

**FOSTERING ORAL PRODUCTION THROUGH PROBLEM BASED LEARNING  
ACTIVITIES IN A SIXTH GRADE ENGLISH CLASS**

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MAESTRÍA EN DIDÁCTICA DE LA LENGUA  
BUCARAMANGA**

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**Requirement for the degree of Magíster en Didáctica de la Lengua**

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## **DEDICATION**

I want to dedicate this study to all the people who have contributed in different ways to the development of my profession and the development of this research project. Primarily, to my family who supports me in the spiritual, moral, ethic, academic and economic aspect. Second, to the students who helped me without any particular interest and, whose only wish was to commit to the community, help them and try out something new. Third, to La Presentación School who allowed me to apply this method with the students. Eventually, I want to dedicate it to my students' parents who were involved with questions and meetings, in appreciation for their constant willingness throughout the 3 months of pedagogical intervention.

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I immensely appreciate the efforts made by the ten students who connected through the model of problem-based learning, and had as a common goal to help their fellow students by giving instructions about how to save their lives in a moment of emergency. I also want to acknowledge my students' parents who were always attentive to their needs and this project's requirements.

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application, despite having a different academic background and of course to demonstrate it is possible to teach well and do more to contribute to the common projects of a bilingual society, and a global citizenship . Undoubtedly, I want to highlight the support, company and guidance from my director Esperanza Revelo Jiménez, for her enlightenment and passion for this profession because she contributes by seeing this field with loving eyes and opportunities of creating experiences. I also want to acknowledge the teachers who educated me such as: Luz Mary Quintero, Olga Uribe, Raúl García, Amparo Clavijo, Aldemar Álvarez, Gabriel Cote, Magdaleydy Martinez, Jermaine McDougald, Liliana Cuesta.

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## RESUMEN

**TÍTULO:** PROMOCIÓN DE PRODUCCIÓN ORAL A TRAVÉS DE ACTIVIDADES BASADAS EN SOLUCIÓN DE PROBLEMAS EN UNA CLASE DE INGLÉS DE SEXTO GRADO \*

**AUTOR:** OMAR ANDRÉS YANGUMA DUARTE\*\*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS, INVESTIGACIÓN-ACCIÓN, SOLUCIÓN DE PROBLEMAS, PRODUCCIÓN ORAL, REFLEXIÓN

### DESCRIPCIÓN:

La producción oral es una competencia del inglés necesaria para la comunicación. Las investigaciones realizadas sobre esta habilidad se concentran en mejorarla a través de varios métodos pedagógicos como el comunicativo y natural. En estos modelos, la competencia de producción oral es vista como el objetivo del lenguaje al igual que para los estudiantes de este estudio, quienes consideran el hablar en inglés como una fortaleza para futuras oportunidades e interacción con extranjeros. Teniendo esto en cuenta, el objetivo de esta investigación-acción fue promover la producción oral a través de actividades basadas en solución de problemas en 10 estudiantes de sexto grado, llevándolos a ser más autónomos en su desarrollo como hablantes de la lengua y reflexionando sobre su accionar. El estudio fue realizado en un colegio privado de Bucaramanga, Santander. Los datos se recogieron mediante grabaciones para saber cómo iniciaron y terminaron en la cantidad de producción oral bajo un contenido de cómo evacuar correctamente y que ellos seleccionaron como problema en la comunidad. Mediante la observación del investigador, cuestionarios reflexivos durante 10 secciones y un grupo focal, se muestra su evolución como hablantes. Los hallazgos se centran en la forma como los estudiantes mejoraron en su dominio académico, afectivo, reflexivo, social y el impacto al investigador quien dinamiza su rol como docente a través de este proceso. Finalmente, se evidencia una seguridad y participación mayor a hablar en inglés disminuyendo el miedo a cometer errores, viendo la equivocación como parte del aprendizaje mismo mediante la continua reflexión.

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\* Proyecto de grado

\*\* Facultad de Ciencias Humanas, Escuela de Idiomas, Maestría en didáctica de la lengua Director: Esperanza Revelo Jiménez M.A in English as a Foreign Language

## ABSTRACT

**TITLE:** FOSTERING ORAL PRODUCTION THROUGH PROBLEM BASED LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN A SIXTH GRADE ENGLISH CLASS\*

**AUTHOR:** OMAR ANDRÉS YANGUMA DUARTE\*\*

**KEYWORDS:** ENGLISH TEACHING, ACTION RESEARCH, PROBLEM SOLVING, ORAL PRODUCTION, REFLECTION

### DESCRIPTION:

Oral production is an aspect of English that is necessary for communication. The research carried out on this skill focuses on fostering it through various pedagogical methods, such as the communicative and natural methods. In these models, competence in oral production is seen as the objective of the language as well as for the students of this study, who consider speaking English as a tool for future opportunities and their interaction with foreigners. Bearing this in mind, the objective of this action research study was to promote oral production through activities based on problem solving in 10 sixth graders, leading them to be more autonomous in their development as speakers of the language and reflecting on their actions. The study was conducted at a private school in Bucaramanga, Santander. The data was collected through English recordings to know how they started and how they ended up in the amount of oral production under the topic of how to evacuate correctly, which they selected as a problem in the school community. Through researcher's observation, reflective questionnaires, during 10 sessions, and a focus group their evolution as speakers is shown. The findings focus on how students improved their academic, affective, reflective, social domains and impact on the researcher who inspires his role as a teacher through this process. Finally, there is evidence of better confidence and participation in speaking English, reducing the fear of making mistakes, seeing mistakes as part of learning itself through continuous reflection.

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\* Proyecto de grado

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## INTRODUCTION

In EFL classes, there are differences in speaking skills from one student to another, which has been a topic of research throughout many years. According to Juhana these differences could be produced by several factors such as: fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence and lack of motivation, she states at the end of her case study that most students believed that motivating them to be more confident to speak English is worth considering. She says “teachers are the ones who should identify fears students feel at speaking the foreign language”<sup>1</sup>. Otherwise, in a book written by Kojima it is mentioned many students from different cultural background have an inhibiting factor in common, which is “the level of anxiety, discomfort and insecurity they find to share their opinions and participate in class discussions”. Kojima recommends “teachers must have a better understanding of the importance of learning about the cultural differences of their students to avoid causing students’ second language anxiety”<sup>2</sup>.

In the same way, Krashen supports these studies with his theory about affective filter that number affective variables in second language acquisition. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, self-image. He claims “that learners with low motivation, self-confidence, a bad self-image and a high level of anxiety are not equipped for success in second language acquisition because learners form a mental block that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition”<sup>3</sup>. In

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<sup>1</sup> JUHANA, Psychological Factors that Hinder Students from Speaking in English Class (A Case Study in a High School in South Tangerang). The English Department, Journal of Education and Practice. Indonesia Open University, 2012 3(12). ISSN 2222-1735

<sup>2</sup> KOJIMA, Emi. Factors associates with Second Language Anxiety in Adolescents from different cultural backgrounds. University of Southern California [online] Retrieved September 24, 2018 from <https://es.scribd.com/document/311886012/anxiety-thesis>

<sup>3</sup> KRASHEN, Stephen. Theory of Second Language Acquisition. University of Southern California [online] Retrieved January 229, 2019 from <https://www.sk.com.br/sk-krash.html>

this study, we see the participants had a high affective filter, as they have low self-confidence and this led them to feel fear of making mistakes when speaking in ESL classrooms.

This Action Research study attempts to foster oral production in ten students by applying a teaching method that enhances immersion in their community where they unanimously decide on problems and find out the most appropriate solution to contribute to the school where they have been around seven or eight years of their lives.

The researcher incorporates the concept of problem-based learning for sixth graders to get a greater amount of oral production. Problem Based Learning “is a teaching method that uses complex real-world problems as the vehicle to promote student learning of concepts and principles as opposed to direct presentation of facts and concepts”<sup>4</sup>. In this study, when the students chose problems from their context, and made the choice, learning became more meaningful and they felt more committed to it. Savery affirms that Problem Based Learning “is an instructional learner-centered approach that empowers learners to conduct research, integrates theory and practice, and applies knowledge and skills to develop a viable solution to a defined problem”<sup>5</sup>. This report explains how students’ oral production improves while acquiring knowledge about a problem identified by them, as well as proposing a solution to it.

ECU Australia University describes Problem-based learning (PBL) as “a teaching strategy, through which students attempt to solve a problem”<sup>6</sup>. It mirrors a

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<sup>4</sup> DUCH, Barbara .J., GROH, Susan .E., & ALLEN, Deborah. E. (Eds.). The power of problem-based learning. Sterling. VA: Stylus, 2001, p.6

<sup>5</sup> SAVERY, Jhon, Overview of Problem-based Learning: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning, 2006[online] 1(1), p.9-20

<sup>6</sup> EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY. Problem Based Learning.Learning Intranet – Curriculum Design. Retrieved September 24 , 2018 from <http://intranet.ecu.edu.au/learning/curriculum-design/teaching-strategies/problem-based-learning>

constructivist approach, and as such, it promotes active learning in students. Furthermore, activities are carried out in groups, where the purpose is to foster self-directed learning, effective problem solving, and the improvement of communication and collaboration skills. While students tend to work in groups, taking a lively role during the activity, the tutor's involvement is usually limited to monitoring and guiding the process.

The pedagogical intervention also includes Inquiry-based in the teaching method. This meant that students were the ones who decided what to do; they started by posing questions, problems or scenarios, giving way to defining a problem which encouraged them to look for a solution, which is different from presenting established facts or knowledge<sup>7</sup>. Consequently, the pedagogical intervention also includes community-based considering the curriculum for this project and practice reflect knowledge and appreciation of the community in which La Presentación School is located and students inhabit. In words of Freire, cited by Sharky, "curriculum be locally generated and generative, inviting learners and their worlds into the project and process, teachers in different communities have to devise curricula and pedagogies that have local relevance. Teaching materials have to accommodate the values and needs of diverse settings, with sufficient complexity granted to local knowledge"<sup>8</sup>; in this study, the students identified a school problem that affects to them and to their classmates, teachers and visitors related to the disaster prevention.

The University of Waterloo affirms that community based learning "is connected as an implicit part of problem based learning. It is a high impact practice, which can improve student retention and engagement, and help students better absorb, retain

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<sup>7</sup> PURICHIA, H.. Problem-Based Learning: An Inquiry Approach. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning*, North Carolina State University, 9(1). 2015

<sup>8</sup> SHARKEY, Judy. *Community-based pedagogies and literacies in language teacher education: promising beginnings, intriguing challenges*. University of New Hampshire, 2012

and transfer knowledge”<sup>9</sup>. It further asserts that students work over a real-life problem, a relevant question or a research area related to the curriculum and, over the duration of the classes, students apply what they are studying in the curriculum to analyze the problem, reflect on what they are learning, and provide potential solutions to the community. During the process, the students find a solution by creating a product on purpose to teach their classmates how to evacuate in an emergency moment.

Problem-based Learning shares similarities with Project-based Learning in aspects such as: the guidance of the teacher, the fact that the student is at the centre, the fact that there are real-world connections, the acknowledgement that learning is active and there is self and peer assessment. “The two PBLs are really two sides of the same coin, the bottom line is the same: both can powerfully engage and in an effective way teach to the students. The smooth differences between both PBLs are the framing and the formalized steps used in problem-based. Also, it is single-subject and not multidisciplinary like project-based”<sup>10</sup>. Something important to mention is that in problem based learning cycle, “there is always a stage where students can analyze and make judgments about what has happened in the sessions, individual works in groups, this process is called: reflective thinking”<sup>11</sup>. As part of the process, and along the implementation of the chosen strategy and the teaching sequences, the teacher observes, records and measures students’ oral production to determine the improvement of oral production skills.

This action research intends to study how oral production can be fostered in sixth grade students through problem- based learning activities.

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<sup>9</sup> UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO. Community-Based Learning. Centre for teaching excellence-Teaching tips, learning activities. Retrieved September 24, 2018 from <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/community-based-learning>

<sup>10</sup> LARMER, John. Project Based Learning vs. Problem Based Learning. Buck Institute for Education. 2013 [online] Retrieved January 16 ,2018 from [http://www.bie.org/blog/project\\_based\\_learning\\_vs.\\_problem\\_based\\_learning\\_vs.\\_xbl](http://www.bie.org/blog/project_based_learning_vs._problem_based_learning_vs._xbl)

<sup>11</sup> DEWEY, John. How we think, DC Heath and Co, Boston, MA. Chapter 1. 1993, p. 1-5

The thesis document begins with a statement of the problem, the research questions and the proposed objectives, which are followed by a review of the literature, the research design, context, sample population, data collection instruments, and a timeline for the development of the project as well as the description of the pedagogical intervention, and the analysis and findings within it. The last chapter contains the conclusions from the research project and possible future directions. The document closes with the list of references taken into consideration in the development of the project.

The thesis has seven chapters in total. The first chapter is titled study and include the statement of the problem that describes the problem addressed and the researcher briefly mentions how he carried out the needs analysis. Afterwards, it is found the general and specific researchable objectives. The second chapter is the literature review, which refers to the theoretical constructs that support the study. Research design is the third chapter and which refers to the context of the study, it gives details of the sample population and the four collection data instruments such as : questionnaires, interviews, teacher journal, and a focus group. This part finishes with the ethical issues for the research. The fourth chapter is about the pedagogical intervention that is the heart of the project; it describes in detail what in each one of the sessions was done. For that, there is a chart about 10 lesson plans with conventions that reflect the integration of the approaches implemented in this study. The fifth chapter is named data analysis and findings. In this, the reader can find what procedure the researcher used to systemize as well as analyzed the data and the reason because he decided to create five categories and why these were the factors that contributed to increase students´ amount of oral production. In the sixth chapter, there are the conclusions embracing the fulfillment of each goal and the pedagogical implications of the study. Finally, the chapter seven is about suggestions for further research. In this, the reader can find important directions this research study can follow based on the results.

## 1. THE STUDY

### 1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Inside my EFL classroom, I did a need analysis, for that, I started to find out learning needs in the students and to observe their development as English learners. After several classes of monitoring I could identified although I always gave input in the target language and they had an average understanding in listening and reading, they took much time in writing but especially in speaking activities they had a low proficiency . That called my attention and I started to analyze the interest for this skill. Quickly I realized the students worried and made an effort to speak when there was a grade, but when we were in classes talking informally or giving opinions about a topic, their interaction and participation were not evidenced. I continued the needs analysis with informal chatting with them where I asked them what happened about their interventions in the class and they answered they hindered from speaking. Curiously, they were aware they felt inhibited and they needed to practice orally more English. Afterwards, I asked myself the following questions taken from the British Council webpage:

What do we want to know about the students?

How can we find it out?<sup>12</sup>

To answer these, I needed to know the root causes by which the sixth graders inhibited at speaking and I decided to design an exploratory initial questionnaire to ask them what happened. However, to create the questionnaire I started to read

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<sup>12</sup> BRITISH COUNCIL. Needs Analysis.2018 [online] Retrieved January 30 ,2019 from <https://www.teaching english.org.uk/article/needs-analysis>

some previous studies related to the same problem and to talk with the Spanish teacher of the same students.

Juhana is the author of the first case study I read. It aims to find out psychological factors that hinder students from speaking as well as the causes and the solutions to overcome the factors. She revealed such factors as: fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence and lack of motivation. At the end of the study, she states: “most students believed that motivating them to be more confident to speak English is worth considering”<sup>13</sup>. Thus, she recommends that teachers should be more aware of their student’s inhibitions to speak in English classes. On the other hand, the second study was written by Kojima who expresses how anxious students are in ESL classrooms in his book, and discusses whether this is related to students’ cultural backgrounds. The author tests four key anxiety factors: cultural, psychological, linguistic and pedagogical<sup>14</sup>. When I asked to the Spanish teacher if the students would inhibit when speaking in Spanish, she answered positively, adding that when somebody talks and makes a mistake their classmates start laughing (see Appendix F).

After considering the three different sources I designed the exploratory initial questionnaire with 10 factors and they had to mark the one or ones they considered as their fears from speaking. The most worry was *fear of making mistakes* ( See Appendix E). This needs analysis makes part of the action research I implemented for the study. Reasons mentions “an action research is an orientation to inquiry that seeks to create participative communities of inquiry in which qualities of engagement, curiosity and question posing are brought to bear on significant

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<sup>13</sup> JUHANA, Psychological Factors that Hinder Students from Speaking in English Class (A Case Study in a High School in South Tangerang). The English Department, Journal of Education and Practice. Indonesia Open University, 2012 3(12). ISSN 2222-1735

<sup>14</sup> KOJIMA, Emi. Factors associates with Second Language Anxiety in Adolescents from different cultural backgrounds. University of Southern California [online] Retrieved September 24,2018 from <https://es.scribd.com/document/311886012/anxiety-thesis>

practical issues”<sup>15</sup> . Also, he says this action research project aims at improving the pedagogical teacher’s practice, letting the teacher investigate an existing problem in the classroom and afterwards to intervene it<sup>16</sup>.

Oral production in English was a difficult topic for these participants due to the fact that they did not use voluntarily L2 to communicate, their time of speeches was nothing, their participation and confidence were low, and they said they hope to practice in a future but not at the moment of the class. They talked only when there was a score or grade. There was a need to work in the amount of oral production, as it let young learners start their bilingual process, which according to Lowry is easier at early ages, and with which they can interact, participate, integrate and see English as a means of communication<sup>17</sup>.

The participants of this action research study were sixth graders from La Presentación School in Bucaramanga. The school’s English program has set its own teaching approach, different from other schools. The main differences are the intensity in hours of English study, as the students have eight hours of English per week distributed in groups of two hours per day; the planning and implementation is related to integrated approach, where the student should be exposed to activities to develop both receptive skills and productive skills; the integration between the students of different grades in events such as: the English Song Festival, the spelling bee event and the Language Day. In these activities, the students prepare a show where they use L2 and they compete between them for the first place. Furthermore, La Presentación School has an English Laboratory and Santillana software where

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<sup>15</sup> REASON, Peter & BRADBURY, Hilary. Handbook of action research. Participative Inquiry and Practice. Inquiry and Participation in search of a world worthy of human aspiration. Sage Publications. 2008. p. 2

<sup>16</sup> REASON, Peter & BRADBURY, op. cit, p. 2

<sup>17</sup> LOWRY, Lauren. Bilingualism in Young Children: Separating Fact from Fiction. The Hanen Centre. Helping you help children communicate. 2016. Article.[online] Retrieved January 30, 2019 from <http://www.hanen.org/helpful-info/articles/bilingualism-in-young-children--separating-fact-fr.aspx>

the students go and find different activities related to listening, reading, writing and speaking, which are integrated in a system of games that encourage learners through the obtainment of coins and prizes in the own account.

The goal of this study is that the students are active participants of their own learning, they work together and try to speak to each other and with the teacher. This way, the learning is more meaningful and it is a greater experience for them. An approach lets them be involved in a process where they have to question, propose, integrate, know their context and solve a problem, which is part of problem based learning. My study aims at fostering oral production in a sixth grade English class through problem-based learning activities. With this in mind, this action research study attempts to answer the following research question:

*How can oral production be promoted in a sixth grade English Class through problem based learning activities?*

There are solid reasons to work in the fostering of oral production of the students in a foreign language educational setting. First, it increases the participation level in the classroom. Students talk longer and they raise hands more frequently so they talk often. In addition, the students strengthen their confidence because, despite the possibility of making mistakes, they are going to see the opportunities for learning and improve their abilities. A second reason is that the classes turn more nourishing, since everybody listens, and the different points of view about something are expressed freely. As a result, there is less fear and less silence and the English class becomes more interactive. A third reason is that once students' oral production improves, they may speak, comment, chat with relatives or friends they have who come from English speaking countries, and they are not limited anymore to start a conversation or keep in touch with nice people. A fourth reason is that the students have several expectations about themselves, in terms of future job opportunities, family trips and good communicative development when visiting other places. With

the use of problem-based learning the students get involved with their community, they start to question about the people and situations around and start to see the school as part of them like a family that needs their help.

## **1.2 OBJECTIVES**

In this research study, the objectives are both research and instruction due to the fact these are based on an action research framework and the master programme proposed a document about guidelines and requirements at the moment of writing the objectives specifying this component<sup>18</sup>.

**1.2.1 General Objective** To promote oral production through problem-based learning activities in sixth grade students.

### **1.2.2. Specific Objectives**

- To describe the level of oral production in sixth grade students before the pedagogical intervention
- To design and implement a teaching sequence using problem-based learning, including reflective thinking activities.
- To establish the amount of oral production in sixth graders after problem-based learning activities, which deliberately include reflective thinking.

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<sup>18</sup> ROSALES, Jose. Elementos para el informe del trabajo de grado de la Maestría en Didáctica de la Lengua. Universidad Industrial de Santander. Bucaramanga. 2013 p. 17

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, it is described the theoretical constructs that support the study. For that matter, eight theories are described on purpose to include current knowledge, including substantive findings, as well as contributions to the particular topic of the area being investigated: fostering oral production through problem based learning. It starts with amount of oral production which is the variable this study pretends to foster in 10 sixth graders at La Presentación School, after there are previous studies about inhibiting factors in young learners when speaking followed by the teenage brain which shows how students at this age behave, how they think and learn. The number four is related to reflective thinking in middle school children, as this is an important stage of the teaching strategy used in this study called problem-based learning and scaffolding which is the number five. Then it is described inquiry-based learning, community –based learning and this chapter finishes with types of speaking tasks.

### **2.1 AMOUNT OF ORAL PRODUCTION**

In daily communication, there are two general competences that let us tell others what we think and feel. These skills are: writing and speaking. These are productive skills used to inform, persuade, describe or instruct. According to Gillis, speaking is the capacity to put words together in a meaningful way to reflect thoughts, opinions, and feelings the speaker provides with these important advantages: ability to inform, persuade and direct<sup>19</sup>. The author states that, through speaking, several professionals can gain the attention of an audience with a message that is effective,

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<sup>19</sup> GILLIS, Gerald. The Importance of Speaking Skills for EFL Learners: Psycholinguistics. Department of English, Alama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan, 2013 p. 2-5

informative and understood. With this action research study, the author wants to get information about how much the students promote their amount of oral production. Supporting this, Thornbury introduces several theories and activities that teachers can do to improve speaking as a skill in the English language class. He expresses the importance of this skill to develop language performance, and emphasizes that learners have to go beyond of just good knowledge of grammar and vocabulary by exploring their paralinguistic systems - which refer to the use of gesture, mime and so on-, to convey the intended meaning, and which become a relevant factor in real development of the skill<sup>20</sup>.

On purpose to encourage to the sixth graders to promote their amount of speaking, the researcher found not only the individual work should be developed like the identification of fears from speaking ,but he adapted Noguera´s idea about strengthening in a team for students being fostered their oral production where they need to interact with each other, work in groups and share their opinions is up taken and expanded as to contribute to reduce anxiety in students, and develop group work activities that enhance their oral production<sup>21</sup>. Noguera says the potential of some concrete activities such as surveys, learning by teaching, and the opinion sharing activities are favorable for the students´ beliefs, and values are qualities to improve their knowledge<sup>22</sup>.

The amount of oral production is related to how much a person speaks using determined language. This study aims at fostering that quantity of speaking in 10 sixth graders. For helping them, the researcher used categorization of speaking tasks throughout all the pedagogical intervention in which the students started just repeating and drilling and were lead towards self-directed, autonomous learning,

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<sup>20</sup> THORNBURY, Scott. How to Teach Speaking. Pearson Longman, 2005 p. 29 - 30

<sup>21</sup> NOGUERA, Claudia. The Use of Group Work Activities to Foster EFL Oral Production and Reduce Anxiety on Intermediate EFL Students. University of Nariño, 2014.P. 15

<sup>22</sup> NOGUERA, op. cit, p. 15

independence in their tasks and oral production of long sentences and wide responses.

## 2.2 TYPES OF SPEAKING TASKS

Each of students' oral tasks was categorized in one out of five categories of speaking performance, according to Brown, these are: *Imitative* , when the student repeats after stimulus ; *intensive*, when the student produces short stretches of oral languages , for example, directed response tasks, read-aloud tasks, dialogue and sentence completion or picture –cued tasks; the *responsive*, when the student applies question and answer, gives instructions and directions and paraphrasing; the *interactive*, when the student does interviews, role-plays, discuss, has conversations or makes games, and *extensive*, when the student does oral presentations, translations, works in news, events or retells a story. It is summarized in the table as follows<sup>23</sup>:

**Table 1. Types of speaking tasks**

<b>Imitative</b>	<b>Intensive</b>	<b>Responsive</b>	<b>Interactive</b>	<b>Extensive</b>
Ability to parrot back a word, phrase or sentence	Short stretches	Question and answer , instructions , paraphrasing	Exchange of oral communication	Monologues

Source: BROWN, Douglas. Language testing. 2004, p. 143-144

The further a student goes in the chart of types of speaking tasks, the less inhibited he/she is in the amount of oral production, as each time the learner goes through a category, the next is more demanding and he/she is more exposure to produce longer stretches of language.

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<sup>23</sup> BROWN, Douglas. Language testing ( Assessing Speaking) Chapter 7, 2004, p. 141-182

The quantity of students' speech is highly connected with how confident and disposed they feel at speaking in the target language, so when the learner is inhibited and is not willing to speak, the amount of oral production reduces considerably limiting to basic and easy tasks like the imitative and intensive. There are variables that influence in those moments of expression. On that way, the following theory provides previous studies about those inhibiting factors at speaking.

### **2.3 INHIBITING FACTORS IN YOUNG LEARNERS WHEN SPEAKING**

There are several skills which develop throughout a second language acquisition process. In EFL classes, one of the most challenging is speaking. TESOL and ELT professionals research about problems in the acquisition of speaking skills. According to Burns and Joyce in Nunan, Schwartz, and Thornbury, as cited by Juhana from Indonesia Open University, psychological factors such as anxiety or shyness, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, and fear of making mistakes, may act as common inhibitors of students when speaking<sup>24</sup>. Sifrar, asserts that some problems have to be coped with in the communicative practice by students in two scenarios: the first, when the communicative practices are carried out with the teacher and the classmates; and the second, when the situation of communication takes place with natives. The type of problems speakers face in the class are: fearing of making mistakes, to forget the suitable vocabulary, and fearing of talking in public; in the real life, the difficulties the speakers face are: to forget the suitable vocabulary, native people talk too fast, and the fluency. The common problem in both scenarios is the use of proper vocabulary when speaking, however, in the first, the students are worrier for making mistakes in front of classmates, while in front of natives, the students worry more for understanding and have a continuous speech. For this study, the most similar scenario is the first, where the inhibition is carried out into the

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<sup>24</sup> JUHANA, op. cit, p. 104-106

classroom. Also, in the sampling there are not natives and the sixth graders did not see English Class as a real environment because the instant need of communication could be in L1 and they thought they would have spaces to practice English in the future as the teacher mentioned above in the statement of the problem. Despite of Sifrar categorizes the problems into two, she asserts the importance of the affective filter in foreign language learning<sup>25</sup>.

The affective filter is expressed by Krashen; he states during language acquisition is the affective filter that is a “screen” that is influenced by emotional variables that can prevent learning. This hypothetical filter does not impact acquisition directly but rather prevents input from reaching the language acquisition part of the brain<sup>26</sup>. In accordance with Krashen, the affective filter can be prompted by many different variables including anxiety, self-confidence, motivation and stress. He points out that students with high motivation, self-confidence and a low level of anxiety are possibly more successful in SLA. On the other hand, a learner with low motivation, low self-esteem and debilitating anxiety could have a named “mental block” and problems with acquisition. He concludes by saying that when the filter is “up”, it blocks SLA and positive affect is necessary, but not enough for acquisition to take place<sup>27</sup>. The researcher of this study considers affective filter has a connection with the inhibition in students and therefore in the amount of oral production, as if the students are motivated, low anxious and have high self-confidence, they are able to make mistakes and take risks in order to take in ad produce language.

Vasquez, as cited by Sifrar, introduces there are the following problems related to the inhibition at speaking activities such as fear of making mistakes, lack of vocabulary, fear of speaking in public, much time thinking before speaking and lack

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<sup>25</sup> SIFRAR, Marjana. *Las Dificultades Lingüísticas y Afectivas de la Expresión Oral en Clase y en la Vida Real*. Universidad de Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2007

<sup>26</sup> KRASHEN, Stephen. *Stephen Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition: The Natural Approach*. University of Southern California, Prentice-Hall International, 1988.p. 22-24. Retrieved from [http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/books/sl\\_acquisition\\_and\\_learning.pdf](http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/books/sl_acquisition_and_learning.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> KRASHEN, , op. cit, p. 30

of fluency. By means of a research study, Sifrar attempts to confirm whether speaking is what students like the most and the difficulties students usually have to speak provided two different social contexts: the classroom, and in real life with natives. Therefore, with a population sample of 40 students, she applies some questionnaires using an adapted Likert scale from 1(never happens to me) to 5(always happens to me) where the most and the least common issues in speaking practice are reported by the students. In her study, students reported fear of making mistakes as the issue they most frequently found problems with, followed by lack of vocabulary and fear of speaking in public. The least difficulty in Sifrar's study was reported for the item: because I do not understand, what others tell me.

The author reports the main difficulty: *fear of making mistakes* was confirmed with students who attributed their answers to the inexistence of a supporting learning atmosphere and the teacher's negative attitude when students made mistakes. In that same token, Ribas y D'Aquino see correction like the most authentic communicative exchange. When teachers correct students, the communicative act has a more authentic goal and develops in a natural frame. Sifrar says that correction is not habitual in conversations between non native and native speakers. She mentions that self-correction increases communicative capacity in students. Therefore, when students have the opportunity to correct their mistakes by themselves, this is less harmful to their self-confidence because the self-correction can make students reflect about errors, change their perception and understand mistakes as opportunities for learning instead of evidence of poor speaking skills. Dewey exposed the same and states that reflective thinking makes learners more aware and able to control their learning, making judgments about what has happened and thinking about how they actually solve problems and how a particular set of problem-solving strategies is appropriate for achieving their goal.

Similarly, Koichi Sato expresses that students of English are not highly competent in speaking because of their fear of making mistakes. The idea finds validation in

another research study conducted by Tsui in Nunan, Yi Htwe, Robby and cited by Juhana, who finds vocabulary problems and fear of making mistakes as the cause of the inability to use spoken language<sup>28</sup>. Apart from the factors expressed above, there are psychological phenomena that prevent students from using the language orally. One of these, as mentioned before, is the affective filter. When the student has a high affective filter, it means he/she has more restriction to receive input, and he/she block to SLA. Here, the author finds a relation between that inhibition produced by psychological variables and how their brains work, so, at the age of teens they start to experiment a period of transition from childhood to adulthood in which their thinking processes change from concrete into abstract. They want to challenge all the time, they feel stress, pressures and temptations evidenced through fears, aggressive behaviors, impulsive conduct without being self-conscious of their actions, they annoy for everything and their levels of anxiety increases. Hence, that affective filter could be related with their natural teenage brain changes.

## **2.4 THE TEENAGE BRAIN**

Concerning the importance of studying the way teenagers' brains work; how changes are produced, how the brain evolves and how this affects oral interaction activities are well established questions in the research literature. According to Andrew Garner, M.D., member of the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, the children's brains develop at different speed as compared to their bodies, however their brain is not totally mature, it is still developing. He expresses some parts of the brain such as the prefrontal cortex (PFC) that sits right behind the eyes does not appear fully mature until 24 years old, another part of the brain called: Walnut –shaped amygdala (AMG)

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<sup>28</sup> JUHANA, op. cit, p. 101

that sits deep in the brain is mature at a younger age. Teenagers' behavior may be caused by this mismatch in brain maturity according to many neuroscientists<sup>29</sup>.

When teens face problems, they differ from adults in the way they behave and make decisions. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry states in its webpage that studies show that brains continue to mature and develop throughout childhood and adolescence and well as into early adulthood. Some of the main challenges the teen brain experiments are immediate reactions including fear and aggressive behavior in charge of amygdala. The frontal cortex is the area of the brain that controls reasoning and helps students think before they act, however it is developed later. Most importantly, adolescents' brains work differently from adults' when making decisions or solving problems. Teens' actions are more guided by the emotional and reactive amygdala, and less by the thoughtful part. Therefore, adolescents are more likely to act on impulse, misread or misinterpret social emotions, get into accidents of all kinds. This means they can also get involved in fights, engage in dangerous or risky behavior and are less likely to think before they act, or pause to consider the consequences of their actions, needless to say, change their dangerous or inappropriate behavior. The Academy clarifies these brain differences don't mean that young people can't make good decisions or tell the difference between right or wrong.<sup>30</sup>.

The AACAP states that when the persons go through a stage of puberty, the brain is in a perfect moment to learn second languages. as the brain passes by a critical

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<sup>29</sup> AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS, What's Going On in the Teenage Brain?. Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents, 2015. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/USUARIO/Documents/Master%20program/Books/What%E2%80%99s%20Going%20On%20in%20the%20Teenage%20Brain\_%20-%20Healthy Children.org.html

<sup>30</sup> AMERICAN ACADEMY OF CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY. Teen Brain: Behavior, Problem Solving, and Decision Making, 2011. Retrieved from [https://www.aacap.org/App\\_Themes/AACAP/docs/facts\\_for\\_families/95\\_the\\_teen\\_brain\\_behavior\\_problem\\_solving\\_and\\_decision\\_making.pdf](https://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/docs/facts_for_families/95_the_teen_brain_behavior_problem_solving_and_decision_making.pdf)

\*A junction between two nerve cells where diffusions of a neurotransmitter pass by.

period producing changes of cerebrum structures, behavior, feelings and attitudes to their performance in the EFL classroom<sup>31</sup>. Gringmuth says teens have a great developmental potential for languages acquisition because the huge amount of synapses\* provide a basis for the final development the brain will undergo in the following months and years. The cortical regions, especially the parietal cortex is important for learning lexical items due to the fact there is an increased density of gray matter in this particular regions and have a potential for the acquisition of vocabulary, knowledge and competences. The American Academy of Pediatrics also underlines that a consolidation process should be necessary for the student to retain the information (input: auditory or visual stimuli) through top-down processes (activation of prior knowledge) and bottom-up processes (integration of knowledge into already existing system). Other changes are adolescents show a tendency to question teachers as authorities without any fail and they want to lead things. It is interesting because it is a didactically recommendable way to value students 'effort and importance in the EFL classroom to provide them more responsibility in assignments. Some recommendations affirm students' drive for exploration, makes them navigate them through authentic material and lead projects<sup>32</sup>.The way like the theory about the teenage brain connects with this study is appropriate for the design of the pedagogical intervention taking into account the participants need comprehensible input, activities that demand concrete thinking skills and the finding of an approach that involves to the participants and encourage them to do their best. The early age of the students make their brains are not able to identify easily and consciously what happen when they work in groups, act impulsively without thinking before and have emotional responses towards others. In the same way, when they make decisions, the maturity of their brains is at an initial change restricting to step back and reflect about their actions. The evaluation of what they do and how they behave make them a better thinkers, problem solvers and better human beings. With

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<sup>31</sup> AMERICAN ACADEMY OF CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY. , op. cit, [on line]

<sup>32</sup> GRINGMUTH, Fabian. Puberty as a Critical Period in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Freie Universitat Berlin,2015 p. 7-8

this premise, the researcher gives way to the four theory called: reflective thinking in middle school children.

## **2.5 REFLECTIVE THINKING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL CHILDREN**

Long ago, the learning of a second language was different from now, as learners did not reflect, analyze but just memorized. John Dewey said that reflective thinking is part of the critical process referring specifically to the processes of analyzing and making judgments about what has happened. With reflective thinking, the learners are aware and control their learning. It is important to assess what students know, what they need to know and how they bridge the gaps, all of these in learning situations<sup>33</sup>. It is suggested that during complex-solving situations reflective thinking is relevant, as it supplies learner's chances to step back and think about which way they solve problems and how a specific set of problem solving strategies could be suitable for reaching their aims.

This process helps learners develop higher-order thinking skills by prompting learners to relate new knowledge and connect it to prior understandings, the students think in both abstract and conceptual terms applying specific strategies in novel tasks and aim towards their own understanding and learning strategies. According to Choy and Oo, reflective thinking is a precursor to incorporate critical thinking. Their study attempts to show a link between reflective thinking and critical thinking determining the level at which teachers reflected on their teaching practices as an indicator of their level of critical thinking. The authors establish four learning processes where the first is a stage of assumption analysis that requires planners to identify all assumptions being made as a means of risk reduction, it is then analyzed to determine its accuracy, examines the beliefs that underline our choices, and

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<sup>33</sup> DEWEY, op. cit, p.106-115

values shaped our assumptions; followed by contextual awareness that considers what to observe and consider about what is happening in the context of the situation, the influences of the outcome, and to think about the missing information and the importance in the situation; imaginative speculation involves thinking about imagining other ways of looking at the situation, to explore as many alternatives as one can think of for a given situation; and the reflective skepticism involves questioning, analyzing, and reflecting on the rational for decisions, the most careful attention required for the aspects, and the consideration of how different I would do in the future<sup>34</sup>.

In this action research study, the use of reflective thinking in problem based learning activities promotes students' oral production helping them develop strategies to apply new knowledge to the complex situations in their day-to-day activities, integrate new knowledge to prior understanding, think in both abstract and conceptual terms and understand their own thinking, learning strategies, and overcome their fears when speaking through a process of scaffolding.

## **2.6 SCAFFOLDING & PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING**

The term scaffolding was introduced by Wood, Bruner and Ross. They refer to it as a variety of instructional techniques used to move learners progressively to a stronger understanding and finally to a better independence in the learning process<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> CHOY, Chee ,& Oo, Pou San. Reflective Thinking and Teaching Practices: A Precursor for Incorporating Critical Thinking into the Classroom? Online Submission, International Journal of Instruction. 2012. p. 167-182

<sup>35</sup> GREAT SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP, Scaffolding. The Glossary of Education Reform for Journalists, Parents, and Community Members [online], 2015, Retrieved from <https://www.edglossary.org/scaffolding/>

They states scaffolding is considered as a strategy to solve problems related to reflective thinking. It is important to have in mind what students have learned, and what they are expected to know. For instance, if a learner is not at the speaking level required to deliver a speech in a course, the teacher can use instructional scaffolding to incrementally improve his or her speaking ability until he or she can talk without assistance.

Wood, Bruner and Ross agree the main objectives of scaffolding include decreasing the negative emotions and self-perceptions that a learner could have when he gets frustrated, discouraged or intimidated at the moment of attempting a hard task with no assistance, direction or the understanding needed to complete it. Although from the earliest months of life the learner is a “natural” problem solver in his/her own right, it is often the case that his/her efforts are assisted and fostered by others, who are more skillful than he/she is<sup>36</sup>.

In this pedagogical intervention the most skilled students helped to the least skilled students, some students decided by themselves to empower and to be leaders to support and accompany their peers and on that way foster their amount of oral production, the teacher was a monitor, a guide and a motivator as Problem Based Learning framework states. Delisle declares in his book PBL is a revolutionary way to change classes with basic learning strategies; with it, the students may work together to solve real-world problems in their schools or communities<sup>37</sup>. To apply it, students drew on lessons from distinct fields and applied them in a very practical way. The fact of perceiving a real impact became the motivation for learning. When the teacher used a real-world study, it helped to the 10 students developed problem-solving, research and social skills; moreover, engaged learners, enhanced retention (activated teenage brain) and helped establish a model for lifelong learning in which

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<sup>36</sup> WOOD, David & BRUNER, Jerome & ROSS, Gail. The Role of Tutoring in Problem Solving. Oxford and Harvard Universities. Pergamon Press, 1976 , p.89

<sup>37</sup> DELISLE, Robert. How to Use Problem-Based Learning in the Classroom. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. 1997, p.4-6

the students started creating their own solution by asking questions to themselves without the teacher decided and settled the content and topic of work. PBL had an inclusion of inquiry-based learning to make of the students the main decision makers and for them to explore their curiosity with an appealing topic and not imposed by the teacher.

## 2.7 INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

Different authors describe inquiry-based learning similarly. Alberta Ministry of Education considers IBL as an active learning approach focusing on questioning, critical thinking, and problem- solving. The Ministry sets students collaborate to create new knowledge while also learning how to “think critically and creatively, and how to make discoveries – through inquiry, reflection, exploration, experimentation, and trial and error”<sup>38</sup>. According to Ontario Ministry of Education it is associated with the idea “involve me and I understand”<sup>39</sup>; in the pedagogical intervention of this study, the participants took the initiative of learning by searching and questioning. Thus, the students were the ones who decided what to work on and started asking, they operated within a framework supported by a driving question and problematic scenario.

Victoria University states that IBL builds from a natural process of inquiry in which students experience a “need to know” that motivates and deepens learning<sup>40</sup>. It adds IBL is characterized by: motivating learning through a sense of purpose, encourage

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<sup>38</sup> ALBERTA MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. Inquiry-Based Learning: a review of the research literature. 2013.p. 2

<sup>39</sup> ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. Inquiry-based learning. Capacity Building Series, Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat Special Edition #32. Retrieved from [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/cbs\\_inquirybased.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/cbs_inquirybased.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> VICTORIA UNIVERSITY. Active and Inquiry based learning. Learning and teaching. Melbourne Australia. [online] Retrieved from <https://www.vu.edu.au/learning-teaching/learning-teaching-at-vu/learning-teaching-approaches/active-and-inquiry-based-learning>

them to become co-creators of their learning, develop student skills in self-direction research, problem solving, develop discipline knowledge and skills<sup>41</sup>. It is supported by Oğuz-ünver and Arabacıoğlu who say IBL refers to the activities in which the students develop knowledge and understanding and whose main principle is acquiring knowledge from direct observations by using deductive questions<sup>42</sup>. Therefore, inquiry-based learning is the art of raising questions. It is when all the students 'observations, learning necessities, and inquiries instinctively require raising inquiry questions. According to Cuevas cited by Oğuz-ünver and Arabacıoğlu, these inquiry questions should be deductive so that allows to conclude with the discussions and explanations based on evidences<sup>43</sup>.

The approach inquiry-based enriched this action research because both the teacher and the students started posing questions based on real observations and using prior knowledge and skills to construct new knowledge while carrying out experiments. The author of this study was both teacher and researcher and his starting point to investigate was identifying a problem thanks to a needs analysis which simultaneously corresponds to an action research framework, furthermore, the students started their immersion in the pedagogical intervention since they were questioned for a problem in the community school and they should get new information to solve it. Moreover, the action research was enriched with IBL when the teacher decided to be a leader, as he stimulated interaction, established inquiry, guided the exploration form and the students empowered their decisions and were self-directed and autonomous learners.

Inquiry based learning is integrated directly with problem-based learning. The reader can find forward in this document the way like IBL is developed along the

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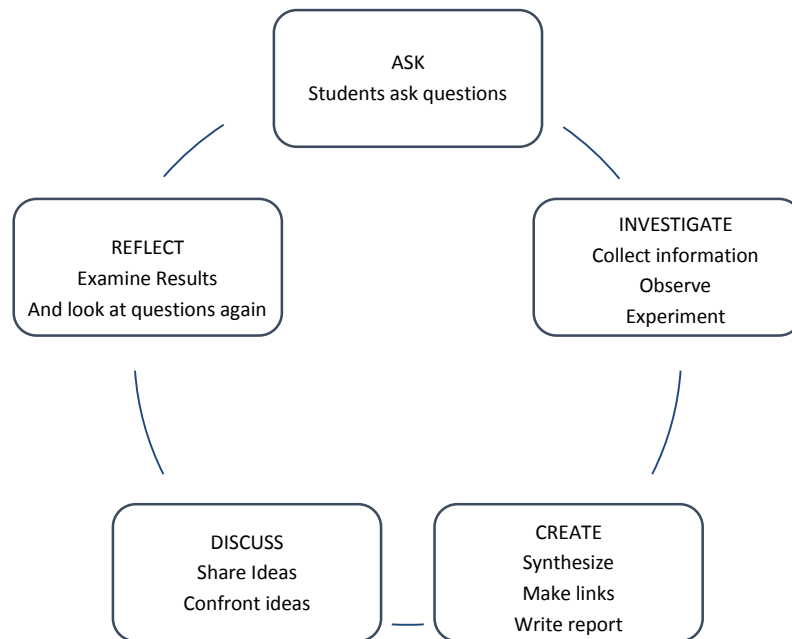
<sup>41</sup> VICTORIA UNIVERSITY, op. cit,

<sup>42</sup> OĞUZ-ÜNVER, Ayşe & ARABACIOĞLU, Sertaç. Overviews on Inquiry Based and Problem Based Learning Methods. Western Anatolia Journal of Educational Sciences (WAJES), Dokuz Eylül University Institute, Izmir, Turkey ISSN 1308-8971. 2011 , p. 307

<sup>43</sup> OĞUZ-ÜNVER, Ayşe & ARABACIOĞLU, Sertaç, op. cit, p. 304

pedagogical intervention through a chart in the chapter 4. The researcher combines PBL and IBL breaking down their stages and combining them when necessary. To have a more clear idea of IBL stages see the following figure which Scheneider created in a 5-step cycle starting with students' questioning from their interests, followed by experimentation in a real context, creation, discussion, and reflection<sup>44</sup>.

**Figure 1. Inquiry-based learning cycle**



Source: SCHNEIDER, Daniel. Instructional Design Models and Methods. Retrieved from: <https://tecfa.unige.ch/tecfa/talks/schneide/diplo06/geneva-diplo-06.pdf>

The students of this study were guided for doing the inquiry-based as exposed above. They were encouraged to ask questions for a problem connected with their context. Even though there are lots of problems that affect the world, it was intended to choose a problem from their reality and life like the school. From that moment all the questions, observation, experimentation and sharing started to do with La

<sup>44</sup> SCHNEIDER, Daniel. Instructional Design Models and Methods. Faculté de Psychologie et des Sciences de l'Education Université de Genève , 2006 [on line] Retrieved from : <https://tecfa.unige.ch/guides/tie/html/tie-talk06/tie-talk06-10.html>

Presentación School. The fact the students worried about helping their institution gave way to implement and integrate an approach called Community-based learning.

## **2.7 COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING**

Community-based is a practice the researcher wanted to integrate to this study in order to make learners understand the social and cultural context they are in and for them to contribute to their school community. CBL has distinct definitions.

According to the Glossary of Education Reform, cited by Marshall University CBL is a wide variety of instructional methods that educators use to connect what is being taught in schools to their surrounding communities, including local institutions, history, literature, cultural heritage and natural environments<sup>45</sup>.

To support this, Judy Sharkey and Amparo Clavijo Olarte cited by Andrea Honigfeld and Audrey Cohan state that Community-based pedagogies are curriculum and practices that reflect knowledge and appreciation of the communities in which schools are located and students and their families inhabit. It is an asset-based approach that does not ignore the realities of curriculum standards that teachers must address, but emphasizes local knowledge and resources at starting points for teaching and learning<sup>46</sup>.

This concept suits really well with problem-based learning because the students not only fostered their amount of oral production, but it was built in a process where they

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<sup>45</sup> MARSHALL UNIVERSITY. What is Community-Based Learning?. Center for teaching and learning [ on line] Retrieved from: <https://www.marshall.edu/ctl/community-engagement/what-is-service-learning>

<sup>46</sup> HONIGSFELD, Andrea & COHAN, Audrey. Breaking the Mold of Education for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students. Innovative and Successful Practices for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2012, Chapter fifteen, p. 129-136

integrated different members of the community, enriched their learning of La Presentación and strengthened the community. It is important to mention, the role of the teacher in this process, as the project helped him to expand his notions of literacy. He observed the participants used literacies in multiple ways and for multiple purposes, which helped them see and appreciate assets in the school community. The teacher saw numerous possibilities to offer in the students as learners the value of a team and the school. The teacher's interest is now about creating lessons that connect his classrooms to the students' worlds inside the school.

### 3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Psychologist Kurt Lewin as cited by Adelman first used the term Action Research in 1946, to describe a research methodology that brings together theoretical developments and the examination of practical problems<sup>47</sup>. Adelman establishes what action research is, its importance and the benefits it brings for classroom problems and transformations of social realities. Considering the research question proposed in this study, which attempts to find out whether problem-based learning activities can promote oral production in sixth graders; action research provides the proper framework to approach the systematic inquiry process.

This approach according to Reason and Bradbury is “a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowledge in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. It brings together action and reflection, in participation with the other, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more the flourishing of individual persons and their communities”<sup>48</sup>. Considering this definition, action research is a suitable process for inquiring how sixth graders confront real situations, in real moments and at a place where they need peers to share, strengthen an idea to find a solution that helps their community. Action research articulates well with problem-based learning, a teaching strategy where students gather information to solve a problem in the community by posing questions and inquiring among them, being the teacher a guide.

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<sup>47</sup> ADELMAN, Clem. Kurt Lewin and the Origins of Action Research, *Educational Action Research*, Routledge, 2006, 1(1), p. 3 DOI: 10.1080/0965079930010102

<sup>48</sup> REASON, Peter & BRADBURY, Hilary. *Handbook of action research. Participative Inquiry and Practice. Inquiry and Participation in search of a world worthy of human aspiration*. Sage Publications. 2008. p. 2

Reason and Bradbury also mention how human the students can be after an action research intervention. These authors develop the idea that action research produces practical knowledge that is useful for people in their everyday lives, it can also contribute to an increased economic, political, psychological, spiritual well-being of persons and communities, and to strengthen a more equitable and sustainable relationship with the ecology of the planet of which we are an intrinsic part<sup>49</sup>.

In the process of action research, it was necessary the teacher implemented an action research cycle following these specific steps<sup>50</sup>:

**Table 2. Process of the action research study**

No	Steps	Explanation
1	Reviewed his current practice	The teacher felt the necessity to innovate and improve his teaching practice by doing and trying a new approach to get better results.
2	Identified an aspect that he wanted to investigate	The teacher perceived classes ran smoothly, and the students tried to do their best effort when there was a grade to compete, but when there were informal activities or there was interaction in the students and with the teacher, they always used Spanish. They didn't talk unless they needed a score. From the 4 skills (reading, listening, writing, speaking), the last one were the ones with the lowest level. At that moment, it is when the teacher decided to foster the oral production in sixth graders.
3	Collected and organized data	The teacher started to observe possible causes of the inhibition in students at speaking. Also, he talked informally with them in L1 about their fears from speaking and asked to the Spanish teacher for her opinion about that hindering. The teacher read about previous studies about the same issue .
4	Interpreted data and imagined a	In this step, the teacher started interpreting data. He obtained 10 causes by which students didn't dare to

<sup>49</sup> REASON, BRADBURY, op. cit, p.2

<sup>50</sup> SAGOR, Richard. Guiding School Improvement with Action Research. 2000, p. 15-25

No	Steps	Explanation
	solution or a way forward	speak freely and voluntarily. For that, he designed an Initial exploratory questionnaire where he asked to the 10 selected students why they hindered from speaking and to find out the root causes of that problem. The most voted reason was: <i>I worry about mistakes I can make</i> . This enlightened to the teacher to find a method to help them. He found in Problem Based Learning a perfect opportunity to foster their oral production and reduce that limitation including deliberately reflective thinking
5	Tried it out and took stock of what happened	The 10 participants attended to 10 sessions where PBL model was applied
6	Monitored what he did	During each session, the teacher observed, made notes , applied instruments and once the session finished he monitored if it was going well ( results according with the plan) to make decisions of change of management of the intervention .
7	Gathered and analyzed data	The teacher put together all the information obtained from questionnaires, interviews, journal and focus group. He transcribed everything, divided into two categories (before and after the pedagogical intervention). He reviewed and evaluated the modified action.
8	Report	The teacher started to write the final paper following instructions from the master programme in English Teaching.

Source: SAGOR, Richard. Guiding School Improvement with Action Research. 2000, p. 15-25

### 3.1 CONTEXT

La Presentación School is a private institution founded and managed by the congregation of the Dominican Sisters of Charity of La Presentación, influenced by Marie Poussepin who was a French Dominican and one of the promoters of

Education in Colombia. The school exists since 1891 and one of its main characteristics is the intergenerational value since the families continue studying there throughout the years. La Presentación is located at Cabecera, an urban and central area in the city of Bucaramanga, where formal education grades K-11 are offered with an emphasis in ICTs and English. Middle school students take eight hours of English per week, teachers follow the integrative approach where the four skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking) are integrated. The resources of books, tablets, workbooks and posters are provided by Santillana Editorial. The school is calendar A and has 918 students from medium-class economic status.

### **3.2. SAMPLE POPULATION**

The headmistress of La Presentación School expressed her initial rejection to the possibility of carrying out the pedagogical intervention during regular school hours because, according to her, this could affect the institutional curriculum. She suggested doing it in extracurricular time, during the afternoons.

The author chose the participants for this study using criterion-sampling principles.

At the beginning, the researcher wanted to implement the pedagogical intervention in sixth C because they had the lowest scores and grades in oral production activities in English Class, furthermore, it was a group that inhibited at speaking (they were not interested in speaking, they were not willing to participate in L2, and they feared from interaction) in voluntary exercises. However, it was difficult before the headmistress' disapproval. Hence, the teacher involved 10 students who met the criteria.

On that way, the researcher informed Sixth C graders about the study. The duration would be 10 afternoon sessions. They would not receive any extra score in English

class for their participation in the project, they would also need to think about food, transportation, and they would have less time for other activities. Finally, 10 students decided to participate in the project with their parents' approval.

The criteria that students had to meet were:

- The availability of the students to attend the sessions.
- The parents' support and permission for their children to participate in the research project.
- The consciousness and acceptance of the no extra scores condition for the participation in the project.

According to Patton the purpose to use criterion sampling is because the study is information-rich and it may reveal major weaknesses that become targets of opportunity for improvement<sup>51</sup>.

As the teacher in charge of the English Class in sixth grade, I plan lessons, use resources and carry out assessments using the School's pedagogical model. Considering there are no significant differences in the way I teach in three groups: Sixth grade A, B and C and observing that results in terms of oral production were lower in Sixth grade C, as stated before, I thought the best sample should come from the Sixth grade C course.

The sample was made up of 10 sixth C graders, 8 girls and 2 boys from 10 to 12 years old, and who were classified in an A1-A2 English Level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages\*, and who had taken the Cambridge examinations Movers Test (YLE) administered in November 2016.

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<sup>51</sup> PATTON, Michael. Qualitative evaluation and research methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1990, p. 169 – 186.

\* COUNCIL OF EUROPE. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. Cambridge University Press. ISBN : HB 0521803136 - PB 0521005310 [www.uk.cambridge.org/elt](http://www.uk.cambridge.org/elt)

### 3.3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The main source of data for this project was collected during a pedagogical intervention carried out with the participants. During the process, the author made two interviews, one at the beginning and the other one at the end of the intervention. Also, the teacher wrote a collection of journal logs with teacher observations about the process, and analyzed students' responses to reflective questionnaires applied at the end of each session. Finally, the teacher applied a focus group interview at the end of the pedagogical intervention.

**3.3.1 Questionnaire.** Another data collection instrument is the questionnaire, which is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents, these can be thought as a type of written interview, sometimes it uses both open and closed questions to collect data, also can be cost-effective<sup>52</sup>. For this action research study, the teacher uses two types of questionnaires, one is an initial exploratory questionnaire and another is a reflective questionnaire.

The Initial Exploration Questionnaire is a set of questions which was designed and applied to find out the causes of the particular problem (inhibition when speaking in voluntary activities) the teacher identified in his teaching context and to define the model to use to foster oral production.

The process for designing this questionnaire started collecting informally information from the students by asking them why they refrain from speaking and he interviewed to the sixth grade and seventh grade Spanish teacher with the same question about why do the students refrain from speaking. The teacher's opinion can be seen in Appendix F. For her, the main reasons is because the students do not know the topic

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<sup>52</sup> JACK, Barbara & CLARKE, AM. The purpose and use of questionnaires in research. London, 1998 14(3) p. 176-179

he/she is going to talk about and because the students felt their classmates laugh at them.

The researcher decided to design a set of questions asking them for the factors that cause them to refrain from speaking. They could select more than one factor. The questionnaire format can be found in appendix E. The reported factors were:

**Table 3. Inhibiting factors in sixth graders**

	<b>Factors</b>
1	I feel nervous to express my wishes and thoughts
2	I do not have anything to say
3	I worry about mistakes I can make
4	I fear my classmates laugh at me
5	Others always talk in the conversation and they do not let me participate
6	I always use the mother tongue
7	I feel anxious
8	I do not feel confident
9	I need motivation
10	I am shy

The questionnaire was explained in Spanish to the ten participants in the research project. They answered it and the most inhibiting factor was the *worry about mistakes they could make*. From the 10 students, 8 students wrote it followed for I need motivation where 5 students answered it.

On the other hand, in the reflective questionnaires is the perfect moment of reflective thinking into the Problem Based Learning process. This way students could consciously analyze what has happened with their oral production, how they solve problems, make decisions; they provided answers about their fears of speaking, weaknesses, strengths and opportunities of improvement. This is a tool used after each session during the pedagogical intervention and includes open questions. Appendix I shows the reflective questionnaires administered to the sample.

**3.3.2 Interviews.** The interview has today become one of the most widespread knowledge-producing practices across the human and human sciences. Brinkmann states interviews can also be more or less structured. In survey research interviewing, standardized questions are often posed and seek answer that are open to quantitative procedures. Most qualitative interviews, however, are semi-structured, as the researcher provides some structure based on his research interest and works flexibly with the guide and allows to the respondents more spontaneous descriptions and narratives<sup>53</sup>.

The purpose of the two last interviews was to collect real information from the participants by recording for later transcription, counting the number of words, and establish differences in the amount of oral production. In appendix F there are transcriptions of four interviews. In the first interview, the researcher recorded to the sixth and seventh grade Spanish Teacher who gave her opinion about students' inhibition when speaking. This interview was useful to get one cause why the students hindered from speaking. In the second interview, the teacher recorded to G5VT to know the reason why she proposed the topic for the problem-solving activities (how to evacuate correctly). The third interview is about four questions the students answered at the beginning of the pedagogical intervention to describe their initial amount of oral production. Finally, the fourth interview was about the same four questions were asked at the beginning to identify and establish the difference of the amount of oral production in the ten sixth graders after the students attended the didactic sequence.

**3.3.3 Teacher Journal.** Dörnyei says that teacher journals are important for teachers and researchers to collect information since these are systematic written

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<sup>53</sup> BRINKMANN, Svend. Interview. Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology, 2014. Online , DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7\\_161](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7_161)

documents as diaries intended to reflect, analyze the investigations and to make future decisions in projects<sup>54</sup>.

So, the researcher decided to keep a daily register of the most frequent classroom happenings in four aspects (use of L2, time of speech, participation, and confidence when speaking, and reflection about oral production). The format of the teacher journal can be seen in Appendix G, and the information can be seen in Appendix H.

The teacher observed ten sessions (around three hours each) from August 2017 to November 2017 to get an idea of the students' oral production using problem-solving activities. In this research study, the teacher used a journal format in each PBL stage based on Dörnyei with information of date, number of session, stage of the problem-based learning cycle, and observation notes about the patterns mentioned before.

**3.3.4 Focus Group.** A focus group interview was administered at the end of the pedagogical intervention. The purpose of it was to compare the different opinions of the participants about the problem they decided to work on, the solution provided by them, what they thought about their oral production. The focus group interview would also allow the researcher to know the impact the research study had on the sample population, to contrast information with the reflective questionnaires and to search for information about the research question: how can oral production be promoted in a sixth grade English Class through problem-based learning activities?

This data collection instrument has gradually emerged as having the following attributes. Firstly, there is a leader or moderator who plans and guides the session, secondly there is a goal of eliciting feelings, attitudes and perceptions about a situation. In addition, and vitally, the focus group must interact as a group, not simply be identified as a nominal group (set of people to be interviewed in turn), indeed it is

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<sup>54</sup> DÖRNYEI, Zoltán, Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodologies. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. p. 271

the interactions of the members of the group that become important sources of information<sup>55</sup>. Appendix J includes the focus group protocol as well as the questions used in the interview.

### **3.4 ETHICAL ISSUES**

This research study involved teens from 11 years to 13 years of age. Therefore, the participants' parents signed a consent letter, containing information about the kind of research study their children would participate in, its purpose, the goals, and the role of their children in all the research.

The letter specified the students should feel confident; also, that he or she could quit the study voluntarily and at any moment without any type of consequence. Likewise, through signing the consent letter parents registered permission for their children's voluntary participation by providing a legally effective informed consent (agreement to participate in the study). The document identifies individual age, level of maturity and psychological state of the participant. At the end, the letter warns about the risks, benefits, privacy, confidentiality, and data handling to take into account when with the parents of the ten participants to obtain their signature, explain the nature of the study, the type of data collection instruments used, the intention and goals of the study and the time required, See Appendix B for a copy of the letter.

The student's confidentiality and anonymity is guaranteed throughout the data analysis and the discussion of findings. The researchers is the only one to handle information gathered from recordings, reflective questionnaires and the focus group. Each participant is assigned an identification code (Appendix D) to make it possible to use some direct quotes or opinions from students, in order to support findings

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<sup>55</sup> SOBREPerez, Polly. Using Plenary Focus Groups in Information Systems Research: More than a Collection of Interviews, University of Salford, Manchester, 2008, p. 181

without revealing their names. The sample was been codified taking into account gender, name and the results in the speaking section from the international Exam YLE MOVERS. For instance, if a participant is a girl of the sample and she got the lowest score in the YLE Movers Exam, the code she will have is G1GH, the last letters GH is about her first name and first last name respectively. G represents the gender (girl), number 1 means she got the lowest score in speaking in the exam among all the 10 participants of the project.

It is important to note that the school managers were aware of all the process implications including schedules, materials and intentions. As stated by Steane keeping people informed about the study being developed, its methods, the use of the data collected and the diffusion of the findings are important aspects to take into account (Appendix C)<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> STEANE, Peter, *Ethical Issues in Research, Surviving your Thesis*, London, Routledge, 2004, p.63

## 4. PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTION

### 4.1 CURRICULUM DESIGN

McAlister states that curricular design involves numerous elements. In his opinion lack of interest in learning English should be the significant factor influencing curriculum design in ELT, meeting learners' needs makes learning meaningful for learners<sup>57</sup>. Hutchinson and Waters argue in favor of a useful division of learners' needs into necessities, referring to what learners must know efficiently, and lacks in relation to what learners think they need<sup>58</sup>. Teachers need to discover these needs by a variety of means: by testing, by questioning and interviewing, by recalling previous performance, by collecting information from books, manuals. When researchers use this information for curriculum design, it becomes more significant and useful to predict the success of any pedagogical practice.

In this opportunity, it is necessary to mention how the curriculum is conceived for English Teaching in Secondary education according to the Ministry of Education guidelines and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages\*. The truth is Colombia has begun to consider English as a foreign language as an essential issue in the National Education for primary and secondary schools, and therefore, it has elaborated a standardized document about guidelines for English curricular design, schools must have in mind. It includes educative pedagogical approaches and essential conceptual elements to support the elaboration of the

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<sup>57</sup> MACALISTER, John, I.S.P. Nation, Language Curriculum Design. ESL & Applied Linguistics Professional Series. Routledge, 2010.

<sup>58</sup> HUTCHINSON, Tom & WATERS, Alan, Needs Analysis for specific purposes. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

\* COUNCIL OF EUROPE. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. Cambridge University Press. ISBN : HB 0521803136 - PB 0521005310 . Retrieved from: <https://rm.coe.int/16802fc1bf>

Institutional Educative Plan or in Spanish "*Plan Educativo Institucional- PEI.*" Everybody should access to the knowledge of foreign languages to improve the process of building a better society and Colombians can communicate their opinions and culture with others.

This document explains the necessity of including an active and interactive methodology that let students learn by participating in activities, whose primary goal is not grammar structures, but to do actions in the target language. It agrees with McAlister, as lack of interest could be decreased thanks to these methodologies that allow students to be actors that use the L2 to communicate actively in the classroom and in circumstances the environment requires.

Another guideline to consider is the implementation of interesting and meaningful activities in accordance with the age of the students and their level of education where the learner is at the center and the teacher role is monitoring, identifying their interests, needs and having into consideration the cognitive and linguistic development for the tasks proposed; in this way, they connect prior knowledge with specific experiences of their daily life which McAlister calls meeting learners' needs<sup>59</sup>.

Another element is the inclusion of reflection in the learning process, as the child may do a personal synthesis about what he/she is learning by identifying what he/she knows and what he/she is learning. In the secondary level, the students already know the mother tongue, so, it is a valuable resource to ease the foreign language acquisition. In this project, the teacher took into account these elements in the design of the didactic sequence. He implemented an interactive methodology, meaningful activities in accordance with their ages. The result showed the students

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<sup>59</sup> MACALISTER, John, op. cit,

involved in the exercise fostering their amount of oral production and in addition being more confident human beings.

The flexible methodologies offer a variety of activities and selection of techniques for each case on purpose to combine and find out the approach that suits better in the classroom.

Finally, the document mentions the implementation of flexible methodologies which means to combine and find out the approach that suits better in the classroom. Furthermore, to carry out an affective methodology which refers to the creation of a comfortable and suitable atmosphere, reduction of the affective filter for the level of motivation to participate to increase. Equality for children gives them confidence and create appropriate conditions for them to develop autonomy and creativity, which is one of the main objectives at La Presentación School.

In the same way, the curriculum is adapted taking into consideration the guidelines of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which describes achievements of learners of foreign languages around the world and which provides a common base for the elaboration of language programs, curriculum designs, exams, and manuals. It describes what students should learn to use the language to communicate. This framework defines the levels of language proficiency to evidence the progress of the students in each learning stage. It lets educators the appropriate means for them to reflect on their practice. One characteristic the Framework of Reference sets is the division of skills. The curriculum should be planned under criteria of exchanging information and ideas with young people to know their thoughts and feelings. Another purpose is to achieve a broader and deeper understanding of the way of life and the methods of thinking of other peoples, to base the teaching and learning of languages on the needs, motivations, characteristics, and resources of the students which coincide with Ministry of Education policy and McAlister proposals. The CEFR mentions the need to awake

in the student the awareness of his present state of knowledge, the establishment of viable and useful objectives by the student, the selection of materials considering students' voice and the self-evaluation just like problem-based learning process proposes.

The principles described above are used in this project from the selection of the method called problem based learning, as this teaching practice meets with the guidelines previously written. In the project, the use of the language is merely to communicate, the students' voices are taken into account to set of goals, activities and materials, even they are the ones who decided about the content and the problem they wanted to tackle to by listening at each other and expressing their thoughts and feelings. The progress of the students is a principle the researcher perceived in each session thanks to a teacher journal and observation. In this research, the participants did self-evaluation after each intervention, furthermore, they did peer evaluation and the teacher reflected about the evolution of the students, how suitable the coming activities were and his own performance.

La Presentación School has an English Teaching Program whose approach is integrated with which the student gets the four general skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking). It aims at fostering language proficiency in students for them to be more autonomous and be global citizens; all of this, framed in the institutional philosophy which reads: *"formar al ser humano, en la madurez y autonomía de sus procesos, para que construya el conocimiento y transforme su realidad sociocultural, resolviendo problemas desde la innovación educativa."*<sup>60</sup>

In the foreign language area, the learning of L2 develops three basic dimensions: corporal, psycho-affective and intellectual; where the last one contains innovate

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<sup>60</sup> COLEGIO DE LA PRESENTACIÓN. Plan de área de Idioma Extranjero. Bucaramanga. 2017

pedagogical proposals that promote the mental structure, the multiple intelligences, and all the cognitive functions, as well as the mental skills.

The advancement of the students is measured throughout two standardized tests: Movers in fifth grade and PET in eleventh grade. Furthermore, the English Teachers design four exams the students take in each grade. These exams are on paper, and it measures their English proficiency in the four general skills.

#### **4.2 INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN (APPROACH FOR THE PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTION)**

There are two simultaneous conceptual strands guiding the instructional approach selected for the pedagogical intervention proposed in this project. The first, is a set of action research principles, and the second is a teaching strategy involving Problem Based Learning, using inquiry-based learning and community-based learning procedures, which aims at obtaining evidence of learners' oral production, by means of tasks planned for the deliberate use of reflective thinking.

Action research relies on the development of powers of reflective thought, discussion, decision and action by ordinary people participating in collective research on "private troubles" as mentioned by Wright Mills, who is cited by Lewin, and who concludes: "there should not be action without research and no research without action"<sup>61</sup>. Marrow supports this idea by expressing: "Action research is the wisest solution to common needs for change. The best practical alternatives are developed thanks to it, by helping communities and giving way to the adjustment of a new environment"<sup>62</sup>. This project aims at helping learners develop interpersonal

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<sup>61</sup> ADELMAN, Clem. Kurt Lewin and the Origins of Action Research, Educational Action Research, Routledge, 2006, 1(1), p. 3 DOI: 10.1080/0965079930010102

<sup>62</sup> ADELMAN, op. cit, p. 8

skills such as decision making, while contributing with others to transform something in their community, a context they share every day at the school where they study.

Lewin also states that action research must include the active participation of those who must carry out the work in the exploration of problems that they identify and anticipate. After investigating these problems, the group makes decisions, monitoring and keeping note of the consequences. Regular reviews of progress follow. The group then decides when a plan or strategy has been exhausted and fulfilled, or come to nothing, and would bring to these discussions newly perceived problems<sup>63</sup>. In the same way, Richard Sagor proposes a succinct definition about action research and expresses it as a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the “actor” in improving and refining on his/her actions<sup>64</sup>. We see the action research becomes an empowering experience, obviously, the most important is that action research is always relevant to the participants; relevance is guaranteed because the focus of each research project is determined by the researchers, who are also the primary consumers of the findings. Maybe even more relevant is the fact that action research helps educator to be more effective at what they care most about –their teaching and the development of their students. I think seeing students grow is the greatest joy educators can experience and when we teachers have convincing evidence that our work has made a difference in our students’ lives, the countless hours and endless efforts of teaching seem worthwhile.

Sagor’s intention mirrors the process all ten participants and the teacher at La Presentación School went through during the implementation of this project. Despite the early age of the students, and once introduced to the teaching approach, they were always exploring and looking for a problem to solve and keeping notes on how

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<sup>63</sup> ADELMAN, op. cit, p. 9

<sup>64</sup> SAGOR, Richard. Guiding School Improvement with Action Research [online] Retrieved January 19,2019 from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/100047/chapters/What-Is-Action-Research%C2%A2.aspx>

to solve it. They agreed on working on an action plan to include the pedagogical strategy they would use to teach others about the right decisions to make during an emergency or in an evacuation situation. Their discussions were sustained by roles distribution where some students were attentive to keep a respectful soft tone, while turn taking when participating. The teacher always guaranteed the relevance of this research and the focus was in his students' growth. The results and register of each session demonstrated the progress of everyone.

Action research matches well with inquiry-based and community-based, as the first is a methodological method that pretends to transform a social reality, it is a type of research designed to intervene a problem into the classroom, where the teacher has a diagnosis and from that point he/she starts to identify a real problem, there is an intervention to solve it and there are results of that didactic sequence. In addition, the author of this project pretends to combine characteristics from approaches such as inquiry-based with which the identification of problems was done by the own actors or participants of the project and the content and way to solve it is according to their capacity of posing questions, experiment and observe; also, there is a component of community-based, as the problem the students identified has to do with the school where they have lived all their academic life; additionally, when they finished with the project there is a message for their classmates and they got involved with that community becoming active members of it and generating a sense of belonging with the school.

On the other hand, the teaching method used for the pedagogical intervention is called Project Based Learning (PBL) which is learner-centered that facilitates the action research. Savery stated PBL "is a good way to integrate theory into practice, and the application of course content to discover and provide suggestions for solutions to a specific defined problem". In PBL, the content of learning emerges from complex real-world problems where the teacher consider questions and needs of participants. Duch supports this claim, adding that students learn better when the

content responds to their own interests and not to direct presentations of facts and concepts<sup>65</sup>; through PBL teachers can promote the development of critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and communication skills and students' learning is more profound.

Savery mentions students must have the responsibility for their own learning. Learner motivation increases when the responsibility for the solution of the problem falls on them. Furthermore, he states PBL shares similar traits with inquiry-based learning, as the second requires an active students' participation, they are involved in outcomes and they are the ones who decide what problem to solve. That is, they choose the content, and the strategy to solve it. PBL is also inquiry-based when students are active in identifying the problem. Both approaches focus on questioning, critical thinking, and problem solving; with inquiry-based learning students are involved and they understand, and with PBL students acquire knowledge.

As stated above, the PBL cycle suits action research appropriately. Both use reflective thinking, which is described as a judgment model that provides a comprehensive view of research and allows participants to assume a better role in their own development<sup>66</sup>.

Boud & Feletti state PBL cycle is a procedure that was created initially for problem-solving in science and exact fields. It was so successful that it started to spread out to other disciplines such as the pedagogical and second language teaching. Maurer and Neuhold mention a seven-stage PBL cycle where the students work through a thinking template named FILA (an acronym for the categories of Facts, Ideas, Learning Issues and Action Plan). Savery and who is cited by the Southern Illinois

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<sup>65</sup> DUCH, op. cit, p.6

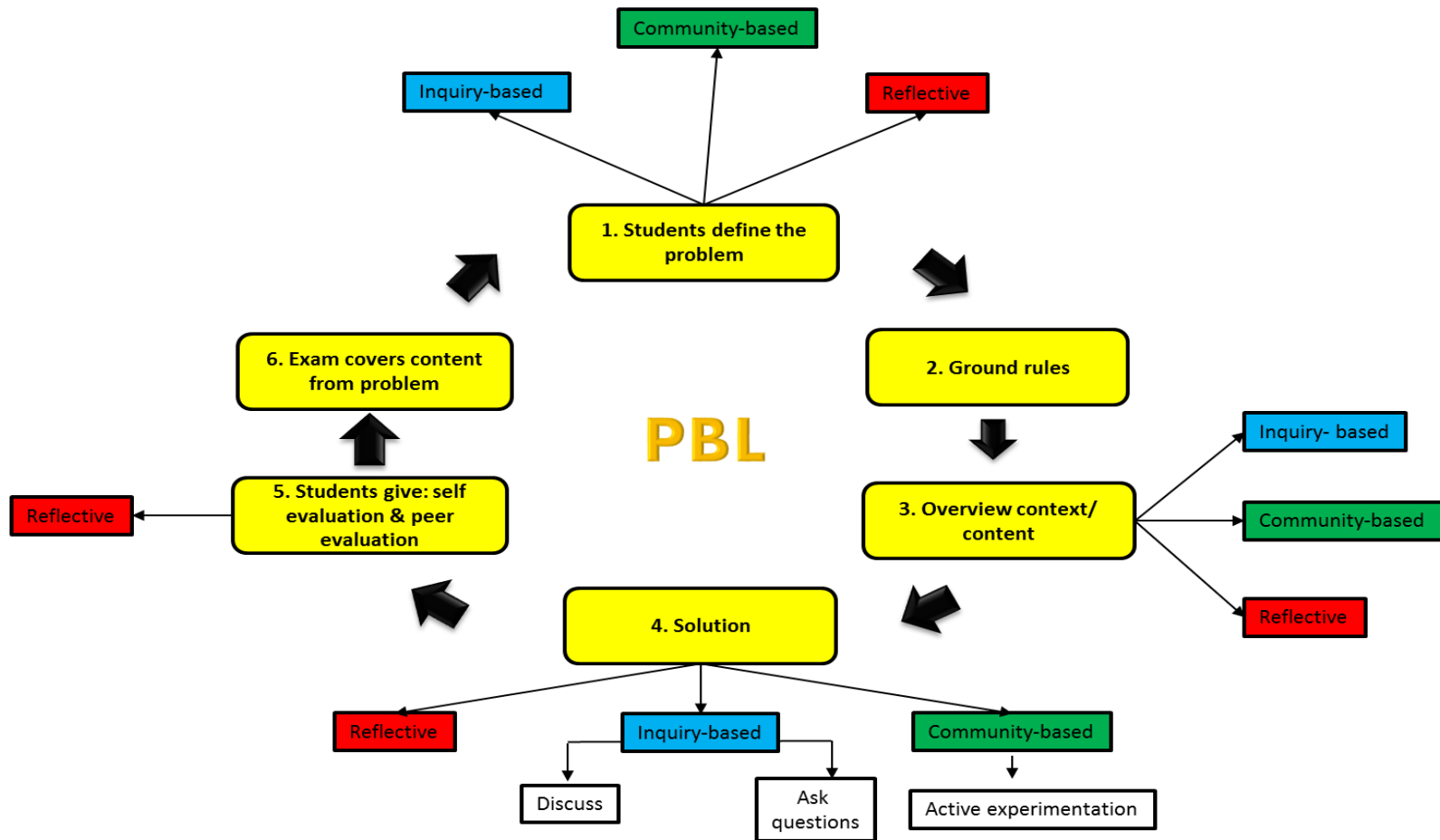
<sup>66</sup> KING, Patricia & Kitchener, Karen, Developing Reflective Judgment: Understanding and Promoting Intellectual Growth and Critical Thinking in Adolescents and Adults. ERIC Resources, 1994 , ISBN-1-55542-629-8

University Edwards Ville sets a five-stage approach that includes peer assessment and evaluation of the content from problems ; he mentions the importance of real-world problems, inquiry-based learning practices, self-directed learning, roles, promotion of communication skills and reflective thinking.

The authors conclude the PBL cycle is flexible and adaptable to the real circumstances of the population or the pedagogical experience. In this project, the participants are 8 girls and 2 boys around 12 years old who propose to design and apply a project into the pedagogical intervention as mean to solve the problem, which gives way to the creation of a new stage called: solution.

This six-stage PBL model integrates the moments in which the students do inquiry-based, community-based and reflective learning. In the figure below, the researcher describes the six-stage PBL at the center with yellow color and breaks down the use of inquiry-based with blue color, community-based with green color and reflective learning with red color. The model is organized as follows:

Figure 2. Approach for the pedagogical intervention



### **4.3 DIDACTIC SEQUENCE**

In this part, the researcher shows the ten lesson plans with a synthesis of each one. Below there is one chart that includes dates, pedagogical goals of each session, the procedure, time and resources. The chart describes how the six-stage PBL was followed and how it integrates with the other approaches as well as the data collection instruments the researcher uses to collect information in the process of action research. Before the chart, there is a convention guide that provides information about the use of each color and the relation with the different approaches used in the didactic sequence.

For further explanation about the lesson plans, see Appendix O. To see pictures of each stage of the work with the students see Appendix N.

**Table 4. Lesson Plans**

Conventions

**Underlined fuchsia** - indicates moments when oral production is fostered by students  
**Blue color** – It points out the use of inquiry-based learning  
**Green color** - It points out the use of community-based learning  
**Red color** - It points out the use of reflective thinking  
**Yellow color**- It indicates the stages of Problem-based learning cycle

Researcher role( Data collection)	Cycles integrated	PBL	Dates	NUMBER OF SESSION	
			<b>Date: August 2017</b>	<b>FIRST SESSION</b>	
			Pedagogical goal: At the end of the first session , the students will be able : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To be engaged to contribute positively with the school community and identify different problem of it.</li> <li>- To mention orally ( parrot back) new words and phrases about problems and community ( Imitative speaking)</li> <li>- To reflect about how important is the school for them and oral production in L2.</li> </ul>		
			<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Time</i>

Researcher role( Data collection)	Cycles integrated	PBL	Dates	NUMBER OF SESSION	
Observation	Inquiry - based	1.Students define the problem	The students categorize the different problems of La Presentación	Human Sources Paper Recordings Camera Questionnaire	3 hours
	Community-based		The students prepare some interviews to three persons who work in the school to know their perceptions about the biggest problems that affect the community.		
			The students make a field trip in the school. They identify and take pictures about problems. Afterwards, they translate the info into English. Start pronouncing words. ( Imitative speaking). They read aloud their translation ( Intensive speaking)		
Reflective questionnaire	Reflective thinking		Reflection		
				<b>Date: September 2017</b>	<b>SECOND SESSION</b>
			Pedagogical goal: At the end of the second session , the students will be able : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To set the problem.</li> <li>- To formulate learning objectives.</li> <li>- To reflect about their willingness to listen and empathize with others.</li> </ul>		

Researcher role( Data collection)	Cycles integrated	PBL	Dates	NUMBER OF SESSION	
			- To talk in L2 about moments they lived in a field trip at school ( extensive speaking)		
			The students have the oral reports about problems the students identified. ( Extensive speaking)	Human Sources Paper Whiteboard Overhead projector Laptop Questionnaire Recording	3 hours
Observation	Inquiry/ Community/ Reflective		The students set the problem. They agreed to know more about how to make right decisions when evacuating.		
Recording					
		2. Ground rules	The teacher and the students propose and share the ground rules.		
	Community-based	3. Overview context/ content	The students recognize the prior knowledge and the new knowledge they need to know for solving the problem		
	Inquiry-based		The students formulate learning objectives to solve the problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To know concepts related to an evacuation or earthquake</li> <li>• To understand procedures are recommended by experts.</li> </ul>		
			There is the presence of a guest speaker who is the social worker and		

Researcher role( Data collection)	Cycles integrated	PBL	Dates	NUMBER OF SESSION	
			who gives a lecture about what an evacuation is and what factors to take into account.		
			The students are assigned individual oral presentations about the following topics: evacuation, emergencies, rescue, earthquake, first aid kit, fracture, drowning, aid/ assistance, first aid, evacuation stretcher.		
Reflective questionnaire	Reflective thinking		Reflection about fear of speaking in the recording( instrument of data collection)		
			<b>Date: September 2017</b> <b>THIRD SESSION</b>		
			Pedagogical goal: At the end of the third session , the students will be able : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To report self-study on problem ( Extensive speaking)</li> <li>- To find out a solution for the problem</li> <li>- To reflect about their way of working in the oral presentation and the power of making decisions.</li> </ul>		
Observation		The students explain through oral presentations concepts of an earthquake, first aid kit, evacuation, drowning, emergency, rescue, fracture,	Human Sources Paper Whiteboard	3 hours	

Researcher role( Data collection)	Cycles integrated	PBL	Dates	NUMBER OF SESSION	
		4. Solution	assistance, evacuation stretcher. ( Extensive speaking)	Overhead projector Laptop Questionnaire	
	Inquiry Community		The students propose the solution which is to receive training and help to their kindergarten and primary school mates.		
Reflective questionnaire	Reflective thinking		Reflection about oral participation in EFL classes and making decisions skills		
			<b>Date: September 2017</b>	<b>FOURTH SESSION</b>	
			Pedagogical goal: At the end of the fourth session , the students will be able : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To know about how to act during an evacuation and read aloud their notes in English concerning to the step by step of an evacuation process. ( intensive speaking)</li> <li>- To reflect about their respect for others 'questions.</li> </ul>		
	Community-based		The students receive the visit of a guest speaker. He is the emergency response head. He takes a tour with them identifying the routes, assembly point and correct manner of evacuating. They make notes	Human Sources Paper Whiteboard Questionnaire	3 ½ hours

Researcher role( Data collection)	Cycles integrated	PBL	Dates	NUMBER OF SESSION		
			The students turn the notes into an instructive text. They share it. (Intensive speaking)			
Reflective questionnaire	Reflective thinking		Reflection about listening others and respect to others.			
			<b>Date: October 2017 FIFTH SESSION</b>			
			Pedagogical goal: At the end of the fifth session , the students will be able :			
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To perform CPR in babies, adults and pregnant women.</li> <li>- To make storytelling (Extensive speaking) about their own experiences with 10<sup>th</sup> graders (extensive speaking).</li> <li>- To reflect about their adaptability, verbal communication, social skills and empathy.</li> </ul>			
Observation	Community-based		The students mingle with others through CPR training.	Human Sources	3 hours	
			The students answer some questions about who they worked with and how was the experience they lived in the training.( responsive speaking)	Paper Whiteboard Questionnaire		
Reflective questionnaire	Reflective thinking	Reflection about the communication with 10 <sup>th</sup> graders				
		<b>Date: October 2017 SIXTH SESSION</b>				

Researcher role( Data collection)	Cycles integrated	PBL	Dates	NUMBER OF SESSION
			Pedagogical goal: At the end of the sixth session , the students will be able : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To interview others (Interactive speaking.)</li> <li>- To know how to help someone taking him/her to an evacuation stretcher.</li> <li>- To report orally interviews. ( Extensive speaking)</li> <li>- To reflect about experiences they share with schoolmates of 10<sup>th</sup> grade and to be aware of moments of difficulty in an emergency.</li> </ul>	
Observation			The students receive a training in Cervical alignment, they interview to 10 <sup>th</sup> graders about their names and thoughts respect with the importance of CPR and Cervical alignment training. ( interactive speaking)	Human Sources Paper Whiteboard Questionnaire 3 hours
			The students report the interviews orally ( Extensive speaking)	
Reflective questionnaire	Reflective thinking		Reflection about their amount of oral production and interaction with others.	
			<b>Date: October 2017 SEVENTH SESSION</b>	
			Pedagogical goal: At the end of the seventh session , the students will be able : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To find out how to train others by choosing an educative strategy</li> </ul>	

Researcher role( Data collection)	Cycles integrated	PBL	Dates	NUMBER OF SESSION	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To talk about a timetable ( agenda) in English( Extensive speaking)</li> <li>- To reflect about their interpersonal skills</li> </ul>		
	Inquiry-based		The students start to create an action plan about how to train their schoolmates. They assume a role, choose a goal and select a pedagogical product with which they pretend to teach their schoolmates.	Human Sources Paper Whiteboard Internet Laptops Questionnaire	3 hours
			The students report their planning ( Extensive speaking)		
Reflective questionnaire	Reflective thinking		The students reflect about their teamwork and listening skills		
			<b>Date: October 2017</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>EIGHT SESSION</b></span>		
		Pedagogical goal: At the end of the eight session , the students will be able : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To execute a timetable planned by themselves.</li> <li>- To reflect about their oral participation in L2 and how harmful is the problem they selected.</li> <li>- To interact in English through the creation of the song and the video clip ( extensive, intensive and interactive speaking)</li> </ul>			

Researcher role( Data collection)	Cycles integrated	PBL	Dates	NUMBER OF SESSION		
Observation			The students divide into two groups. One works with kindergarten and start to create a song with messages about how to evacuate correctly( Appendix K). The another group works with primary and they create a video clip with messages to evacuate well .The scripts of the video can be seen in Appendix L ( Imitative, intensive, interactive, extensive speaking)	Human Sources Paper Internet Laptops Questionnaire	3 ½ hours	
Reflective questionnaire	Reflective thinking		Reflection about their oral participation and the problem they are trying to solve.			
			<b>Date: November 2017 NINTH SESSION</b>			
			Pedagogical goal: At the end of the ninth session , the students will be able : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To teach to primary and kindergarten students about what to do in an emergency moment through educational activities. ( Extensive and interactive speaking)</li> <li>- To develop their self–awareness about teaching responsibility and attitude from learners in a classroom setting.</li> </ul>			
Obsevation	Community-based		The sixth graders show the song and the video clip to the kindergarten and	Human Sources	3 hours	

Researcher role( Data collection)	Cycles integrated	PBL	Dates	NUMBER OF SESSION	
			primary students (imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive and extensive speaking) The kindergarten and primary students answer a survey to measure if they understood the topic. See format in Appendix M and students' answers in Appendix Ñ.	Overhead projector Internet Tablet Surveys	
			<b>Date: November 2017</b>	<b>TENTH SESSION</b>	
		5. Students give: self and peer evaluation	Pedagogical goal: At the end of the tenth session , the students will be able : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To talk about making right decisions in an evacuation and to help to their schoolmates to make it well. ( Interactive and responsive speaking)</li> <li>- To recognize their growth as human beings and as a member in an educative collective.</li> </ul>		
Reflective questionnaire Focus group Observation	Reflective thinking		The students do self-assessment and peer assessment about all the work they run during the project. They share it ( Intensive speaking)	Human Sources Surveys Questionnaire	3 hours

Researcher role( Data collection)	Cycles integrated	PBL	Dates	NUMBER OF SESSION	
Recording Observation		6.Exam covers content from problem	The students take an exam orally about the content of the problem (Responsive speaking)	Recording	

## 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The previous chapters described the theoretical, pedagogical and methodological stages of this study, aimed at promoting oral production through Problem Based Learning activities in a group of 10 sixth-grade students chosen to participate in the sample. This chapter presents two headings. In the first, the reader can see how the data were collected and how the researcher did the analysis. In the second, it is described what the researcher found through five categories to give answer to the research question.

### 5.1 PROCEDURE FOR DATA ANALYSIS

In this first heading, the researcher explains how he did the analysis of data and the techniques he used in an integrated process that gives account of the systematic procedure he followed to analyze the data and come to the findings.

The techniques used for the data analysis were primarily transcription, counting, quantification, tabulation and interpretation of data, open, axial and selective coding. This research is mixed methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analyzing and integrating quantitative (e.g. interviews based on *amount* of oral production) and qualitative (e.g. questionnaires, journal, focus group) research.

The quantitative instrument (two interviews) was transcribed word by word, afterwards , the researcher counted the time of the speech, pet words, moments in silence, words in L2 and words in L1.

Then, the researcher tabulated the data of both quantitative and qualitative instruments. This let the researcher has an overview of the sample intentions and fits the purpose of data reduction; according to Cohen it also allows the reader to observe similarities and differences between respondents in a more practical and objective way<sup>67</sup>. Even though, tabulating data is often related to quantitative analysis, it could be directed in a qualitative way if the researcher besides organizing the respondents answers in a table, makes inferences and interpretations of the data, this is what Dörnyei states as qualitzing data<sup>68</sup>.

The tabulation of information in the data analysis occurred when the researcher used the answers given by the participants in the three instruments and the teacher's observation applied as well as the categories arisen after reading in order to know the students' thoughts about their reflective thinking and oral production promotion.

The first step in coding was open coding, it happened when the researcher read and re read the information collected in the reflective questionnaires, teacher journal and the focus group transcriptions to identify aspects or codes per instrument as for instance, participation in L2, confidence, use of English, length of oral speech, autonomy, attitude, capacity of reflect and teamwork and then relate them to a specific category.

After doing the open coding where categories emerged from the data collected, the next step was to analyze at a more profound level how these categories could be linked among the different data collection instruments in a process called axial coding. For example, during the analysis of the teacher's journal, some students' patterns were identified and they were taken into account to form a category, but then when reading the focus group transcriptions, and questionnaires it was possible

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<sup>67</sup> COHEN Louis, MANION Lawrence. & MORRISON Keith. Research Methods In Education. London; Routledge. .2007.

<sup>68</sup>DÖRNYEI, Zoltán, Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodologies. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007: 271

to put together some of the attitudes, skills and feelings students said they faced during the research project.

Thus, it is necessary to recognize the connections between these categories emerging from the analysis of the different instruments and establish the possible similarities or differences. This process is called by Cohen et al and Dörnyei as axial coding. Finally, and after analyzing the similarities and differences between categories, these are specified and supported in themes by the theory to give an answer to the proposed research question.

## **5.2 CATEGORIES**

In this heading the researcher gives account exclusively of what he discovered throughout the study. In that way, it is described 5 categories that let know the results in the 10 sixth graders. These findings are: inner strength and engagement in EFL classes, interventions in target language, length of oral speech, awareness & synergy, and commitment.

**5.2.1 Inner strength and engagement in EFL classes** This first category refers to the confidence each student has, the increase of participation, and the attitude towards the target language after the implementation of the pedagogical intervention.

Before the didactic sequence, the students did not want to answer, they were afraid of raising their hands and had many pet words and moments in silence. After the tenth session was ended up, the researcher recorded the students again in the same conditions as the first interview and their confidence increased. The following chart shows the pet words and moments in silence after the pedagogical intervention in

comparison with the beginning of this. Less silence and less pet words show confidence with the language.

**Table 5. Pet words and moments in silence before and after the pedagogical intervention.**

		Pet words		Moments in silence	
1	G1GH	Before	mm ( seven times), como ( five times),	8 times	64 sec
		After	None	3 times	11 sec
2	B1SG	Before	yes ( four times) , no(three times), mm(six times )	5 times	29 sec
		After	ehhh ( two times)	2 times	10 sec
3	G2PC	Before	mmmm(two times), so(three times), because(three times), where ( three times), eva( thre times), jijijji (one time)	5 times	58 sec
		After	jijiji ( once) , because ( three times)	Two times	6 sec
4	G3FS	Before	ehhhh ( one time), mmmmm(two times) jijijji ( one time)	4 times	33 sec
		After	ehhh( once)	Two times	5 sec
5	G4PD	Before	mmm(three times)	2 times	16 sec
		After	ehhh ( once), mmmmm( once)	Three times	8 sec
6	G5VT	Before	in ( three times), an(three times), mmm ( one time), eeehhh ( once)	2 times	9 sec
		After	0	0	0
7	G6NL	Before	mmmm( twice)	4 times	26 sec
		After	ahhh( once), pre ( twice)	Twice	6 sec
8	G7SC	Before	osea ( twice), mmmmmm( once)	4 times	16 sec
		After	0	0	0
9	G8SR	Before	the( three times)	0	0
		After	0	0	0
10	B2SO	Before	Mmmmm ( twice)	2 times	6 sec
		After	0	0	0

As classes went by, students got more interested in speaking because they dared to speak and everybody tried to help instead of laughing. We could notice that problem-based learning activities worked perfectly in our class setting, since the students were very willing to participate in the activities and help to solve the problem as much as they could. As the majority of students (9 out of 10 students) answered in the reflective questionnaire # 8 (see Appendix I ), they like talking and they consider themselves better speakers, errors are not bad thing for them anymore. Also G7SC says: *“para mi más que un proceso difícil es porque me requiere esfuerzo, como que el secreto está en hacerlo y al ponerlo en práctica funciona porque al menos en este tema todo es más sencillo”*, G4PD expresses: *“La verdad profe a mí me gustaba participar pero al tener que hablar en inglés me bloqueaba y prefería no hacerlo, además para sacar una oración me gastaba muchísimo tiempo”*, and the students concluded that inhibition is part of normal learning; they add that when there are excellent students and others are average, the students with elementary level don't dare to speak, but when the group is closer, they relax and everything flows better. In the focus group the students agreed they were afraid of speaking when the pedagogical intervention started, they did not know how to start and they did not have vocabulary. G1GH says: *“Yo estaba nerviosa, el profe nos hizo unas preguntas y no sabíamos sobre qué iba a ser”*, G7SC says: *“estaba nerviosa y me sentía como impotente porque no sabía cómo pasarlo al inglés y por eso cuando me dijo que hablara sin pensar si estaba correcto o no me solté”*, B1SG mentions: *“Yo también estaba un poco inseguro de que sería y que contestar”*. Furthermore, in the journal, the teacher observed in the first session their interest to speak English was an intention and dream but they did not effort for participating in English. At the beginning they said they would continue making mistakes and for that reason they intervened in Spanish, others simply didn't talk. Another teacher observation was they did not know how to start their ideas and pronounce words.

In the teacher observation could be identified a change in attitude towards the language. According to the Consello da Cultura Galega language attitude is a group of opinions, ideas, prejudices a speaker has with respect to a language<sup>69</sup>.

Students' attitude towards the language got better in comparison with the performance they showed up at the beginning of the pedagogical intervention (this can be verified on teacher's observations in Appendix H). It is evident in the students' answers provided through all the reflective questionnaires. For example, in the first reflective questionnaire the students were asked if they like talking in English and they said they were lazy thinking in English, others answered they were not able to do . In G7SC's words: "Me daba pereza pensar en Inglés, tocaba tomar mucho tiempo y esfuerzo" . In the focus group one girl mentioned she had had a bad experience and she preferred to keep in silent. Other ideas were they did not dare to speak, the skill of speaking was to challenging for them and learning to speak would take much time. You can check the reflective questionnaires in Appendix I. Below, there is chart that shows students' language attitudes at the beginning in comparison with the performance they showed up at the final of the pedagogical intervention.

**Table 6. Attitude towards the target language**

Before			After				
Do you like talking in English?		Do you participate using English?		Do you think you talk in English better now than before?		Do you participate using English?	
No, it is lazy thinking in English	8	I do not dare to speak	6	Yes, it is easier now	6	Yes , I am a better speaker	5

<sup>69</sup> LOIA.Centro de Documentación Sociolingüística de Galicia.Language Attitudes. Retrieved January 24 , 2019 from <http://consellodacultura.gal/cdsg/loia/socio.php?idioma=2&id=5>

Before				After			
More or less	2	It is so challenging	4	I like talking	4	Yes, I like talking	3
						Errors are not a bad thing	2

If we analyze this chart, we can say students were reluctant to use English as much as possible, they did not want to participate and they felt it was a risk because they could make mistakes and listen others' laughs. They feared totally to be "ridiculized" according to them. The teacher had to give the confidence for them to dare to speak and he talked much to them about the benefits as bilingual speakers. After the intervention, students felt speaking was easier and their development was better. I think, it was because the vocabulary, pronunciation were practiced during all the sessions and they could talk about it during different opportunities. So, when they were asked about evacuation and related topics they had something to say and the affective filter reduced.

According to the data and my analysis of Problem-based learning the factors that contributed to increasing students' confidence and participation were:

- They knew vocabulary about the topic.
- They were contextualized in the different situations they could cope with during an evacuation.
- They learnt to respect at each other.
- They understood they were a team and they should help between them.
- They were aware mistakes are a normal part of the process and precisely in those moments it is when learning is more meaningful.
- There was a change in attitude towards the target language.
- They dared to speak regardless possible mistakes they could make.
- For them, it was more important their own thoughts and improvement in the language, instead of paying attention for others' opinions.

**5.2.2 Interventions in target language** This category refers to the use of English as a means of communication when speaking. Before the intervention, the sixth graders didn't dare to speak voluntarily in English, they talked between them in L1 and asked to the teacher everything in Spanish, except for mandatory speaking activities, and there were many occasions the teacher had to score activities for them decided to talk. After the implementation, although it was hard for them to express their ideas voluntarily in the target language and without previous preparation, they could manage to do it (with some interference from L1) as they asked in English (they used the question "How do you say x?") for the words they did not know.

In the self- evaluation the students took ( Appendix I),they claimed they perceived they spoke well in the context of emergencies (4 out of 10), their amount of oral production was good (4 out of 10) and they felt they improved a lot (2 out of 10). Compared to data from the peer evaluation format where the question was: what is your perception of the oral production of the other members of your team? Which they answered as follows: good but they can improve (4 out of 10), they improved although they sometimes thought about what they were saying (3 out of 10), more or less (1 out of 10), and it was good (2 out of 10).

In the teachers' observation their students increased their use of L2. They started speaking in Spanish and little by little they started decreasing the spaces in silence and pet words and overall increasing the number of words in L2, and the number of words of L1 was lower. The chart below has the exact numbers pronounced in L1 and L2. It is important to mention that when somebody was talking in an English oral presentation, they started making notes to ask later in English about questions and clarifications.

**Table 7. Use of English instead of Spanish**

			Total of words	Number of words in English	Number of words in L1
1	G1GH	Before	86	37	49
		After	71	71	0
2	B1SG	Before	58	46	12
		After	92	92	0
3	G2PC	Before	57	48	9
		After	45	45	0
4	G3FS	Before	39	36	3
		After	31	31	0
5	G4PD	Before	15	13	2
		After	80	80	0
6	G5VT	Before	88	88	0
		After	78	78	0
7	G6NL	Before	56	27	29
		After	75	69	6
8	G7SC	Before	64	29	35
		After	83	83	0
9	G8SR	Before	56	54	2
		After	58	58	0
10	B2SO	Before	22	22	0
		After	68	68	0

Additionally, in the focus group, the students expressed before the intervention they recognized they used Spanish and they used short answers. B1SG said: “ *La verdad quería responder todo en inglés y por eso le preguntaba al profe como se decían ciertas palabras, me faltaba vocabulario*”, G7SC expressed: “*Yo entendía profe lo que me quería decir y sabía que contestar pero en español*”, B2SO answered: “*La verdad en mi caso soy muy preciso al hablar, me sentí bien. Entendía las preguntas y las contestaba cortas sin incluir mucha cosa*”. 67SC added: “*Yo diría que es bueno porque hablaba mucho español y no el lenguaje que debía que era inglés*”. We see there was a lack of vocabulary to talk about emergencies. In the same focus group

when the researcher asked to the students about the use of English they answered: G1GH said: *“Si aprendí todo relacionado con vocabulario, aprendí mucho porque osea, ahora está mejor”*, G5VT: *“si mejoré porque cuando hicimos un juego de unir traducimos mucho y así como que sabemos cuáles son esas palabras y pues cuando hicimos el video ,todo estaba en inglés”*, B1SG said: *“ cuando la primera vez que tocaba que usted no me dejaba responder en español , me decía trate, trate que me quedaba como media hora respondiendo , al final, cuando fue la entrevista donde Mario yo si pude logré hablar, yo no sé cómo , pero logré hablar”*, G2PC said: *“Mejoré mucho en vocabulario”*, G3FS expressed: *“ en parte si me ayudó en vocabulario y mi seguridad al hablar, no sabía cómo iniciar las ideas y decía sólo palabras, no sabía sobre evacuación”*.

In comparison with the use of English of the students at the beginning of the pedagogical intervention, I could notice that students were more willing to express themselves in the target language during the lessons while being encouraged by the problem-based learning approach. PBL definitely helped them to use the L2 because:

- They could manage vocabulary after identifying a specific topic without being imposed a mandatory theme from the teacher. They felt involved working in the solution and all the sessions were around the same theme. I can say everybody was committed with the aims set by themselves.
- PBL empowered them in decisions and they tried to converse in English. They felt their opinions and talents were taken into account. Their classmates didn't laugh.
- The language learning process of some students improved building knowledge with their more advanced peers in their groups
- PBL gave them the chance to teach others in English and they felt it was a contribution for their school.
- They expressed a decrease in the fear of making mistakes when speaking, which made them happy and thankful.

- They were aware making mistakes is part of a learning process.
- They learnt to make notes and use different commands to ask or give an opinion.

**5.2.3 Length of oral speech** This indicator refers to the number of words used during a specific time. At the beginning of the pedagogical intervention the students did not speak in English, they didn't ask for correction of sounds of words in English. Thus, the teacher decided to start giving input in English and started teaching them words such as: emergency, community, problem, school, institution, activity, among others.

The students developed several types of speaking tasks involved in the problem-based learning cycle to foster their oral production. These types include: repetition after stimulus, reading aloud, answering and questioning, interviewing 10th graders, doing storytelling, and making oral presentations. These activities considerably increased the length of students' oral speech.

A summary of this data is shown as follows:

**Table 8. Length of oral speech before and after the intervention**

Participant	BEFORE			AFTER		
	Time talking in L2( seconds )	Number of words in English	Length( Time/ Number of words)	Time talking in L2( seconds)	Number of words in English	Length ( Time / Number of words)
G1GH	84	37	2,27027027	109	71	1,535211268
B1SG	124	46	2,695652174	108	92	1,173913043
G2PC	152	48	3,166666667	104	45	2,311111111
G3FS	73	36	2,027777778	55	31	1,774193548
G4PD	46	13	3,538461538	92	80	1,15
G5VT	155	88	1,761363636	106	78	1,358974359
G6NL	84	27	3,111111111	139	69	2,014492754
G7SC	121	29	4,172413793	90	83	1,084337349
G8SR	122	54	2,259259259	80	58	1,379310345
B2SO	54	22	2,454545455	147	68	2,161764706

It shows a comparison between the length before and after the pedagogical intervention. The analysis is based on the following operation:

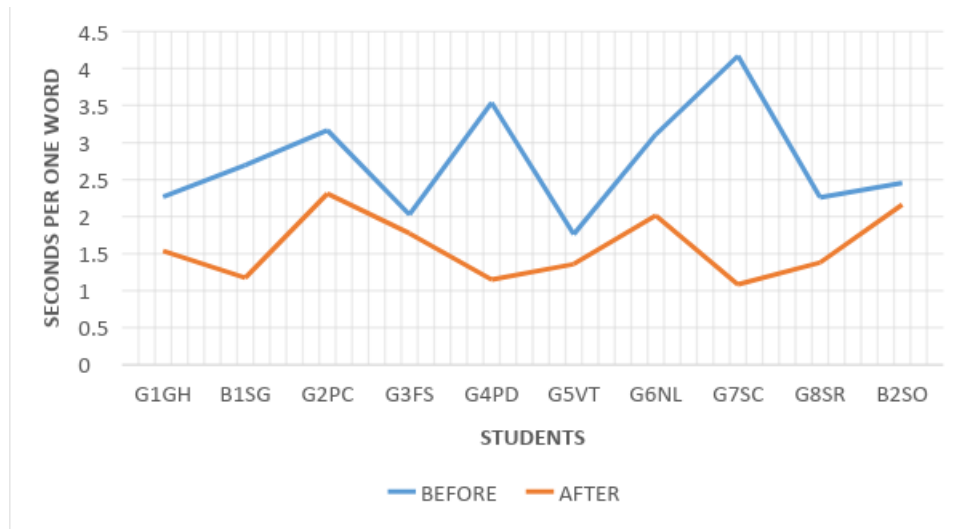
*Time of speaking / Number of words= How often one word is expressed.*

Example: The student G1GH before the intervention spent 84 seconds talking and produced 37 words in English. If we do the operation (84/37) it gives 2,27 seconds/word. That means each 2, 27 seconds the student produced one word.

The lower is the frequency of time, the more words the student produces. According to it, we can conclude the 100% of the sample optimized the time of speaking, thus the students produced more words in less time after the pedagogical intervention. The graphic below shows the difference between each student. The blue line represents how often the student produced 1 word before the intervention and the orange shows it after the intervention. We can say the orange line is below the blue one, which means the students pronounced more words more frequently because they spent less time while mentioning the words.

It is important to mention that students increased their oral production in regards to the same questions they were asked at the beginning of the intervention and then at the end. The students' oral production was not checked when I asked to talk about other topics. We have to keep in mind that they studied the topic of discussion during the intervention so they had more ideas to conceptualize.

**Figure 3. Time of speaking in sixth graders before and after the intervention**



In the journal, the teacher identified at the beginning of the intervention there was not record of time in L1, as the students did not pronounce any word in English. They did not ask for correct sounds or words in English. At the final, the teacher observed sometimes they asked to the teacher how to say a word but when they asked for corrections or clarifications, the students did it in English lengthening their speech. In the focus group the students agreed they say more things than before. In G1GH's opinión: "realmente ahora hablo más, me siento como más suelta y hasta me sorprendo de lo que digo". It is supported by their self-assessment conclusion: "*hubo mejora. Ahora hablamos más. Tenemos consciencia de que hay errores pero es parte de esto*".

Problem-based learning influenced in extending the length because:

- The student had a wide range of vocabulary and when they did not know a word in English, they asked for it using the target language.
- They felt comfortable with their pronunciation and sounds. They learnt to recognize their voices in English and they liked.
- There is awareness about making mistakes as a part of the learning process.

- There was a need to express their opinions in L2, which made them expand the time of their interventions.

**5.2.4 Awareness & synergy** This category refers to how conscious the students were about their teamwork, and empowerment in the study. As students did not know how to work as a team, the teacher guided them throughout the process of solving a problem of their school community. The students grouped themselves with the people they wanted. However, I made them clear that if the group did not work, I had the right to reorganize the teams. Nevertheless, I did not have to do it since the two groups worked as expected.

The following charts show the students' answers during the sessions about group work and roles distribution:

**Table 9. Students' answers in reflective questionnaires during the sessions about group work**

QUESTIONS	SESSIONS											
	First session		Second session		Third session		Fourth session		Seventh session			
	How was your performance in the field trip?		How was your attitude when listening to others?		Did you respect others' points of view?		How do you consider the participation of the students when the Emergency Response Head was talking?		How do you think you helped your group?		Did the others listened to you?	
Answers												
Answer 1	We wasted time , I talked with my friends	6	I was interested. I listened to them	4	No, we all talked at the same time	5	We all respected and paid attention	5	We had a role and I did all the things I was in charge of	5	Yes, they listened to me	5
Answer 2	More or less, I started to walk around the school	2	I liked to see the pictures and how they worked	4	Yes, but I had to wait my turn	3	It was super interesting. I made notes about everything	4	I gave ideas and I tried to collaborate as much as possible	2	Yes, we had to put rules but it was possible	4

QUESTIONS	SESSIONS											
	First session		Second session		Third session		Fourth session		Seventh session			
	How was your performance in the field trip?		How was your attitude when listening to others?		Did you respect others' points of view?		How do you consider the participation of the students when the Emergency Response Head was talking?		How do you think you helped your group?		Did the others listened to you?	
Answers												
Answer 3	My classmates distracted me	2	At first I was bored	2	Yes, my classmates talk too much( in L1)	2	Sometimes I wanted to sit down to rest	1	I tried to talk English and help them in each thing they needed	3	Yes, although it was a little bit difficult	1

This information comes from the reflective questionnaires. Their perceptions of teamwork changed totally. As at the beginning the students thought they had wasted time (6 out of 10), started walking around the school (2 out of 10).

In the third session, they reflected about respecting others' opinions and half of them said everybody was talking at the same time. However, it was changed through a process of reflective thinking. The results are evident in the other questionnaires when they answered about how they think they helped their group and said: (5 out of 10) We had a role and I did all the things I was charge of, (2 out of 10) said I gave ideas and I tried to collaborate as much as possible.

When the students are asked about if others listened to them, 10 out of 10 answered positively. In the focus group, the students expressed they are a team, they are closer than before, and they help each other. G1GH says: "*Si, claro profe, ahora somos como más unidos, nos tenemos confianza, por ejemplo en sus clases nos buscábamos para aclarar dudas*", G6NL expresses: "*Yo ya sé qué es eso, no sabía que era, me gustó y ahora respeto más al otro*", and B2SO mentions: "*encontramos que somos un equipo, y trabajamos juntos*".

We can analyze at the beginning they didn't pay attention to the other classmates and they preferred to talk instead of working. Little by little, they understood everyone is part of one same goal and they show respect for others' opinions and divide the responsibilities in the number of people of the group. I think teamwork skills were fostered because they all encouraged and committed to contribute with the solution. Everyone talked in an opportunity they should their best and the teacher encouraged them to do their best and demonstrate respect for the others. I think the fact they respected others made themselves more confident and together.

It is notorious how through the sessions and the moments of reflective thinking the students started to be conscious about their own performance and started doing

reflection by themselves which the focus group evidences too. They started to reflect about their work in the intervention. When the teacher asked: what things would you change of all the process? they started to give their opinions respectfully and asking for the word. Some opinions were: G3FS *“hacer más grande el grupo y cómo distribuirlo por varios salones porque solamente alcanzamos a pasar por tres salones “*, G4PD said: *“a mí me pareció que estuvo bien pero por lo menos como estábamos tan cortos de tiempo pues era como enseñarles y ellos repetían pero muchas veces ellos no tenían la idea del tema de que era porque pasábamos como muy rápido”*.

In the role distribution we found the following answers from students (table10 ). One is from the first session and the another is from the seventh session, when they were doing the action plan.

**Table 10. Students´ answers about role distribution**

Questions	First session		Seventh session	
	Did you like the role you chose today? Why?		Why did you choose that role?, did you like it?	
Answer 1	No, the truth is my classmates chose and I had to do that	8	Yes, I know what I am good for and I want to do my best for my team.	7
Answer 2	Yes, I like leading	2	Yes, however I would like to be a leader	3

At first, they blamed their classmates for doing what they did not want to, on the other hand, at the end, 7 out of 10 said they had clarity about what they wanted to do and they liked their role thinking in contributing to the team. I think the students discovered their strengths and weaknesses through the reflective thinking moments and when they experienced their roles they could have the chance to feel passion for doing that making them sure of what they wanted to do. I think the enthusiasm of the teacher activated them to do a better effort.

Furthermore, a process of autonomy or empowerment the sixth graders evidenced. When they needed to find a solution for the problem, they decided to train themselves, and after, they offered to help others by training kindergarten and primary students. Thus, they decided to make two plans for each kind of school audience. The teacher worked as a guide and monitored all the process. The student were the ones who created and went to the classrooms to teach tips about how to evacuate the buildings correctly.

Developing learner independence was an important benefit obtained from the implementation of Problem Based Learning, as the learners felt that speaking consumed a considerable amount of time. Learners had to work within and beyond the classroom to foster their amount of oral production. The notion of learner independence or learner autonomy moves into the area where learners can direct their own learning. I mean, those activities which took place without the immediate intervention of the teacher. During the pedagogical intervention I said I trust in them generating confidence and it made them to do their best getting awesome results I gave confidence and congratulated their efforts and proposals. In this scenario, learners set their own objectives and followed strategies devised by themselves to fulfill them. This is in turn facilitated the learner to become more efficient and effective when they studied and worked independently. I think the learner independence demanded learner involvement (community-based, inquiry-based) and such involvement may lead to a deeper and better learning.

In the focus group interview, some opinions show the development of autonomy in students. G7SC, stated: *“Porque hicimos la canción y lo mostramos a kindergarten y el otro grupo hizo el video, pero este grupo hicimos la canción sobre los pasos de la evacuación. Fuimos muy autónomos”*, G1GH said: *“Si, claro profe, ahora somos como más unidos, nos tenemos confianza, por ejemplo, en sus clases nos buscábamos para aclarar dudas. Somos más autónomos”* and G6NL mentions: *“Yo*

*ya sé qué es eso, no sabía que era, me gustó y ahora respeto más al otro. Soy segura y autónoma”.*

To complement the data , there is shown the final self-valuation and peer-evaluation. The students took it at the final of the pedagogical intervention A summary of the data collected is organized as follows:

Self-evaluation:

**Table 11. Students´ answers in the final self- evaluation**

Questions	What are interpersonal skills for you?	Did you do your functions efficiently? Why?	What role would you like to have next time? Why?	What obstacles did you find in the activity ?	How would you help your team the next time?	Has this activity helped you to develop your leadership? Why?	Do you see yourself as a leader? Why?
Answer 1	Help others and look for solutions of the problems	Yes, I did all the duties I was in charge of	Lead-Director. This calls my attention. I like to lead	At first I didn't talk	Doing what I know most	Yes, I realized about my skills	Yes, I consider myself a good leader. I am a guide
Answer2	Share in team, collaborate at each other , support others.	Yes, everyone worked and contributed	The same role	I got distracted	Not talking about other things	Not too much, they didn't let me	No, I do not like to lead

Questions	What are interpersonal skills for you?	Did you do your functions efficiently? Why?	What role would you like to have next time? Why?	What obstacles did you find in the activity ?	How would you help your team the next time?	Has this activity helped you to develop your leadership? Why?	Do you see yourself as a leader? Why?
Answer 3	Teamwork and values in a team	3	Time keeper	1 None, we decided everything well and quickly	1 Look for more info	1	
Answer 4			Writer	1 Low performance of gadgets	1 Listening to others	1	

Regarding the students' answers, statistics showed that the majority of the students performed well all duties, and they did not waste time as it happened at the beginning. In the question about the role they would like to have next time, 4 out of 10 answered they would like to be a leader, 4 out of 10 would prefer to have the same role in contrast with the students' answers at the beginning when they said they were obliged to choose a role they didn't want because they did not have any more options. When the students answered about how would you help your team next time, 7 out of 10 answered by doing what they know most, on the other hand, before the pedagogical intervention they asked to switch the roles and said the others were the ones who didn't work nor participate.

The analysis of this graphic let us know they were aware each problem has a solution we can find out. They discovered they have potential to lead projects and they wanted to start to manage projects, they felt more empowered and responsible and they thought they could have a group of people to guide. If we compared these answers with the ones given before the intervention, we can see at the final they feel responsible of their duties and they didn't blame anyone, but they considered they could contribute to a team from their responsibilities.

Peer evaluation: The students answered after the pedagogical intervention some questions about their classmates. A summary of the data collected is organized as follows:

**Table 12. Students' answers in the final peer evaluation**

Questions	What is your perception of the oral production of the other members of your team?		Mention three strengths of your team		Did this activity contribute to your team? How?	
Answer 1	Good but they can improve	4	Teamwork	6	Yes, because we learnt to work in team	4
Answer2	They improved although they sometimes think about what saying	3	Responsability	4	Yes, we learnt about evcuation	2
Answer 3	More or less	1	Respect	4	Yes, we learn at each other	2
Answer 4	It is really good	2	Fellowship	2	Yes, we helped others and we are satisfied	2
			Support	2		
			Creativity	1		
			Listen others	1		
			Committment	1		
			I don't know	1		

The students considered their ability to work in a team as a strength, followed by a value of responsibility. In the teacher's observations there is a log where the teacher notices how relaxed they felt when talking due to the fact they knew the others, they knew their limitations and they were working towards the same goal. All of them were committed and they strengthened as a team of 10 students. In the focus group, the students expressed they would like to work with all their classmates of sixth C, as it was a nice work and when the rest of students knew about the project their interest was permanent to participate and to be included.

In B1SG words: *“Yo creería que trabajar con todos los de sexto C. Fue chévere y ellos querían estar ahí.”* In another part of the focus group interview, while reflecting about interpersonal skills, the teacher asked the students if they thought they improved their interpersonal skills; G1GH answered: *“Si, claro profe, ahora somos como más unidos, nos tenemos confianza, por ejemplo, en sus clases nos buscábamos para aclarar dudas”*; G6NL said: *“Yo ya sé qué es eso, no sabía que era, me gustó y ahora respeto más al otro”*, and B2SO expressed: *“Encontramos que somos un equipo, y trabajamos juntos”*. The students mention the positiveness about working with kindergarten, primary and tenth graders. They liked it very much and they considered this an experience in integration by knowing their names, and their level of English. In another part of the focus group interview the students underlined the teacher’s mission and the importance for them as learners. In their own opinions, G8SR says: *“Algo que quiero decir es que aprendimos qué tan difícil es enseñar a otros y explicar. Los niños molestaban, hablaban y queríamos que estuvieran en silencio y atentos”*, and G5VT replied: *“Es cierto. Ahora entendemos a los profes. Cuando usted nos estaba acompañando que se fue, estuvimos con ellos solos y fue muy difícil hacerles entender que esto era importante”*. The teacher asked the students about how they felt about teaching and the students answered, G4PD: *“Es de admirar esa labor profe”* and G3FS: *“Estábamos de otro lado. Antes éramos como estudiantes y ya, ahora nos ponemos y valoramos a nuestros profes”*.

Problem-based learning helped the students to be more aware in several aspects such as teamwork, role distribution, empowerment and personal growth because:

- The students reflected and stepped back about their actions done individually and in teams.
- They set a common goal that encouraged them unified efforts to reach it.
- They were conscious they had a same problem that affects to all the community.
- They empowered of each duty and role during the activities.
- PBL let students respect and listen others before criticizing and judging.

**5.2.5 Commitment** Since students' low sense of belonging with the school was a concern, the use of reflective questionnaires and the model of problem-based learning was necessary inside the classroom. The identification of a problem of their school, and the setting of a common goal to solve it, made students find admiration for the public who conforms the school and to love it more.

On a first moment, the students answered how harmful they considered the problem of not knowing how to evacuate correctly could be, and their opinions showed it was merely monetary focused on the facilities, others said they did not know. However, in the eighth session the students answered the same question totally different where 7 out of 10 students said their friends were at risk and they could save their own lives, the other three students answered their friends could die and they could help them survive. A summary of their answers is depicted in the chart below:

**Table 13. Students' answers about sense of belonging at School**

	First session		Second session		Fifth session		Fifth session		Eight session	
	How many problems did you find in the school?		How harmful is the problem for the community?		What do you think about 10th graders?		Would you like to work with them again?		Do you consider the problem harmful? Why?	
Answer 1	Four problems: academic, conviviality, environmental and social	8	The facilities may pull down	8	They are very intelligent and they are really open with us. They helped us and answer our questions.	6	Yes, we can learn too many things from them	6	Yes, our friends are at risk and they can save their lives	7
Answer 2	The trash in the public areas	2	I don't know	2	I like they taught some things about pronunciation	4	Yes, they are nice persons	4	Our friends could die, we can help them	3

Another important aspect to mention about the students 'sense of belonging is the interaction with lower grade students and higher-grade students from the same school. Sixth graders received training in CPR and cervical alignment with 10th graders and they applied an interview and did a storytelling. The sixth graders 'answers about the work with 10th graders were really positive, 6 out of 10 answered they could learn many things from them, and 4 out of 10 answered they seemed to be nice persons. When the students went to kindergarten and primary to teach them how to evacuate, they concluded in the focus group it was a good experience and they learnt from the smallest about their feelings when the alarm went off, G5VT said: *“Conocimos los niños y ellos nos conocieron, ahora cuando me los encuentro nos saludamos y hablamos. Son lindos”*.

In a part of the focus group the students recognized a teacher's mission and the value of teaching. G8SR says: *“Algo que quiero decir es que aprendimos que tan difícil es enseñar a otros y explicar. Los niños molestaban, hablaban y queríamos que estuvieran en silencio y atentos”* G5VT says: *“Es cierto. Ahora entendemos a los profes. Cuando usted nos estaba acompañando que se fue, estuvimos con ellos solos y fue muy difícil hacerles entender que esto era importante”* It was really rewarding to hear this from sixth graders . The student G5VY expresses: *“Creo que valoro más lo que hacen ustedes profes. Porque es entregar su dedicación a personas que muchas veces no lo valoran”*.

All this interaction with 10th graders, primary and kindergarten students, beside the recognition of a problem of the community and to help others contributed to increase their sense of belonging to La Presentación School.

Problem- based learning helped to students to involve more at the school community because:

- They could interact with 10<sup>th</sup> graders, managers and guest speakers and learn from them.
- The students were aware about the facilities of the school as a necessary place for them to progress, live and share.
- The students found a way to help others and to be listened by others such as their classmates, friends and teachers.
- They recognized how difficult teaching others is and they agreed helping others is valuable for them.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Having analyzed the data gathered during the pedagogical intervention and taking into consideration the research question posted at the beginning of the study: how can oral production be promoted in a sixth grade English Class through problem-based learning activities? Some conclusions can be outlined:

In response to the question, it is possible to see that at the beginning of the project there was a low amount of oral production by students in English Classes, and sometimes it was nothing. In the classes, the teacher was the one who talked and the interaction in English of the students was their silence or short words such as yes, no, maybe, I do not know, more or less. Throughout the project, the Problem Based Learning model involved students in a dynamic process of identifying a problem and solving it, where high levels of interaction are required, as well as participation and oral communication, definitely helped the school community.

This model was successfully carried out during the implementation of the project. Thus, students not only could practice and improve their productive skills but also learn about their strengths, weaknesses and how to work in teams while being autonomous members of a collective. They could share orally the information they gathered about problems they identified, and at the same time, they could understand differences of ways of thinking and opinions through the stage of reflective thinking.

Regarding to the specific objectives included in this project, it can be said that this project met all of them in the sense that the lessons integrated problem-based learning activities on purpose to promote oral production. Thus, the teacher encouraged the sixth graders into the context of their school where they have been

all their academic and social lives and they asked themselves how they could help this School by detecting firstly a need or a problem. Although there was fear of making mistakes in their oral performances, students could manage to express more ideas orally in quantity without paying attention if they sounded strange or did not use grammar correctly.

Also, the specific objective about describing the level of oral production in sixth grade students before the pedagogical intervention was met since the four data collection instruments (recordings, teacher journal, reflective questionnaire and focus group) provided information about the amount words the students use in their speech at the beginning. The students expressed their reason to avoid speaking was the fear of making mistakes, as a bad experience of an oral activity produced this inhibition. Also, they were lazy at thinking in English, they spent too much time thinking and preferred to keep in silence.

In regards to the specific objective of designing and implementing a teaching sequence using problem-based learning, including reflective thinking activities, it can be said that according to the student's community problem, the researcher created ten lessons by using the six stages of problem-based learning. In each lesson there was a reflective thinking activity with which the students stepped back and thought about how they actually solved problems. The lessons were implemented in the afternoons at the school.

Moreover, the objective of measuring the amount of oral production in sixth graders after problem-based learning activities, which deliberately include reflective thinking was met. The teacher asked and tested the sample with an oral exam that covered content from the problem about how to evacuate school premises correctly. The researcher recorded students' answers and after he analyzed results, which showed a definite improvement in the quantity of oral production. Furthermore, with qualitative instruments it was possible to know what happened during the

intervention. The students increased their confidence to participate in English class because they recognized their main fear was making mistakes when talking, and this attitude changed when finding a close and confident team who was looking for the same goal of increasing the amount of speaking. They dared to talk to others because they were aware that in a learning process everybody makes mistakes, and this is an opportunity to learn and improve and if they didn't face the situations, they would never overcome them.

Finally, it is important to mention that into the process of problem-based learning there is a stage of reflective thinking about their oral production, their strengths and weaknesses. This self-assessment and peer-assessment process, granted students awareness about who they are and respect for their classmates. In the findings, the students demonstrated that each individual had a role in a collective task, they had to be responsible, help each other, to be autonomous about the duties and not criticize others but reflect about their own performance.

Last, but not least, the problem-based learning model had a community-based approach, which turned out to be instrumental in awakening students' sense of belonging at the School.

## **6.1 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The sample has been analyzed and the ten students have demonstrated a change in terms of their inner strength & engagement in EFL classes, intervention in English, length of oral speech, awareness & synergy, and commitment. Also the improvement in students, it was evidenced a positive change in terms of the teacher, the researcher, the English team, the curriculum and the school.

The teacher is an important human being and professional who also grew in different aspects as well. The teacher was a person who planned the classes like he learnt in the school through a grammar translation method where the interest of the class was to learn a bunch of rules and vocabulary. In the classes, the teacher used L2 when the level of the group demanded for it but not in all the groups, there was not reflection in students nor in himself, and the community was not involved at all in any part of learning process. When the teacher started to get into the different approaches and new pedagogies thanks to the research study, his mind started changing and therefore his teaching practices.

He started to reflect about educating in terms of principles, values and not just as individuals who will work. The new perception was the students are members of a society with valuable goals to build a better world.

The truth is creating different classes and involving a different staff of a school is time consuming and demanding but the gratification and satisfaction increases as much as the sense of the students for the things you do.

When the teacher finished the project and the new school year 2018 started, many parents and sixth graders came interested in being part of a project like the one done in 2017.

The author of this study had both roles, teacher and researcher. It was a challenge for him as he had never researched at the same time of teaching. This study gave him the opportunity to identified needs from a school and his students, determine a problem existed related to English language teaching and manage goals and data collection instruments to establish improvements in weaknesses. Teaching and research go hand and hand and allow to answer about the integrity of an English monitor.

Something the author wants to mention from this experience is what he learned from their students. They made him remember when he started learning English and how a different outlook can change the acquisition of the language in a more integrative, useful and humanized way. He remembered the value of making mistakes; when you are a teacher you think you should know everything and the truth is teachers need to grow as well, need to know correct errors and lose fears of being corrected.

This study made English team remember about the different ways teachers have to carry out successful learning. Sometimes, before the same daily routine, we start to do basic things and teach as before with book-centered approach, grammar-translation methods and evaluating for filling institutional online platforms. It was a chance for demonstrating we can change the style of teaching and impact on the students and our environment.

The learning about managing the curriculum was another important aspect, as the headmistress of the institution did not grant the space in the regular schedule to apply the project, nevertheless, the researcher got committed with parents and students to do a great project which had results for the director of the school and demonstrated it was worth doing it.

## 7. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Considering the analysis of data and findings, future research could be directed to know perceptions students have about their school and study deeply how they could strengthen their school identity by doing problem-based learning activities in the English class, that is, the acknowledgement of themselves as a part of a community. The students could see themselves as an important part of the school who know the history, norms of conduct and their identity as “Estudiante Presentación”. Students found room to participate in the school, were willing to know all the staff and discover the school needs. The students helped with teamwork and reached out to kindergarten, primary and high school students.

Another important direction this research study can follow is to measure quantitatively the participation of the 10 students in an English Class during the regular school schedule, to compare if the advance and confidence is kept before their classmates. It would be interesting to establish a comparison between the amount of oral production of students who didn't attend the project and the ones who participated, to contrast and make inferences and find differences in patterns of participation, confidence, use of L2 and inhibition.

Finally, it would be stimulating to involve problem-based learning activities in the curriculum of the school, since it could enhance students' interpersonal skills, making them global citizens that transform communities and not just as learners of subjects. It is important to mention this pedagogical approach is not only for English Classes, but it is useful in all fields of knowledge such as: science, math, arts, sports, social studies and ethics. Problem-based learning has the potential to contribute to the students thinking as problem solvers who can cope with difficulties, becoming

more confident human beings and working together with respectful, empathetic creativity.

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