

USING JOURNALS TO REFLECT ABOUT NARRATIVE TEXTS THROUGH CRITICAL
LITERACY

MARGARITA ROSA DIAZ GAMARRA

UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA BOLIVARIANA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGY

ADVANCED EDUCATION SYSTEM

MAESTRIA EN PROCESOS DE APRENDIZAJE Y ENSEÑANZA DE SEGUNDAS
LENGUAS

MEDELLÍN

2020

USING JOURNALS TO REFLECT ABOUT NARRATIVE TEXTS THROUGH CRITICAL
LITERACY

MARGARITA DIAZ GAMARRA

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of MAGISTER EN PROCESOS DE APRENDIZAJE Y ENSEÑANZA DE
SEGUNDAS LENGUAS

Advisor

GLORIA GUTIERREZ ARISMENDY
Mg. en Procesos de Aprendizaje y Enseñanza de Segundas Lenguas

UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA BOLIVARIANA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGY
ADVANCED EDUCATION SYSTEM
MAESTRIA EN PROCESOS DE APRENDIZAJE Y ENSEÑANZA DE SEGUNDAS
LENGUAS
MEDELLÍN

2020

AFFIDAVIT

I, Margarita Rosa Díaz Gamarra, hereby declare that this master's thesis has not been previously presented as a degree requirement, either in the same style or with variations, in this or any other university (Article 92 Advanced Education Student Code, Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana)


MARGARITA ROSA DÍAZ GAMARRA

Abstract

Reflection is the key to change things that do not work and enhance those positive aspects that can be better, it is a way of analyzing and being critical. The objective of this research is to describe the reflections of eleventh grade students towards narrative texts; their reflections are the result of reading them through a critical literacy process. These reflections expose diverse aspects of the texts: the code, the characteristics, the meaning they infer, and the students' perceptions of the socio-cultural politic and economic features that shape them. Consequently, having a critical stance towards texts face them with situations related to what they read, their realities and life experiences. These critical experiences encourage them to take part on those situations; it also develops abilities in the students that allow them to be aware of what a text entails behind the words; also, this process let them be autonomous in taking decisions regarding their learning processes, it empowers them and they start doing things to transform what was normal and accepted for them.

Key words: critical literacy, reflection, journals, narrative texts, critical consciousness, second language learner.

To my missing piece and my everything, my dad. We have gone so far in this world, more than one day we dreamt of. Every action in my life is a consequence of what you taught me; every achievement is your achievement too. I hope to see you again.

Acknowledgments

I do believe in God and the purpose He gave to my life; I thank him for his presence in my path. I still remember the day when I finished my high school and this thesis was not even in my dreams; today it is my reality. To Javier, the love of my life, for starting this journey with me, for making me laugh, holding me tight when I did not need it, and for doing it when I was desperate for it. To my mom, for her support and untiring force to fight, she has devoted her life to her daughters, to me. To my students, for letting me be part of their lives and shaping mine. To professor Gloria, who helped me organize my ideas and put them into the right place.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1. The Significance of Reflection through Critical Literacy.....	1
Chapter 2. Reviewing the Literature	16
Chapter 3. A Qualitative Research Study.....	28
Chapter 4. Critical Literacy a Tool to Develop Critical Consciousness.....	42
Chapter 5. Critical Consciousness to Connect and Change the Students’ Realities.....	64
References.....	75
Appendix A.....	81
Appendix B.....	82
Appendix C.....	85
Appendix D.....	86
Appendix E.....	87
Appendix F.....	88
Author’s Biography.....	89

List of Figures

Figure	Page
Figure 1. The critical literacy's joint through narrative texts and reflection.	13
Figure 2. Picture taken during the elaboration of journals.....	43
Figure 3. Picture taken during the elaboration of journals.....	43
Figure 4. Some of the students' journals.	44
Figure 5. Taken from Juli's journal.	47
Figure 6. Taken from Tina's journal.	47
Figure 7. Taken from Santi's journal.	49
Figure 8. Taken from Sofia's journal.	50
Figure 9. Taken from Rosa's journal.	50
Figure 10. Taken from Jhon's journal.....	52
Figure 11. Taken from Aleja's journal.	53
Figure 12. Taken from Angie's journal.	53
Figure 13. Taken from Javier's journal.	55
Figure 14. Taken from Kika's journal.	55
Figure 15. Taken from Angela's journal.	56
Figure 16. Taken from Juana's journal.....	57
Figure 17. Taken from Cristi's journal.....	58
Figure 18. Taken from Mafe's journal	58

Chapter 1

The Significance of Reflection through Critical Literacy

Reflection is a significant component of critical literacy (Molden, 2007), and this study is focused on how the student's personal reflections shape the way while they explore critical literacy. The focal point of this research is to give learners the opportunity to approach narrative texts from a different perspective, the one from critical literacy and reflect about them. The synergy of these factors provides an impending potential for teaching languages, where the language is not only a code and a communicative tool but it is also an opportunity to be critical and explore different topics from the learner's perspective. Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) express that "language is something that people do in their daily lives and something they use to express, create and interpret meanings and to establish and maintain social and interpersonal relationships" (p.16). This is why I truly believe that using diaries to reflect about narrative texts that are explored through the critical lens opens a new path to know what the students perceive from the texts, and the repercussions it brings to the classroom for both the teacher and the learner.

As educators, we are called to help our students to acquire skills that allow them to reflect in an effective way, to give them the time and opportunities to do so. Critical literacy shows them that they are not only learning a language but they are empowering themselves with a different perspective, one in which they are aware of their role, feelings and processes towards texts (Bishop, 2014; Ko & Wang, 2013; Lau, 2012; Morrell, 2005). This exercise is the result of an inner and reflective process where the learner analyzes a text beyond the words, takes into account the characteristics of it and relates them with their contexts, feelings and thoughts. Those texts must be focused on them and directly related to their contexts, this way the learner will feel connected to the texts and their reflections become a personal and unique experience. Journals

become the instrument where the students consolidate their reflections through writing and experience critical literacy.

Purpose of the Study. The purpose of this study is to describe the reflections of eleventh grade English students towards narrative texts through critical literacy. Professionals, teachers and students have seen reflection as an important tool to analyze specific actions and understand them as part of a process and not as isolated activities, to take important decisions that change their way of acting or to enhance specific skills (Macnaughton, 2003; Moon, 2004). Hence, it is significant to show students that they can relate with the topics addressed inside a classroom, that what they do can be analyzed, that they have a perspective and they can be critical about it. Using journals allows them to inspect their actions deeply, to record their experience, to express themselves and to learn from, to have a voice and generate a change.

Inside an English class, we have reading as a form of expression and one of the many uses of language. More specifically, we have narrative texts presented through fiction and nonfiction stories. This type of texts shows emotions and tells stories which the students can easily relate to. At the same time, the students learn from all the language forms presented in it, and develop their reading skills. Besides, when using critical literacy to read a text, the exercise goes beyond the comprehensive skill and turns out into a critical experience of language, power and its social functions (Gutierrez, 2008). The following research questions guides this study:

How does a critical literacy process empower second-language learners through narrative texts?

Defining the concepts.

In order to better understand the concepts that support my research study, I provide a short definition about critical literacy, reflection, and critical consciousness and what they imply. These notions act as a base to develop and go deeper into the purpose of the present research.

Critical literacy. Different processes around the world have mentioned the idea of a critical human being towards the society, as an example of this we find Du Bois' (1899) ideas of a philosophy of race, and whose life itself was a critical and emancipatory act. He was an advocate of a change in the American political and social system by interrogating the intractable nature of racism and white supremacy, and by supporting women's rights and a broad liberal arts education in society (Du Bois, 1903). In Europe, Antonio Gramsci as a philosopher and politician battled against the power in capitalist societies; through his analysis he advocated for the need of educating popular workers as a means of fighting back "cultural hegemony", and through that path to develop "working class intellectuals" (Gramsci, A. 1994). Likewise, the School of Frankfurt and its group of scholars, among other critical theorists, reflected and assessed society towards a Critical Theory by interrogating society's contradictions, seeking a "human and social emancipation... to create a world which satisfies the needs and powers of human beings" (Horkheimer, 1972, p.24).

As a consequence of this criticality, its repercussion and imminent relationship with education in Latin-America, Paulo Freire (1987) developed his ideas of emancipatory literacies which see the reader as an active character in charge of transforming the society. Critical literacy's conception deals with the relationship between language and power (Janks, 2000), as well as the sociopolitical and economic framework in which they co-exist. As Bishop (2014) explains, critical literacy "is also grounded in the ethical imperative to examine the contradictions in society between the meaning of freedom, the demands of social justice, the

obligations of citizenship and the structured silence that permeates incidences of suffering in everyday life” (p. 52). Language turns into the reflection of these issues which is a keystone of critical literacy. According to Luke (2012) “critical literacy has an explicit aim of critique and transformation of dominant ideologies, cultures and economies, and institutions and political systems” (p.5).

Therefore, critical literacy is a transformative element that seeks social justice for oppressed people within the educational setting, for both the teacher and the learner, it is an opportunity for us as educators to understand them better and their relationships with society and texts. “Critical literacy invites teachers and students to consider the varied ways literacy practices matter to the participants and their places in the world.” (Gregg, Hoyte & Flint, 2012, p.20). Using crucial literacy in the classroom must represent a difference in the way of instruction as an “ability to read, critique, and engage multiple texts (...) to create the classroom as public space where all ideas, even those that form the fabric of our lives, can be scrutinized” (Brannon, Urbanski, Manship, Arnold & Lannone, 2010, p.16).

Janks (2014) notes that “critical literacy education focuses specifically on the role of language as a social practice and examines the role played by text and discourse in maintaining or transforming these orders” (p.349). This is why, for us as language teachers, critical literacy becomes significant since it deals with reading and writing as a social practice to battle the norms and rules that shape and are determined by society. This process is a possibility to make things meaningful in our class and allow the learners to use the language with a purpose. As Gutierrez (2008) asserts that “there is a conscious attempt to find hope and possibility in new understandings that can serve as new tools for helping the students” (p.155). For her, this leads to

a new perception of the foundations of what we do, to create “a more just and democratic educational system” (p.148).

Therefore, for my research study critical literacy became a new path to explore texts inside the English class, where texts were not understood as social expressions before. Morgan (1997) expresses how we as teachers need to promote conditions for a “different textual practice” and consequently “different political relations” than “present social, economic, and political differences” (p.2). Likewise, the author mentions that a main aim of critical literacy is to “produce a different kind of reading and reader” (p.3). Morrell’s (2005) remarks the change in the nature of literacy and makes emphasis on critical literacy education as “a tool within a revolutionary process intended to challenge existing norms and disrupt existing power relations” (p.314). This critical perspective enlightened and nourished our context with a new way of analyzing, reading, understanding, questioning and using texts and its characteristics to be part of the world. I was convinced that there was a whole new process that I needed to discover together with my students, by using critical literacy and what it entails to explore the language and texts inside our classroom as an empowering tool to change their realities.

Critical literacy and reading. A critical perspective from and towards texts compromises the fact that texts can be approached beyond the code and understand what they involve, the characteristics they have and how they were conceived. Bishop (2014) notes that “critical literacy uses texts and print skills in ways that enable students to examine the politics of daily life within contemporary society” (p.52). The basic process of reading and writing have evolved to show the power of language in society and its direct connection with each human being. As Luke (2012) explains, “critical literacy involves a normative analysis of the relationship between designs, shapes and features of texts and their consequences in material and social contexts”

(p.211). Hence, here is where the well-known Freire and Macedo's (1987) words regarding *reading the word and the world* show their importance for us as educators. Morgan (1997) explains that "by 'texts' is understood whatever in our social environment can be read as a text: whatever constructs a meaning through shared codes and conventions, signs and icons" (p.29).

As an educator my purpose with my students was to change their role inside the classroom and gave them more opportunities to own their learning process, allowing them to question and reflect their realities, to propose and specially to let them become active actors towards texts. Lau (2012) describes this type of students as "active readers and writers of cultural texts so that they can create their own meanings to shape and transform their social conditions" (p.325). A text must do more than just simply convey meaning, or being a tool to check the reading comprehension of the learner. With a text, the teacher and the students have the opportunity to examine it, to look for information about the author, their intention, the characteristics of the society when that text was written and so on. Morgan (1997) states that, any text would "give students the opportunity to identify and investigate a social issue connected with that topic which is of interest to them" (p. 34). Critical literacy in reading allows the reader to take a different perspective in which the intention of the text and the reasons why it was created, are more meaningful than asking reading comprehension questions. Hence, in the present research study these notions guided the experiences lived with texts in the critical literacy and reading processes developed in my English classes.

Luke and Freebody (1990, 1992, 1999) developed *The Four Resource Model* with the intention of having a normative description that validated literacy practices for an effective reading and reader that participates in an active and critical way in the world through texts. This

model presents four practices: Code Breaker, Meaning Maker, Text User, and Text Critic. I summarize these practices as follows:

- As a *code breaker* where the reader analyzes the text from a linguistic perspective decoding letter, symbols and graphics.
- As a *meaning maker* by taking part in the meaning of the text when using background and personal experiences to bring significance to the text.
- As a *text user* when the reader uses the information of the text and is aware of the text's cultural and social purpose.
- As a *text critic* by being able to think critically about the messages in the text, to identify underlying ideologies or biases and to develop their own interpretation.

This model allowed me to intertwine critical literacy with narrative texts, to have a clear vision of the exercises and practices I wanted to develop with my students, it showed me the potential we had to approach texts from different perspectives, to work on literacies as part of an English class and, to analyze the text from the students' individualities and to have a critical stance towards the narrative texts we read.

Narrative texts. Texts which tell a story are often called narratives, which include most of the time the same structure: they have characters, a plot and of course a sequence of events; they all have something in common, they transmit an idea or a feeling and invite to imagine and interpret the text according to each person mind. Lunkens (1998) states that this type of texts are the ones that recount in a logical, and chronological way events that are linked, caused and experienced by factors; the author adds that while doing this, narratives entertain the audience too. Bruner (2003) expresses that we use narrative texts "to shape our everyday experiences".

Thus, narrative texts tell or retell a story that happened to someone somewhere, we are used to narratives as we are used to tell our most important and shocking events in life as a story.

Reflection. This act has long been related to education since it is a crucial part of educative experiences that occur in a thoughtful and contextualized context. John Dewey (1933) mentioned that “in discovery of the detailed connections of our activities and what happens in consequence... the quality of the experience changes; the change is so significant that we may call this type of experience, reflective” (p.170). Hence, he explains that reflection is an encounter with the aftermath of an experience, a change that occurred during the learning process. This describes the important connection between learning and reflection, there is no sense in learning without analyzing it.

The findings in the examination and the changes occurred for the learner after the experience is what he calls reflection, a construction of meaning based on the experiences. Dewey (1933) showed the importance of reflection in the learning process, seeing it as a reconstruction and reorganization of the experiences, even when not all of them are successful. Nevertheless, reflection allows this type of conclusion.

Dewey (1933) also defined the reflective thought as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (p.118). Therefore, this author considered reflection as a process of interaction and continuous thought related to knowledge, it cannot be cut off from it and neither deny its nature in the fact that reflection leads to additional inferences. Reflection can happen during or after the event, you can analyze what is happening at the moment while you take decisions (*reflection in action*) or after (*reflection on action*), when the event has happened; the experience itself does not lead to learning, it is necessary to reflect

on purpose to learn about it (Schon,1983) . For the purpose of this study, reflection is seen as mode of thought that gives meaning to the learning and teaching processes in which there is a new arrangement and a cautious contemplation of the experiences that take place in both processes.

For Kolb (1984), reflection is part of a process which he called “The Experiential Learning Cycle”. In this cycle, the tenets are the experiences that the learner encounters in their learning process. He determined four stages and is the learner the one in charge of his own process. Regarding reflection, it appears as the basis of stage two, as Reflective Observation. Here the learner establishes the outcomes between the experience and his understanding and goes to the next stage where the reflection takes him to a new idea or a modification on a previous one. This author uses reflection as a link and a step in the learning process showing the benefits and significance of it to continue learning and growing. Otherwise, the learner will not have a proper understanding of what he experienced and the learning process will not be meaningful.

Taking into account the effects that reflection brings to the learning process, letting it to expand knowledge related to the process, its characteristics, how it occurred and what can be improved, it is our duty to use in our teaching practices and propose it to our students as a resource to continue growing and learning. Rodgers (2002) argues that discussing about reflection allows the topic “to grow in definition and practice rather than disappear” (p.842). She also explained and demonstrated how reflection becomes a tool to change a simple experience into a meaningful knowledge. For the author, reflection is rigorous and methodical, which demands from the person that practices it commitment, emotional and cognitive discipline. She concludes that reflection has specific steps to keep learning and defines them as follows: first,

there is an observation, which consists in a detailed narrative of the experience. Then, there is an analysis that implies generation of reasons and theories that become in a new experience. The cycle never ends; it continues as for a teacher or a learner to keep learning.

Reflection in education “is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one’s experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas” (Rodgers, 2002, p.845). Therefore, for this research study reflection allows the student to give significance to their experience, to analyze the reasons behind it, their reaction to it and why it happened, what they learnt, and more importantly what can be better in the next opportunity.

Reflective practices. To reflect is not an action done by itself, it is a skill that needs to be developed and practiced. A reflective practice is a set of skills developed in real time, it deals with real, complex and difficult situations (Moon, 1999). Hence, through the practice of reflection the term ends as theory and encounters in the practice of it assumptions, beliefs and even solutions to problems in a structured way.

Bolton (2010) remarks the importance of writing while reflecting as an effective tool to perceive the situation with a different perspective, thus to act differently. This way, when writing, the roles, assumptions and beliefs are questioned and not left behind into an action done once since it is important for students to live and analyze what they express as a result of the reflection and do something with that outcome. Reflective practices are part of a continuous and an intellectually engaged activity adapted to changing practices by transforming knowledge (MacNaughton, 2003).

Reflection is a personal and inner process, normally not done in public. When writing, a student can express what he is thinking and feeling and put into words or even drawings what

they reflection is about. Regarding the process of writing Bolton (2010) says that at the beginning, the writing process occurs unplanned, and probably this will delay the reflection process that comes with the continuity of the writing exercise. Nevertheless, what makes it more important the practice of writing, it is the fact that it permits to record and contemplate the actions, the reflections.

In the present research, writing occurred as a consequence of the reflection done when approaching texts from a critical perspective. In these two main processes, reflection was present and connected them. The aim was to engage students in this practice and give them the space inside the classes to express themselves in the journals, to let them record their insights and reflections from the encounters with narrative texts, how they saw themselves towards the text and how they saw the text in them.

Critical consciousness. Nowadays, in education it is necessary to develop skills that go beyond the cognitive ones, and to give students the opportunities to do more with their thinking abilities, here is where the critical focus takes place (Ko and Wang, 2013). When a student starts to question the knowledge is becoming an active and empowered subject instead of a passive learner that keeps absorbing knowledge that is deposited in their mind as Freire (1970) characterized the “banking model of education”. As a way of intervening this situation and transforming their reality Paulo Freire (2005) talks about *conscientização* as the result of the involvement in the world with the intention of transforming the oppressive elements of reality. Freire (2005) states that this “represents the development of the awakening of critical awareness” (p.15).

First, to be critical conscious, it is necessary to be aware of the contradiction in which the student is immerse, to have a clear panorama of the social, economic and political contradictions

that surround them, to then take action and transform oppressive and dominant elements (Morgan, 1997). To be critical conscious is a first step towards change and real meaningful transformation (Mora, 2014a), to see what is behind the processes in which the students are part of but this time as active subjects, owners of their own knowledge, opinions and decisions. For the purpose of my study I understood critical consciousness as a result of examining all the forces that shaped a text, to analyze, reflect, understand, set a position towards it and act in accordance to that transformative process and go beyond to change that reality. This understanding gave the students a new active position towards their own world and consequently the world that they are part of.

Critical consciousness as a result of reflecting through critical literacy. The experiences lived through critical literacy inside the classroom must give the learner the opportunity to set his role in it, to analyze the texts deeply, to know its characteristics and the reasons behind their creation, the contexts where they were created and the one for which it was created. Tosuncuoglu (2018) states, “thinking is an active process but it is not sufficient by itself” (p.26). The activities that the students will develop in the journals must have a link with their contexts, with the people, situations and things that are important and meaningful for them. Otherwise, it will be one more activity to develop inside the classroom without significant repercussions in the students’ lives. Reflection cannot be static, its practice must have a purpose of change, the one that the critical consciousness gives to it.

The characteristics that critical literacy brought to reading narrative texts gave to the present research study the perfect occasion for my students to reflect and being critical conscious. In narrative texts they found more than stories and explicit information, they found

tools that opened their minds to understand and analyze the contexts where they lived and the information, they had access to, with the purpose of facing and acting in their lives differently.

In other words, reading narrative texts within the English class is the perfect vehicle to open the doors to critical literacy experiences, this process was wrapped up under reflective practices and opportunities for the students to express themselves in the journals. The connection was made when the students took a narrative text with a critical perspective, wondering the characteristics that shaped that text like: why was it created, who did it, what was their intention and the target readers. As well when and what was happening when the text was written, the contribution it made to their lives and how it was related to the context where they lived in.

(Figure 1).

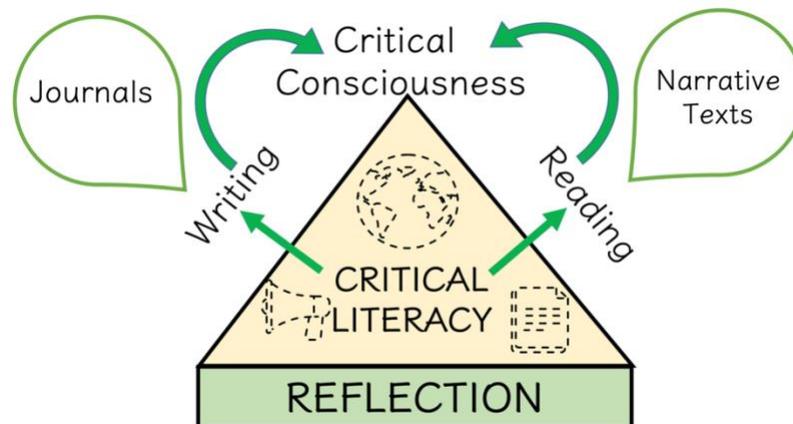


Figure 1. The critical literacy's joint through narrative texts and reflection.

This exercise was based on a constant reflection, asking questions to reflect allowed my students to see a bigger panorama, to examine, compare and take ownership of the matter. Their reflections and interpretations were expressed on the journals, which were part of their own creations, their outcomes showed the connection that language had with their feelings and emotions; it also demonstrated how they saw themselves in this world and the realities they faced, always keeping in mind what could be different or questioned.

Critical literacy gave narrative texts a new path to walk inside my classes, they were approached through a new, different and challenging perspective, while at the same time the learners developed their communicative skills and used the language for social purposes (Perry, 2012). Reading is one of the main skills developed when learning a language, and texts are present in every aspect of our lives, the way we read them and how we use them inside our classroom is a key to start a change in our students (Grambrell,1996; Molden, 2007). This is why I found necessary to implement critical literacy in this research project since it allowed us to approach texts from the reader's perspective and related them to their own experiences. As Abednia (2015) expresses, "in CL students are encouraged to approach texts in a questioning manner, challenge received knowledge, and, instead of taking in knowledge passively, construct it actively and autonomously" (p.28).

In this research study the relationship between critical literacy and narrative texts contributed to identify, analyze, contrast and decide which social and political characteristics were not just for them. Also, they felt empowered with new visions and forms of doing so. Being reflection a part of it, journals played a significant role where the students found the opportunity to express themselves and gathered the information that was relevant for them, this information was the result of their thinking, the one they found as their own product.

I sincerely think that all these elements gave a different and new opportunity to my students to learn a second language, as well it was for me a distinct and fresh opportunity to continue growing and learning from my students. I noticed how critical literacy offered a diverse perspective to approach narrative texts and find in them the power to change our realities and look for opportunities to leave behind cultural, social and economic problems. This transformation is directly related to critical consciousness, when the students analyzed in depth

texts through the critical literacy lens and took actions to change the iniquity and oppression they suffered in everyday life, and took what they had questioned inside the classroom to other contexts where they developed themselves. These processes were based on a main and solid action which is reflection, it brought to this exercise a constant thinking and evaluation of self-actions and in this particular study towards narrative texts.

Chapter 2

Reviewing the Literature

Taking into account the concepts that guided the present study, already exposed in Chapter 1 and the purpose of them, I will continue exploring the literature related to critical literacy, reading, and reflection. Therefore, I will present the characteristics that make these studies relevant for my research such as the contexts where they were carried out and most importantly the author's point of view related to the main concepts, how the study was conducted in terms of methodology, data collection procedures, relevant findings and conclusions. Moreover, at the end of this section I will manifest what I learned from them.

To begin with I explored diverse electronic databases such as: SciELO, JSTOR, ESBCO, DOAJ, JURN, and Emerald Insight, as well online journals like JAAL (Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy), searching for academic research studies that presented the following combinations: critical literacy and reading, critical literacy and journals, and reading and journals. I focused on studies around the world held between 2005 to 2019 with the aim of presenting more updated literature.

Studies Exploring Critical Literacy

To use critical literacy inside the classroom goes beyond knowing the theory, which is only a base to start the process. There is not a recipe that I could follow and use in my classes. However, from theory and others' experiences I discovered and understood better the role of critical literacy inside the classroom; it helped me to guide my own work.

Reading. A base of critical literacy is the relationship that texts have with social and cultural issues like injustice and inequality (Comber, 2014). As texts can be presented in different genres and scenarios, my main concern was to find researches which studied the critical perspective in reading exercises and mainly explained the way they were carried out. If I want to

present narrative texts to my students and work with them from a critical perspective it is necessary to better understand how other people did it.

A first study was completed in Indonesia at an English Education Department. Hikmat (2017) wanted to develop critical literacy in a Reading class with 20 students and three lecturers in a university setting. The article focused on strategies used to develop critical literacy in Reading class. The data collection techniques used were interviews, observations and documentation.

In the article, the author presented several models to develop critical literacy through reading exercises, one of them is the *Four Resource Model* proposed by Luke and Freebody (1999) which consist of four phases: code breaking, making meaning, text user and text critic. For the purpose of the study the author used some strategies based on the models he previously exposed which consisted on: 1) Using various readings that are relevant and interesting for learners. Most of them were short stories like *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place* and *Tom Sawyer*. This is to make students interested in the story so that they enjoy reading the text. 2) Asking critically questions in written and orally, for instance “Why do parents send their children to school? Or “Why do you think that Hemingway used some Spanish words in the story?”. 3) Stimulating students’ interest, prior student knowledge and experience. 4) Facilitating and guiding students to understand the text. Sometimes, the lecturer asked the students to list the difficult words. 5) Writing summary of the text and response to it and 6) Discussing questions collaboratively.

The author also explained the challenges found by the lecturers while the course, some of them were students’ low capability of critical literacy, students’ lack of self-confidence, and students’ lack of knowledge and in comprehending the text due to their lack of English

proficiency. Finally, the author explained that critical literacy was lived through the research as means of comprehensively exploring the new language and culture through various texts and as a way of interacting with information that goes beyond the understanding of the information stated in a text.

Even though this research was not developed in a high school or public education setting, and it was not focused only on narrative texts, I chose it because it presented several approaches to use them in a reading class which makes it relevant for my study, where one of those models have a framework proposed by Abdenia (2013) which have writing reflective journals as one of its final stages. Most of the approaches have in common the personal engagement in the text for the students, which reminds me of the significance of choosing texts that are in accordance with students' interests. Besides, asking questions to the students with the aim of inferring, analyzing, reconstructing, and considering multiple viewpoints and even the fact that with critical literacy the readings can be negotiated with the learners.

I also found significant, that the author mentioned the position of the reader in critical literacy saying that the students as readers are the ones now in power of analyzing and being critical toward the hidden message of text and are the ones who digest text and the information in it, giving the reader a position of power towards the text.

Critical Literacy Practices. A second study was carried out by Liu (2017), his purpose was to find out how Chinese English Foreign Language (EFL) reading classes integrate with critical practice and what contributions critical literacy practice can make to Chinese EFL reading classes. The research was an experimental study with two classes, both of them with EFL students from different countries around the world. The controlled class was defined as a reading EFL class, and the experimental one as a reading class with critical literacy practices.

The students were freshmen who had already taken an IELTS exam having scores from poor to high distinctive.

In his article the author tells different teaching procedures regarding critical literacy and mentions one of the teacher's responsibilities is "to scaffold students to accomplish tasks and offer help when necessary, ... to stimulate students to go deeper into texts" (p.135). To do so the author also focuses on Luke and Freebody's (1999) *Four Resource Model*, which was modified into: coding competence (ability to decode and Critical Literacies in Historical Context encode the text), semantic competence (ability to make meaning of the text), pragmatic competence (ability to use the text appropriately in a context), and critical competence (ability to critique and evaluate the text). This demonstrates that theory continues evolving based on constant reflection and rigorous investigation about itself and the implication of practicing it.

Among the conclusions, the author states that *critical literacy practices* help to increase learners' English language proficiency since to progress in critical competence, students must reinforce their language foundations. Besides the development of their skills to distinguish main data from minor details, identify reliable information from the inaccurate and identify the essence of texts which is of great significance to the success of a reading task.

I consider this study significant for my research since it provides more conceptualization related to critical literacy in which I found a strong basis to understand it and make it part of my teaching practices, as the one proposed by Luke (2014) as "the use of the technologies of print and other media of communication to analyze, critique, and transform the norms, rule systems, and practices governing the social fields of institutions and everyday life" (p.21), this opens the critical literacy spectrum to new understandings.

I also found noteworthy that this research analyzed critical literacy practices and progress through an IELTS exam, comparing one group to the other, and not based on individualities or what the students had to tell about their own experiences. This is one of the reasons that I consider necessary to implement a tool that helps to analyze other factors that are not measurable, to take into account characteristics. Therefore, I reinforced the believe that journals are a great instrument to record the outcomes of this type of critical exercises since they allow the users to express their thoughts, emotions and reflections to be later analyzed and better understood from their own points of view.

Narrative texts. During the review of the literature besides articles I also found a doctoral thesis in which a popular book series, Harry Potter, was analyzed. This thesis looked closely to ways in which the Harry Potter texts may be approached from a critical literacy perspective to support readers to contest conservatively-aligned readings and to question the role of the texts in preparing learners for a world of peace and cooperation. Knowing that these series of books are incredibly popular around the world the purpose was to situate them globally and to utilize them pedagogically. Reading (2006) found that reading novels from a critical perspective is appropriate since this type of texts are “cultural artefacts based on a particular global and historical setting” (p.24). Moreover, these popular novels participate in the formation of adolescent identities, imaginaries and collectivities. This popular novel makes part of popular culture since the text engage large audiences in a globalized economy.

The author analyzes the novels in depth taking into account diverse aspects. One of the strategies the author used is the one proposed by Education Tasmania (2001) that suggests that texts should be approached from an interrogative position, which is related to critical literacy and give examples of it, to mention some:

“Questions linked to the intentions of the text (what is this text about and what does its composer want us to know?); textual structures and features (what sort of genre does the text belong to?); characterization (how are teenagers constructed in the text?); gaps and silences (who and what is missing from the text?); power and interests (who benefits most and who least from this text?); world view (what kinds of social conditions does the text portray?); composer values (what kind of person, with what interests and values, composed the text?); and multiple meanings (what different interpretations of the text are possible and how else could it have been written?) (p.55).

However, what in my opinion is the most valuable aspect of the study regarding the purpose of my research is the fact that the novel was just a medium of engagement for the students inside the classroom. Hence, when using critical literacy to read, the significance is in the exercise of analyzing the text and not in the text itself. According to the author, the text must bring the world and the word together to the classroom, any type of text can be scrutinized under the critical lens. This is why there are different studies that use critical literacy through comics, news, myths, science fiction, multimodal type of texts among others (Reading, 2006).

I found this doctoral thesis appropriate because it shows how from a popular book like Harry Potter can be addressed using critical literacy giving examples of possible ways to analyze it and at the same time uses a text which is interesting for the students in high school age for having characteristics close to their world, school, family, friends and desires of exploring, finding answers among others. Besides, this study demonstrates that the novel was just the medium of engagement to develop critical literacy, as well as the power of a text to be part of some adolescents' lives and identities.

Implementing Critical Literacy. The last article that I found close to my research regarding critical literacy describes how teachers and students create spaces for it in the context of book introductions. The document is only one part of a yearlong teacher research study that investigated critical literacy development in a second-grade in the US.

Firstly, they divided the class according to the reading level and interests of the students, in accordance to this, they chose the books to read from the advices given in the Guided Reading System from Fountas and Pinell (1996) and tried to find books in which the main characters had similar characteristics to the students, like to be children.

Then, in their examples, I could find ideas regarding the questions I could ask my students while reading narrative texts, because the teachers used purposeful prompts such as “I wonder...” and “Do you think so?” to extend the students’ thinking about concepts, illustrations, and problem-solving strategies while they read.

In this article the researchers gave plenty of examples where they showed how they implemented the critical lens to book introductions. They used the *Four Dimensions of Critical Literacy* by Lewison, Leland, & Harste, (2008) as a base to develop their methodology (Disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on the sociopolitical and taking action and promoting social justice). Likewise, the authors point out the relevance of choosing books that supports students’ engagement with social issues, besides finding intertextuality among texts and ideally crossing the topics with the curriculum from other subjects, for instance they used books related to slavery to provide a context for later books about civil rights and resistance movements.

Among their conclusions, they found that it became easier for students to engage in critical literacy scrutiny since “the more often we engage in these processes, the more likely

students will be to interpret texts using critical literacy when they read” (p.125). They also talked about the importance of giving students more opportunities to practice critical literacy beyond the classroom, for example in book clubs, reading at home or when interacting with other type of texts.

Taking all these ideas and information above, which I believe suits my study, I noticed that the age and the grade of the students was not an issue of concern and it depended on the teacher’s ability to find the path and conduct the students to a depth analysis of the text on their own. Therefore, critical literacy can be used to any type of activity related to texts, social contexts and without any concern on the age or development of language skills, it depends on the knowledge the teacher has of the tool and the expertise that uses to adapt it to the students’ characteristics.

Reading Relationship with Journals

In a first attempt to find more literature related to the processes and concepts in my study, I tried to find critical literacy articles directly related to the use of journals. Nevertheless, from the ones that I found I could not find one study that had this connection in their main purposes. Hence, I directed my search to find articles related to reading and the uses of journals. With this new point of view, I was able to find a couple of them.

Journals. The first article was not developed in an English class or in a second language one. However, it had elements that I consider are pertinent for my research since the main concepts included reading and journals. The research explored the use of reflective journals as a flipped classroom technique to promote completion of reading assignments. Gardner (2012), explains the strengths and difficulties of this method, how concepts, definitions, and traditional knowledge become homework so that classroom activities can be spent on applied learning,

problem solving, and discussion. Regarding their methodology, first the students had to read the assigned texts and then were asked to work on their journals, through a Blackboard application online, each week they wrote an entry and answered questions posed by their teacher such as “What did you learn?” “What do you still have questions about?” and “What personal or professional connection can you make to this topic?”. The reflections were directed to explain key concepts from the reading and reflect on their application, with the added benefit of reflective thinking about content.

Then, the teacher checked their entries and together shared them with the classroom, giving students the opportunity to gain the perspective of others and guide the direction of the class discussion toward what they most need to know. The author used a mixed-methods analysis of student responses to an online survey and qualitative and illustrative use of reading reflections to explore if the use of reading reflections enhanced student preparation and engagement for the class discussion.

For the authors, one of the most important findings was that students responded reflectively to the readings, asked questions that reached beyond the content of the readings, and were able to consider the content in relationship to their personal and professional lives. Similarly, for them while using reflective journals the students are a tool “to assess reading with the benefit of reflective thinking about the content, ... students consider their knowledge and how they can apply it” (p.699). Nonetheless, they also mentioned some drawbacks that the students found. Time was the most common limitation among the students’ answers since they argued they did not have the time to reflect freely knowing that they had a deadline.

This particular study showed me that the students can see the reflection as an assignment if they have to make it without any provocation and under the same circumstances at home, class

time can be useful for them so they will not feel pressure for submitting or having a deadline with the work. As well, I truly believe that answering the same questions will give the same type of answers without a direct relationship with the person who is reflecting, we must incite that reflection through different activities even when the vehicle is the same, thus the students will not feel pressured, which goes against one of the main purposes of critical literacy.

Reading and writing. Finally, there was an article in which mostly adolescents that could not pass their entry exam to the university took a reading course. As part of the curriculum of the course they had to read a book. To address this need, the author used response journals to guide the reading of the book. Therefore, the teacher chose *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho as the best option since it has simple language, is brief and conducts to reflection on universal spiritual themes and values (Dunkelblau, 2007).

This type of journal is an informal literature log that helps students to focus on their individual reactions to a story rather than on strict literary analysis (Peregoy and Boyle 1997). For the author it is “a space where her students can “dialogue” with a text avoiding penalty or intrusion, they can explore their feelings, memories, and dreams as they relate to a text, or a story and its characters” (p.51).

The students had to submit eight reader response journal entries (one per week) throughout the time they were reading the book. Previously the teacher instructed them on how to use a journal. Some of the questions she designed for the entries were: What does a passage or incident in the story makes me think of? Have I experienced some of the same things as one of the characters? What would I do if I were the character? Through the questions the students get involved with what is happening in the text and related them with the story and this way the teacher avoids that the students write a summary of the plot.

They did not receive a grade for their reflections since they cannot be graded with a number or an adjective, but she responded to them as a way of continuing the reflection and having an indirect dialogue with the students. This is a significant contribution to my study because this way the students will not feel the pressure of assessment or making a mistake, but on the contrary they will feel freer to express themselves and at the same time they will receive certain kind of feedback from the teacher.

The author found that even when they students were from different ages and backgrounds, most of them feel related to the story with topics such as listening to one's inner voice, living in the present moment, the universal language, and the secret of happiness. She also remarks that while reading the students are developing their language skills and find in reading a book in English and enjoyable and enriching experience.

I found this article pertinent for my research study as it has two of the main concepts I am exploring, reading, and journals. In this joint the author found that the book she chose allowed the students to make a connection between it and some aspects in their lives. It is also a study in an English foreign language class, which demonstrated that the language is a vehicle for reflecting. I also noticed how reading became relevant for the students and is a doorway to explore intellectual, emotional and even spiritual horizons.

To sum up, with this literature review I found key and crucial elements that are part of my research and I understood more deeply some of the concepts, how they work together and the way I can employ them. One of the main lessons I grasped from this exercise is that critical literacy can be developed anywhere around the world and with every type of learners without any distinction of their religious, social or cultural backgrounds, language proficiency or age, since it can be adapted to the needs and characteristics of each one of the students.

Likewise, I noticed the relevance of using texts that are appealing to the readers' interests for them to be engaged and feel related with what they are reading and are able to identify situations in which they can feel marginalized. Each study showed me that we should find the right vehicle to let our students reflect and find in the task a reason to do it, one that goes further than achieving an academic grade or recognition. Similarly, I could find approaches and methods to use critical literacy inside the classroom and some strategies to develop reading exercises along with it.

Chapter 3

A Qualitative Research Study

Through this chapter, I will present the methodological approach that supports my research study. To begin with, I describe the participant's sample and the setting where the study took place. Additionally, I will refer to the data sources, data collection instruments and analysis, and explain the categories. In addition, I will determine my role as a researcher in this study. Finally, I will conclude with some ethical considerations.

Research Design

For the purpose of the present study, I used a qualitative research approach, because I described the reflections of second language learners through reflective journals. This way, I got in touch with these reflective practices as Richards (2003) expresses that qualitative research allows us to “get close to the practice, a first hand-sense of what actually goes on in classrooms, schools, hospitals and communities.” (p. 9). Furthermore, through this research the learners' reflections gave me the opportunity to explore, understand, and learn from the aspects that are relevant and shape these inherited processes in their social contexts (Richards, 2003; Leavy, 2014).

Stake (2010) points out that “by qualitative we mean that it relies primarily on human perception and understanding” (p.11). I paid special interest in the students' voices and the experience of writing their own thoughts and reflections when they analyze the narrative texts through the critical lens, their thoughts and expressions were one of my main focuses. According to Saldaña (2011), the information from qualitative research primarily comes from “textual materials that document human experiences about others and/or one's self in social action and reflexive states” (p.4).

A qualitative emphasis allowed me to see the participants, my students, as more than providers of data and numbers. They are characters that are constantly evolving and need to be seen from their humanity. When Stake (2010) talks about a qualitative design he mentions the importance of human perception and understanding as the basis of it.

Additionally, Feuer (2007) defends the use of qualitative methods by teacher researchers with the intention of joining and discovering questions related directly with their job as educators about practice and pedagogy. The teacher cannot be a passive personality inside the classroom and limit himself to teach, they have the duty to inquiry all the time the work that has been planned and executed as part of a constant reflection and as a result of working with human beings.

As a teacher researcher I looked for telling what my students have to express and not precisely my point of view about it, I wanted to study how they see themselves outside the educative process, how they related within social and cultural contexts and the outcomes from their critical and reflective exercises. In my role I learned from them and gained insights from it. I was the narrator of their story, I described the outcomes of their reflections, their opinions and those relevant events that took place while the development of the study. This is why qualitative descriptive research is the perfect design that suits my study. Saldaña (2011) states that qualitative research is a “factual account of the fieldwork observations to answer the questions” (p.29).

In my position I amplified my students’ voices and was the one in charge of replying their words and highlighting their experiences. I wanted to detail the events in which we were involved, how the critical literacy exercises worked inside the classroom and the results of their reflective practices. Descriptive research urges on describing the participants, activities, events or

situations to see how the things are experienced according to the phenomenon under investigation. (Leavy, 2017). Furthermore, Nassaji (2015) argues that descriptive research is “more concerned with what rather than how or why” (p.129). Therefore, my students’ experiences are part of my data since it is essential to grasp their point of view to describe them in the most accurate and faithful possible way.

Participants

The study took place with high school students from two courses of eleventh grade. Their ages vary from 15 to 18 years old. Each course had 39 students. I chose them since they were close to my teaching practices and are the ones who inspired me to understand the importance of approaching texts from a different perspective, to do more with them and to see the power of reflection, taking into account their characteristics, necessities and comments related to the English classes and their process through the years of developing the language. They showed me that they were willing to participate in the activities that all the teachers proposed them, they were students that strive to be better and were asking questions all the time. They are my purposeful sampling since it allowed me to choose the participants who gave me crucial information for the study. (Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle, 2010). Nonetheless, their participation was determined by their parents’ acceptance and consent to be part of this study (Appendix A). Saldaña (2011) concludes that “participants’ voluntary engagement in the project and our supportive rapport with them are necessary for the ethical conduct of the research”. (p.24).

Research Setting

I conducted the present research study in a public school located in Barrancabermeja, Santander. The school offers five levels of education, a pre-school, elementary, middle and high

school grades. There is also an optional program at the end of high school, where the students receive specific education to become a normal-school teacher, it lasts four semesters. In every grade, they receive English classes following the recommendations from the National ministry of Education, in pre-school and primary they receive one hour of instruction by their homeroom teachers. From sixth to ninth grade, they have English teachers and three hours of class. In high school, tenth and eleventh grade, they have four hours per week in charge of an English teacher as well. For the optional program, they have three hours per week of English, these students receive training in teaching English and the language itself.

The school has around 2100 students from different socioeconomic backgrounds among males and females. Their objective as an institution is to form teachers with a human, civic and Christian awareness. Regarding the English area, each teacher has a meso-curriculum to follow, the topics, classes, or methodologies to use and evaluate depend on the teacher's preference, there are only basic rules to follow regarding the assessment criteria.

Data Sources

In journals, I saw a platform to combine critical literacy experiences and reflective practices when the students analyzed narrative texts and connected them with their lives. They used the language through reading narrative texts from a critical lens, where they examined in depth the text to see the characteristics and connections they have in common. Also, they explored the language while writing in journals, where they found an open space to express themselves, a space to reflect. This exercise is the connection and the path to develop their critical consciousness.

Narrative texts to provoke students' reflections. For my research I chose narrative texts as the excuse to develop critical literacy exercises in my class. In a first step I presented my

students to short texts such as fiction short stories and poems, to later let them choose what they wanted to read. I wanted to give them the option to choose what to read, for that reason I created a questionnaire on Google Forms to ask them for their opinions. Each student voted for one or more texts that seemed interesting for them (Appendix C) The four texts that received more votes were the ones we continued reading. This way, I took into account their opinion, encouraged them to give their insights and knew more about their interests.

I used critical literacy to approach narrative texts during the third term of the school year. As a teacher researcher I observed, participated in the discussions, and took notes related to the students' responses, their process, evolution and results during this experience. To provoke their reflections, I used the Four Resource Model of critical readers from Luke and Freebody (1999) which sets the reader in four different roles: as a *Code breaker*, *Text user*, *Meaning maker* and *Text Critic* towards the text (Appendix B) **to approach each text**. By developing this critical exercise and record their reflections. It was easier for the students to set themselves in the text by facing their reflections.

Journals as a platform to develop critical literacy. Using journals to reflect is an exercise that needs discipline. For this reason, the activities developed in the classes needed to be planned and organized carefully through an instructional plan (Appendix B), bearing in mind that an academic term in the school is composed by 9 or 10 weeks. This way, in the first week I introduced and explained the exercise we were going to do and gave them the space to create their own journals and print in them their identities and interests, later they chose the narrative texts to read. To continue in the following weeks with the reading of texts and use of journals. Every reading led to a critical analysis and a reflective practice consolidated in the journal which let to one entry per text.

Data Collection

With the aim of collecting data to find information that helped me answer my research question, I chose two main instruments: journals and interviews. Lodico et al. (2010) argue that a “qualitative researcher typically includes more than one data collection technique at different times to validate findings” (p.165). I also used class observations to take into account those actions and situations that occurred along the process of implementation.

Journals. Reflection can be carried out individually or in groups through different implements such as reflective journals, blogs, reflective cycles as the ones proposed by Schon (1983), or Kolb (1984) among others, up to language portfolios that will gather the result of this critical exercise. These tools allow the learner to visualize their learning process and analyze it. To choose one it is necessary to take into consideration the context, needs and objectives of the reflective process.

Journals have been used as a source of data for biographers and literary scholars for hundreds of years to document the events of people’s lives. There are many different types of them that can be used for research purposes, such as time-use diaries, personal journals and electronic blogs (Alaszewski, 2006). This is an important instrument for this research since it allowed me to see the reflections from my students, their writing process and the way they analyzed texts from the critical perspective. Journals are the conjugation of all the elements present in this research. I tracked the uses of journals; the way they developed the exercises to later analyze them according to the categories I determined.

For the purpose of the present study, the journals were unstructured ones, since this type of journal as Langer (2002) explains, it “allows students to produce their own format... they are free to use a range of content and structure of design” (p.340). The creation of their journals had

some basic guidelines that the students considered; for instance, they constructed and decorate them as they wanted but they must have certain quantity of pages and be made from scratch. After reading each narrative text and developing the critical literacy practices, the students had a reflective task developed during the class according to what they have done before. Hence, this reflective practice worked as the general guideline for each entry (See Instructional plan, Appendix B). However, the students were free to add pictures, using any type of writing or expression in the journals, and they found a space to write, to express freely and reflect on their own. I was open to their creations and forms of expressions since meaning can be transmitted through different forms. Consequently, journals showed how the critical literacy exercises and critical consciousness were strengthened.

Interviews. For the intention of this study, I interviewed the students two times; one interview at the beginning of the study (Appendix D) and the other one (Appendix E) at the end of it, both in English. It consisted in two structured interviews using a protocol to know the idea that students had and how they practiced and perceived critical literacy and reflective exercises. Lankshear & Knobel (2004) assert that “the best available means for accessing study participant’s opinions, beliefs, values and situated accounts of events at a particular point in time” (p. 199) are interviews.

Additionally, Stake (2010) expresses that the purpose of interviewing is to get exclusive information from the participants, likewise to collect numerical collection of information. Similarly, Saldaña (2011) describes interviews as “the most common method of data gathering in qualitative research studies, perhaps because they directly solicit the perspectives of the people we wish to study” (p.75). I explained them the objective of each interview and how important their answers were for me. Also, I let them know that there were no right or wrong answers.

Later, they had access to the questions from the protocol so they could prepare better for that moment. I wanted to know the strategies they used to approach texts and the relationship they had with them. Furthermore, my interest was to know their insights about the process they were living and to gather more information from them and the way they perceived the process of using journals.

Observations. Throughout the collection of data, different situations occurred with the students that were not appreciated in their journals or in their interviews. This is why I considered important to take notes related to what I appreciated during the development of the exercises using an observational protocol (Appendix F) that I designed for this specific task. Stake (2010) expresses that observing data is highly preferred by qualitative researchers because there is only some “information that can be seen directly by the researcher or heard or felt” (p.90). This also helped me to reflect and analyze the procedure of each exercise, to reflect and to take decisions when it was necessary to change the plan or make emphasis in what I considered went well or was important to reinforce.

The writing process. I wanted to observe this process in the students, the way they developed their writing practice and the manner they expressed their thoughts and reflections, how they used the journals specifically for this purpose, if they did it alone or asked for help to write, if they used their own knowledge or used other resources, or even if they expressed their thoughts differently and not precisely using words.

The relationship with texts. Regarding this aspect, I took into account the forms the students used to approach the texts. Hence, I paid special attention to the time they employed when reading and analyzing the texts, the strategies they used to understand them, what they already knew or not about them, the way they analyzed the text, if they went deeper and beyond

the words from the text. I mainly considered the way the students developed a relationship with the texts.

The students' insights. Even when the journals and the interviews were a rich and main source of reliable information for my research, there was more information to take into account than the one that I could find in them, as an example the way how the students lived this process, how they read, clarified unknown vocabulary, practiced their pronunciation for reading out loud, reflecting, sharing their understandings with their peers or preparing their writing. Therefore, I bore in mind the comments they did while they developed the critical literacy exercises, what they said related to the process, what they commented that found interesting or not in the texts, their actions and reactions while they read, analyzed, reflected and expressed themselves in the journals.

The development of the critical consciousness. The critical awareness is not acquired or taught in one class; this ability is developed through a process of awakening. Step by step, through every critical experience when working with narrative texts the students' developed a critical consciousness. For some students their position and opinions towards the topic in the text were clearer than for others, and this proved that this is an individual and inner process. I remarked the interactions the students had among them while they analyzed the texts and developed the critical exercises, showing me that they perceived the social, political and economic contradictions in their reality and had their own way of transforming it or at least recognizing the way to intervene it.

Data Analysis

The process of analyzing the data was guided by four categories for which I took into consideration my conceptual framework and research question. I organized the information in each category by putting together the commonalities. I defined these categories as follows:

Categories.

The pedagogical implications of using journals in an English class. The process of using journals as tools and moments for critical literacy generated some pedagogical implications. These connotations are related to the methodology employed at the moment of using them as an instrument to reflect, to develop their writing and communicative competence. Journals became the consolidation of the participants' reading, writing and critical literacy processes as the proof of how this practice was developed. Considering that this was a provoking and free experience, their reflections were the result of using the language with a communicative purpose and having a critical stance towards a situation they were aware of.

Critical literacy and students' reflections. During the process of reading narrative texts through the critical literacy lens some reflections came up. In this category, I collected their reflections while using journals, with the aim of analyzing them from a critical perspective. I included the outcomes that my students expressed during the exercises where narrative texts were implemented for their analysis. Besides, the discussions using the language and critical literacy as a vehicle to express themselves. I wanted to relate how my students engaged in critical literacy. Therefore, I bore in mind their experiences with texts and the analysis of some of their elements such as: the characteristics of the author, the intention of the texts, textual features, characterization of the topics or characters, powers and interests (who and what is missing? what can they change?).

As well, I took into account their reflections towards the texts, if they were relevant for them, what their relationship with the text was, how they saw themselves in the text, what did they learn from it, among others.

Reading comprehension of narrative texts. For this category, I studied the participants' comprehension of what narrative texts were for, how they addressed texts and analyzed the elements present on them. I took notes when doing this exercise and wrote down some comments from the participants during the process in the observational protocol. Taking into consideration that reading is both, a cognitive and sociocultural process. My focus was on the participants' interaction with the text in light of the four-role model from Luke and Freebody (1999) as mentioned in the data sources.

Students' perceptions. During the interviews the students provided valuable information and this category is based on what the students said during those moments. Amid these sessions I found data that showed me how they perceived the critical and reflective exercises, their insights of the process, this knowledge also helped me to nourish my description. I wanted to express in detail how they saw and lived the process of approaching texts from a different perspective and the use of journals, to tell what they have to say related to this exercise's impact on them and how it evolved. I also wanted to see how their self-confidence was explored.

Trustworthiness

For a qualitative study, it is important to ensure that the data collection is done well enough to be reliable, it is essential to be able to tell the story with detail and reflexivity. Taking into account that this is a small-scale research, it does not represent the general population. Therefore, the process is based on a set of evidences that come from the participants altogether

(Yin, 2011). Moreover, Gullion (2016) remarks, “a great story evokes images, sounds, sensations, feelings, emotions, memories” (p.16). The author adds that “lack of reflexivity translates to a lack of transparency on the part of the researcher” (p.36).

It was necessary to avoid biases and to maintain a distance from the reflective product of the students’ practices through the critical exercises and the journals. Hence, I retold their experiences, describing in detail what they did. According to Choudhuri, Glauser, & Peregoy (2004) researchers are obliged to justify to the research community that they have done due diligence by having a good rationale for the study, a clear description of the data collection procedures and analytic methods, as well as a clear interpretation of the data.

Concerning the present study, as I mentioned before, I collected the data through the students’ journals, two set of interviews done to the students and the observations of the classes. I used triangulation with these data collection techniques as verification for the data analysis, to assure legitimacy to my research (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). Cresswell (2013) states that triangulation “is collecting data over different times or from different sources” (p.252). Moreover, Cohen and Manion (2000) describe triangulation as an “attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behavior by studying it from more than one standpoint” (p.254). First, I analyzed the students’ reflections in their journals, then their answers before and after the critical literacy experiences in the interviews and finally, the observations along the process of the research. I used segments of the mentioned data sources with the aim of validating and supporting the information found in other pieces of data.

Ethical Considerations

Considering that this research was developed in an educational setting with students that were mostly underage, there are several procedures that were followed to make sure that the

study was carried out in an ethical manner. Hence, I asked the school principal for permission to execute the study in our institution through a letter. The students and their parents signed an informed consent (Appendix A) where they agreed and were informed about the implications, pertinent details, procedures, benefits and risks of the study.

I followed a strict protocol with the data, to treat their personal information and to ensure anonymity. Furthermore, I tried to minimize the potential risks that participants could face and acted in accordance with ethical principles, respecting the participants' and their own human dignity; all the information published is real, and not manipulated, providing sincere information.

Role of the Researcher

In this study my role as a teacher and a researcher was an active one. I was both at the same time, it gave me the possibility and responsibility to be a data collection tool and guide the classes simultaneously. My posture was determined by the characteristics of this study. First, the participants were my students, I interacted and shared with them as a teacher, this allowed me to understand their context and to have from firsthand the data. Arghode (2012) explains that “the researchers cannot detach themselves from the research phenomenon as they bring in their subjective experiences” (p.162). The data fetched new discoveries to consider, this way it alighted the path of the study and opened new routes to take.

As a teacher researcher, I was in charge of the phenomenon under study. Stake (2010) defines qualitative researchers as those that “usually prefer the close-up view”, and those who “take a single case to study and emphasize the nature of that particular case” (p.19). I carried out the research in my own classroom, which allowed me to be immerse in my students learning process. Finally, I find important to remark Saldaña's (2011) words: “emphasis is also placed on the researcher as a human instrument, who develops not just rigorous skills but also empathetic

understanding and personal creativity in the investigation and documentation of complex social life” (p.30).

Chapter 4

Critical Literacy a Tool to Develop Critical Consciousness

The purpose of this study was to describe the reflections of eleventh grade second language learners towards narrative texts through critical literacy. Within this chapter, I relate the findings derived from an extensive analysis of the reflections found in the journals, the participants' answers during the interviews and the observations made during the staging of this research.

The pedagogical implications of using journals in an English class.

Among the pedagogical implications of using journals, I found that the students explored and used language with a specific communicative purpose, they expressed their feelings, thoughts, wishes, reflections, personal analysis and imagined ideal situations through English.

One of the ways they achieved this was through the creation of journals, which I asked them to do it with a personal touch. The results of that first exercise demonstrated how creative my students are and some hidden talents in them, I was amazed by the dedication they put and the reflection of their personalities represented there (See Figures 2 and 3). As a consequence, each journal is a genuine representation of their personalities and a message of who they are (See Figure 4).



Figure 2. Picture taken during the elaboration of journals.



Figure 3. Picture taken during the elaboration of journals.



Figure 4. Some of the students' journals.

Related to the writing process, Victoria explained that “before writing the reflection in the journal, I first enriched myself with other sources about the topic, then I made a draft in the notebook and looked for images about the subject. Then I wrote in the journal”. As for Tina, she remarked that “I asked my colleagues to correct my mistakes”. Equally, Tefa said about her writing process that “my concerns were that the words were well written according to the tenses and context”. Moreover, Rosa replied “I was concerned that the texts were consistent, in good handwriting and in making decorations related to the subject” (Interview, October 10th, 2019).

This process forced me to be flexible with the timing, the planning I did at the beginning was modified because it took longer than I expected, our discussions were challenging and more students participated on them; sometimes they used their mother tongue, Spanish, then translated or asked a classmate for help or tried to express in English their point of view, as they wanted to express themselves.

Besides, when the time to reflect came, they also spent more time on it than the one I assigned in the planning; they wanted to give their best in their reflections in the journals, so they not only wrote but draw and colored their final productions. Isa mentioned: “I tried to do it very cute, I drew and this I never do it. So, I tried to give the best expressions and the best work”. Similarly, Laura revealed: “When it comes to aesthetics, I always wanted them to wear different colors and not write in black. First, I wrote what I thought and then I did pass it to the journal” (Interview, October 10th, 2019).

Likewise, the journals were not only a piece of paper to record some thoughts, but also a mean of expression, they used it as a white canvas and the perfect opportunity to tell what they really wanted to say without the concern of a grade or of giving the right answer. During the exercises they had a lot of concerns about what should be recorded in the journals, they wanted to know the texts and the topics of reflections in advance. For this, we agreed that only their personal reflections and outcomes from reading the texts should be recorded in the journals. They were treated as a personal and private possession, when I was checking them some of the students asked me to do it privately and not while I was in the classroom.

While using the journals, the students started a writing process on their own, they found the need of organizing their ideas before starting to write. They did not want to pen a final version of their product in the first try. Therefore, they planned, wrote, revised, corrected and edited their writings, asking their classmates and me about spelling, grammar tense and unknown words to express what they truly felt. In such a way the students themselves bore in mind linguistic aspects such as spelling, grammar tenses, subject and verb agreement.

Critical literacy and students' reflections.

The results of analyzing narrative texts while using critical literacy are significant and creative productions alongside deep reflections; this was achieved through reading texts that were related with the students' realities which allowed them to give an opinion about it. In the time that the students read the texts, they showed their ability to achieve this connection. Their opinion was crucial to plan the work to develop with them, they broke the norm of doing what the teacher asked and decided freely what to read. Likewise, their reflections were the result of answering one provocative question, giving an opinion or explaining their reality. There were no major indications with respect to their reflections or writing productions, the length, form and aesthetic of it is entirely their own decision.

Some interesting thoughts and confessions came out during the first reading, a short story called *A Beast* by Guy Bass. I noticed how they related a children short story with their reality and identified real people, situations and feelings that are part of their families and consider them as beasts. Caro expressed in her reflection "I believe that in every family there is a beast and in the case of me is incomprehension" (Taken from Caro's journal). As for Ela, "I think that in every family there is that typical manipulative person, who only does things for his benefit. I think that place would be occupied by my brother, that with just crying he gets everything he wants" (Taken from Ela's journal). Some other students expressed what they felt and the characteristics they related a beast with, negative feelings and actions (Figure 5). The fact they were able to judge and decide what wrong good and wrong because it affected them and their families, showed me the way they intertwined their realities with the reading and analyzed them. (Figure 6).

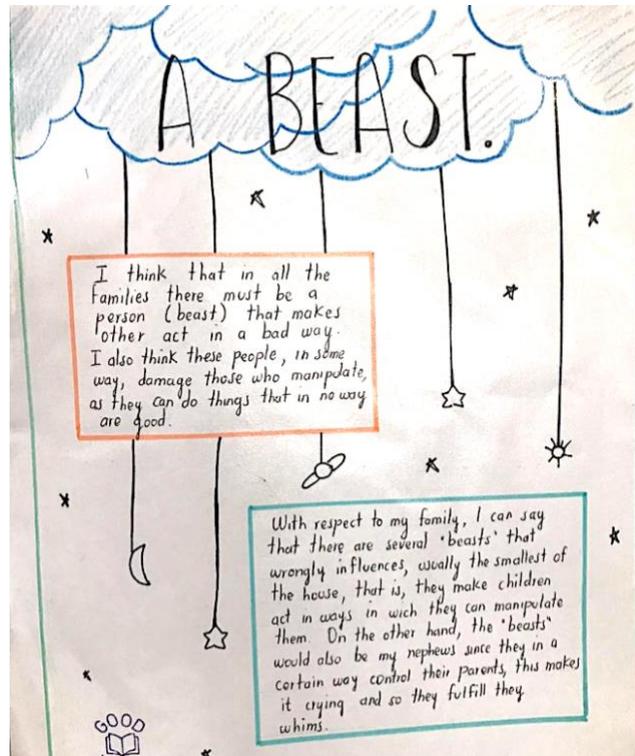


Figure 5. Taken from Juli's journal.

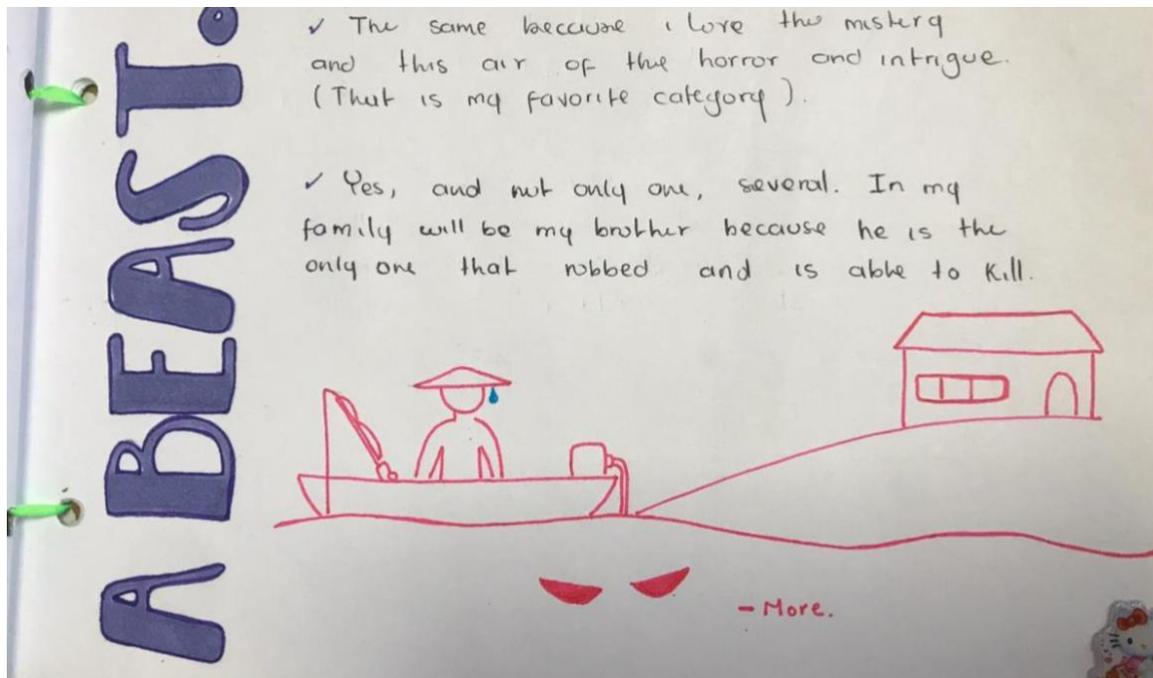


Figure 6. Taken from Tina's journal.

From the pedagogical part, I wanted to make this process interesting and appealing to make my students participate and reflect about it, I chose topics that are related to them. Thus, they read, discussed and reflected about family, school, the world and their personal future. With the strategies implemented in the first exercise, they answered some questions taking into account the *Four Resource Model* by Luke and Freebody (1999). As an example, they looked for familiar and new words in the text, finding the adjectives that described the characters personality as common for them, while the name of the main character, Tuna, confused some of them and was categorized as a new word (Code Breaker); They answered questions related to their feelings when reading the text and to speculate what might happen next since the text had an open-ending and the let the reader to interpret the situation from different perspectives (Meaning Maker); later they analyzed the structure of the text and its purpose, they paid attention to the layout of it, the type of texts and related this short story with the tales they read when they were little kids (Text User). To finish this exercise, the students answered what the position of the author would be, the most important learning from it (Text Critic) and reflected about what could be considered as a “beast” in a family, demonstrating how they related a hostile character like the Beast with diverse attitudes, situations or family members.

Continuing with the exercises related to family matters, we read *For a Daughter Who Leaves*, a poem by Janice Mirikitani, the students were asked to write a poem on their own related to family relationships or an important relative and their memories together. However, this time they did not ask about the length or quantity of words, they were autonomous and even decided to give a twist to their poems and wrote poems which talked about bias that people usually have related to the actions that girls or boys typically do (See Figure 7).

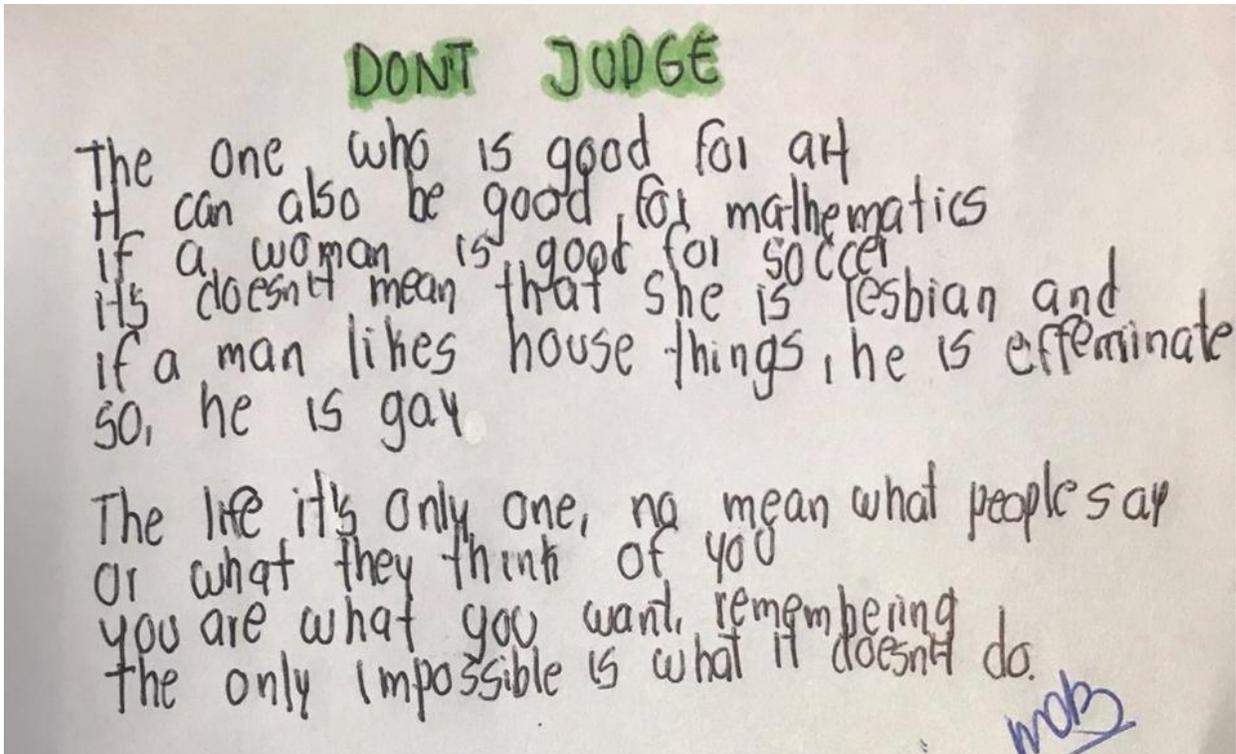


Figure 7. Taken from Santi's journal.

There was another poem that explored the upcoming situation that some of them will live of moving out to university and the teachings received from their parents (See Figure 8); another poem talked about the viewpoints people have regarding women that primp (See Figure 9). Through this exercise a lot of topics were discussed, the students had an opinion about them and supported them with facts and stories they knew well. A topic that makes part of their reality and is up to date allowed them to form and express their position, it was a rich source to use language and an excellent communicative tool to develop students' language and critical skills.



Figure 8. Taken from Sofia's journal.

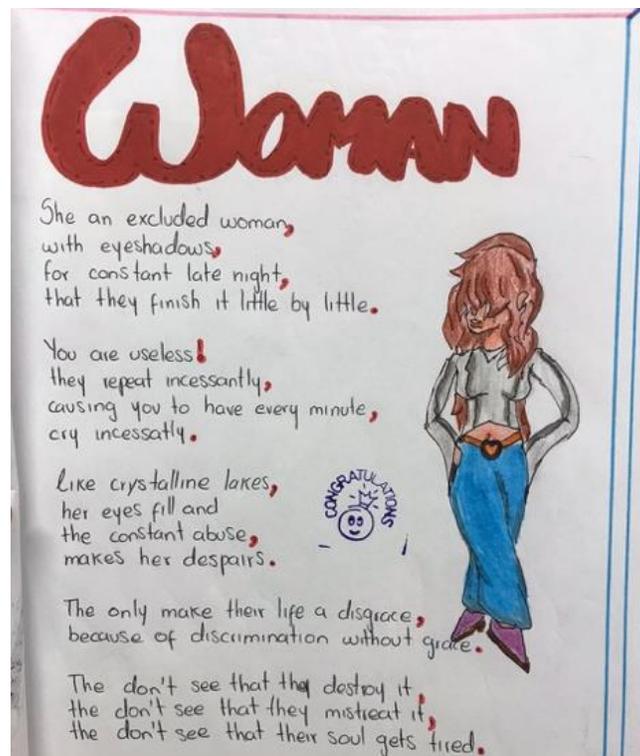


Figure 9. Taken from Rosa's journal.

As I could notice the reading had to change to make it attractive to the students; this time they read the poem by stanzas, some students volunteered themselves to do it. Likewise, I changed the questioning since it took more time than I expected to work with each text and its reflection and focus on one question or aspect per role. Therefore, for this poem, they predicted the topic from the title and noticed who the author was in the Meaning maker role; regarding the Code Breaker role, they found the actions in the poem and after discussing the meaning they mimicked them. For the Text User role, they gave new possible titles for the poem and identified its characteristics.

Finally, for the fourth role, the Text Analysis, they identified the purpose and the topic, the purpose and bias of the text. Their analysis was deep and important for identifying the characters, they defined as “typical” that a mom is regretting her daughter leaves her house and the author does not portray a dad and a son. Or the fact that girls are treated as children even when they are grown up adults because families think they are delicate, soft and unsecure to take charge of their own lives. Some other students were beyond while analyzing the text and mentioned as a scientific fact that women are more emotional for her hormones which make them more sentimental than men, and some others mentioned the type of relationship they have with their parents, some being more attached to their mothers more or some others to their fathers, they even rated the level of trust they have with their parents.

Changing the topic of the readings, we moved to the school setting and read a short story called *Pink Bow Tie* by Paul Jennings, through this text they talked about a context in which they are immerse most of the time. Their creations showed that they want a school that potentiates specific skills in the students. Hence, each school was focused on what they are good at and what they like. One of their productions showed a school in which there was not oppression or rules

which tell them how to act and think (Figure 10) with this Jhon stated his position towards the government.



Figure 10. Taken from Jhon's journal.

Their position is clear, their school must change from the one where they study. They found as ideal a place in which there is half of the students they normally study at school (Figure 11), the subjects explore all the human dimensions and not only the academic ones, some of them were beyond the indications and created a syllabus (Figure 12). Through this exercise the students were able to take a critical position and create an alternative one, a school that is the response to what they live, to the context that shapes them.

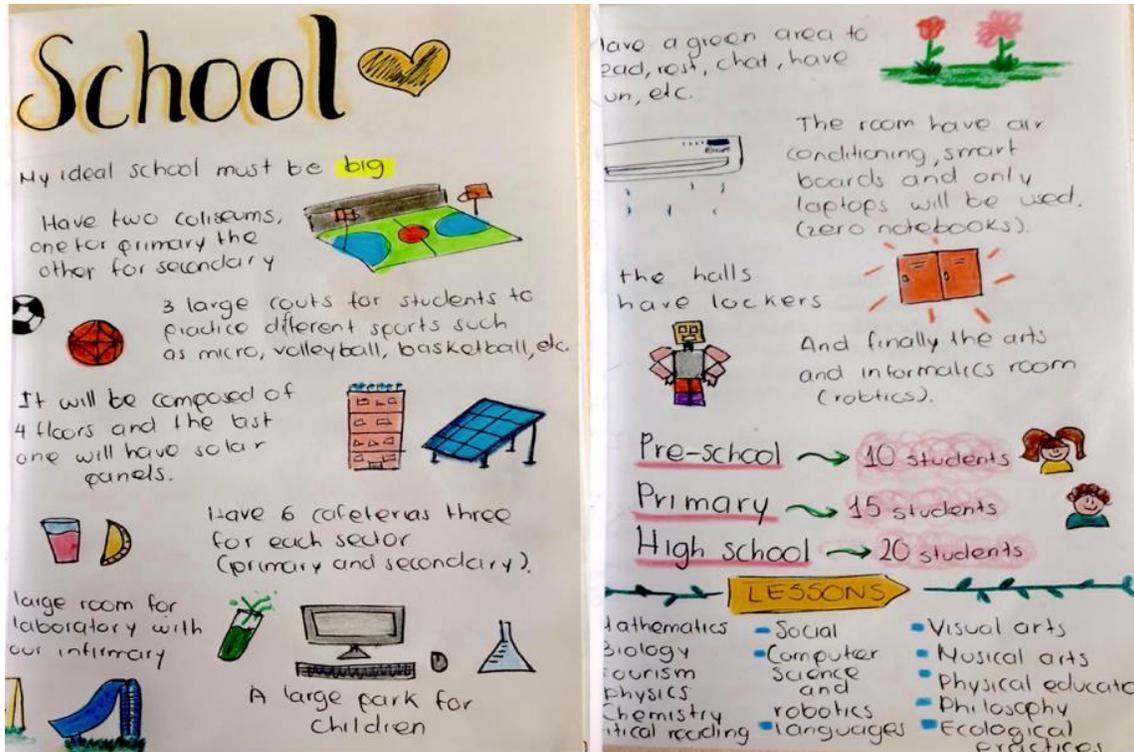


Figure 11. Taken from Aleja's journal.

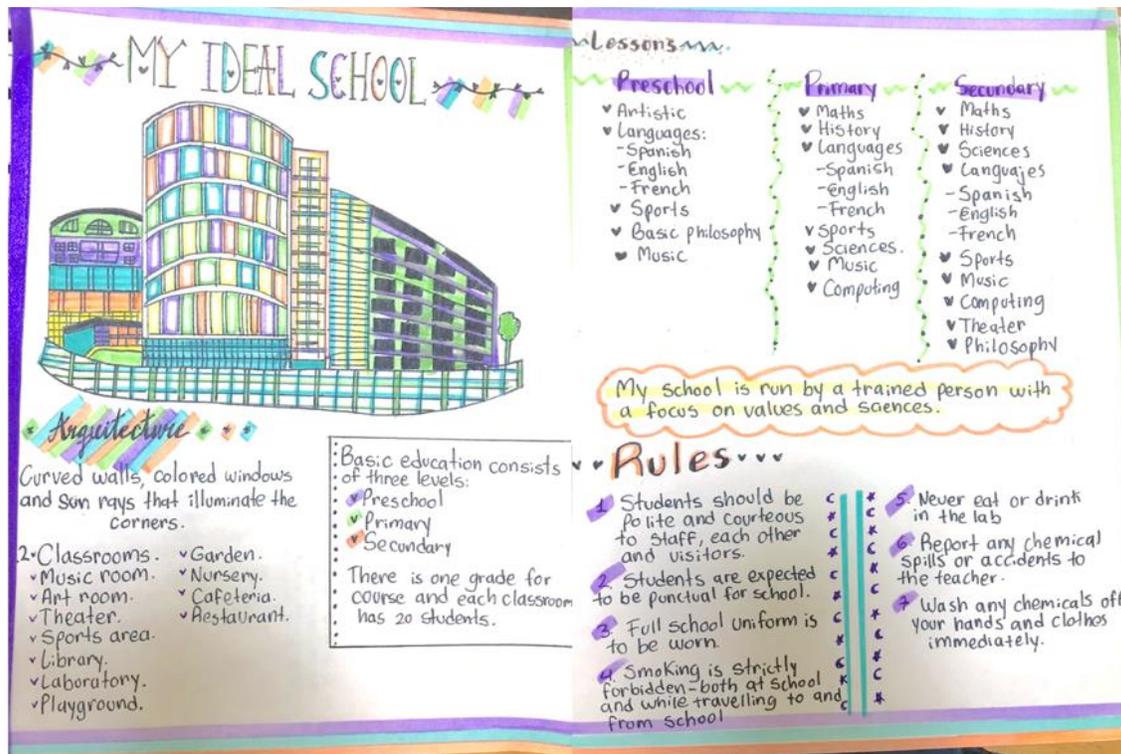


Figure 12. Taken from Angie's journal.

For this exercise, to crack the text as a code they focused on the characters and their descriptions, with them, they draw a portrait of one of the characters, which helped to check their vocabulary and reading comprehension too. Later, they gave their insights to help understand the text as participants of it and talk about the prohibitions they had in school and the one presented in the text, they made a list of this things and decided if these prohibitions were fair or not. Besides, as users of the text they discussed the purpose of it; as critics they talked about which voice was privileged and which one was neglected in the story. Finally, they reflected about the ideal school and designed one in which they decided the number of students, rules, subjects, and who would be in charge of the school.

Moving on to a different subject the next readings were about the future, two short poems written by Carolyne Ardron, for this exercise the students did some research in the news. I asked them to look for news that seemed interesting and pertinent for them bearing in mind the theme of the poems. In the connection they made, they were able to identify climate issues as a topic to pay attention to and a threaten to our future (See Figure 13). Hope appeared as a feeling among the concern, this feeling in finding news about sustainable options like recycling programs and companies that take responsibility of their ecological print (See Figure 14). In their reflections they demonstrated a clear posture and that portrays distress for a possible extinction and see humanity as the cause and the solution for climate issues (See Figure 15).

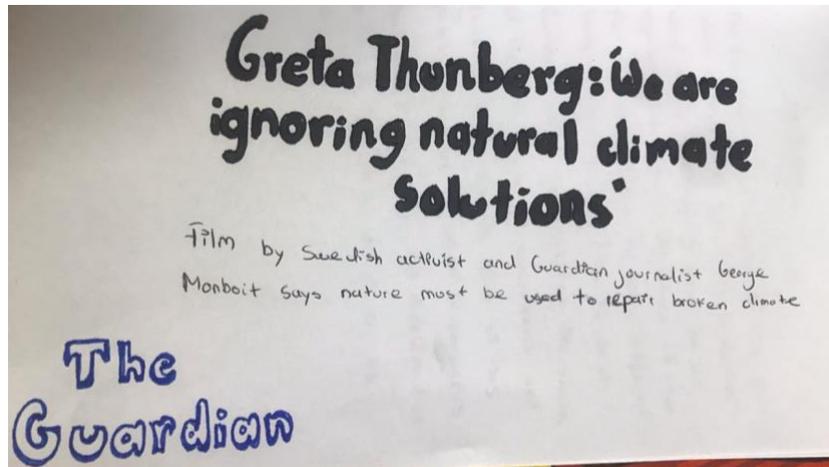


Figure 13. Taken from Javier's journal.

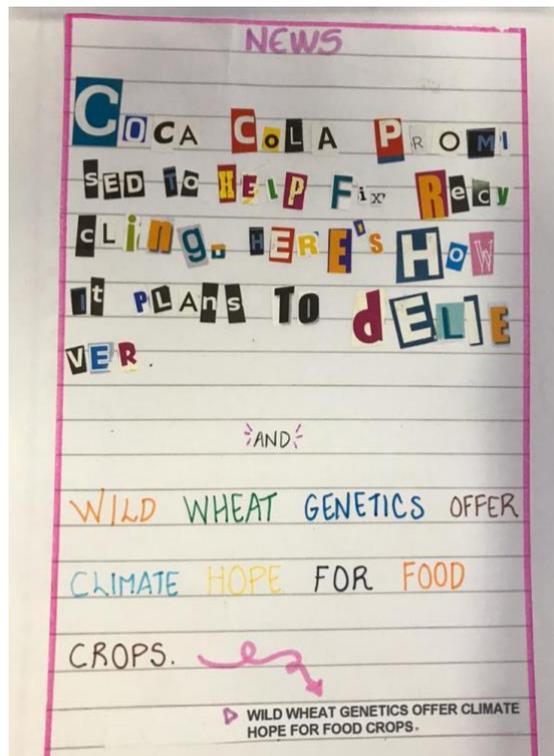


Figure 14. Taken from Kika's journal.

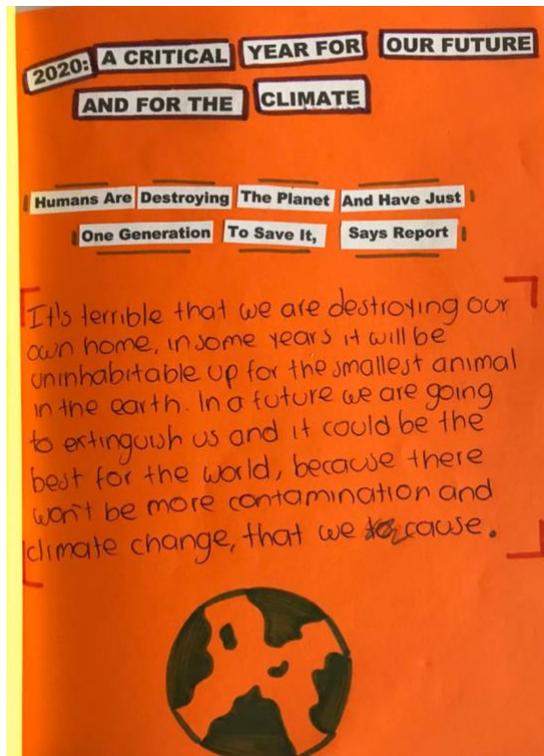


Figure 15. Taken from Angela's journal.

Through this practice the students showed me that the length of the text does not have to be long to provoke in them a deep response. With these short poems they analyzed the structure of a poem such as counting the stanzas and finding the rhythm in them (Code Breaker), they expressed their feelings while they read the poems (Meaning maker); moreover they identified the aspects in the poems that were directly related to the future (Text User). Additionally, the students discussed what the author's intention was (Text Critic). This way their research demonstrated the connection the students are able to make with their realities and their concern when thinking about the future.

The last exercise was a short story, *The Colorful Life of Calum*, by Ron Butlin which main topic exposes the way we see life when kids, and contrast it when we become adults. This time the reading was done using an audio with the voice of the author to continue with the analysis through the Four Roles. Some of the students described adults as conformist people that

get used to corruption and become afraid of changing the routine and catalogue us as cowards for not changing this situation in which we act as it is expected and accepted by society.

They also revealed that a way to stay genuine and be sure to follow their dreams is remembering their aspirations as kids, those child dreams would be more connected to reality now and show those dreams as an objective to achieve (See Figure 16). Besides, they reflected about the moment they were living at the time and that new life they would start living when they went to university, showing a path to shape those dreams (See Figure 17). However, some other students lived the same moment with uncertainty. (See Figure 18)



Figure 16. Taken from Juana's journal.



Figure 17. Taken from Cristi's journal.

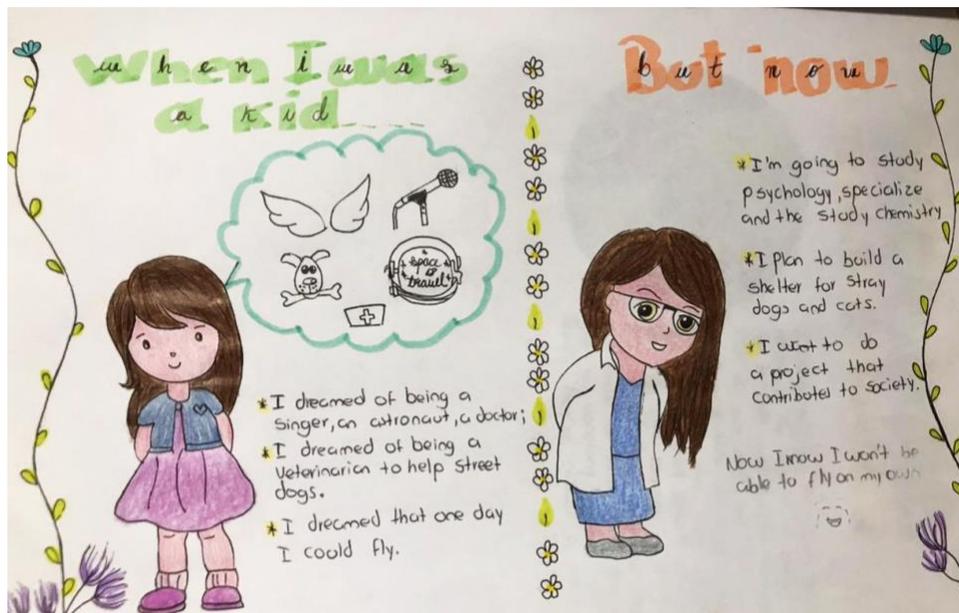


Figure 18. Taken from Mafe's journal

These implications are the result of reading the short story as a Code Breaker focused on the unknown vocabulary and an exercise to match the definition of it in English, then as a Meaning maker the students associated personal conditions like anger, jealousy, rage, surprise,

cowardice, fear among others with colors like green, black, red, blue, white and yellow, they shared what these colors made them feel and what they thought those colors projected. Then, the text was analyzed as Text Users in which students analyzed the context of it and the degree of the formality in it. For the Text Critic role, the point of view of the author was compared to a rat race type of society in which we live, some students commented that even when they are not adults they live in rat race too since their actions are part of a cycle based on studying, graduating, getting a job to buy things, or to travel. They saw a way out of this cycle by doing what they like and looking for genuine happiness with what they do.

Reading comprehension of narrative texts.

For the students to read narrative texts was an opportunity to discover the reason behind this type of texts, they found different kind of stories which were chosen by answering a questionnaire on Google Forms (Appendix C), with this they had the option of choosing the material to work on. In the pre-reading stage, they found fun to anticipate and predict what the texts were about, most of the time the title was not enough to know it. For example, when they read *A Beast* by Guy Bass one of the students associated it with depression, or when they read *The Colorful Life of Calum McCall* by Ron Butlin, their expectations were completely different for Kevin, after reading the title to predict what the story was about he expressed, “I think it tells the adventures of a boy”. Then, the students were exposed to different ways of reading them, we did silent reading, reading as a whole class, out loud, in couples or in groups with the aim of approaching them in varied ways.

Likewise, with the purpose of understanding better the text it was necessary to explore the unknown vocabulary, through diverse activities where the unfamiliar words were anticipated or they could relate to them. Julie said, “we read in group, then we were looking for unknown

words and finally we shared our views”. (Interview, October 18th, 2019). Reading has to be fun, as well as the expectation of the reading is fundamental to keep them enthusiastic during the whole exercise, thorough the reading they are discovering aspects like the characters or events that keep them entertained.

During the first exercises they stopped the reading to ask questions about it, later they started to use dictionaries from the library or dictionary apps on their cellphones; at the end this activity was done independently, only in some cases, they asked me about it. Besides it was easier for them to identify the characters, plot, setting and event in the narrative texts with the pass of exercises. I could notice that some of them agreed in the answers but their interpretation depended on their own point of view and understanding when we analyzed the texts from the participant role (Four Resource Model by Luke & Freebody, 1999) their answers varied.

The length of the texts was not a problem with them, for those longer texts they were more focused and did not want to interrupt the reading and the pacing of the exercise, while with those short poems and readings their participation in the discussions were the same, what was important for them was the topic of each reading which kept them interested and a participant on it. Moreover, the questioning that I planned at the beginning had to change, I notice that it was not important the quantity of questions but the quality, sometimes I used only one question for each role and their answer demonstrated the understanding of them. The questioning also varied in form, and the way they answered, sometimes we discussed them as a whole class, some others they discussed them in groups or with a pair, they answered them in the notebook, or with the teacher’s interaction.

Students’ perceptions.

At the beginning their perceptions were based on what they already knew about using journals and being critical; during the interviews some students thought that when we talked about journals we referred to newspapers, for example Julian mentioned: “I used to do my practices in my school or when I read the newspaper to stay informed”. Similarly, Beto expressed: “I used a journal when I need to know information about the country, and I used to be informed” (Interview, July 17th, 2019).

Differently, Victoria revealed that when she was a child, she used journals to write her secrets and added “on that was all my problems and feelings”. As for Ela she used journals: “to express my thoughts or feelings because I’m afraid to trust someone” (Interview, July 17th, 2019). Students found in journals a personal connection, it became a part of them and a tool to express themselves through it; language was not an obstacle to say something, in a largest or smallest type of expression they had something to say and it was genuinely their production.

Respecting Anna declared that when using the journal: “I wanted to represent me, both my thoughts and my tastes”. Isa avowed that “At the beginning I didn’t think in express an idea but after I started to reflect about the topics proposed by the teacher”, she also added “I think it was very good for me. In my opinion it’s necessary for reflect about the things that happen in your life and create new visions about some situations”. (Interview, October 18th, 2019).

When we read the first text which was a short story with an open end, Lina approached me and asked me to bring more texts like that one, because she really enjoyed reading it due to the intrigue about not knowing what was about to happen next. Furthermore, John mentioned “It’s an interesting process, analyze a text from a critical perspective contribute to our formation and encourage us to have a personal opinion about topics in general”. For Anna, the process of approaching texts “gets you a clearer concept of each thing that is read, you can better

understand the text”. Some of the students were honest and demonstrated the struggle they had to express themselves and read texts beyond answering reading comprehension questions. For Sebas, reading from a critical perspective “was hard, because it’s complicated for me”, later he commented that he “liked because I had to be critic and I wanted to demonstrate that I’m good doing draws and being creativity”. (Interview, October 18th, 2019).

I was allowed to hear from them the way they were experiencing the process through the set of interviews carried out before and after the process, besides the interaction with the students while we developed the study. They were always keen on knowing which will be the next reading and the exercises for it, even when the exercises were full of expectations.

Answering the Research Question

How can a critical literacy process empower second-language learners through narrative texts?

As a consequence of critical literacy, the students were able to analyze and state a position towards social and cultural situations they found in narrative texts. These texts were close to their realities which made them appealing and known by them, this provoked an interest in them and the need to state and tell an opinion about the texts. Hence, with critical literacy the students used the language to communicate an idea of their own, to let other know what they think and the position they take in these themes.

Their creativity supported their opinions, through drawings, colors or just simplicity, they expressed themselves and showed who they are, they used a second language keeping in mind the objective of the reflections, they wanted to express an idea, here is where the connection of their realities transformed the desire and the idea into an opinion, into real words that they shaped inspired by the stories in the texts. Through their reflections, they demonstrated they have

a well-formed opinion and position about current issues, they comprehend causes and consequences of their decisions and they are full of hopes and dreams, they wanted a change in their contexts.

Reading narratives through critical literacy showed the students that there is no need to understand every single word of a text to comprehend its purpose and the ideas behind it, that they understand English even if this happens because they can recognize what the text communicates and they can use a second language to be part of their contexts. They developed confidence in their communicative and critical consciousness, they became autonomous and overcome obstacles while reading and writing, they chose freely what to read, volunteered to participate and kept track of their process when writing their reflections.

Chapter 5

Critical Literacy to Connect and Change the Students' Realities

Critical literacy looks for breaking what we understand as normal and acceptable in social and cultural contexts where students are immerse, while empowering them to examine and change these situations. A part of it relies on reflection, which force opens a new spectrum of analysis about things, people and situations (Gutierrez, 2008; Morgan 1997; Morrell, 2005). Students who have critical literacy as a platform to approach texts with a different perspective, one that allows them to analyze the text from their own knowledge and interpretation of the world, are becoming autonomous and aware of social, political and economic contradictions, owning their knowledge and connecting it with their reality. Using these potent powers inside the classroom, where language is the tool to explore and express the most inner thoughts, result in a sprouting of new stories to tell, where the student is the main character and the one who designs and gives them a frame.

The Pillars Holding the Development of Critical Consciousness

My main idea at the beginning of this study was to use reflective practices with a purpose, to give that action a value in the educational field, to show the students the power they have when they take a moment to use their education to analyze the situations they live in or surround them. Therefore, critical literacy appeared as a way of approaching that field, since it looks for breaking what we understand as standard and acceptable in social and cultural contexts where students are part of, while empowering them to change these situations. These two concepts are part of each other, critical literacy needs reflection to take a look at the broad picture and analyze all the components in it. Likewise, reflection finds in critical literacy a path to expand its outcomes, otherwise its practice will remain inconsistent.

Taking into consideration what I described in the theoretical framework related to critical literacy approaching texts, to reflect about its characteristics, background, purpose and significance as a way to practice it, I could notice that critical literacy was the path to find in narratives an ulterior motive besides telling stories and playing with people's imagination. Narratives tell different stories, one that the author wants to portray plus the message that each reader finds in it, which I consider is the most important one. When the students read these narrative texts, they found the language in it portrayed as a code, besides through this experience it was a way of conveying meaning and a path to explore their inner and outer world.

To keep track of this, journals were the perfect allied, they were an instrument to reflect, to keep track of thoughts, feelings and actions but within critical literacy I found that journals became a tool to express, to explode imagination, to draw and feel free to think, to make valuable an opinion and to tell their side of the story; journals gave a voice to my students, it was their way of connecting themselves with the world. They explored reflective practices through their journals which gave them the opportunity to dig in their minds and put into words and draw what they had to say to the world. As a consequence of reflection and critical literacy, the students had the opportunity to think and decide by themselves.

Another important factor that made part of this study was the questioning done through the critical literacy exercises and the Four Resource Model (Luke & Freebody, 1999) as a consequence of critical literacy and reflection; this practice let the students to ask questions and look for answers, the reasons and purposes behind the texts, when a student starts to question the knowledge is becoming an active and empowered subject in their society. Therefore, to read through critical literacy practices allowed the students to be aware of their role and all the potential they have.

The Significance of Using Journals

As for students their journals had two main repercussions; the first one is the sentimental connotation, in which the journals were more than blank pages because they were an extension of themselves making them meaningful and a representation of what they are as human beings in a specific time and place. Another one, is related to their learning process and the development of their writing skills, they were able to identify which was the best process to organize their writing, being aware of what they needed to have a final product. Moreover, they were able to use it as a mean of expression, they used words and drawings to convey a message demonstrating the magic of understanding the world they live in.

As for me, as an educator, journals were the opportunity to remind that my classes spin around my students, their desire to do more, to analyze deeper and express what they truly felt forced me to be more flexible with the time, having a primary aim to use language with a purpose. This tool was the opportunity to make them develop their critical and communicative skills at the same time, they were interested in their jobs and the grade was not their main objective. Although giving them guidelines is fundamental, it is also important to step aside and let them choose, to trust in their choices to create, to do and to say. This was a rewarding experience that summarized some personal aims I have as an educator.

The Critical Literacy's Role

Critical Literacy was the key to connect the written reflections with the reading of narrative texts. This means that reading a text and pore over it in all its aspects, and what it entails for the reader result in a deep reflective production. According to this, using the *Four Resources Model* was the chance to recognize the text and analyze its structural characteristics, to participate in its interpretation from particular cultures, families or communities, to negotiate

the social relationships that shape it, and to analyze the text itself, its purpose, design and discourses.

Besides, critical literacy allowed the students to make an analysis to the texts that joined their contexts with the ones on the narratives, making easier for them to feel related and able to express what they already knew and had experienced. This triggered their interest and disposition to set a position, express a message or tell an opinion.

Reading Narratives

What I discovered along my students in this process when reading texts, was that narratives texts are more than a story or an entertainment for the reader. The students' interpretation was based on their own experiences; the type of person they are was reflected in the way they interpreted and anticipated the text story. To achieve this, it was necessary to vary the way the story was presented to the students, I used different strategies, but for them it was better to have the text in their hands instead of projecting it on the board, for example.

Furthermore, the reading of the text had to change from text to text, we did silent reading, as a whole class, reading out loud, in couples or in groups. One of the repercussions that I believe is the most important one regarding the reading of narrative texts is that the students did not give up reading the text, even when they faced long or more complex texts than others, they wanted to read, understand, analyze and understand them.

The Students' Insights

From the students' perceptions I could validate what I observed with their opinions and perceptions about the process, they were always open to share their thoughts and the way they lived the process, they took decisions regarding what to read and gave their opinions in respect of some activities that for them were fun or more interesting. As an example, I noticed how they

changed the way they perceived journals and its purpose, and at the end most of them used their journals for reflective purposes.

Likewise, they had a critical task to carry out and this put language as a mean and not the main objective of it, their opinions and perceptions were more important, this way language was not their main concern and got them stuck while they organized or wrote their productions. To keep track of all their comments and assertions I found useful the observational protocol, it became challenging to run the class and keep a record of those interesting comments and actions coming from the students. Additionally, reflection became a mandatory step for me before starting a new exercise, this way I could take a look at those notes and plan better the activities.

Limitations

As an apprentice researcher, I am aware that this study presented some constraints, that I faced challenges throughout the process. Nonetheless, these issues certainly helped me to improve along the way and future research studies. I paid special attention and tried to identify weaknesses related to the time to gather the data, to find more literature related to critical literacy and journals with high school students and that the fact that this study was framed in a particular setting, the findings will not be seen as a general truth. In this segment I describe the limitations of my study and explain new opportunities to face them in a future.

The first one was related to the time when I implemented the research, my students were coursing the last year of their high school and while we were developing the activities they were finalizing their preparation for taking the national test, some of the students were concerned about it and their mind was focused on it, their conversations, free time and school activities were devoted to this preparation. Therefore, I explained the plan of work I had for them to balance both activities; I showed them all the activities we had done during the year as

preparation for this specific text and how critical literacy and reading narratives were helping them to work on their reading and analysis skills which are extremely helpful for taking this type of texts. Even though they wanted to keep reading more texts and even they proposed a book. Nonetheless, the time was not enough to continue with the curriculum and specific critical literacy activities like the ones developed in the implementation of this research.

Another restriction was related to the characteristics of the exercises we developed during this project. The students participated in this process that took a little bit more than three months and did not receive a specific grade for the quality or quantity of their productions and some of them are used to receive a grade of every action or exercise done during classes. I guided them while we read, reflected and wrote in their journals but I did not take this into account for the grades of the English class. At the beginning, not all the students had the same willingness to participate and few students did not give their journals the necessary importance. They forgot the journals at home and wanted to use their regular notebook instead, therefore it took a little bit more time for them to develop the exercises and understand the purpose of their journal.

Regarding the administrative processes, I found a limitation in the tracking of the implementation of the curriculum and the approach the school have by means of the academic coordinator, even when I had previously sent a letter to the principal explaining the purpose and methodology of the research, they were concerned with the compliance of every aspect from the curriculum and the preparation for the end of the school exam and felt I was devoting more time to the research project than the established curriculum. Even, they asked me to stop implementing the project for a while. Hence, it was necessary to present the project to a part of the administrative staff, to explain what we were doing and how the end of the school exam preparation was carried out during the whole academic year, to show the tasks development and

how the students were using the language in them. However, this was the perfect opportunity to share and explain them a way of using the language and teaching English with a realistic purpose.

Finally, I found a limitation regarding the questioning I had planned when designing the methodology of the study, for that part I had planned a lot of questions and planned that the students answered them individually on their journals. However, during the first exercise I realized it would be monotonous to do it like that; also, the students decided to use the journals only for their reflections. To deal with this I had to change the questioning and vary the quantity, the way of doing it and the students' manner of answering them. For the next opportunities I used different strategies to ask the questions, they chose a piece of paper, a number on a board game, organized the question in groups and shared their answers in groups or a whole class, they discussed and gave a common answer or insight as a group, among others.

Recommendations for Future Research

The implications of this research are not a closed road at all, they are a basis to keep studying the role of critical literacy and reflection in an English Second Language classroom. There are thousands of public and private schools where this study can be used as a guide to read narrative or, I believe informative texts will be a great source to follow this path taking into account their pertinence to the context and time where the students are living. Another option, that at the same time tackles one of the limitations, is to use texts that can be found in the course book to weave together curriculum and this type of research.

Regarding reflection and the uses of journals, for teachers who use or are willing to use new technologies inside their classroom, they can introduce this study and focus the reflective practices in a different platform, they can use a social network, or an affinity space, or a blog to

develop these exercises or new reflective activities there. If I had the opportunity to implement once again this study, I would like to take into account one of these options to involve Multiliteracies to it and boost the students' motivation and explore a different area of literacies.

Moreover, if a teacher or researcher wants to continue with this study, I believe it can be replicated with participants in different ages, I suggest to carry it out with earlier teenagers or even with children to describe the outcomes of their critical analysis and reflections.

Independently of the age, human beings can reflect about any situation that is related to their context, consequently their outcomes will be a priceless source to understand the role of critical literacy and reflection in a similar setting.

Finally, with respect to our professional development as teachers and to teacher's preparation, universities are the ones responsible for designing a program that responds to the learners' and pre-service teachers' needs. It is time to head out the future and leave aside the traditional theories and methodologies in the curricula. Hence, the curricula should be a reflection of this and provide training related to critical perspectives. There is an urgent need for knowing and learning more about these theories, literacies and what they entail. This study suggests the requirement of having critical literacy inside the universities for teacher preparation, and professional development to see and use the language as a mean and purpose of transforming the students' realities.

Conclusions

Critical literacy was the starting point in this study, it was a platform for my students to approach texts and reflect about a way of "reading the world and the word" (Freire & Macedo, 1997), it gave them the necessary tools and skills that empowered them to read the narratives. Through this study, the students were not focused on giving a specific answer or one that was

literal to the text, the main objective was to understand the deep characteristics of the texts, to why it was written, who had written it, what the purpose was, the voices that were highlighted and those that were neglected, they were able to connect the text and the message that was there for them with their lives.

The implications of this study were the multiple bridges that the students could build among them and the texts, how those stories made sense for them and their socio-cultural contexts, they connected with texts in a way that they felt that the texts were written for them, having a special and different message for each one. When we give our students the opportunities to reflect about those messages behind the text, they are using the language to explore the world, thus the communicative goal is achieved inside the class, and one of the most important repercussions was to show them that they are able to use the language with a specific purpose.

The students were able to analyze their relationship with the language and faced challenges to read and to express, they dodged those barriers and expressed their inner thoughts about topics that are well-known for them and for which they have a position or were discovering one. Another relevant repercussion was the writing process they developed through their reflective practices, they were able to identify their needs, to plan and execute a plan, to start a draft and transform it in a final product. They were not restricted in the form of the text instead, they created one with their personal touch and were empowered to believe in what they wanted to say and the way of doing it.

The perfect mean to do what I mentioned above were their journals, the students saw in them an extension of what they are; its repercussion is a memory of what they did, it is a document to keep as long as they want, a proof and a reminder of what they are able to do, where

they stated their position towards topics such as their families, school, future and they dare to share their dreams and ambitions. Within journals the students were able to connect the texts with their realities which made them relate and feel their analysis as personal.

When talking about the skills they developed it is fundamental to mention the autonomy they developed through the study, this is a direct consequence of their critical consciousness, they took responsible decisions by themselves but also, they took into account the social context where they interacted while being independent. Therefore, our teaching practices must point to a process which is student centered that looks for developing in them new skills to assume responsibility of their own learning processes.

What I learned

The first time I used reflection in my professional career was through a reflective journal about my teaching practices, during this experience I underwent the power of introspection and of kept track of what I did. However, for this research I realized that reflection is not only for teachers or about deep thinking our actions or what happened to us. Reflection got a new meaning to me and to my students as the way of connecting the language with ourselves.

Likewise, critical literacy taught me to look in a different direction, to plan and lead my teaching to aims, processes and activities centered in the students. Giving them this power did not put me aside in the process, on the contrary it gave me more responsibility to plan with care what I wanted my students to do with the language, and most importantly I feel that I achieved my purpose that it was to give my students the opportunity to notice what they could do and how language is a tool to discover the world. I experienced the power of transforming the educational setting which I make part of through research. Lastly, with all these aspects I feel challenged to

keep wondering, studying and proposing new platforms where my students question what they face, connect with their realities and transform them.

References

- Abednia, A. (2015). Practicing critical literacy in second language reading. *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 6(2).
- Alaszewski, A. (2006). *Using diaries for social research*. London: Sage
- Arghode, V. (2012). Qualitative and Quantitative Research: Paradigmatic Differences. *Global Education Journal*, 2012(4).
- Barkhuizen, G., Benson, P., & Chik, A. (2013). *Narrative inquiry in language teaching and learning research*. Routledge.
- Bishop, E. (2014). Critical literacy: Bringing theory to praxis. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 30 (1)
- Bolton, G. (2010). *Reflective practice: Writing and professional development*. Sage publications.
- Brannon, L., Urbanski, C., Manship, L., Arnold, L., & Lannone, T. (2010). EJ in Focus: The Ebay-ification of Education: Critical Literacy in a Consumerocracy. *The English Journal*, 99(3), 16-21.
- Bruner, J. S. (2003). *Making stories: Law, literature, life*. Harvard University Press.
- Choudhuri, D., Glauser, A., & Peregoy, J. (2004). Guidelines for writing a qualitative manuscript for the Journal of Counseling & Development. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 82(4), 443-446.
- Cohen, L. M., & Manion, L. (2000). L. and Morrison. *Research methods in education*, 5.
- Comber, B. (2015). Critical literacy and social justice. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 58(5), 362-367.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design. Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How We Think*. 1st ed. Boston: D.C. Heath & Co.

- Du Bois, W. E. (1989). *The souls of black folk [1903]*. na.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1899). *The Philadelphia negro: A social study* (No. 14). Published for the University.
- Dunkelblau, H. (2007). ESL students discover the rewards of reading through reader response journals. *ENCOUNTER: Education for Meaning and Social Justice*, 20(2), 50-55.
- Elder, L., & Paul, R. (1994). Critical thinking: Why we must transform our teaching. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 18(1), 34.
- Feuer, A. (2007). How Qualitative Research Changed Me: A Narrative of Personal Growth. *Qualitative Report*, 12(1), 122-130.
- Freebody, P. (1992). A socio-cultural approach: Resourcing four roles as a literacy learner. *Prevention of reading failure*, 48-60.
- Freebody, P., & Luke, A. (1990). Literacies programs: Debates and demands in cultural context. *Prospect: An Australian Journal of TESOL*, 5(3), 7-16.
- Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 1968. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Herder
- Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy. Reading the word and the world*. Massachusetts: Bergin
- Gambrell, L. B. (1996). Creating classroom cultures that foster reading motivation. *Reading Teacher*, 50, 14-25.
- Gardner, J. G. (2012). *The Inverted Agricultural Economics Classroom: A new way to teach? A new way to learn?* (No. 323-2016-11330).
- Gramsci, A., & Antonio, G. (1994). *Gramsci: Pre-prison writings*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gregg, S. C., Hoyte, K. W., & Flint, A. S. (2012). I could just go free in my mind': Combining critical Literacy, reader response, and writer's workshop in the elementary classroom.

- Illinois reading council Journal*, 40(4), 19-25.
- Gullion, J. S. (2016). A brief history of ethnography. In *Writing Ethnography* (pp. 3-6). SensePublishers, Rotterdam.
- Gutiérrez, K. D. (2008). Developing a sociocritical literacy in the third space. *Reading research quarterly*, 43(2), 148-164.
- Hikmat, M. H. (2017). Developing Students' Critical Literacy In Reading Class at An English Education Department In Indonesia.
- Horkheimer, M. (1972). *Critical theory: Selected essays* (Vol. 1). A&C Black.
- Janks, H. (2000). Domination, access, diversity and design: A synthesis for critical literacy education. *Educational review*, 52(2), 175-186.
- Janks, H. (2014). Critical literacy's ongoing importance for education. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(5), 349-356.
- Ko, M. Y., & Wang, T. F. (2013). EFL learners' critical literacy practices: A case study of four college students in Taiwan. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 22(3), 221-229.
- Kolb, D (1984). *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development* [internet] Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kolb, D. A. (2014). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. FT press.
- Langer, A. M. (2002). Reflecting on practice: Using learning journals in higher and continuing education. *Teaching in higher education*, 7(3), 337-351.
- Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2004). *A handbook for teacher research*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Lau, S. M. C. (2012). Reconceptualizing critical literacy teaching in ESL classrooms. *The*

- Reading Teacher*, 65(5), 325-329
- Leavy, P. (2017). *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches*. Guilford Publications.
- Leavy, P. (Ed.). (2014). *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research*. Oxford library of *Literature and Teaching*. p. 474-481
- Liu, Y. (2017). Critical Literacy Practices in EFL Reading Classroom--An Experimental Study towards Chinese University Students. *English Language Teaching*, 10(5), 133-138.
- Lodico, M. G., Spaulding, D. T., & Voegtle, K. H. (2010). *Methods in educational research: From theory to practice* (Vol. 28). John Wiley & Sons.
- Luke, A., & Freebody, P. (1999). Further notes on the four resources model. *Practically Primary*, 4 (2), 5-8.
- Luke, A. (2012). Critical literacy: Foundational notes. *Theory into practice*, 51(1), 4-11.
- Lukens, R. J. (1998). *A critical handbook of children's literature*. DIANE Publishing.
- MacNaughton, G. (2003). Reflecting on early childhood curriculum. *G. MacNaughton, Shaping Early Childhood*, Open University Press, London, 113-120.
- Macrine, S. (Ed.). (2009). *Critical pedagogy in uncertain times: Hope and possibilities*. Springer.
- Molden, K. (2007). Critical literacy, the right answer for the reading classroom: Strategies to move beyond comprehension for reading improvement. *Reading improvement*, 44(1), 50.
- Moon, J. (1999). Learning through reflection—the use of learning journals in Moon J (ed) *Reflection in learning and professional development. Theory and practice*.
- Moon, J (2003) *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning*. London: Routledge.
- Moon, J. (2004). Using reflective learning to improve the impact of short courses and workshops. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*, 24(1), 4-11.

- Mora, R. A. (2014a). Conscientização. Key Concepts in Intercultural Dialogue, 42.
Retrieved from: <https://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org/2014/11/24/key-concept-42-conscientizacao-by-raul-alberto-mora/>
- Morgan, W. (1997). *Critical literacy in the classroom: The art of the possible*. Routledge.
- Morrell, E. (2005). Critical English education. *English Education*, 37(4), 312-321.
- Nassaji, H. (2015). Qualitative and descriptive research: Data type versus data analysis. *Language Teaching Research*, 19(2), 129-132.
- Perry, K. H. (2012). What Is Literacy?--A Critical Overview of Sociocultural Perspectives. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 8(1), 50-71.
- Reading, J. (2006). Critical literacy in a global context: reading Harry Potter.
- Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. Springer.
- Rodgers, C. (2002). Defining reflection: Another look at John Dewey and reflective thinking. *Teachers college record*, 104(4), 842-866.
- Sage, M., & Sele, P. (2015). Reflective journaling as a flipped classroom technique to increase reading and participation with social work students. *Journal of social work education*, 51(4), 668-681.
- Saldaña, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of qualitative research*. OUP USA.
- Scarino, A., & Liddicoat, A. (2009). *Teaching and learning languages: A guide*. Melbourne: Curriculum Corporation
- Schon, D. A. (1983). 1983, *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.
- Stake, R. E. (2010). *Qualitative research: Studying how things work*. Guilford Press.
- Tosuncuoglu, I. (2018). Place of Critical Thinking in EFL. *International Journal of Higher*

towards Chinese University Students. *English Language Teaching*, 10(5), 133-138.

Yin, R. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York: Guilford Press, 3-23.

Appendix A

Estimados Padres de Familia,

Cordial saludo.

Esta carta tiene por objeto solicitar su autorización para que como docente de inglés y estudiante de la Maestría en Procesos de Aprendizaje y Enseñanza de Segundas Lenguas, yo, MARGARITA DÍAZ GAMARRA, pueda contactar a su hijo(a) para desarrollar mi proyecto de investigación.

Es importante anotar que las observaciones y entrevistas que lleguen a hacer se limitarán a la investigación y que estos datos no se utilizarán para ningún otro propósito. Se tomarán fotos y se grabarán videos en algunas clases con el fin de recolectar información. Además, se enviarán encuestas y se harán entrevistas a los participantes en la investigación.

Usted está en completa libertad de permitir la participación o no de su hijo(a), sin ninguna forma de coerción para su colaboración y sin ninguna posibilidad de represalias en las clases. en caso de no aceptar. Usted y su hijo(a) tienen derecho a ver las fotos y videos, así como el producto final y, de no estar de acuerdo con algo en el mismo, se harán los cambios del caso.

De antemano les agradezco su colaboración en el desarrollo de esta tarea, la cual espero me ayudará a mi formación como investigadora. Cualquier inquietud con respecto a esta tarea, me pueden contactar directamente al correo electrónico mrdiazg@gmail.com, o al 3XXXXXXXXX y con mucho gusto atenderé todas sus inquietudes.

Atentamente,

Margarita Díaz
Docente de Inglés

Hemos leído la información en esta carta y estamos de acuerdo con la participación de nuestro/a hijo/a en esta tarea.

Nombre y Firma de los Padres o Acudientes

Fecha: _____

Hemos leído la información en esta carta y estamos de acuerdo en que nuestro/a hijo/a aparezca en materiales de audio, fotos y/o video para el propósito de esta tarea.

Nombre y Firma de los Padres o Acudientes

Fecha: _____

Appendix B

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN	
TYPE OF ACTIVITY	DEVELOPMENT
<p>Reading: A Beast Author: Guy Bass. Type of text: (Short Story) Topic: Family</p>	<p>To activate students' prior knowledge, I will ask them if they have read short stories in English on their own, what are the characteristics about narrative texts, if they have a favorite text and so on. I will ask the students to work in couples.</p> <p>CODE BREAKER: I will ask them to pay attention to the title of the text and read the first sentence of it, and talk about what does it mean to them, what do they believe is the text about. Later, as a group I will start reading the text and ask some students to continue the reading. Finally, they will answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What words are interesting? • What words are new? • What words are familiar? <p>MEANING MAKER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you feel as you read the text? • What might happen next? <p>TEXT USER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What text type is it? • What is the purpose of the text? <p>TEXT CRITIC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the most important learning that you need to take from the text? <p>REFLECTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you were the author what other ending will you give to the story? • If you were the main character how would you have acted with your family?
<p>Reading: For a Daughter who Leaves. Author: Janice Mirikitani Type of text: Poem Topic: Family</p>	<p>MEANING MAKER: Read the title, can you predict what the text is about? Who is the author of the texts?</p> <p>CODE BRAKER: Find the actions that are described in the text and represent their meaning through an image or other words.</p> <p>TEXT USER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the characteristics of this poem? • Write three other suitable tittles for the poem. <p>TEXT CRITIC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the author demonstrated any bias and how do you know this? • What was the author's intent and did the author achieve this? How do you know this?

	<p>REFLECTION: Choose one member of your family and think about your relationship through the years. Write a short poem based on the memories you've with him/her on your journals.</p>
<p>Reading: Pink Bow Tie. Author: Paul Jennings Type of text: Short story. Topic: School</p>	<p>CODE BRAKER: Highlight the sentences where the principal, the secretary and the main character are described physically. With the information you've from the principal draw a portrait of him.</p> <p>MEANING MAKER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it against the rules in your school to dye your hair? For a boy? For a girl? Do you think this rule is a just rule? • Make a list of the things you cannot do at your school. • Are these rules just or unjust? Which ones, in your opinion, are unfair, and why? <p>TEXT USER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What text type is this? (genre) How do you know this? • What is the purpose of this text? <p>TEXT CRITIC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this text represent a specific point of view? Which one? • Which voice is privileged in the text? • Whose voice is neglected in the text? <p>REFLECTION: What would your ideal school be like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would it be like your current school, or would it be different? How different would it be? • How many students would it have ...in the whole school?/ ...in each class? • How many teachers would there be? • How many classrooms? • How much recreation space would there be? • What lessons would you have that you don't have now? • Who would be in charge of the school? • What kind of rules do you think you must have at this school
<p>Reading: In my future Author: Carolyne Ardron Type of text: Poem Topic: The future</p>	<p>I will ask the students to think about the future and create an acrostic with that word by asking them to imagine they're living in the year 2100. What's life like? What can they see around them? How far has space and technology advanced? Then, the students will read two short poems related to the future.</p> <p>CODE BRAKER: I will ask the students to choose one of the poems and analyze the rhymes, lines and stanzas.</p> <p>MEANING MAKER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you feel as you read the text? • How did the text position or change your way of thinking about this topic? <p>TEXT USER:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of text is this? How do you know this? • How would the language change if you were to use these ideas in a different text type? <p>TEXT CRITIC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the most important new learning that you need to take from this text? • How do you understand the message from the poem? <p>REFLECTION: The students will create their own poem related to the future by choosing one of the templates.</p>
<p>Reading: The Colourful Life of Calum McCall</p> <p>Author: Ron Butlin</p> <p>Type of text: Short Story</p> <p>Topic: Future self</p>	<p>CODE BRAKER: I will choose some of the words and expressions from the story and ask the students to match them with their correct meanings.</p> <p>MEANING MAKER: I will give the students some cards with some personal conditions (Anger, Jealousy, Rage, Surprise, Cowardice, Fear, Cold, Shame, Inexperience) and I will ask them to associate them according to some colors (green, black, red, blue, white, yellow). I will invite them share which is their favorite color and how it makes them feel.</p> <p>TEXT USER: I will ask the students to take a look to the text and define how it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is structured? • Is the tone and degree of formality? <p>TEXT CRITIC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the author’s point of view? • How does the text influence people’s ideas? • Which point of view do you feel is silenced? <p>REFLECTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When do you become an adult? • How have you changed from when you were a child? Make a T chart to compare your dreams as a child and now.

Appendix C

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1f6QxusZWpSe7_iDcdlx7BCG57QXuBtxFogeSF-rk60l/edit

11-2 Readings

Dear students, In the following question you will find the title of some texts followed by the first sentence of it, you can choose more than one option. In the second question, you have the possibility to propose a different reading for our class.

***Obligatorio**

Name: *

Tu respuesta

Choose a text that you would like to read in our next classes: *

- For a Daughter Who Leaves - A woman weaves her daughter wedding slippers....
- Pink Bow Tie - Well, here I am again, sitting outside the Principal's office....
- Ex Poser - There are two rich kids in our form. Sandra Morris and Ben Fox. They are both snobs...
- In My Future- In my future, I'd like to be a cat...
- The Colourful Life of Calum McCall - During the early years of his life, Calum McCall was surprised to...

What text would you like to read too? It can be a short text, poem, tale, autobiography, etc. Write the name and the author of it. *

Tu respuesta

Enviar

Appendix D

Initial Interview

STUDENT:						GRADE: Eleventh ____	
SUBJECT: English						DATE:	
TEACHER: Margarita Díaz Gamarra						TERM: Third	
FINAL TEST		GUIDE		WORKSHOP		MAKEUP TEST	
						QUIZ	
						OTHER: Interview	

Dear student,

You have been selected to answer the following interview because you are someone who has a great deal to share about learning, reflecting and the way you approach texts. My objective is not to evaluate your answers. Rather, I am trying to learn more about teaching and learning taking into account your insights. Please answer the following questions

1. Have you ever used a journal before? When and what for?

2. How do you usually express your thoughts, ideas, emotions and feelings the most?

3. What is your relationship with English language?

4. When you read a text, what do you notice in it? How do you analyze it?

5. Do you consider yourself a critical person?

6. What type of critical actions do you put into practice in your life?

7. Do you reflect about what you read and learn? How and why?

8. Do you make any connection among what you learn in school and your personal life?

Appendix E

Final Interview

STUDENT:							GRADE: Eleventh ____			
SUBJECT: English							DATE:			
TEACHER: Margarita Díaz Gamarra							TERM: Third			
FINAL TEST		GUIDE		WORKSHOP		MAKEUP TEST		QUIZ		OTHER: Interview

Dear student,

You have been selected to answer the following interview because you participated in a research project where we read narrative texts through a critical literacy perspective. My objective is not to evaluate your answers. Rather, I am trying to learn more about what this experience was for you.

1. When you created your journal. What did you want to express there?
2. How would you describe the experience when you used journals?
3. Did you follow a plan when you developed the exercises in the journals? If yes, which one?
4. What were your concerns while developing the exercises in the journal?
5. How do you describe the process of reading a text from a critical perspective?

Author's Biography

Margarita Díaz is an English and French teacher from Universidad de Pamplona, she has been teaching English as a second language for the last 8 years in private schools, English institutes and currently in a public school of Colombia. She has deepened her knowledge in teaching English processes and didactics through a graduate degree from Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana. At the present time she is a candidate for the MA in Learning and Teaching Processes from Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana and is eager to continue exploring the research field with the aim of improving her teaching practices and contributing to the formation of English second-language learners to motivate them to explore and communicate with the world.