself. I organized the ideas putting together the participants' as well as the researcher's interpretations. The examples below illustrate how participants perceive their hometown and the attitudes they took when I visited them to start the project. *They are happy because I visited them in their hometowns. At 9:30 the other practitioners arrived with the aim of starting work in my project that has been called "Cheva is 'Cheva' despite the disaster".* Researcher's FN, #2.

Going back to experiences is not easy when those situations had hurt them and participants prefer keeping silence about them. That is one relevant reason, why working on this topic was complex and I had to gain trust in order for participants to share their stories/ experiences. At the beginning it was difficult to obtain information because they saw me as a strange person. I remember one of my participants said: "A veces tratamos de olvidar las cosas que nos hieren pero el miedo vuelve cuando empieza a llover y las imágenes pasan como si estuviera pasando ahora" Researcher's FN, #2.

The excerpt above shows that they had series of images that they cannot take away from their mind despite the time or the new experiences they have had. Due to this fact, I assume they kept memories about that experience that become stronger when it rains and there exists a possibility that another adverse situation happens.

Walking by the different areas made participants remember that day clearly and there are different perspectives they had

about it. When people tell their stories as they experience them, they can explore their reactions to challenging life events and they can discover how they can respond effectively to difficult situations in their lives. The following excerpt evidence the way a participant remembers that day.

*El deslizamiento venía muy lentamente, veía como las cosas de algunos vecinos, que otras personas se caían, cómo la tierra se movía y se hacía grietas y como los hijos de esas personas lloraban y también ellos, recuerdo cuando mi casa se cayó, como algunas personas salían corriendo a salvar su vida.* Researcher's FN, #3.

In addition, something that seems curious to me was the meaning they had about their houses. When we did the cartography sessions, they were asked about their definition of house. Some of them regarded their houses as more than a structural place. The excerpts below evidence the meaning they give to their houses. A participant asserted: "*Mi casa es donde se comparte el aspecto familiar y los valores que vamos desarrollando en el transcurso de la vida.*" (Taken from N, Romeo, #4)

Another participant wrote: "*Mi casa significa donde una persona inicia su educación espiritual, de valores y educativos, es un hogar de donde uno no quiere salir.*" (Taken from N, Dufev, #4)

Those excerpts revealed that they consider their house not only as the space where they lived but also a place where members of a family built their values.

All in all, the previous description of the participants' experiences about a hard situation became the first category named "Looking at myself in the mirror". For me, a combination of all experiences and the sense participants made of their houses as well as their stories stimulate the curiosity to know how they face the process of resilience through the telling of their stories.

### Category 2: Daring myself

The name of this category "Daring myself" emerged from the interpretation I did about the participants' expectations about the future despite the adversity they faced. Starting by participants' perceptions after the landslide, I found that participants felt sad but despite their situations, they thought positively about their new start. A factor that called my attention is the fact that participants strengthened their relationships with their partners as well as their family. The American Psychological Association [APA] (2008) stresses that family support and renewing friendship can help return normalcy to a child's life, providing reassurance and a sense of safety (As cited in La Greca, 2008 ).

*Lo que importa de esta experiencia es que seguimos unidos como familia. (N, Luxmy # 2)*

In short, this extract reflects the participant's positive perceptions about the relation with their families. Through narratives they expressed that they felt strong as family because they kept together and now they value more what they have.

In support of this view, one participant told me how important the collaboration of other

people is for him, he included as a relevant point that neighbors help each other in the adversity. "*A raíz de lo que sucedió estamos más preparados para afrontar una situación como ésta y estamos siempre dispuestos a colaborar cuando sea necesario*" (Taken from N, Crisavacu, # 6)

Apart from family support, I could notice there was peer support when they were asked to write their stories. Before they started writing, they discussed or told their experiences to each other in order to awaken their ideas. After that, they looked for different places to start writing. The idea that participants supported each other helped me to consider "Family and peer support" as a main topic to correlate ideas. I confirmed that the landslide helped them to discover their potential capacities to keep together and help each other when necessary. Furthermore, they understood the value of keeping a family.

Along the process, I expanded my data and I revised the interviews to validate them. The interviews helped me to corroborate data. Participants deepened their answers in the interviews and I could clarify doubts in relation to the participants' experience. Some extracts show the feelings they had when we mapped each affected area:

*Al recorrer cada lugar se siente un sentimiento de tristeza y de nostalgia de darme cuenta que ya no queda nada de lo que era antes. Sin embargo, pues toca continuar y estar más preparado por si algo así vuelve a ocurrir. (Q1, Crisavacu # 3)*

*Las cosas pasan por algo y es una prueba de Dios para que nos demos cuenta que las cosas materiales no son tan importantes*

*como la vida de uno.* (QI, Dufev # 3)

*Esta situación te enseña que no debes estar apegado a las cosas materiales ya que nada dura para siempre y es una buena oportunidad que te exige seguir adelante con más fuerza para valorar lo que tienes.* (QI, Crisavacu # 4)

In the examples above I noticed a tone of nostalgia, but at the same time hope at the end of the path. In addition, some participants commented that life is more important than material things and they always show a positive thought when they talked about the future. Those examples made me think that my participants became stronger after the natural disaster happened. Those positive words let me reflect about another important topic which emerged from the project: "Become stronger to hatch my life experience".

Luthar (2006) says that "resilience is an atypical process in that positive adaptation is manifested in life circumstances that usually lead to maladjustment" (p.739). Participants showed they faced that adaptation in different ways. A participant mentioned in an interview "Al principio, como mi mamá estaba afuera sentimos angustia de encontrarnos y saber que estábamos todos. Sin embargo uno quiere hacer tantas cosas y salir rápido que el tiempo se hace más lento" (Taken from QI, Dufev, #2)

Those examples illustrated that there was a feeling of distress and, at the same time, anxiety to protect themselves. Dufev was worried about his family; his priority was centered on all the members of the family being together.

When I wrote some field notes, there were some aspects related to the resilience process:

*"It is almost 2:00 p.m. and we were having a long walk, and a participant walked towards me and hugged me. I said nothing but he smiled at me and told me that I was part of his life and that he was grateful with me for sharing their experiences with them"* Researcher's FN, #3.

The above example demonstrated that sharing time with the participants contributed in the process of resilience in the way that people involved in it became part of the process, and started sharing a narrative construction and reconstruction throughout the inquiry. (Clandinin & Connelly,1988).

However, since the beginning participants finished each sentence with a positive thought. "*Gracias a Dios nadie murió y acá todos ayudan y más en las situaciones difíciles*" Researcher's FN, #3.

When participants were asked to describe the perspective they had of the situation, some participants reported: "*Sí, fue duro perderlo todo en un momento. Bueno, pero la vida sigue y toca seguir luchando día a día*". (Taken from N, Romeo, #2)

Dufev said : "*Las cosas pasan por algo y que es una prueba de Dios para que nos demos cuenta que las cosas materiales no son tan importantes como la vida de uno. Además ahora toca es salir adelante*". (Taken from N, Dufev, #2)

Crisavacu wrote: "*no debes estar apegado a las cosas materiales ya que nada dura*

*para siempre y es una buena oportunidad que te exige seguir adelante con más fuerza para valorar lo que tienes".* (Taken from N, Crisavacu, #2)

According to the previous participants' answers, I inferred that Romeo, Dufev and Crisavacu have a specific perspective about their lives. Romeo argued that the situation was hard but in spite of it, life continues and he has to follow surviving. Dufev believes that there was some reason for the situation to happen, also, he claims that people have to value life because it is the most important. Additionally, Crisavacu agrees with Dufev in the sense that material things are not more important than life itself. Through those quotations it is clear that participants have an inner force to continue living and surviving.

## Conclusions

This study was interesting because I yielded information I did not expect to find. For this reason, this study can be a tool for other researchers who may be interested in social issues that arise from reflection about students' social experiences. As participants have different perspectives to live hard experiences, applying narrative methods seems a natural progression because narrative may capture the social understandings and implicit knowledge of participants' lives.

It was evidenced that sharing time and experiences with participants strengthens relationships. Additionally, sharing time with them allows teachers, to know at least in the surface, students' perceptions about their personal experiences. Furthermore,

teachers are ready to deal with those students who face difficult situations. Thus capturing these stories and analyzing them may lead to a better insight into the complexity of human's lives.

Similarly to Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 19), I believe that an "educational experience should be studied narratively" and I feel that prompting for narratives in life history interviews with students can add important layers to understanding their experiences, their motivations, feelings and plans and it facilitates the exploration of the interplay between structure and agency as embedded in students' narratives. Through these narratives we can also gain a glimpse of how students' experience as a phase of life is socially constructed and we can describe their practices while preserving their voices.

## Limitations

One of the limitations I found developing this study was in relation to time. I shared time with them, but working on social topics requires a lot of time (5 - 6 months) where participants and researcher share time together to achieve an objective. Nevertheless, I shared a lot of time observing population and sharing the different experiences with them but I needed more time for getting more solid data.

Another limitation was in relation to trust. As this is a social topic related to a natural disaster, most of the times vulnerable people prefer not to talk about that personal situation to other people. That is why the researcher needs to develop certain capacities to obtain information from vulnerable people. Thus, the researcher has

to play “The believing game” in order to co – construct their stories. It is important that teachers become familiar with coping strategies in order to help their students without hurting them.

When developing this type of work, a researcher needs to take into account that it takes time and s/he needs to be patient and wise when collecting information. Also it is important that the researcher sets a relevant topic not only for participants but also for researchers. It means that both participants and researchers need to have an open mind to absorb the small details that enrich the investigation.

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## L'éloignement de la Famille : Repartir à Zéro Vers le Vide

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### **Abstract**

The family is a very perceptible element in the novels *Disgrace* J.M Coetzee (2008), *The trial* Franz Kafka (1983), *The Human Stain* Philip Roth (2000) and *Mon cœur à l'étroit* Marie Ndiaye (2007). This article aims to analyze the unstable relation between the characters and their families. In this regard, a comparative literary analysis is proposed in order to present an alternative reading of this novels. This analysis focuses on three elements mainly: the detachment phenomenon and the characters' different points of view, the debts transmission as a fatal a condemnation, and finally the characters' silent suffering as a resistance and fate symptom.

**Key words:** Comparative literature, family problems, detachment, debt transmission, suffering, fatality, shame.

### **Résumé**

Le thème de la famille est un élément très présent dans les romans *Disgrâce* de J.M Coetzee (2008), *Le procès* de Franz Kafka (1983), *La Tache* de Philip Roth (2000) et *Mon cœur à l'étroit* de Marie Ndiaye (2007). Cet article a pour objectif d'analyser la problématique entre les personnages et leurs familles. Dans ce cadre, on établira une analyse littéraire comparative afin de proposer une lecture alternative des œuvres. Cette analyse examinera particulièrement trois éléments : les différentes perspectives et les causes du phénomène d'éloignement, la transmission de dettes comme un système du déclenchement d'une condamnation et finalement la souffrance silencieuse des personnages comme un symptôme de résistance et de fatalité.

**Mots clés :** Littérature comparée, problématique de la famille, éloignement, transmission de dettes, souffrance, fatalité, honte.

### Quelle représentation de la famille dans ces romans ?

“ Toutes les familles heureuses se ressemblent ; chaque famille malheureuse est malheureuse à sa manière ”.

*Léon Tolstoï*

S'agissant de traiter la problématique entre les personnages et leurs familles ainsi que les éléments d'éloignement, de transmission et de souffrance, il n'est pas inutile d'explicitier la notion de famille, et de préciser quelques caractéristiques par une analyse sociologique. Le dictionnaire Larousse définit la famille comme “ *Unité de production, de reproduction biologique et de consommation, fait culturel et non naturel, le groupe humain que constitue la famille prend des formes variables et complexes, selon les différents systèmes de parenté*”<sup>1</sup>. D'autre part, Alain Joyal explique que “ *la famille représente, un des éléments les plus polysémiques du sens commun : son usage varie selon le temps et selon les cultures, et même à l'intérieur d'une époque ou d'une culture donnée, sa signification peut varier* ”. (Joyal, 1992, p. 3) Cela manifeste une diversité d'images de la réalité tout à fait représentables aussi dans *Disgrâce*, *Le Procès*, *La Tache* et *Mon cœur à l'étroit* où la famille a un rôle essentiel.

Gisèle Sapiro remarque que le fait littéraire en tant que fait social ouvre un champ de recherche connu comme sociologie de la Littérature. (Sapiro, 2014)

Chez Coetzee, David Lurie est divorcé. Pour sa part, Lucy sa fille, habite à la campagne : “ *ce n'est plus une enfant qui joue à la fermière mais une solide paysanne, une boervrou* ” (Coetzee, 2008, p. 78). Lucy est lesbienne, et à la campagne elle habitait avec Helen une femme “ *plus vieille que Lucy* ” (Coetzee, 2008, p. 78) Apparemment David est un père qui respecte les décisions de sa fille ; mais en secret, lui fait de nombreux reproches “ *Il [David] voudrait bien que Lucy se trouve quelqu'un de mieux* ” (Coetzee, 2008, p. 78) Le désaccord de David Lurie le pousse à croire qu'elle est complètement différente de lui et de sa première femme: “ *C'est curieux que lui et la mère de Lucy, l'un et l'autre citadins, intellectuels, aient produit cette survivante de l'espèce des jeunes colons solides.* ” (Coetzee, 2008, p. 79) La famille dans *Disgrâce* se centre principalement sur la relation père et fille. La mère a un rôle inactif, voire absent tout au long du roman.

Dans *Le procès*, la famille a un rôle moins évident. Nous pouvons constater également une relation presque absente entre K et sa

<sup>1</sup> Famille (s.d.). Dans Dictionnaire Larousse en ligne. Repéré à <http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/famille/51139>

mère : “ *Soudain...il eut envie d’aller voir sa mère...cela ferait donc bientôt trois ans qu’il ne l’avait pas vue* ”. (Kafka, 1983, p. 275) L’idée de famille apparaît dans le roman dans un seul chapitre intitulé “ *L’oncle Leni* ” (Kafka, 1983, p. 122) où nous découvrons que K a une cousine de 18 ans, celle qui prévient Leni du procès pénal contre K. L’oncle Leni rend visite à K pour lui demander une explication de cette déconcertante nouvelle. Leni lui fait remarquer “ *Je reste un peu ton tuteur et, jusqu’à présent, j’en étais fier...* ” (Kafka, 1983, p. 127) Le lien oncle-neveu est affecté par la honte que Leni vécue par Leni lorsqu’il apprend que K est conduit en justice. Leni cherche à préserver l’honneur et le prestige de sa famille ; en effet il tente d’aider son neveu avec Maître Huld. Veut-il vraiment aider K ou souhaite-il plutôt à éviter le déclenchement d’une calamité qui l’atteindra également ?

D’autre part, la famille dans *Mon cœur à l’étroit* souffre l’éloignement et le mépris. En effet, Nadia quitte ses parents en ces termes : “ *je ne reviendrais jamais en ces lieux...* ” (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 272) Elle renie son origine humble. Elle quitte son mari, et s’éloigne de son fils également. Elle entame une relation avec Ange. Ce dernier a deux filles: Gladys et Priscilla. Elles n’aiment pas Nadia : “ *Excusez-la, dit Gladys. Oh, tu nous fais honte* ” (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 57) Nous percevons aussi l’homosexualité du fils de Nadia. Il avait une relation avec Lanton “ *un garçon meilleur que mon fils à bien des égards* ” (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 129) Ralph le fils de Nadia a une fille dénommée Sohuar. Mais elle ne vit pas chez lui. En revanche Ralph vit avec une femme étrange qui vraisemblablement ignore l’existence de Sohuar. Nadia découvre que son fils a cherché les parents de Nadia, et

qu’à présent ce sont eux qui s’occupent de la petite Sohuar. Ils ont quitté les Aubiers. Nadia rompt sa relation avec Ange, et retourne finalement avec ses parents et sa petite fille. Nous pouvons donc conclure que la représentation de la famille chez Ndiaye nous montre des relations familiales problématiques et instables dus aux préjugés de Nadia.

Enfin nous pouvons observer un autre cas de rejet familial dans *La Tache*. “ *Coleman Silk was born white in a black family. His decision to take his destiny into his own hands brought about his social success but also his disconnection from his family* ” (Dumas, 2009, p. 24) Coleman décide de cacher son origine ethnique afin de pouvoir jouir d’un futur autre. Cette décision implique à la fois l’éloignement immédiat de sa mère, de son frère et de sa sœur Ernestine. Il épouse Iris. Ils ont 3 enfants : Walter, Lisa et Mark. Ni sa femme ni ses enfants ne connaissent le passé ethnique de Coleman. Après le décès d’Iris, Coleman entame une relation avec Faunia Farley une femme 30 ans plus jeune que lui, “ *elle avait quitté l’école en cinquième* ” (Roth, 2000, p. 12) Elle a quitté son mari parce qu’ “ *il la battait avec une telle brutalité qu’elle s’est retrouvée dans le coma.* ” (Roth, 2000, p. 47) D’après Coleman, Faunia lui avait fait “ *retrouver le vice du sexe* ” (Roth, 2000, p. 45) L’histoire d’amour entre Coleman, (professeur réputé de l’université d’Athena) et Faunia (femme de ménage) provoque d’abord un rejet social qui affectera irrémédiablement la relation père-enfants : “ *Il est de notoriété publique que vous exploitez sexuellement une femme opprimée et illettrée qui a la moitié de votre âge* ” (Roth, 2000, p. 62) Walter, Lisa et Mark Silk condamnent leur père à l’indifférence. Et bien qu’il se retrouve

dans un dilemme douloureux et problématique, Coleman reste avec elle. Puis, peu de temps après Coleman et Faunia décèdent à cause d'un accident provoqué par Les Farley l'ex-mari jaloux de Faunia.

Ces quatre romans offrent différentes représentations de la famille. Dans *Disgrâce*, *Le procès* et *La Tache* (concernant Iris Silk) le rôle de la mère est moins évident. Dans *Mon cœur à l'étroit*, la mère a plus d'interventions et d'évocations. La mère a un rôle plus important dans la narration présentée par Ndiaye. Quant à *Le procès*, nous pouvons dire que la représentation de la famille est transitoire et moins remarquable que le reste des romans proposés pour cette analyse. Cette notion n'est représentée que dans un seul chapitre où Leni essaie inutilement d'aider son neveu. Nous remarquons aussi une évocation de sa mère exprimée par son désir de la revoir. La famille dans *Le procès* ne présente pas de relation directe entre le personnage et l'intrigue du roman, bien au contraire de *Disgrâce*, *La Tache* et *Mon cœur à l'étroit* où l'idée de famille est important dans la narration.

D'une part, nous analyserons les relations familiales avec les parents ou l'oncle dans le cas de *Le Procès*, et d'autre part la quête des protagonistes et la façon dont la famille intervient dans leur destin. De plus, l'éloignement de la famille a d'importantes conséquences sur le personnage, soit il cause un sentiment de honte constant, de mépris, ou tout simplement il est une façon d'effacer l'histoire et de repartir à zéro. Les personnages des romans ne souhaitent pas le soutien de leurs familles. La figure de la famille est bien souvent ignorée, mis à l'écart

voire trahie. Dans *Disgrâce*, Lucy, la fille du personnage principal ne veut pas devenir une intellectuelle comme ses parents; tout au contraire elle va choisir la vie de la campagne. Lorsqu'elle est violée, elle ne cherche ni la justice, ni la vengeance. Lucy accepte les événements qui lui arrivent comme une façon de renverser l'histoire et de restituer en quelque sorte les erreurs du passé. Chez Kafka, Joseph K semble troublé par la présence de son oncle à la banque. Son oncle prétend l'aider en recourant à Maître Huld un avocat " d'une réputation bien établie comme avocat et défenseur des pauvres " (Kafka, 1983, p. 129) K est séduit par Leni, l'infirmière de l'avocat, avec laquelle il s'éloigne pour flirter. Lorsque K rejoint son oncle, il est furieux de l'irresponsabilité de son neveu. De quelle façon la famille intervient-elle dans les vies de Lucy et K ? Nous observons également que l'éloignement de Coleman Silk dans *La Tache* souligne l'importance qu'il donne à ces propres projets. La famille devient pour lui une gêne qu'il doit mettre à l'écart pour achever son projet de vie. De façon similaire, dans *Mon Cœur à l'étroit* Nadia s'éloigne de chez elle en reprochant à ses parents le fait de l'avoir gardée dans: " la médiocrité d'une existence tout enclose par les bornes d'un quartier et par des rites austères ". (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 277) Nadia et Coleman montrent un mépris évident pour leurs familles. L'objectif serait-il de simplement d'occulter leur véritable passé ? Ou bien l'enjeu serait-il plus personnel ? Ce mépris, comment interfère-t-il dans le destin des personnages ? Nous pouvons voir que le rôle de la famille devient un des éléments clés dans les quatre récits. D'autres interrogations s'imposent : Dans quelle mesure la famille doit-elle être

condamnée aux fautes du passé ? Plus clairement, dans quelle mesure *Disgrâce*, *La Tache*, *Mon Cœur à l'étroit* et *Le procès* interrogent-ils la relation entre les personnages et leurs familles ?

L'ensemble de notre réflexion part d'un premier constat qui est l'éloignement des personnages de leurs familles. Cet éloignement aura différentes causes et conséquences dans les quatre romans. Coleman et Nadia considèrent leurs origines comme un obstacle qui s'oppose à leurs ambitions, alors que Lucy et K s'éloignent de leurs familles afin de découvrir d'eux-mêmes les conséquences du destin. Ensuite, nous verrons la famille comme un agent de transmission des dettes du passé. Les vestiges de l'Apartheid en Afrique du sud et le harcèlement sexuel de David Lurie, le refus des origines chez Nadia et Coleman, et la perte du procès chez Kafka déclencheront des conséquences regrettables voire tragiques. Enfin, nous examinerons l'implication de la famille et la souffrance silencieuse des personnages. Les familles dans *La Tache*, et *Mon Cœur à l'étroit* seront un élément de bouleversement silencieux et constant des personnages. Alors que dans *Disgrâce*, et *Le procès*, la souffrance silencieuse de Lucy et de K sera un aspect incompréhensible voire inconcevable pour David et l'oncle de K.

### **La famille et les phénomènes d'éloignement**

*“ Je crois que la meilleure définition de l'homme serait : créature à deux pieds et ingrate ”*  
Fiodor Dostoïevski

L'image de la famille dans les quatre romans nous mène d'abord à la question de l'éloignement comme un symptôme de malaise, de mise à l'écart et de rupture. Chaque roman nous présente la thématique de l'éloignement familial à partir de différentes perspectives. Concernant l'éloignement, Nathalie Letsch affirme que:

La distanciation au sein des relations sociales et familiales, due à des comportements ambivalents, provoque, un mal-être profond des héros. Il se manifeste sous diverses formes, telles que la honte, la culpabilité, le sentiment d'abandon, le reniement, l'envie de meurtre et la névrose. (Letsch, 2010, p. 30)

Nous nous interrogerons sur les causes qui mènent au phénomène de distanciation ou d'éloignement entre les personnages et leurs familles. Chez Kafka la famille est un aspect très peu abordé. Il existe un seul chapitre tout au long du roman “ *L'oncle, Leni* ”, où nous remarquons la présence de deux membres de sa famille: son oncle Karl, et sa cousine Erna. Le rôle d'Erna est très éphémère dans le roman. Elle est une lycéenne de dix-huit ans à laquelle Joseph K ne rend pas visite souvent. Cet oubli révèle le peu d'importance que K accorde à sa famille. C'est toutefois Erna qui, dans une lettre, avertit son père de l'arrestation de Joseph K. Dans cette lettre elle soutient aussi que Joseph lui a envoyé une boîte de chocolats pour son anniversaire ce qui n'est pas tout à fait vrai, étant donné que K. a complètement oublié son anniversaire. Quant à son oncle Karl, il est “ *un petit propriétaire foncier... hanté par le souci*

obsédant de régler toutes ces affaires en l'espace d'une journée. " (Kafka, 1983, p. 122) Il se considère lui-même comme le tuteur de K. " Tu sais que je ferais tout pour toi, je reste un peu ton tuteur et, jusqu'à présent " (Kafka, 1983, p. 127). Il est en quelque sorte un substitut du père. Karl exerce d'ailleurs une certaine autorité sur Joseph K. Tourmenté à cause des nouvelles envoyées par sa fille, il s'est déplacé pour s'occuper en personne de l'affaire de K. Afin d'aider son neveu, Karl et K. vont chez Maître Huld un avocat défenseur des pauvres et ami à lui. Quant au personnage principal, Joseph K, nous pouvons dire qu'il s'agit d'un jeune homme célibataire de trente ans qui habite dans une chambre d'une pension. Le lecteur ne connaît pas son nom de famille, ni son passé. De son apparence physique nous savons seulement la couleur de ses yeux: "Vous avez de beaux yeux noirs" (Kafka, 1983, p. 90). Nous connaissons aussi sa profession : il est fondé de pouvoir dans une banque. Il semble avoir peu d'importance malgré son métier. En fait son métier est un élément paradoxal dans le roman; étant donné que ce " pouvoir " ne lui sert à rien pour se défendre devant la loi. Tout le profil de J.K nous fait penser à la figure de l'anti-héros.

Au contraire du roman kafkaïen, *la Tache* est un récit où la famille a un rôle essentiel mais honteux pour le héros du roman Coleman Silk. Nous apprenons que Silk a grandi dans le New Jersey et qu'il vient d'une famille noire qu'il désapprouve :

Et puis voilà qu'il était parti pour Washington, et au bout d'un mois se retrouvait nègre, et rien d'autre ; il devenait un Noir et rien d'autre. Non, non

et non Il voyait d'ici le sort qui l'attendait, et il le refusait. (Roth, 2000, p. 151)

Silk décide d'occulter ses origines afro-américaines désavantageuses en se faisant passer pour un juif, profitant de la blancheur de sa peau. Plus tard, il devient professeur de lettres classiques et doyen à l'université d'Athéna, où il travaille pour une vingtaine d'années à peu près. Toutefois son succès résulte de la trahison de ses origines et de sa famille. Lorsqu'il décide de se marier avec Iris Gittelman, il lui occulte ses origines d'afro-américain. Par la suite, il ment à Iris en affirmant qu'il est juif et que ses parents sont morts. La mère de Coleman accueille amèrement la nouvelle, lorsqu'elle apprend que son propre fils dit à Iris que la famille de Coleman n'existe pas:

" Et elle croit que tes parents sont morts, Coleman, c'est ce que tu lui as dit.

- En effet  
-Tu n'as ni frère ni sœur, pas d'Ernestine, pas de Walt ?

Il acquiesça. (Roth, 2000, p. 189)

De son mariage avec Iris, Coleman a quatre enfants : Jeff son fils aîné, Mikey et les jumeaux Lisa et Mark. Après le décès d'Iris, Silk commence une " liaison " avec Faunia Farley, une femme illettrée de trente-quatre ans. La relation entre Coleman et ses enfants devient véritablement gênante étant donné qu'ils désapprouvent totalement la scandaleuse affaire avec Faunia.

A propos des origines, Nadia refuse aussi les siennes. Elle reproche à sa famille leur vie médiocre parce qu'ils habitent dans le



quartier des Aubiers à Bordeaux. Nadia comme nous l'avons déjà fait remarquer, accuse ses parents de l'avoir gardé *dans la médiocrité*. Son éloignement est transformé en haine vers ses parents : *"Plutôt mourir que de revoir ces faces auxquelles la mienne doit ressembler un peu maintenant que j'ai pris de l'âge"* (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 277). Nadia s'est mariée pour la première fois avec un électricien. De ce premier mariage ils ont eu un enfant qui s'appelle Ralph. Ralph est homosexuel, il a eu une relation amoureuse avec Lanton, un inspecteur de Bordeaux. On apprend que Ralph a une fille avec Yasmine, et que cette fille est prénommée Souhar. En ce qui concerne Nadia, elle a épousé en secondes noces Ange Lacordeyre, un instituteur de l'école dans laquelle elle a travaillé pendant une quinzaine d'années. Ange avait eu deux filles d'un premier mariage, Gladys et Priscilla. De l'héroïne de ce roman, nous savons qu'elle est une institutrice fière de son métier. Quant à son apparence physique, l'auteur ne s'étend pas trop sur la question. Nadia n'est pas blanche : *"quoique je n'aie pas la peau claire"* (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 312) Elle affronte une métamorphose physique qui la fait grossir. Le phénomène d'éloignement familial dans *La Tache* autant que dans *Mon Cœur à l'étroit* est toujours causé par les origines des héros de ces romans.

Ce n'est peut-être pas le cas dans *Disgrâce*. Le lecteur ne trouve pas beaucoup d'informations par rapport aux parents de David Lurie. Concernant sa famille, le lecteur apprend qu'il a divorcé deux fois. Sa première femme est Evelina, mère de Lucy et sa deuxième femme est Rosalind. Après ces deux divorces il avoue : *"Je ne suis pas fait pour le mariage, Lucy. Tu l'as bien vu"*

(Coetzee, 2008, p. 89). David a cinquante-deux ans, et il est professeur de langues modernes et ensuite il devient professeur associé en communications au Collège Universitaire du Cap. Sa relation avec Lucy est déjà lointaine étant donné qu'ils habitent dans différentes villes. Quant à son rôle de père, il affirme : *"être père est quelque chose plutôt abstrait."* (Coetzee, 2008, p. 82) Lucy l'appelle tout le temps 'David' au lieu de papa ou père. Les peu de fois où elle mentionne le substantif masculin *"père"*, c'est pour le présenter à ses clients ou dans ses conversations avec son père pour lui faire comprendre : *"Je ne peux pas rester une enfant pour toujours. Et tu ne peux pas être mon père pour toujours non plus"* (Coetzee, 2008, p. 204). Nous observons que dans ce cas, c'est Lucy qui s'éloigne de son père en considérant que les liens de familiarité vont en quelque sorte disparaître. La volonté opposée des héros dans les quatre romans ne se traduit pas uniquement par des relations troublées avec les membres de leurs familles, mais aussi par les différentes causes qui les mènent à l'éloignement.

La visite de Karl à la banque naît de l'incertitude après avoir reçu une lettre d'Erna. Dans la lettre qu'Erna écrit à son père, elle lui raconte qu'elle est allée à la banque pour voir K étant donné qu'il y avait longtemps qu'elle ne l'avait pas vu. Elle a dû attendre et finalement elle n'a pas pu le voir. Erna se renseigne avec un employé de la banque qui lui dit qu'il existe un procès contre le fondé de pouvoir. L'oncle de Joseph K inquiet pour l'affaire de son neveu va à la banque où K travaille et s'introduit dans son bureau en lui demandant un entretien confidentiel. *"Qu'est-ce que j'apprends, Joseph?"* (Kafka, 1983, p. 122) C'est la première phrase qu'il

mentionne une fois qu'il est seul avec K. Sachant que K et son oncle ne se sont pas rencontrés depuis longtemps, cette intervention dévoile déjà un ton de reproche de la part de Karl. K est véritablement troublé par sa visite inespérée. Le silence de K comme première réponse à son oncle, révèle un premier éloignement. En effet l'attitude évasive de K et l'absence de réponse déclenchent la colère de son oncle : "*Tu regardes par la fenêtre, cria l'oncle en levant le bras. Mais pour l'amour du ciel, Joseph, réponds-moi !*" (Kafka, 1983, p. 123) La visite de Karl est aussi un reproche face à l'inattention de K par rapport à sa cousine Erna. Car en plus d'avoir oublié de lui souhaiter son anniversaire, il ne l'appelle pas pour s'excuser et pour la remercier d'avoir inventé l'histoire des chocolats pour le couvrir. Nous constatons donc un éloignement répétitif de la part de K. Quand l'oncle de J.K se rend compte qu'il est véridique ce que sa fille lui avait écrit il est bouleversé par l'attitude réservé de son neveu : "*Ces choses-là ne se produisent pas tout d'un coup, elles se préparent longtemps à l'avance, il a dû y avoir des signes avant-coureurs, pourquoi ne pas m'avoir écrit ?*" (Kafka, 1983, p. 127) Ce dernier passage souligne l'éloignement de K non seulement par rapport à sa cousine mais par rapport à son oncle aussi. La distance entre Joseph et sa famille est synonyme de honte, de respect, de la confusion d'être accusé sans connaître vraiment les causes. Joseph n'attendait pas la réaction de son oncle face à son procès. Après avoir discuté avec lui, K lui montre son respect en disant : "*je suis disposé à te suivre en tout point.*" (Kafka, 1983, p. 128) Cependant l'évènement paradoxal de cette histoire c'est qu'une fois qu'ils sont arrivés à la maison de l'avocat Maître Huld, K ne reste

pas avec eux. Il sort de la chambre pour rencontrer Leni, l'infirmière de l'avocat. Ce dernier comportement de K "*Sans même chercher un prétexte, sans te cacher le moins du monde, non, ouvertement, tu cours la retrouver et tu restes avec elle. Et nous plantes là*" (Kafka, 1983, p. 144). Ce dernier éloignement accentue l'attitude contradictoire de K, compte tenu de la conversation qu'il avait eue avant avec son oncle. L'éloignement familial chez Kafka est composé de trois moments : le premier a lieu entre K et sa cousine Erna. Un deuxième encadré par le silence évasif de K au début de sa rencontre avec son oncle. Et un troisième moment quand il sort de la chambre de Maître Huld pour flirter avec Leni. Nous observons que dans *Le Procès* Erna et Karl vont vers J.K et que malgré leur effort pour se rapprocher de K, il garde toujours sa position lointaine.

Contrairement à la position de constant éloignement de J.K par rapport à son oncle Karl et sa cousine Erna, nous assistons à un éloignement progressif dans *Disgrâce*. Il existe d'abord un éloignement de type intellectuel et d'apparence:

C'est curieux que lui et la mère de Lucy, l'un et l'autre citadins, intellectuels, aient produit cette survivante de l'espèce des jeunes colons solides. Mais peut-être n'est-ce pas eux, sa mère et lui qui ont produit Lucy : elle est peut-être surtout un produit des circonstances historiques. (Coetzee, 2008, p. 79)

Lucy prend une position opposée à ce que ses parents attendent d'elle. L'autre type d'éloignement c'est celui de l'espace : d'abord elle s'installe dans une ferme au Cap-

Oriental. Cela lui permet de se distancier considérablement des coutumes de ses parents. D'une part nous avons David qui travaille dans la zone métropolitaine. Il donne un cours sur les poètes romantiques. Il aime le vin et la musique, et travaille sur un projet d'opéra. D'autre part Lucy, qui est une agricultrice. Elle est membre d'une tribu de jeunes qui vendent dans les rues de Grahamstown. Elle ne fait pas attention à son aspect physique ni à la beauté citadine. Son apparence a tellement changé depuis la dernière fois que Davis lui a rendu visite : *“ Il a mis un instant à la reconnaître. Un an a passé et elle a grossi. Ses hanches et ses seins ont pris des proportions...elle s'avance pieds nus...”* (Coetzee, 2008, p. 77). Quand David lui rend visite il constate que Lucy est devenue *“ une solide paysanne, une boervrou ”* (Coetzee, 2008, p. 78) Le monde de Lucy lui apparaît tellement différent voire *“ inconnu ”*. Lucy s'éloigne de ses parents comme modèle pour sa vie. Elle prend ses distances comme si elle trouvait quelque chose d'erroné dans la vie de ses parents. Elle note que, bien que David ne critique pas directement son choix d'être fermière, elle aperçoit son désaccord : *“ Tu penses que je devrais me consacrer à des choses plus importantes...tu penses, que parce que je suis ta fille, je devrais faire quelque chose de mieux avec ma vie ”* (Coetzee, 2008, p. 95). Lucy ne change pas sa pensée. Elle a décidé de vivre à la campagne et de mener une vie simple. Au bout de quelque temps David comprend que Lucy ne vas pas changer d'avis, donc il va laisser Lucy *“ vivre sa vie. ”* L'éloignement dans ce roman est incarné la plupart du temps par Lucy. Comme dans le cas de J.K c'est la famille qui s'approche; dans *Disgrâce* c'est David qui va chez sa fille. Lucy ne lui rend jamais visite. Par ses actions

Lucy lui fait comprendre qu'elle veut vivre sa vie à sa propre façon. Et si le prix c'est l'éloignement total elle le fera volontiers.

Pour Coleman l'éloignement est perçu comme la seule possibilité d'avoir une nouvelle vie, une vie digne en accord avec ses ambitions. Dès le début il s'oppose à la volonté de ses parents. Son père voulait qu'il aille à Howard, l'université *cent pour cent noire*. Nonobstant il découvre qu'il la déteste, vu qu'il ne supporte pas le fait d'être noir. Il ne se reconnaît pas comme tel, donc *“ Coleman rentra chez lui et dit à sa mère qu'il ne retournerait plus à cette fac-là ”* (Roth, 2000, p. 149) Cet éloignement est déjà une rupture qui montre que Silk ne sera jamais le Coleman noir que son père avait rêvé. Dans la marine Coleman avait commencé à affirmer qu'il était juif, et il était facilement passé pour tel. Nous trouvons dans sa couleur de peau l'élément qui lui permet véritablement de s'éloigner de ses origines. Si Coleman avait été noir il aurait été tout simplement impossible pour lui d'avoir la vie de ses rêves. Dans cette nouvelle vie comme juif, il fait connaissance avec Iris Gittleman une femme juive qui deviendra sa future épouse. Puisque depuis le début de leur relation Coleman occulte ses origines noires, il se voit obligé de renoncer à sa mère, sa sœur Ernestine et son frère Walter. Dans le roman de Roth c'est la mère de Silk qui souffre le plus de la décision que son fils a prise. *“ Il l'assassinait. On n'a pas besoin de tuer son père ”* (Roth, 2000, p. 191) Elle sait que cet éloignement deviendra pour elle une condamnation ; étant donné qu'elle ne connaîtra jamais ses petits-enfants. Malgré la souffrance que cette décision cause à sa mère, Coleman continue avec son projet : *“ Tout aurait été plus facile sans sa mère.*

*Mais il fallait surmonter cette épreuve s'il voulait être l'homme qu'il avait choisi d'être* ” (Roth, 2000, p. 191) Coleman est suffisamment obstiné pour continuer malgré le bouleversement provoqué à sa mère. Après avoir écouté à Coleman, madame Silk lui avoue qu'il l'avait de toute façon refusé depuis son enfance: “ *Tu m'as donné bien des avertissements, depuis le jour de ta naissance ou presque. Même le sein, tu répugnais à le prendre. Maintenant je vois pourquoi.* ” (Roth, 2000, p. 192) L'éloignement devient donc un mauvais présage qui est achevé avec le mariage de Coleman. C'est aussi à valeur de présage que Madame Silk lui dit ses derniers mots : “ *Tu penses en prisonnier. Si Coleman Brutus. Tu es blanc comme neige, et tu penses en esclave* ”. (Roth, 2000, p. 192) Les chaînes que Coleman prétend oublier deviendront pour lui sa propre punition. Madame Silk décide sans finalement comprendre la position de son fils. Coleman comme Lucy Lurie sont certainement capables de mettre totalement leurs familles à l'écart afin d'avoir une vie différente qui les éloigne du passé.

L'éloignement pour Nadia est l'opportunité de s'élever dans l'échelle sociale. Il s'agit d'un éloignement familial mensonger par rapport à ses parents. De la même manière que Coleman Silk a décidé de devenir juif et d'oublier son passé, Nathalie Letsch, interprète l'éloignement comme une

“Défamiliarisation qui convoque un univers à la fois réel et irréel. Dans Le personnage Ndiayen, bien qu'il s'inscrive toujours dans une collectivité –sociale ou familiale–, ne peut pas éviter le constat de son propre enfermement en lui-même:

il ressent toujours l'inconfort d'un décalage entre ses attentes envers la société et la famille et leur déception ” (Letsch, 2010, p. 10)

L'enfermement est une conséquence se révèle comme une autre précision significative qui évidence aussi l'éloignement de Nadia. L'héroïne Ndiayenne détermine son objectif aussi et elle s'efforce d'y parvenir. Cependant nous remarquons que s'il y a bien une rupture entre les héros de *La Tache* et *Mon cœur à l'étroit* avec leur parents, la différence sera que chez Ndiaye les parents ne connaissent pas les intentions de Nadia au moment où elle part. Coleman est honnête au moment d'avouer sa décision de s'éloigner de sa famille pendant que les parents de Nadia ignorent ses motifs et ses projets. Le comportement de Nadia révèle sa pusillanimité et son conflit intérieur. Lorsque Nadia s'éloigne de sa famille, les défauts de son ex-mari et ses parents deviennent plus évidents :

Le père de mon fils s'est transformé en quelques années en l'un de ces pauvres gars vieillissants, hirsutes, vindicatifs, qui arpentent lentement les trottoirs en ricanant ou maugréant au flux et reflux de la marée saumâtre qui bat contre les parois de leur crâne. (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 145)

Toutefois Nadia se considère elle-même comme “ *une bourgeoise respectable, toujours très soigneusement habillée, coiffée, maquillée* ” (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 224). L'éloignement lui permet de faire des constantes comparaisons entre la vie qu'elle avait avant et après son mariage avec Ange. Cependant son éloignement sera aussi la

cause du refus de son fils Ralph : “ -Je reste sa mère, non ? Dis-je exaspérée ; -Je ne sais pas s’il verra les choses ainsi, dit alors le père de mon fils, après un temps de réflexion ” (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 147). En lisant le roman, nous apprenons que Nadia est un personnage aveugle, incapable de reconnaître ses plus évidentes fautes. “ Et moi je suis fatiguée qu’on me reproche d’être une mère vénéneuse ou une mère qui n’aime pas comme il faut ” (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 160) , “ L’éventualité que mon fils me reproche encore d’avoir quitté son père pour Ange me mets hors de moi ” (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 199). L’éloignement de Nadia et totalement paradoxal étant donné qu’elle demande une loyauté dont elle n’a elle-même jamais fait preuve. L’éloignement des personnages dans ces romans a diverses causes. En ce qui le concerne, nous pouvons affirmer que la famille est un organisme directement affectée par les décisions d’éloignement. L’oncle Karl, Madame Silk et David Lurie et les parents de Nadia ne comprennent pas bien les causes qui mènent les personnages à l’éloignement. Chaque famille supporte le drame de l’éloignement, même dans le cas de Nadia où nous savons que même si les parents n’ont pas de rancune contre elle, quand ils téléphonent sans oser lui parler, ils comprennent bien que leur fille a décidé de s’éloigner de leurs vies.

### **La famille et la transmission de dettes.**

“ *Le présent serait plein de tous les  
avenirs, si le passé n’y projetait  
déjà une histoire.* ”  
André Gide

Lorsque Karl apprend qu’il existe un procès pénal contre K, il réagit immédiatement en

se déplaçant à la ville pour s’occuper de K et l’aider. Dans un premier temps nous voyons Karl en tant que tuteur de K, donc nous pensons qu’il est là pour lui rappeler qu’il n’est pas seul est que même s’il a des problèmes, son oncle sera là pour l’aider dans la mesure du possible. Mais, dans un deuxième temps, nous apprenons les véritables raisons pour lesquelles Karl est là : “ Pense à toi, aux gens de ta famille, à notre réputation jusqu’ici, tu étais celui qui nous faisait honneur, tu n’as pas le droit de Niue faire honte. ” (Kafka, 1983, p. 125) Karl interprète la réputation de la famille comme une règle que K ne doit pas transgresser. Si K leur faisait honneur, cela veut dire qu’une fois K soit condamné, la famille n’en aura plus. Cela les conduirait à un destin de parias auquel ils ne pourraient pas échapper : “ Cela signifierait tout simplement qu’on a fait un trait sur toi. Et que tous les gens de ta famille subissent le même sort ou sont au moins, humiliés plus bas que terre. ” (Kafka, 1983, p. 128). En évitant la condamnation de K, Karl évitera aussi le déclenchement d’une condamnation encore pire sur sa famille, étant donné qu’il considère la réputation familiale comme un aspect fatalement irréparable.

Le parcours de la dette chez Coetzee a une origine historique que Lucy veut changer, inverser voire payer avec des sacrifices qu’aucune personne blanche n’a jamais fait en Afrique du Sud. Le premier sacrifice pour réparer cette dette historique sera la démonstration de travailler comme une “ *boervrou* ”. La question de la dette de Coetzee devient un défi chaque fois plus difficile à supporter pour Lucy. D’ailleurs nous découvrons certains éléments qui nous mèneront peu à peu à l’hypothèse que David sera puni pour son comportement incorrect

avec Mélanie. En même temps David et Lucy souffriront les conséquences de la dette historique qui a été semé avec injustices des Sud-Africains :

“ La raison est qu'en ce qui me concerne, ce qui m'est arrivé est une affaire strictement privée. En d'autres temps, en d'autres lieux, cela pourrait être considéré d'intérêt public. Mais ici, aujourd'hui, ce n'est pas le cas.

-Ici, ça veut dire quoi ?

- ça veut dire l'Afrique du Sud ”. (Coetzee, 2008, p. 142)

Lucy est impuissante face au poids du passé historique, malgré les événements tragiques qui marquent sa vie, elle conserve sa position de martyr et ne se rend pas. Quand Monsieur Isaacs cherche David il mentionne : “ *Professeur Lurie ! Professeur Lurie ! Vous ne pouvez pas vous sauver comme ça ! Ce n'est pas la fin de l'histoire...* ”(Coetzee, 2008, p. 51) Ces mots sont un présage de la fatalité qui accompagnera Lurie jusqu'à la fin du roman. David aperçoit les intentions de Lucy et essaye de la persuader : “ *Lucy, Lucy, je t'en supplie. Tu veux réparer les torts du passé, mais ce n'est pas la bonne façon de t'y prendre* ”(Coetzee, 2008, p. 168). Mais la décision de Lucy sera toujours la même : rester sans penser aux conséquences :

Et si... si ça, c'était le prix à payer pour rester ici. C'est peut-être comme cela que je devrais voir les choses, moi aussi. Ils considèrent que je dois quelque chose. Ils se considèrent comme des créanciers, viennent recouvrer une dette, un impôt. De quel droit pourrais- je vivre ici sans payer mon dû ? (Coetzee, 2008, p. 200)

La transmission de la dette est l'élément plus marqué chez Coetzee. C'est sur la revendication du passé que le roman porte son regard. Lucy ira jusqu'au bout afin d'effacer les erreurs du passé. Lucy perçoit sa grossesse comme une opportunité pour devenir quelqu'un de bien ; c'est-à-dire que le viol, la grossesse et d'autres vicissitudes sont pour Lucy une façon de purifier son passé et “ *de repartir à zéro* ”. Lucy Valery Graham explique que “ *Disgrace examines the effects of colonization on the colonizers rather than the colonized, and ultimately it wants readers (especially Western readers) to struggle with the fact that we cannot control the ongoing ramifications of colonization* ”. (Graham, 2003, p. 36) Coetzee se sert de la littérature pour représenter la réparation du passé parmi la souffrance silencieuse de Lucy. Quant à Coleman, même si ses enfants ne savent pas le véritable passé de leur père, il existe encore un élément indéchiffrable de haine qui se répercute dans leur comportement. Ils ressentent une sorte de dégoût envers lui. Coleman remarque qu'ils refusent même à parler par téléphone avec lui :

Et à présent, la communication avait été coupée. Il refit le numéro ; c'est Josh ?—  
Oui. —Ici Coleman Silk, le père de Lisa.  
Lisa n'as pas envie de parler, répondit l'homme après in silence; et il raccrocha (Roth, 2000, p. 89).

Il existe une transmission de la dette de Coleman à sa famille, dans la mesure où il devient victime du mépris qu'il a déjà fait endurer à sa mère. Coleman n'a pas une bonne relation avec Mark. Mark lui pose des questions par rapport à ses grands-parents.

Il soupçonne vraiment ce que son père lui raconte ; nonobstant il n'a aucune preuve qui conforte son hypothèse. Coleman apprend que *“Cette hostilité irréductible envers son père lui avait fait prendre le contre-pied de tout ce que sa famille était, mais aussi, chose plus amère, de ce qu'il était lui-même.”* (Roth, 2000, p. 91) Son éloignement et mépris familial du passé revient avec fureur pour lui rappeler ses propres fautes. C'est son fils Jeff qui lui dit que pour eux Coleman est perdu : *“ Quand à dire que nous étions en train de te perdre... nous te perdons depuis que maman est morte, que tu as démissionné de la fac. Il a bien fallu qu'on prenne notre parti, papa. On n'a pas su quoi faire ”* (Roth, 2000, p. 235) . Cette fois ce sont ses enfants qui l'abandonnent irrémédiablement. C'est toutefois Zuckerman qui lira dans l'histoire de Coleman le retour du passé : *“ Coleman voyait en Markie la punition de ce qu'il avait fait à sa propre mère ”* (Roth, 2000, p. 429) Pareillement comme sa mère, Coleman décède en connaissant la répugnance qu'il provoquait à ses enfants. Il est victime du système de rejet qu'il a construit.

La transmission de dette est évidente chez Ndiaye dans la mesure où Nadia expérimente la haine de Ralph : *“ Mon fils avait ricané et s'était enfui, sans pitié, plein de haine. Comment était-il possible d'inspirer une telle haine à son propre fils, son fils unique qui vous avait tant aimée, Je ne pouvais pas le comprendre ”* (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 299). Le caractère sarcastique et despote de Nadia ne lui permet pas de réfléchir à ce qu'elle a fait pendant les trente-cinq ans d'absence qu'elle a fait supporter à ses parents en les prétendant morts. Dans *La Tache* Coleman ne révèle pas son secret à Iris. De la même façon dans le roman de

Ndiaye, Nadia ne dévoile pas à son mari Ange le secret portant ses origines. Elle craint la réaction d'Ange : *“ il me reprocherait mon mensonge et j'apparaîtrais alors comme une personne étrange et vile. ”* (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 231) Quand Ralph cherche ses grands-parents il cherche en quelque sorte à racheter son passé aussi. Quoiqu'avec la vie qu'il a avec Wilma, il nous serait possible de dire qu'il paye aussi le prix d'avoir toutes les commodités que Wilma lui offre. Ralph est lui aussi condamné à vivre avec elle dans des conditions étranges et macabres. Nous observons qu'énigmatiquement la famille est toujours un élément vulnérable des erreurs du passé. Elle sera toujours la garantie qu'aucune des fautes commises par ses membres ne reste impunie.

### **La souffrance silencieuse vers une guérison du passé.**

*“ Ma souffrance est ma vengeance contre moi-même ”.*  
Albert Cohen

Une fois que K sort de la maison de Maître Huld, il continue sa vie sans aucun remords par rapport à la honte que son oncle Karl a dû subir à cause de lui. K sait qu'il doit des comptes à sa *“qu'en souffrant silencieusement les injustices de la loi, K trouve la façon d'éviter l'humiliation de sa famille. À la fin du roman K accepte docilement la mort. Il a développé en soi une culpabilité imaginaire qui devient plus forte que sa propre volonté de trouver justice. Le silence est un symptôme de résistance au destin dans *Disgrâce* aussi. Lucy est violée, elle refuse d'appeler à la police. “ *Cornwell défines Lucy's silence as an allegory for postapartheid South Africa* ”* (Cornwell, 2002,

p. 47) En effet cette allégorie comme Cornwell l'a appelé se dévoile peu à peu dans le roman. Lucy ne s'oppose pas à ce destin néfaste. Elle permet que Petrus s'approprie son terrain, elle accepte même de devenir la troisième femme de Petrus. Elle se contente de dire : " *Les voies du seigneur sont impénétrables* " (Coetzee, 2008, p. 160). Lucy se sait responsable de l'Histoire aussi. Dans *Le Procès*, Lucy et K souffrent et acceptent en silence l'injustice du destin. En revanche, Coleman remarque qu'aucun de ses enfants ne portent de marques visibles de ses origines. Il a envie de révéler à Iris son passé, son plus précieux secret " *mais il n'avait jamais fait ce cadeau à Iris* " (Roth, 2000, p. 243) Il ne le mentionne même pas à Zuckerman la personne à laquelle il lui avait demandé d'écrire son histoire. Toutefois Zuckerman avait inexplicablement pressenti le secret de Coleman :

Je m'assis sur l'herbe, stupéfait, incapable de m'expliquer mon intuition : cet homme avait un secret, cet homme au profil affectif absolument convaincant, crédible, cette force dont l'histoire faisait la force, cet être gentiment matois a un secret immense... C'est précisément ce secret qui fait son magnétisme. (Roth, 2000, p. 288).

C'est après sa mort que le secret de sa vie se révèle avec la présence d'Ernestine sans qui le secret de Coleman n'aurait jamais été déchiffré. Dans le cas de Nadia, elle supporte silencieusement le mépris de ses collègues, ses élèves, ses voisins, son mari, son ex-mari, les filles d'Ange, son fils. La haine s'étend mystérieusement, mais Nadia ne veut pas trouver les causes. Quand le tramway l'ignore elle se reproche le fait de prétendre passer inaperçu dans une société

où elle a été marquée par l'antipathie et la rancœur :

Imbécile, pauvre andouille que tu es, me dis-je, furieuse, crois- tu vraiment qu'il s'agisse de se dissimuler parmi le monde, de se faire oublier l'espace de quelques minutes? C'est puéril, c'est stupide. Il se peut que tu sois pire qu'eux, ou, en tout cas, plus durement châtiée. Ou pire, oui, pourquoi pas. (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 244)

Après avoir supporté la rancune des autres, elle retourne avec ses parents et accepte à Souhar sa petite fille. C'est alors qu'elle rencontre Ange pleinement guéri, et découvre qu'il est en couple avec Corinna. Le silence est la réponse à sa fatalité et son bouleversement :

" Je secoue la tête impuissante. Daoui attrape ma main, la serre sur son cœur. Ange pose une bise impersonnelle au coin de ma bouche. Souriants, cordiaux, ils s'éloignent, se tenant par la taille. Je me remets en route, poussant Souhar en direction de la maison " (Ndiaye, 2007, p. 377).

Les événements du destin dépassent la volonté de comprendre de Nadia qui restera en souffrance silencieuse sans arriver à comprendre les interrogations de son destin.

### **Repartir à zéro vers le vide.**

*" La souffrance est l'unique cause de la conscience. "*  
Fiodor Dostoïevski

Pour conclure, nous pourrions mentionner que la famille développe dans chaque



roman des caractéristiques que nous pourrions regrouper : Dans *La Tache*, et *Mon cœur à l'étroit* la famille est un élément de honte. Cette honte est liée aux problèmes de race et d'origines étrangères. Les héros des romans s'éloignent de leur famille pour avoir une certaine liberté de se réinventer et de devenir autres : d'un côté Coleman prétendra être un juif pour être socialement accepté. De l'autre côté Nadia renoncera à son premier mari, à ses parents, et même à son fils pendant longtemps afin de devenir une bourgeoise bordelaise. L'autre groupe de caractéristiques se trouve dans *Disgrâce* et *Le procès*. L'éloignement familial montre à Lucy et à K dans un rôle plutôt messianique. Ils feront des grands sacrifices pour arriver à une possible rédemption de leur race ou leur famille. L'éloignement de leur famille leur permettra de continuer leur propre destin. Ils seront diminués physiquement et moralement petit à petit. K sera réduit jusqu'à la mort. En l'acceptant sans connaître les causes de son procès K cherchera probablement la salvation de la réputation de sa famille, étant donné qu'il finit par accepter les desseins de la loi. Lucy est recluse dans un espace chaque fois plus petit. Elle passe de propriétaire à expropriée dans sa propre maison. Elle doit habiter avec son violeur, et devient la troisième épouse de Petrus sachant qu'elle est lesbienne. En effet, la notion de famille à la fin de *Disgrâce* propose des nouveaux défis que nous ne savons pas si Lucy réussira à supporter. Finalement, la famille reste un élément clé qui contribue au développement de l'intrigue de chaque roman. La relation des personnages avec leurs familles est en quelque point gênant et troublant pour les héros. Nous remarquons aussi que dans les

quatre romans la famille est une entité importante mais passive. Elle ne s'oppose pas aux objectifs des personnages centraux. Il serait intéressant d'étudier la frustration de la homosexualité dans *Disgrâce* et *Mon cœur à l'étroit* étant donné que Lucy et Ralph sont présentés dans quelque point comme homosexuels. Lucy habitait avec Helen, et Ralph avait une relation amoureuse avec Lanton. Les deux personnages homosexuels finiront par avoir des enfants. Donc il existe une rupture de l'homosexualité qui serait intéressante d'approfondir.

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## Student-Teachers as Editors and Writers: a Pedagogical Design to Examine Peer Edition Through Formative Assessment

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### **Abstract**

The present pedagogical proposal describes an initial implementation of a peer-edition process as a formative assessment strategy conducted with a group of nine first-semester Teacher Education Program students in a public school in Guadalupe Santander. On the whole, the study sought to identify and characterize how peer-editing could enhance students' writing abilities. The pedagogical design aimed at developing students' awareness in relation to their role as student editors and student writers and promoting autonomy in the process of learners' composition exercise to encourage collaboration and cognitive development in the composition process evolution. The piloting of a peer-editing cycle based on process writing and peer-editing principles was proposed, implemented and finally

### **Resumen**

La siguiente propuesta pedagógica describe una implementación inicial de un proceso de edición por pares, como estrategia de evaluación formativa, efectuada con un grupo de nueve estudiantes de primer semestre del Programa de Formación Complementaria en una institución pública de Guadalupe, Santander, Colombia, con el propósito de identificar y caracterizar cómo la edición por pares podría mejorar las habilidades escriturales de los estudiantes. Se propuso, ejecutó y finalmente se evaluó un ciclo de pilotaje basado en el proceso de escritura y los principios de edición por pares y su comprensión considerada para perfeccionar y afinar los subsiguientes ciclos. Los objetivos propuestos fueron, desarrollar la comprensión de los estudiantes en su rol

evaluated. Insights from the process were gathered and considered to refine and polish forthcoming cycles.

**Key words:** peer-editing, formative assessment, process writing, peer feedback.

de editores y escritores, promover la autonomía en el proceso de composición de los aprendices para promover la colaboración y el desarrollo cognitivo en el proceso de evolución de la composición, e identificar las modificaciones escriturales de los estudiantes y con ello evidenciar el mejoramiento de sus habilidades escritas.

**Palabras clave:** edición por pares, evaluación formativa, proceso de escritura, estrategia, retroalimentación.

## Introduction

The present article describes an initial implementation of peer-editing as a formative assessment strategy effected with a group of nine first semester Teacher Training Program students at Escuela Normal Superior María Auxiliadora – ENSMA- in Guadalupe Santander. The purpose of the study was to identify the influence that such an assessment instrument may have on learners' writing practices. In connection with the aforementioned objective, this pedagogical design expected to guide participants' in their development of awareness concerning their roles as writers and editors, also, to encourage collaboration and autonomy along the writing composition exercise. With those objectives in mind, a three-stage peer-editing cycle, in which students were meant to assume the roles of writers and editors, was planned.

In addition, this paper gathers participants' reflection on writing based on a close look to their dialogues and interactions when

reading and commenting on each other's written pieces. A decision to embark on this project was made mainly because writing is perhaps, the most difficult and challenging language ability to develop and it deserves further exploration in our local contexts. Correspondingly, and even when writing experiences at different levels have been widely and extensively documented, more awareness in relation to student -teachers participation in peer-edition practices may contribute not only to understand, firsthand, how the writing process occurs in the classroom and how it evolves from writers and editors' perspectives, but also to learn about connections participants make between their current roles as students with their future work as teachers.

Unlike listening or speaking, writing needs to be taught, and in that sense, it is necessary to recognize that as a thinking process it takes time to learn, refine and master. On account of this, and understanding that learning writing is basically a process that can be supported and enhanced through social interaction,

peer-editing claims to be a crucial referent to encourage its learning.

On the other hand, and even when particular studies have shown some disadvantages of peer feedback, especially related to the “competence” teacher or students can have in relation to suitability of comments given, students’ language levels and friendship or gender bias, it has been also proven that its efficacy impacts writing teaching in terms of providing student writers an authentic audience, also developing linguistic and reading skills that, then implemented in learners’ own compositions, may foster writing improvement. In addition to previous benefits, peer feedback attainments are strongly linked to the role student editors accomplish along the process. In that way, research shows that when appropriately trained, students provide comprehensible revisions that take to gain written betterment in their peers’ compositions. For that reason, peer assessment follows a set of principles which are aligned to what the writing process compresses and that formative assessment supports, this proposal attempts to profit those particularities and enhance them in a supportive writing learning environment.

With the purpose to contextualize the reader and promote comprehension of the proposal being described, this paper has been divided into four different sections in which the first one, the literature review, displays the theories supporting the study namely process writing, peer-editing and formative assessment. After that component, the article includes a detailed description of the pedagogical intervention. An evaluation of the experience is the next segment in this manuscript and it discusses the relevance

of the experience not only in relation to participants’ roles as students, but also as future teachers. Finally some implications and contributions to the English writing area are exposed.

## **Theoretical Foundations**

### **Defining formative assessment**

Formative assessment has been defined from different authors and perspectives; however, some of their insights better match the purpose of this proposal. A first reasoning is made by Cizek (2010) who conceptualizes this process as a collaborative practice in which teachers and students are immersed in the decision to comprehend students’ learning and conceptual organization, and in such purpose, to determine how from their strengths, weaknesses and areas of improvement some decisions -about teachers’ instructional planning and students achievement progress- can be made.

In this regard, it is by combining evidence of instruments and formats, used along the implementation process with students and teacher’s actions that, this strategy comes to life. In that sense, formative assessment as a process, contributes to identifying strengths and potential areas of improvement which will inform about students’ learning achievement. In addition, during formative assessment, collaboration between students, who in the specific case of this study become student writers and student editors, will support reading and composition abilities, cognitive development and social interactions, all of them necessary constituents when learning together.

Black and William (2009), make explicit what is “formative” in this kind of assessment; teachers and learners make informed decisions on instruction and learning based on student achievement that has been previously elicited and interpreted. From this perspective the peer-editing strategy being implemented requires teacher, students themselves and their peers to analyze constantly gained performance during the process -that is-, continuous refinement of materials they use and the information they gather to adjust their practices in order to understand how students’ written improvement moves. In the same way, editors and writers’ interactions inform about transformations observed along the study, and new decisions that need to be made. Essentially the authors previously mentioned, Black and William, defend the relevance of evidence as the key component in which assessment is originated in the purpose to consider present and upcoming students’ needs.

### **Peer-editing**

As it has been discussed before, distinctive attributes of formative assessment based on reflections about the acts of teaching and learning, are complemented by a peer-assessment strategy that bridges the gap between learners’ current writing performance and desired outcomes.

As a key concept supporting this pedagogical proposal, peer-editing has been extensively studied by Liu and Hansen (2005). These scholars conceive peer-editing as the “use of learners as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities

normally taken by formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor” (p.31) when making comments, observations or judging each other’s compositions in both oral and written formats in the writing process.

Even when the editing process demands from student editors specific language knowledge and abilities required to make the proofreading exercise a worth and authentic practice in the classroom, it is not the only skill to be considered. Personal, cognitive and interpersonal marks are boosted, as asserted by Yang et al.,(2006) and cited in Bijami (2013), “peer feedback is beneficial in developing critical thinking, learner autonomy an social interactions among students” (p.94).

Likewise, Brown (1998) considers peer editing as “a true sharing process” in which participants are not limited to provide feedback, but also are given feedback. In the same manner it is a process connected to the notion of fostering the development of writing skills, but equally important, reading abilities.

As a formative assessment instrument peer-editing contributes to develop a more comprehensible idea about the dynamics of teaching and learning in the classroom, and also to broaden the roles of teachers and students- now seen as editors and writers-. The classroom turns into a collaborative social setting where students interact with each other in the purpose to provide support and learn together. In the same manner editors are acknowledged as tutors in their peers’ continuous writing refinement progress, and writers are recognized as more aware and reflective authors.

Along with previous ideas there are some evident benefits peer-editing practices bring for writing skills enhancement. Topping (2010) identifies distinctive advantages peer assessment provides to learners. Inherent to individual gains, peer assessment encourages motivation, learning engagement, self-commitment, and autonomy when making decisions about learning. Learners are able to reflect and take action on their own achievement and metacognitive development. Additional benefits are connected to empathy strengthening while providing and receiving feedback from peers.

Fostering individual, social and communicative abilities and relationships is a potential effect prior benefits may have on students. A more inclusive vision of learning where students grasp progress not only at a cognitive level but also at an interpersonal dimension, can be accomplished through the peer-editing proposal.

### **Process writing**

Brown (2010) asserts that in contrast to other language skills, writing is a “culturally learned behavior” (p.334), which implies that we only learn to write if someone teaches us or we are in a literate society.

In the same fashion he recognizes writing perceptions have evolved. More than a half century ago writing was perceived as a final product based on certain standards of prescribed English rhetorical style, in which accurate grammar and organization responding to conventional rules were imperative. However, and throughout time, when new approaches and paradigms in

education have been conceived, human beings are now considered “creators of language” Brown (2010. p.335), where content and message are relevant and the intrinsic student motivation is the center of learning. Elbow (1973) clearly differentiates those conceptualizations when he suggests writing is an evolution of thought, which basically means that is by writing that language users construct and deconstruct their message. “Meaning is not what you start with, but what you end up with” (Elbow 1973. p. 15)., and that will only come after sitting, thinking, writing, going backwards, crossing out and so forth.

Nowadays, an approach that responds to those characteristics concerning the teaching of writing is “process approach”. Some of its principles adapted by Shih (1986) and cited by (Brown, 1994) refer to:

- Highlight on the process of writing that takes to the final written piece.
- Develop students’ awareness in relation to process writing, and their own writing abilities when expressing themselves.
- Emphasize on the process of revision implemented and provide students with enough opportunities to refine their texts.
- Provide feedback to students along the writing process. Such assessment can be given from teacher and peers.
- Promote individual conferences with students through the whole composition process.

### **Pedagogical Design**

After extensive reading to gain a better understanding of “process writing”, “formative assessment” and “peer editing”,

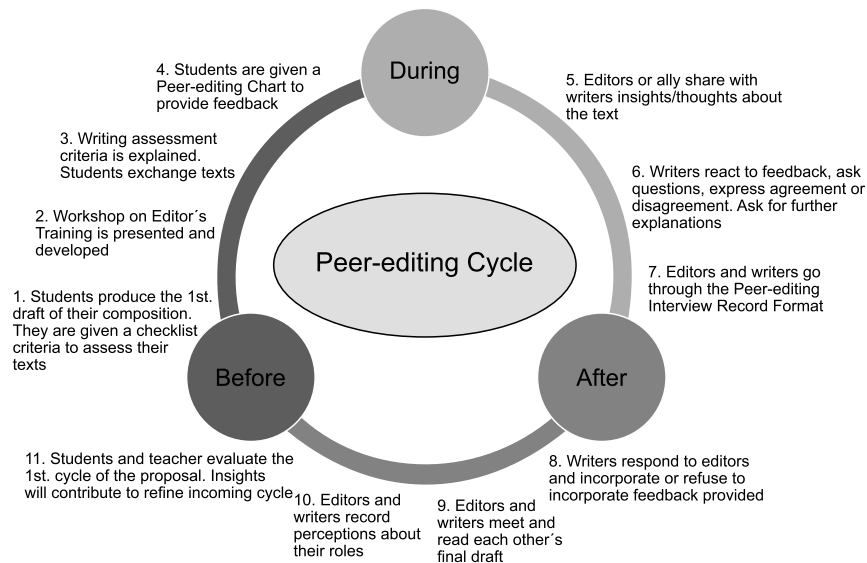
there was the need to articulate these theories to teaching practices in the classroom. In such manner, and considering both approaches, -The Process Approach to Writing Instruction adapted by Shih 1986 (cited in Brown), and Peer-editing Principles proposed by Hansen and Liu (2005) - conceive writing as a three-moment practice; “before”, “during” and “after”, the fundamentals for a piloting cycle were established.

This strategy was initially planned to be carried out in a four session two-hour period time, however, because of the necessity to expand and clarify ideas, an extra session was incorporated. Participants included a group of nine pre-service teachers –one male and eight female– whose ages ranged from sixteen to twenty-three year old. Except for a student who comes from a different department, the rest of learners are graduated students at ENSMA - in 2014 or

previous years. Even when their language abilities are diverse, their proficiency English level remains at a Basic User Level or A1. Most participants come from the rural area, and a small percentage come from the urban sector.

Four main objectives were set to be fulfilled through this proposal; a first one referred to the encouragement of students’ awareness in relation to their role as editors and writers by means of peer-editing as a formative assessment strategy. A second one aimed at promoting autonomy in the process of learners’ composition. A third purpose intended to encourage collaboration and cognitive development in the composition process evolution, and a last one sought to identify students’ writing modifications to make evident participants’ betterment of their writing skills.

### Peer-editing cycle proposed



**Diagram 1.** Peer Editing Cycle



The Peer-editing cycle represents basically a set of activities which go through the three-moment process of writing; before during and after. Before the cycle is over, an evaluation of the process is implemented, and insights considered refining activities, formats and processes in a forthcoming stage (See Diagram 1).

**Before peer-editing stage:** As part of the first semester's Teacher Training Program syllabus, and in a closing activity related to the content unit *Introducing Yourself*, students were to write a short text about themselves. Such composition was then used as students' first draft for the present peer-editing proposal implementation, and so, the first activity included in the diagram already displayed. In addition, with the purpose to inform learners about composition assessment, they were given a writing checklist criterion in advance for their texts to be adjusted before turning them in. Once written, pieces were collected and the peer-editing strategy was ready to be socialized.

In an initial session, the second exercise included in this phase was presented and developed: the Editor's Training Workshop (see Appendix 1). This workshop sought to familiarize learners with what an editing process shaped by formative assessment principles meant, and also to guide them into assuming a reflective perspective throughout the implementation of the peer-editing strategy. In that respect, Min (2006) explains that it is by training students on how to give and use feedback, that peer-assessment can be an exceptionally effective practice, cited by Azarnoosh (2013). Finally, this step-by-step training

workshop included detailed "hands at work" reading, commenting and editing exercises designed for students to strength their abilities not only as readers, but also as constructive editors.

In the second session, a group activity meant to monitor editing abilities was developed: The Peer Editing Chart (Format 1). Subsequently, a format containing criteria to assess students' compositions was explained. Basically, this three-column format (see Appendix 2) contains the very same criteria students already went through when composing their texts. Additionally, it includes a column to record editor's comments and perceptions regarding writers performance in each item assessed. A third column includes writer's responses to editors' comments and observations. Students, organized by pairs exchanged texts and were instructed in how to go through that activity. For next session students, as homework, had to read their peers' drafts, comment and offer feedback based on criteria already presented in format 1, in the column referred to Editor's comments.

**During peer-editing stage:** Two main activities were developed during this session; a first one related to the essential purpose of providing written and oral feedback to writers, (Format 1), and a second one connected to a reflective dialogue, between editors and writers illustrated in the Peer-Editing Interview Record Format (Format 2-see Appendix 3).

The written feedback (recorded in Format 1: "Peer-editing Chart") that readers provided had the purpose to recognize

writers' initial composition skills which will eventually make their texts grow, and was characterized by identification of strengths and areas of improvement through comments and observations about the texts. In addition this collaborative exercise informed writers about opportunities they had to revise, refine and gain some progress in their writing learning process. After editors finished assessing compositions, writers had the opportunity to react to feedback given by asking questions, manifesting agreement or disagreement or asking for further explanations to editors. Both interventions were audio-recorded and also intended to enhance students' comments when editing a written piece in a forthcoming cycle. Brufee (1999) recognizes in these types of experiences an opportunity for students to develop writing skills, cited in Al-Jamal (2009).

At this time of the implementation, editors were sharing their insights orally based on what they previously, and as homework wrote. However and even when writers had reacted to feedback, they still needed to be given time to respond in the same format and in written form. In that manner they were guided on how to do so. This exercise was to be done as homework for the next session. Along with this activity, it was expected that writers read, revised and refined their compositions and produced a second draft.

As a final activity and in the dialogue established right away and registered in Format 2, students exchanged ideas about their roles in the writing process implemented. Information gathered through this format was intended to adjust the

strategy and the writing process when moving into the second cycle.

**After peer-editing stage:** For this last part of the cycle, writers had already read and refined their compositions according to observations previously made by editors. Moreover, and connected to prior exercise, they had responded to editors' written comments using Format 1.

As a first activity for this session editors and writers met once again. The objective now was to make writer's text evolution evident through an additional second reading by editors, and confirming if the provided feedback was or was not incorporated in the last version of their compositions. Finally, closing written individual reflections were made by students in both of their roles, writers and peer editors. For that reason they went through the Formats 3 and 4 connected to Editor's Peer Editing Reflection Log (see Appendix 4) and Writer's Peer Editing Reflection Log (see Appendix 5). These forms were conceived to dig into students' perceptions related to process writing, editors' abilities in assessing their peer's texts and writers' awareness in relation to their composition writing skills. Finally participants 'involvement in the process through these formats revealed some nuances concerning the impact that students' (as editors and writers) decisions had on text improvement along the implementation of the strategy. More important was to identify learning and teaching connections students started making, not only from their current student role, while being engaged in the pedagogical design, but also from their perspectives as future educators built throughout their work as editors.

Now that this peer-editing piloting cycle was completed it was necessary to know to what extent the strategy could or could not benefit participants' process writing and various roles construction. In order to evaluate the experience, a poster session and several formats were considered. Next section shares the most relevant students' insights.

## **Evaluation**

As an evidence of the assets, challenges and the value this experience brought about in relation to learners' involvement as students and as future teachers, two key formats, the Editor's and Writer's Peer Editing Final Reflection Logs along with students' evaluation comments -gathered at the end of the cycle- were reviewed with the purpose to know students' reflections and outcomes about their participation in the project.

### **Editors' perceptions about their role**

Students felt comfortable when assessing their peer's compositions. By having the chance to share prior knowledge through comments and observations, editors contributed to make their classmates' texts evolve. In that sense, readers felt their opinions were valued and then eventually, collaborative work was evidenced in subsequent written versions. Even though editors recognized editing process develops reading criticism, it represents an enormous responsibility towards their peers' process writing evolution. In doing so, students enhance their ability to evaluate their own writing, Hansen & Liu (2005) cited in Al-Jamal, D. (2009).

Lack of confidence and uncertainty when assessing each other's drafts were difficulties editors encountered during the edition process. Such restrictions were founded mainly in language knowledge limitations. To overcome those eventualities students suggested developing a deeper reading exercise intended to excel the edition process by means of rigorous self-information practices.

### **Effectiveness of editors' comments**

Comments given by editors were taken into account by authors when revising their drafts, and most of them were associated with a prescriptive nature of language. It was by negotiation of meaning, that editors and writers could enhance compositions. Authors questioned, asked for clarification and went through extensive proofreading, key issues referred as "mindfulness" of the recipient to maximize the effects of feedback provided (Bangert et.al 1991)., and identified by Sumangala and Dicarlo (2000) as "functions during negotiation" cited in Al-Jamal, D. (2009 pp.16-17).

In addition to that the dialogue established between editors and writers enhanced collaborative learning work. Assertiveness exhibited by readers when assessing their peers' productions and awareness and receptivity writers showed in relation to their writing abilities, and composition characteristics, were attitudes which contributed to gain students' interest in correcting their written pieces. However, low interest and commitment when writing or correcting drafts impeded more insightful text growth.

## **Writers perceptions about their role**

Even when students seemed to be enthusiastic about the writing exercise developed, they recognized complexity in this language ability which made them feel confused and doubtful when creating their texts. Writers mirrored themselves as committed learners able to achieve composition progress derived from self-motivation and the opportunity to share their previous knowledge and also the ability to express themselves. On the other hand, students ponder that it is by considering peers' assessment, proofreading own texts, writing a first draft, and being more creative in their compositions that language difficulties can be surpassed, and thus text grow. Despite difficulties, writers valued the opportunity to develop a higher composition level in terms of text elaboration

## **Writers' performance**

Readers mainly focused on their peers' abilities to create a written piece however, and from writers' perspectives their drafts were characterized also for showing fluency when expressing their ideas. Interest and commitment have been identified as composition attributes recognized during the strategy implemented so far. Nevertheless areas which require more attention enhancement are include understanding formal aspects of the language, especially mechanics (spelling and capitalization) and the excessive emphasis on prescriptivism to use the English code.

## **Text evolution**

At some extent, and after reading the final

versions of compositions, readers evidenced peer text evolution. From proofreaders' perspective such progress was based on particular interest shown by students when revising their texts. They need to understand the reasons behind their inaccuracies. In addition to that, improvements were materialized in text organization, fluency and mechanics. On the other hand, some of the most relevant changes writers perceived in their compositions after the peer-editing exercise were associated to text coherence development, use of accurate information when writing, and building up vocabulary.

## **Connections as future teachers**

Students stressed the importance of being editors in relation to connections they can establish between their roles as current students and future elementary school teachers. By having the chance to be editors and assessors of their classmates' compositions, participants develop a sense of student responsibility towards each other's learning process. In addition to that, they thought that fomenting proofreading processes with children may contribute to explore their initial reading and writing abilities while supporting motivation, collaboration, improving evaluation strategies and strengthening awareness to process writing.

Student as writers emphasized that permitting students to express themselves, encouraging self-confidence, and supporting motivation are potential connections that can be learnt from this experience and then implemented in their future role as teachers.

## Conclusions and implications

Creating the conditions to enhance writing process in the EFL classroom promotes an exciting and collaborative work environment in which learning is constructed socially and students are empowered to develop awareness in relation to their ability to read and write. In a peer-editing exercise, like the one detailed here, learners assumed the challenge to value and assess their own and peer reading and composition abilities in their roles as editors and writers. By sharing previous knowledge they had about the language, their experiences as learners, and insights from workshops implemented, students started to develop awareness of the communication attributes any text should possess. By doing so, a more complete and enriched peer-edition performance was attained in the English writing classroom.

In that sense, achievements gathered after implementing the peer-edition strategy with the student-teachers group have been divided into three main categories, and they refer to:

- Language Abilities
- Social Abilities
- Learning Outcomes

**Language abilities.** After having finished a first peer-editing cycle some limitations are visible in peer-assessment comments and observations. Since it has been mostly focused on language structural aspects, it requires to be redirected favoring meaning of students' compositions. To achieve that purpose more elaborated comments in which editors elicit information and ask for clarification about writers' texts, and authors

manifest their decision of implementing or not comments made will be fostered through the Editor's Training Workshop to be effected in a second cycle. It is expected these reflections can be evident by means of information gathered through formats and comments shared orally, and thus to have a better picture of the peer-edition process taking place. Additionally, deeper discernments students provide as editors and writers are desirable so formats will necessitate being revised and refined.

In the same manner, this piloting cycle implementation has led to the discovery of potential skills students showed as writers and readers. By reading peers' compositions and providing formative assessment comments and -at some level- making texts evolve editors demonstrated, how much they can contribute to their peers' writing refinement. In the same manner, authors by asking for clarification and expanding information in relation to their initial drafts, and finally by making evident individual reflections through text development, could respond and materialize editors' comments and observations.

**Social abilities.** In the process of peer edition students were challenged to compose and provide constructive comments to their peers' written pieces. This exercise had the intentionality to observe what transformations from peer interactions were taking place along the process for then giving an account of the evolution and growth gained through the peer-editing strategy. One of the main achievements gotten so far is related to the initial affective and social interactions that have determined the student progress in relation to text

production, rapport between editors and writers, and about the comments peers are able to accomplish. Previous ideas refer to the capacity students have to encourage confidence and sensibility towards the self-writing process everyone undertakes, and in that way master the ability to make commentaries in relation to others' writing processes. Students have succeeded in making of this learning environment a significant and convenient atmosphere for all of them due to the affinity and effective communication bridges they have established.

**Learning outcomes.** A third and last trait refers to how the strategy contributed to understanding process writing from students and the researcher's insights with the purpose of planning, implementing and evaluating the strategy. In this manner, three different issues have been identified as follows

**Promoting criticism.** In a preliminary moment students showed elementary notions about editing. Previous ideas were enhanced by practical editing exercises aimed to foster the ability to comment on peer compositions. After a first familiarization workshop readers started gaining experience made evident sometimes through comments regarding their peer's improvement and some others through frustrations that lately turned into new knowledge and learning insights. Such perceptions have been taking them progressively to increase expertise related to the nature of being eventually, and potentially critical and autonomous readers when commenting on peers' drafts.

**Co-responsibility when learning.** Before getting into their role of editors, students had a first access to the process of creating a text that let them explore the writing level which best described their current composing competence. Hence, the identification of their own weaknesses and the necessity to learn the basics to create a text in a nonnative language was a key issue. This process allowed every student to raise awareness and commitment regarding their individual learning and even more, to assume the role of editors responsibly. In addition, they tried to find the most effective strategy which implied the responsibility to edit their peer compositions and made their classmates understand and perceive this process with willingness to learn.

**Uncertainty to unknown.** For students, the process of writing indistinctively of the language used, may result in a complex challenge. This fact implies somehow -a level of uncertainty-, even though when that practice includes formal aspects of a foreign language, in this particular case, English. This component determines discomfort to what is unknown and hesitation to make mistakes. However, the co-responsibility everyone has assumed about own and others' processes has generated trustfulness and enthusiasm to overcome impediments.

The following lines include some considerations to bear in mind before you plan to start a similar strategy. A first component is related to time. Exploring the writing ability will always be an interesting endeavor, however time constraints may

deprive the process to be developed in a fully and a more step- by step manner, and teachers interested in carrying out a writing-based project in their classroom should be aware of that. From planning to evaluation, the strategy demands constant reflection, refinement and polishing, especially when no previous experience has been achieved. Finally, it is advisable to leave an extra window time to allow any further and necessary adjustment sessions due to school activities or any other unforeseen circumstances.

A second element is planning and flexibility. Because of the need to articulate teaching actions that respond to process or students' needs in the implementation, a careful planning needs to happen. Being mindful about the connections between what has been planned and what occurs in the classroom is a fundamental decision. In relation to flexibility and since the peer-editing strategy involves different actors, actions and processes that are mutually dependent, and will eventually require to be addressed, looking at things from an outsider perspective will help to know how to proceed, and such decision can make a difference.

Finally, Falchikov (2001) claims that "good quality peer-assessment requires time for organization, training and monitoring" (p. 67). In this manner, editors need to be trained. Even when a lot has been said about writers, a successful peer-edition strategy requires committed editors, and training them is definitely an asset. By doing that, readers develop a sense of awareness, confidence, engagement and own responsibility in their peer writing learning

process. As a teacher you need to inspect what you expect. In such manner, assuming a continuous and reflective attitude along the process will shed some light on what needs to be strengthened, changed or not further considered.

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## Appendix 1: Editor's Training Workshop

### PEER-EDITING: A STRATEGY TO ASSESS THE WRITING PROCESS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

#### EDITOR'S TRAINING WORKSHOP 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**OBJECTIVE:** This workshop has been designed to familiarize learners to what the editing process shaped by formative assessment is, and also to provide some valuable insights in relation to their reflective perspective along the implementation of the peer-editing strategy.

1. Think of a magazine or journal editor. What their functions are? Share your insights.

a. What is editing? Read these definitions and...

“Preparar o adaptar un texto para su publicación” *Diccionario Práctico del estudiante. Real Academia de la lengua.*

“Un texto no debe abandonarse hasta estar completamente seguros de haber logrado un buen resultado. Es por ello que se hace uso de la “edición”, la cual consiste en “volver al texto con ojo crítico” (Serrano, Peña, Aguirre y Figueroa, 2002:116), con la intención de pulir lo ya escrito y lograr así un mayor grado de coherencia entre las ideas que se presentan.”

“Prepare for publication, correcting errors, checking facts, etc. *Gage Canadian Dictionary.*

b. Which definition did you like the most? Why?

2. Think of these questions:

a. Have you taken part in a peer-editing activity?

b. How was it like?

c. How would you like a peer to evaluate your composition?

d. What would you make feel confident

e. What would encourage you in a process in which peers check your composition?

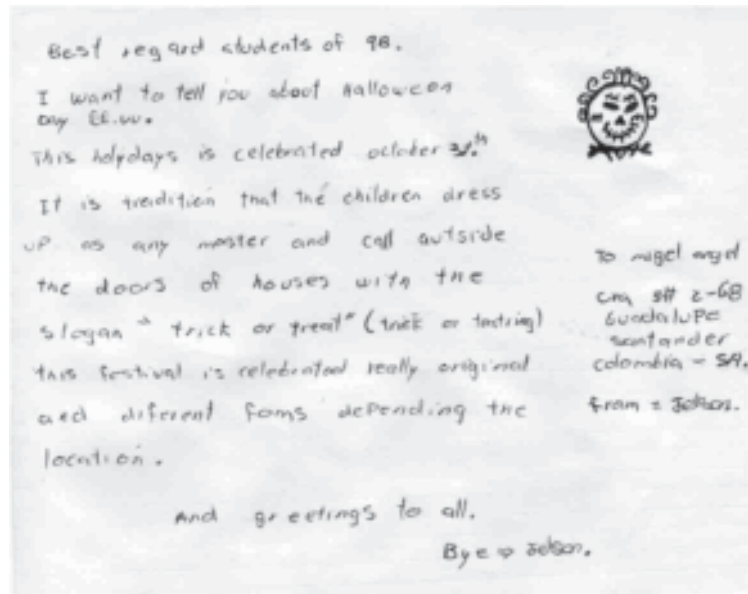
3. In groups of two students you are going to read a short composition about Halloween, - taken from a unit “**Holidays around the world**”- and written by a ninth grader.

a. What aspects can you focus on to edit the text?

b. What kind of feedback can you provide to help him/her to improve the composition?

c. How can you provide a type of feedback that your peer could learn from it?

d. Use a correction/revision code (any of the previous proofreading marks given) to provide feedback



Texto sobre Halloween escrito por un estudiante de grado noveno usado como modelo de edición

4. Now, answer these questions about the text:

a. What did you like best (strengths) about the paper?

\_\_\_\_\_.

b. What do you like the least? (aspects to improve)

\_\_\_\_\_.

c. Is information presented in a post-card format?

\_\_\_\_\_.

d. Did the writer take the formality of the text into consideration?

\_\_\_\_\_.

e. Can you identify information related to What?, Where?, When? and What do people do?

\_\_\_\_\_.

f. What is something you would advise to the writer about his/her text?

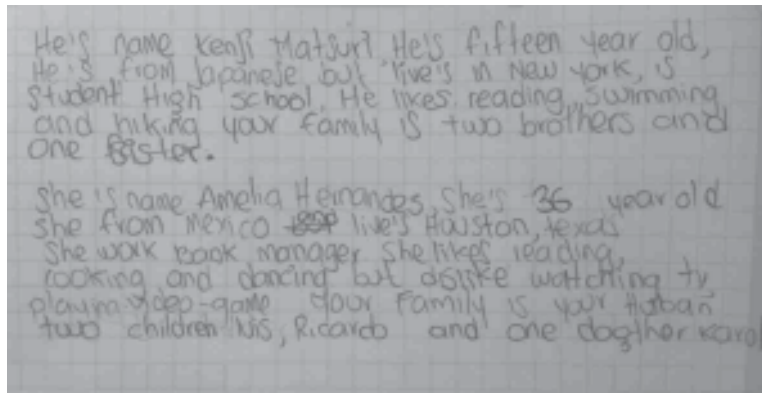
\_\_\_\_\_.

g. How can you communicate effectively your suggestions to this writer?

\_\_\_\_\_.

### Additional text to be studied

1. In groups of two students you are going to read a short composition about Introducing people.



Now, answer these questions about the text:

a. What did you like best (strengths) about the paper?

b. What did you like the least?

c. Is information presented clear?

d. Does the text include appropriate use of possessive adjectives?

e. What is something you would advise to the writer about his/her text?

f. How can you communicate effectively your suggestions to this writer?

## Appendix 2: Peer Editing Chart

PEER-EDITING CHART			
Editor's name _____			
Author's/writer's name _____			
Date _____			
	Criteria	Editor comments	Writerinsights /response
1.	There is evidence that the text has been previously planned		
2.	The text includes a title.		
3.	The text is organized in paragraphs. Each paragraph presents different information about someone else's life and his/her family.		
4.	The written piece includes information and concepts already studied and related to introducing yourself.		
5.	Adequate use of agreement, tense, word order, connectors, pronouns, possessive adjectives.		
6.	The text evidences adequate use of spelling, punctuation and capitalization		

### Appendix 3: Peer Editing Interview Record Format

<b>PEER-EDITING INTERVIEW RECORD FORMAT</b>	
Editor's name	_____
Author's/writer's name	_____
Date	_____
<b>WARM-UP</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> 5 minutes.	
To open this conversation editors and writers are going to talk about the peer-editing writing general process. To guide this conversation you can think of;	
a. How did you feel during the process?	
b. What was the hardest task / activity along the process?	
c. What was the easiest one? After the talk write a summary of your ideas	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
<b>EDITOR &amp; WRITER PEER-EDITING DIALOGUE</b> 8 minutes	
This task is going to be developed in two different moments. In a first moment <b>editors</b> are going to highlight strengths and aspects to be improved by writers/authors according to the Written Feedback Format.	
In a second stage, writers are going to ask for clarification and expansion of feedback in which they can express agreement or disagreement in relation to observations made. (Dialogue is to be audio-recorded)	
<b>CONCLUSION</b> 5 minutes	
For this final part of the exercise, editors are going to provide final comments and advice	
_____	
_____	
_____	

### Appendix 4: Editor's Peer-Editing Final Reflection Log

<b>EDITOR'S PEER-EDITING FINAL REFLECTION LOG</b>	
Editor's name _____	
Author's/writer's name _____	
Date _____	
As an editor, and after the peer-editing proposal implemented you are going to reflect and record your insights about your role and the writing process just concluded. These questions may guide your discussion.	
1. How did you feel being an editor?	
_____	
2. How would you describe your role as an editor?	
_____	
3. What are some strengths you identified from your peer's composition?	
_____	
4. Did you identify any area/s which require/s more attention? Which ones?	
_____	
5. From comments given, which ones do you know your peer incorporated? /didn't incorporate?	
_____	
6. Why do you think he/she incorporated/didn't incorporate comments/observations provided?	
_____	
7. How did the peer react to your comments/observations?	
_____	
8. How did writer's composition evolve after the peer-editing activity?	
_____	
9. How can you improve your role as an editor next time?	
_____	
10. As an editor, how can you connect this experience to your role as a future teacher?	
_____	
_____	

### Appendix 5: Writer's Peer-Editing Final Reflection Log

<b>WRITER'S PEER-EDITING FINAL REFLECTION LOG</b>	
Editor's name _____	
Author's/writer's name _____	
Date _____	
As a writer, and after the peer-editing proposal implemented you are going to reflect and record your insights about your role and the writing process just concluded. These questions may guide your discussion.	
1. How did you feel being a writer?	
_____	
_____	
2. How would you describe your role as a writer? Or	
_____	
_____	
3. What strengths were exposed in your composition?	
_____	
_____	
4. Is/Are there any area/s that require/s more attention? Which one/s?	
_____	
_____	
5. Did you incorporate ALL observations made by the editor? Yes? No? Why?	
_____	
_____	
6. How did you react to your reader's comments/observations?	
_____	
_____	
7. What do you think is the most relevant change/evolution in your composition after the peer editing exercise?	
_____	
_____	
8. How can you improve your role as a writer next time?	
_____	
_____	
9. As a writer, how can you connect this experience to your role as a future teacher?	
_____	
_____	
_____	

**THE AUTHOR**

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## Enletawa Journal editorial and ethical policies

*Enletawa journal* is a biannual publication led and financed by the Masters in Language Teaching at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia. The journal is managed from Edificio Central, office # C224 on the university's campus, telephone number 7405626 Ext. 2470. The journal's URL is [http://revistas.uptc.edu.co/revistas/index.php/enletawa\\_journal%20](http://revistas.uptc.edu.co/revistas/index.php/enletawa_journal%20), and its email address is [revista.enletawajournal@uptc.edu.co](mailto:revista.enletawajournal@uptc.edu.co)

The journal provides a means for the dissemination of academic work including research, pedagogical innovation and theoretical discussion articles, essays and others types of writing concerning language pedagogy and associated fields. In-service, pre-service teachers and researchers in the field of foreign and second language learning and teaching are welcome to submit articles in English, French and Spanish.

The journal's leadership is responsible for maintaining the publication quality and includes an editor, an assistant editor, a scientific committee and an editorial committee. Members of the various committees are evaluated based on their academic work and about their publications in other journals.

### **Article submission:**

Articles submitted for evaluation to the journal are expected to comply with national and international copyright laws. Authors must submit original articles which have not been previously published in or submitted for evaluation to another journal. Authors are expected to register as users in Enletawas' Open Journal System platform through the link: [http://revistas.uptc.edu.co/revistas/index.php/enletawa\\_journal%20](http://revistas.uptc.edu.co/revistas/index.php/enletawa_journal%20). Through this platform they can find information about deadlines for submissions, journal publication dates, author guidelines, the journal policies and previous issues.

When authors submit articles for publication, they agree to have their articles reviewed by external and internal reviewers. These reviewers make suggestions to the editor as to which articles should be published. Authors who submit articles are also responsible for the ideas found in their work and must commit to follow the suggestions of the reviewers and those of the Editorial Committee. Authors must adhere to Enletawa journal's academic, editorial and scientific standards. In addition, the Journal has the right to contact authors and ask them to provide details regarding their manuscripts' content at any point during the revision process up until articles are published.

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#### **Article evaluation:**

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Once the article has been reviewed, authors must incorporate reviewers' feedback into their article. They are expected to send the article with corrections to the journal within fifteen working days of receiving feedback from the reviewers. The corrections must be highlighted in the text in order to facilitate the review process. Upon the article's final revision by the author, reviewers will provide a final concept to the journal within fifteen working days of receiving the author's final revision. If the editor accepts the article for publication based on reviewers' recommendations, the editing process will begin. Failure to meet the journal's deadlines for article correction will result in the publication of the article in a subsequent issue. On the whole, an article will need approximately six months for a full review to be completed.

Based on the scientific, editorial and academic criteria underpinning the journal's articles, evaluations will be guided by a format which requires that the author provide information concerning the article's content. Reviewers are responsible for making suggestions about whether an article should be accepted or rejected. The journal is responsible for

maintaining the confidentiality of reviewers' names and partial or final results of evaluation throughout the review process up until the article is published in paper or electronic format in the Journal.

### **Editorial duties:**

Editorial and scientific committees are responsible for establishing author guidelines, developing the journal's editorial policies and observing scientific and academic quality criteria. For each issue of the journal being published, the scientific committee sets parameters for academic quality. This committee can also make recommendations to the editor regarding possible improvements to the journal's policies. The editorial committee is charged with setting guidelines for the submission of articles in each new issue, making final decisions concerning the articles which will be accepted for publication (after the review process) and ensuring that the editorial process functions efficiently while maintaining the journals' scientific quality.

The editor gathers and presents articles to the editorial committee, selects reviewers and guides evaluation processes that lead to the journal publication while ensuring confidentiality.

### **Editorial Ethics:**

The editorial committee monitors each of the stages of article evaluation starting with article submission and ending with journal publication. Enletawa journal is committed to following universal ethical and scientific journal publication standards and that those individuals involved in this process, namely, readers, authors, committee members and reviewers also follow these standards. If Enletawa journal fails to follow any of the ethical guidelines for publication, the journal will send a written communication to the people involved and the general community.

Personal data and all documents collected by Enletawa Journal will be kept confidential in order to guarantee committee members, reviewers and authors integrity. In order to maintain its commitment to observing ethical and intellectual publication standards, the journal's leadership and authors will refuse to engage in any activities which could lead to the journal's commercialization, thus allowing for open access to its contents. When errors are found, the journal will acknowledge mistakes and publish a correction in the following issue.

## **GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS**

### **Article Classification:**

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This type of publication provides a detailed description of final research studies' findings. Generally this type of article includes an introduction, methodology, results and conclusions.

## **Reflection Article**

This type of publication shares final original research findings imbued with an analytic, interpretative or critical perspective.

Literature Review Article. This document analyzes, systematizes and interconnects published or unpublished research findings concerning a specific field with the purpose of informing about advances and tendencies. It is expected that authors conduct a nuanced literature review which includes at least 50 references.

Short Article. This type of article shares preliminary or partial original research findings.

Case report. This type of article shares a study's findings which are based on a specific situation. The publication seeks to inform readers about the particular experiences in a case while it reviews literature corresponding to similar cases.

Theme review. This type of article emerges from the critical literature review that authors produce regarding a specific topic.

Letters to the Editor. By means of this type of publication, authors can share their critical, analytical or interpretative positions concerning documents published in the journal.

Editorial. By means of this type of document, the journal editor, any of the members of the editorial committee or a guest researcher may express their views about topical issues in the journal.

Translation. This category includes classic texts, current issues or transcriptions of historical documents which are related to the journal's scope of interest.

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Presentation letter: authors must include an additional letter specifying academic background, institutional affiliation, email address and the date when the article was written. An article can have no more than 3 authors.

Length of articles: articles in categories 1, 2 and 3 (see classification above) must not exceed 8,000 words or 25 letter size pages. Short articles must contain between 5 and 7 pages.

**Abstract and Key Words:** the article must include an abstract between 100 and 150 words. Additionally, the authors need to include between 5 to 8 key words which inform readers regarding the article content. The abstract and key words must be written in the original language of the article and two other languages (French and Spanish)

**Graphs:** tables and graphs must be included within the document, not at the end. Authors must avoid using colors other than black and white. Each figure and table must include a title and a reference from where they were taken, if necessary. Graphs must be in a standard format (e.g. JPG or TIF).

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### **References:**

Following the American Psychological Association (APA) style, Sixth Edition, authors must include citations inside the text as well as the complete bibliographic information for each citation in the list of references. For example:

Sierra, A. M. (2007). Developing knowledge, skills and attitudes through a study group: A study on teachers' professional development. *IKALA*, 12(18), 279-305.

Pavlenko, A. (2007). Autobiographic narratives as data in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 28(2), 163-188.

### **For Books:**

Freeman, D. (1998). *Doing teacher-research: From inquiry to understanding*. A Teacher Source book. San Francisco, CA: Heinle & Heinle.

Chamot, A. U., Barndhardt, S., Beard, P., & Robbins, J. (1999). *The learning strategies handbook*. New York, NY: Pearson Education.

### **For internet sources:**

Oxford, R. (1989). Strategy inventory for language learning (SILL). Retrieved from <http://homework.wtuc.edu.tw/sill.php>

Hofstede, G. (2010). National culture dimensions. Retrieved from [http://www.geerthofstede.com/hofstede\\_mexico.shtml](http://www.geerthofstede.com/hofstede_mexico.shtml) Quotations

If a direct quote is less than forty words, incorporate it into the text and use quotation marks. If the direct quote is more than forty words, make the quotation a free standing indented block of text and do not use quotation marks.

**One work by one author:**

In one developmental study (Smith, 1990), children learned...

OR

In the study by Smith (1990), primary school children...

OR

In 1990, Smith's study of primary school children...

**Works by multiple authors:**

When a work has two authors, cite both names every time you reference the work in the text. When a work has three to five authors, cite all the author names the first time the reference occurs and then subsequently include only the first author followed by et al.

For example: First citation: Masserton, Slonowski, and Slowinski (1989) state that...

Subsequent citations: Masserton et al. (1989) state that...

For six or more authors, cite only the name of the first author followed by et al., and the year.

## Políticas éticas y editoriales de la revista Enletawa

### De la publicación y de los autores:

La revista *Enletawa* es el órgano de proplación de la Maestría en Docencia de Idiomas de la Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, Maestría encargada de cubrir los gastos de la presente publicación. La oficina sede de la revista se encuentra en el Edificio Central oficina C224, dentro del Campus universitario, teléfono 7405626 ext. 2470. La dirección electrónica de Enletawa Journal es: [http://revistas.uptc.edu.co/revistas/index.php/enletawa\\_journal%20](http://revistas.uptc.edu.co/revistas/index.php/enletawa_journal%20) y su correo electrónico es: [revista.enletawajournal@uptc.edu.co](mailto:revista.enletawajournal@uptc.edu.co).

*Enletawa Journal* es el medio de difusión de productos académicos resultados de investigación e innovaciones pedagógicas; artículos de discusión teórica, ensayos y otros escritos que aporten al campo de la pedagogía y a las demás disciplinas que se encuentren relacionadas con esta. La revista *Enletawa* tiene una periodicidad semestral y recibe artículos en los siguientes tres idiomas: inglés, francés y español.

La revista *Enletawa* cuenta con: un Editor, un Asistente Editorial, un Comité Científico, un Comité Evaluador y un Comité Editorial que se encarga de que la revista en general y su publicación en particular sean de calidad. Los miembros de los respectivos comités serán sometidos a una evaluación que permitirá conocer la producción académica de cada uno de ellos y la difusión de sus productos escriturales en otras publicaciones.

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## PARA LOS AUTORES

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