LESSONS LEARNED BY A NOVICE TEACHER RESEARCHER IN A

RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS AFTER IMPLEMENTING A TEACHER STUDY

GROUP

A Thesis Presented by

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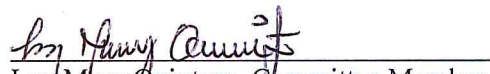GROUP

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DEDICATION

To my beloved mother.

To my loving brother

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

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Teacher study groups (TSG) are a professional development (PD) strategy used to promote teachers' learning and creation of knowledge through reflection on theory and practice. The organization and delivery of a TSG is a challenging task, especially for a novice teacher researcher. In this retrospective case study, I describe the two major sets of lessons I learned after leading a TSG with English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in my school. I used as data sources a questionnaire, two semi-structured interviews, audio recordings and transcriptions of TSG sessions, teachers' notes and reflections, my notes along the process and a retrospective analysis of what I did and did not do in regards to the literature about TSG conduction. Findings show the lessons I learned as a facilitator of the TSG and as a novice teacher researcher. The first lessons involve the mistakes I made in the identification of the real purpose of the TSG; some inadequate logistical decisions regarding the member selection, delivery of the sessions, time management and choices in materials; and the gains that a TSG brought to the teachers. The second set of lessons relates to my learning in the development of the research process. I learned that the data collection I conducted was not clearly designed and did not reflect what it was supposed to

show. Besides, some of the techniques I used, such as the teachers' journals and my own

journal, missed the requirements of the research literature. In my retrospective analysis I

concluded that a TSG facilitator must endeavor to set an adequate purpose aiming to attend

the teachers' needs.  Second, organizing and delivering a successful TSG requires clear

decisions making regarding the logistics of the TSG. Third, the TSG is a positive

experience that offers teachers the opportunity to have a voice in their PD process, reflect

on their teaching practices and construct knowledge among other enrichment aspects.

Finally, within the research process, it is important that the novice researcher devotes

special care to the data collected. The instruments that he/she uses must be carefully

planned and managed in order to facilitate the analysis of the data and obtain the

information expected.

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## Introduction

Since the 1990's, the idea of teachers as researchers has gained an important place in teaching (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; 1993). Under this socio-cultural view of teachers, they are intellectuals and critical actors in schools and society (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Research done by teachers also serves as a good source of teacher professional development (TPD) because by exploring their own practice, teachers can learn and impact the learning conditions of students (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Vescio, Ross & Adams (2008, p. 88) conclude that when teachers learn in professional communities, their learning has a positive impact on their teaching practices and their students' achievement.

One option for teachers to grow professionally is their participation in a teacher study group (TSG) (Clair, 1998). Cramer, Hurst & Wilson (1997, p.7) state that through this TPD strategy, teachers get together and may decide how to solve a problem, explore their practice, study, reflect on it and create practical and theoretical knowledge (as cited in Shaw, 2011). These authors also highlight that TSGs support teachers in the development of autonomy, building communities of learning and facilitating self-actualization. In the specific case of English teachers, the advantages of participating in a TSG are numerous. Huang (2007) and Yeh (2005), report that teachers may improve their language proficiency, development teaching skills and knowledge, avoid feelings of isolation, and create communities of learning.

TSGs have been a TPD option for Colombian English teachers. One of the most detailed descriptions of this strategy is the work of Sierra. Sierra (2007a) reported that teachers developed knowledge about English and about classroom research; skills such as critical thinking and collaborative work; and attitudes such as initiative, commitment,

positive stand towards research, and risk taking. Additionally, Sierra (2007 b) described the benefits that a TSG brought into to the facilitator's pedagogical work in skills and attitudes. The author illustrated how the conductor of the TSG in her study gained leadership and organizational skills. She also demonstrated gains in taking initiative and showing a democratic attitude in her work with the group.

Moreover, Aldana and Cárdenas (2011) analyzed the factors that may affect or favor the continuity of a TSG. Their study suggested that for five teachers from public schools in Bogotá, participating in TSGs their commitment remained across time if some conditions were met. Teachers' autonomy and the support from their teacher training institutions favored the networks they built, and as a consequence, they remained engaged in the program. On the contrary, the lack of support from their colleagues, the authorities in their schools and the local and national educational authorities affected their motivation.

In addition, Rojas (2009) described the benefits, challenges, advantages and disadvantages that a group of teachers from a public school had when they engaged in a group work to set up a language resource center. Finally, Álvarez and Sánchez (2005) explored the impact that a TSG had in their school as teachers reached agreements about the implementation of a common English language teaching approach.

Although the literature on how to conduct a TSG is abundant (Birchak et al., 1998; Oliphant, 2011; Richards & Farrell, 2005), there is no description of the challenges that a novice teacher researcher faces in the development of this strategy with English teachers. This gap is found in both international and Colombian publications in the field of English language teaching (ELT).

There is some literature on how graduate students and pre-service teachers acquire research skills in general. For example, Labaree (2003) stated that graduate students'

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learning to do educational research bring with them three advantages: maturity, professional experience and dedication. However, they may have to change their cultural orientation from "normative to analytical, from personal to intellectual, from particular to universal and from experiential to theoretical" (Labaree, 2003, p.13) and that change may be problematic. Demirbulak (2011) showed a successful experience with undergraduate students in ELT in which they gained awareness on the connection of the rules of a teacher as instructor and researcher.

In the Colombian context, there are various publications that show how pre-service and in-service teachers develop research skills or conduct research (Cárdenas, 2004; Castro Graces & Martinez Granada, 2016; Fandiño, 2010; Pineda and Clavijo, 2003; Vergara, Hernandez & Cardenas, 2009). However, these publications report positive cases. There is only one reference to the difficulties that a novice teacher researcher experience keeping a research journal (Banegas, 2012).

As part of my teacher education in the undergraduate and graduate programs, I became aware of the importance of doing research in my own classroom. As I gained knowledge on TPD, I decided to conduct a TSG in my school setting as part of the research requirement for the thesis in the Master's program I was pursuing. Despite my theoretical training on how to do research, my readings about TSGs, and my motivation and commitment to conduct a TSG with my English colleagues the task was not easy. I experienced many difficulties as a novice teacher researcher and made several mistakes along the process. After a retrospective analysis of my performance, I learned two sets of lessons about how to conduct a TSG and how to collect data through the use of journals.

I developed this retrospective case study after implementing a TSG in my work place, a private Catholic coeducational school located in a western neighborhood of

Medellin. I was an English teacher in 8th and 9th grades. I worked with eight colleagues that shared with me the interest in exploring new teaching methodologies to improve our teaching practice. All of us had some teaching experience and shared a previous training course to take the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT).

The research question that guided the study was: **What are the lessons learned by a novice teacher researcher in a retrospective analysis after implementing a TSG**?

In the subsequent sections of this manuscript, I first present the theoretical framework that guided this research. After that, I describe the setting in which I conducted the study and I provide some information about me and the participants involved in the TSG. I also described how I made the decisions about the sessions for my work with the English teachers. Then, in the Methods section, I explain the different data sources I used to collect the information for my retrospective analysis and the procedures for analyzing it. After that, in the Findings section, I describe the main lessons learned in my role as the facilitator of the TSG and as a novice teacher researcher using journals. In the Discussion section, I analyze the findings in the light of socio-cultural theories and other studies about TSGs in order to explain the lessons I learned. Finally, I present the conclusions of the study, its limitations and some suggestions for further research.

## Theoretical Framework

In this section I present the major theories that explain the lessons I learned as a novice teacher researcher in my retrospective analysis after conducting a TSG. I explain my learning process in relation to the theories of teacher learning and reflective practice. Additionally, I consider the theories about TPD and TSG. This theoretical framework is based on some sociocultural theories of teacher research and learning that see teachers as reflective practitioners that focus their activity on the classrooms.

### Teacher research

In the 1990's, teacher research emerged as an important response to the paradigm of research on teaching often carried out by expert outsiders (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990 p. 2-3). The authors frame teacher research mainly as qualitative interpretive research that assumes teaching as "a highly complex, context-specific, interactive activity in which differences across classrooms, schools, and communities are critically important. Interpretive research provides detailed, descriptive accounts of customary school and classroom events that shed light on their meanings for the participants involved" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990 p.3). They define teacher research as "systematic and intentional inquiry carried out by teachers" (p. 3) using the criteria proposed by Stenhouse (as cited in Rudduck & Hopkins, 1985) to define research in general as "systematic, self-critical enquiry". In that sense, the reflective practice becomes crucial for TPD as they may reflect in the day-to-day practice and before and after that (Schön, 1983, p. 49). Hence, teachers may achieve a great level of awareness about their teaching practices in order to grow professionally and make the changes needed.

In this line, Cochran-Smith and Lytle report that teacher research has value for the teaching community and the academic community (1990, p.8). In the first, teachers who do research transform their practices, become agents of change, gain awareness of their own work, are critical users of knowledge and value their work. In the second, teachers inform researchers with authentic data they collect about the important issues of the classroom. They can also critique existing theories and propose new theories.

Regarding these benefits, it is important to reflect on the teaching paradigms that frame the teachers' role in order to understand their function and take a stance. Kumaravadivelu (2003) describes three strands for teachers' role: teachers as passive technicians, as reflective practitioners, and as transformative intellectuals. Under the first strand teachers are in the role of transmitting content information (p.8). Under the second, the role of teachers as a reflective practitioner consists of the process of reflecting on their practices through two main frames: reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. That means, teachers plan and review their teaching acts before and after teaching (on action). Teachers reflect on their performance as it takes place adjust their teaching instantaneously in case of a problem (p. 10). And under the third, teachers as transformative intellectuals, they perform a dual role that "requires teacher to view pedagogy not merely as a mechanism for maximizing learning opportunities in the classroom but also as a means for transforming life in and outside the classroom" (p. 14). Within this last role, the reflective practice is paramount. The last two strands become relevant for teachers in order to understand the teaching and learning events and assume a critical inquiry that lead them to go beyond in their professional development.

TPD may be defined as "an ongoing learning process in which teachers engage voluntarily to learn how best to adjust their teaching to the learning needs of their students"

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(Diaz-Maggioli, 2003, Defining Professional Development, para. 1). It gives in-service teachers the possibility to improve their teaching practices, construct knowledge and identity alone or within a community, develop skills and attitudes, validate their knowledge, share teaching and learning experiences, transform their practices and beliefs. Additionally, TPD provides teachers with the opportunity to become agents of change (Day, 1999 as cited in Day & Sachs, 2004, p. 13).

A good opportunity to foster the process of reflective practice and critical inquiry may be that teachers engage in a TPD initiative. Richards & Farrell (2005) express that professional development "often involves examining different dimensions of a teacher's practice as a basis for reflective review" (p. 4).

One of the TPD strategies that may facilitate the process of reflective practice is the TSG. Several authors have demonstrated that TSG, as a community of learning, may foster the teacher learning process because teachers share their teaching experiences, reflect on their practices, and participate in discussions about their views concerning pedagogical issues such as assessment, teaching methodologies, class management, new policies, language and teaching theories, among others (Borko, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Kennedy, 2005). Within these learning communities, teachers learn through cooperation with others; challenge their teaching assumptions or views; connect theory with practice; take part in conversations about materials, ideas and experiences related to their work; and assume an inquiry stance to construct local knowledge (Matlin & Short, 1991 as cited in Yeh, 2005, p. 53).

TSG may become communities of practice if teachers participate in this strategy voluntarily to make sense of their experiences (Wenger, 1998). If they are engage in interactive talks with their TSG leader teachers develop professional learning (Carroll,

2005). Moreover, all this learning is possible if teachers participate with clear purposes and have the opportunity to contrast and transform not only their views, but also their community of practice (Grossman, Wineburg & Woolworth, 2001; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002; Whitford & Wood, 2010).

Many authors recommend the workplace as the appropriate setting for teacher learning in order to offer teachers a familiar context and to generate a meaningful transformation in teachers and the school context (Grossman et al. 2001; Whitford & Wood, 2010). Once teachers are provided with an appropriate setting, they must take into account certain issues regarding the community formation such as the community identity, the leadership, the community purpose(s), the norms to facilitate the teachers' interaction and participation, among others (Grossman et al., 2001; Whitford & Wood, 2010). This entire plan is meant to assure a space for teachers to renew their knowledge, ensure students' learning, raise awareness of the limits of individual knowledge, develop their teaching skills and dispositions, and modify their teaching views through reflection and inquiry (Grossman et al., 2001; Whitford & Wood, 2010).

In sum, a TSG offers a number of benefits for teachers. It becomes a perfect place for them to share their teaching experiences; assume reflective practices that lead to learning and improving their skills; and generate, co-construct, and validate knowledge through collaboration. It also provides the possibility for teachers to challenge and transform, for instance, their views about pedagogical issues and teaching practices.

In the following section I describe the context where I conducted this study.

## Setting

This study was conducted in a private Catholic co-ed school located in the west of Medellin. The school offers preschool, elementary and high school education to approximately 2,000 students who mostly belong to middle class socio-economic status according to the Colombian standards. The school time is divided into two shifts. In the morning, the school offers education from kindergarten to eleventh grade and in the afternoon, it imparts instruction to high school students.

The Institutional Educational Project (*Proyecto Educativo Institucional* in Spanish) of the school emphasizes the Catholic values of the religious community that rules the institution: knowledge and love of God. The philosophy of the religious order stresses the relation between faith, culture and life under a Christian perspective. There is no explicit methodological approach for teaching the content areas, but the institution assumes that each teacher has his/her own teacher criteria.

Regarding English teaching, although there is not a language teaching methodology defined, the program focuses on the Colombian Standards for English Instruction (MEN, 2006). English teaching staff was comprised of nine teachers (eight colleagues and me) whose ages ranged from thirty to forty years. Seven of us hold university teaching degrees: five in ELT and two in pre-school education. The other teachers did not have teacher education background.

Students from first to nine grade received five hours of English instruction per week and students from kindergarten, tenth and eleventh grade have four hours a week. The difference in time of instruction comes from the shorter school day for preschoolers and the higher number of courses for last two grades.

English classes lasted fifty minutes and the average class size was about 42 students. The school required teachers to follow a textbook and its corresponding teachers' guidebook. Students used the textbook, its workbook, and a dictionary. Concerning the school facilities for the English area, there were two audiovisual classrooms: one for preschool and elementary school and one for high school. There were also some resources such as TV sets, laptops and Wi-Fi connection for teachers to use them in their classes. Teachers chose autonomously the textbooks.

With reference to TPD, the school did not provide teachers with enough opportunities for them to fulfill their own professional needs. Indeed, given the excessive school extra teaching activities, many teachers found difficult to participate in any professional development program (PDP). For instance, English teachers' sole space to grow professionally was their participation in our weekly area meetings. These meetings lasted fifty minutes and were intended to discuss school administrative agendas and to plan activities that the teachers implemented along the school year.

Contrary to that tradition, in June 2010 the school principal approved a space for teachers to engage in a TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test) course. His main objective was to facilitate the teachers' achievement of an international English teaching certification. The teachers did not have to pay for the course and the preparation took place in the same school.

After finishing the TKT course experience, teachers expressed their willingness to continue growing and improving their teaching practices by using the area meeting time to get together. For that reason, I started sharing with my co-workers some knowledge I acquired as a masters' language teaching student, mainly about the new approaches to teach English. I believed that a TSG strategy was an ideal way to foster our teaching practices

and knowledge. As they showed interest, I explained my study group proposal to the principal and the academic coordinator of the school. They allowed me to implement a questionnaire to explore the teachers' needs regarding their professional development (See Appendix A for the questionnaire design). Table 1 presents the answers provided by the teachers.

Table 1.

*Answers to the Questionnaire Concerning the Teachers' PD needs.*

| Domain | Needs | Number of teachers |
|---|---|---|
| **Teachers as Instructors (Classroom Management)** | Help teachers deal with class size. | 2 |
| | Help students work well independently. | 3 |
| | Help students work well in cooperative groups. | 4 |
| | Ensure that all students participate in classroom interaction. | 1 |
| | Manage time effectively. | 1 |
| | Develop and maintain consistent school discipline/conduct code. | 0 |
| | Communicate effectively with students one-on-one. | 2 |
| **Teachers as Instructors (Instructional skills)** | Teaching aids and techniques. | 0 |
| | Training on cross curricular integration. | 1 |
| | Promoting critical thinking. | 2 |
| | Motivating students to learn. | 4 |
| | Designing or implement a challenging curriculum. | 0 |

| | Modifying instructional strategies to meet individual needs. | 1 |
|---|---|---|
| | Assessing students' current skills and knowledge. | 1 |
| | Working effectively with students who demonstrate special needs. | 2 |
| | Design appropriate out-of-class assignments and activities. | 0 |
| **Teachers as Learners** | Better language proficiency | 0 |
| | Networking (Working with peers through interdisciplinary approaches- Professionals from other fields). | 1 |
| | Preparing to students with special learning needs / gifted students. | 2 |
| | Reflective teaching (Study groups- Network) | 1 |
| | Communication with families and caregivers (Behavior/Academic problems) | 3 |
| | Information Technology use | 0 |

Concerning the formation of the TSG, all the teachers expressed their willingness to participate and learn about the current ELT methodologies as they considered this strategy as the opportunity they were claiming for in order to enhance their teaching practices.

After having described the setting where I conducted the study, in the following section, I present the methodology implemented in the retrospective analysis of my role conducting the TSG; the data sources selected to collect the information on my learnings; and the data analysis procedures I used.

## Methods

I conducted this study based on the general literature proposed by Merriam (1998), Creswell (2007), and Yin (2009) for case studies. I also took into consideration what Baxter and Jack (2008) suggested for novice researchers. I used a particular type of case study called retrospective case study. Mills, Durepos & Wiebe (2010) defined as follows:

> "Retrospective case studies are a type of longitudinal case study design in which all data, including first-person accounts, are collected after the fact. The events and activities under study have already occurred, and the outcomes of these events and activities are known. In retrospective case studies a time line of events and variables that changed over the time period is reconstructed after the events have occurred" (p. 824).

### Participants

In this retrospective case study, I was the main participant. I conducted the TSG in which eight of my colleagues participated. They were secondary participants because the major findings focused on my learnings, but they played a very important role as members of the TSG I envisioned. I am an in-service English teacher and hold a Bachelor's degree in English-Spanish Education from a public university program located in Medellín. I graduated in 1997. By the time of the study I had sixteen years of English teaching experience. I had been teaching English in the school for about fourteen years and was a full-time English teacher of three classes of eighth grade and two classes of ninth grade. I was the homeroom teacher in a class of ninth grade.

With reference to my experience in professional development programs, I attended different workshops, professional conferences and publishers' sessions that focused mainly on textbook management and ELT methodologies. Prior to lead the TSG, I participated in a

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preparation course for TKT. I took the test and obtained a Band 3 grade in all sections. Band 3 is a passing score that corresponds to the test-taker having general knowledge on indicators such as language systems, background to language learning and teaching, lesson planning and use of resources and the management of teaching and learning processes ("TKT Results | Cambridge English", 2017). Currently I am in the last stage of a Master's in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning at a public university. My aim for entering the program was to enhance my knowledge in foreign language teaching and how to do research. I consider this last issue as a key element to improve my teaching practices.

My eight colleagues were four women and four men. In the next lines I briefly describe the teachers' background information regarding teaching experience and TPD. I will refer to them using pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Emilia has a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education with an emphasis on English. She graduated from a private university in Medellin in 1999. At the time I collected the data she had fourteen years of teaching experience. She was a full-time English teacher of four classes of second graders and one kindergarten class. She had an average of 36 students per class. Besides these duties, she was also the English section coordinator. Her workload did not permit her to be a homeroom teacher. Regarding Emilia's professional development, she completed a course on English language curriculum in 2002 and attended some workshops, professional conferences as well as publishers' sessions after graduating from the university. In 2010, she participated in the preparation course for the TKT offered at school. After taking the test, she obtained a Band 3 in all sections.

Laura holds a Bachelor's degree in English and Spanish Language Education from a private university in Medellin. She graduated in 1993 and had eighteen years of teaching

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experience when she participated in the TSG. She was a full-time English teacher in one kindergarten class of thirty-four students and in four first grade classes of thirty-five students. Concerning her professional development experiences, they were mainly related to her attendance to different publisher sessions, language conferences and workshops. Moreover, she attended the preparation course for the TKT. Her score in the test was Band 2 in all components. This meant that she had basic knowledge of ELT.

Helena has a Bachelor's degree in English and Spanish Language Education from a private university in Medellin. She graduated in 2000 and had thirteen years of English language teaching experience by the time of the TSG delivery. She was also a full-time English teacher in four classes of seventh graders and one of sixth grade. She had an average of forty-four students per class. She was a homeroom teacher for a class of seventh grade students. Her TPD experiences were similar to Laura's. She also attended the preparation course for the TKT. She obtained a Band 3 in all sections.

Angela has a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from a private university in Medellin. She graduated in 1991 and had 20 years of English teaching experience when she participated in the TSG. Her proficiency in English came from traveling abroad. She was a full-time English teacher in four kindergarten classes of thirty-four students and one first grade class of thirty-five students. Most of her TPD experiences consisted on attending publisher sessions, language conferences and workshops. Although she took the TKT, she did not comment on her score.

With respect to the four men of the group, Jaime graduated in 1997 from a private university in Medellín. He holds a Bachelor's degree in English and Spanish Language Education and had been teaching English for sixteen years when he participated in the TSG. He was a full-time English teacher in two classes of fifth grade and three classes of

fourth grade, with an average of forty students per class. He was also a homeroom teacher for a fifth grade class. His TPD experiences were very similar to the other teachers. That is attending language conferences, workshops and publisher sessions. In addition, he attended the preparation course for the TKT, took the test and obtained Band 3 in all components.

Jason is an Electronical Engineer that graduated from a public university in Medellín in 2001. At the time of the study he had been teaching English for eight years. He was a full-time English teacher in two classes of fourth grade with an average of forty students and three classes of third grade with an average of thirty five students. His English language proficiency came from living in Canada for about four years. When he returned to Colombia, he started working as an English Language teacher. Like most of my colleagues, he attended workshops, publisher sessions and language conferences as part of his professional development. In the TKT he obtained a Band 2 in all sections.

Hector holds a Bachelor's degree in English and Spanish Language Education from a private university in Bogotá. He graduated in 2012 and belonged to the school administration staff. He was a full-time English teacher in three classes of sixth grade and two classes of fifth grade with an average of forty-four and forty students respectively. Besides, he was the homeroom teacher in a sixth grade class. He did not attend the TKT course and before the TSG he had not been in any workshop or language conference.

Finally, Norman obtained an associate degree in Liberal Arts and Social Sciences in the United States. He graduated in 1997 and had sixteen years of teaching experience when he took part in the TSG. At the school, he was a full-time English teacher in charge of four classes of eleventh grade and three classes of tenth grade. His knowledge of English Language comes from having lived and studied in New York for about fifteen years. His TPD experiences were basically the same of the other teachers in the English section. He

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attended almost the same workshops, language conferences and publishing sessions. As the other teachers, he participated in the TKT course, took the test and obtained the Band 2 in all the sections.

**The Study Group**

I organized the TSG with the aim of learning about the latest ELT methodologies in order to improve our teaching practices. At the time of the study I was taking a graduate course in that topic and that. I decided to include the same methodologies I was studying because I believed that they could be an alternative to change my colleagues' views about the use of the textbook as the central element in their classes. I also decided to use in the TSG some of the readings I had for my graduate class.

As arranged with the principal of the school and the area coordinator, the group met at the school every week for approximately one hour. The meetings started in February 27th 2013 and finished on June 12th in the same year. There were in total ten meetings and all of them were delivered in Spanish because some of the teachers felt more comfortable sharing their ideas and conclusions in our mother tongue. It is important to highlight that the teachers who participated in the TSG did not receive any extra payment because we met in our regular weekly English department meeting time. Teachers expressed their willingness to work together in this new experience to expand their learning. The agenda for each session, including the topics and readings assigned, are presented in Appendixes B and C.

Before collecting the data I informed teachers and school administrators about this study. I obtained permission from the school principal and teachers expressed their enthusiasm to participate in the TSG. Later, to protect the participants' privacy and avoid negative consequences for their participation, I used a consent form as a way to respect

ethical procedures in qualitative research. I clearly informed the teachers about confidentiality policy, their rights to quit the study, the data methods to collect information, the use that I would give to the information collected, the contact information of my advisor and me. All teachers signed the consent form presented in Appendix D.

**Data Sources**

I collected the data for the study through a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, teachers' notes, audio-recordings and transcriptions of the TSG meetings some notes I took during the sessions or after them, and the retrospective analysis of my performance as the TSG facilitator at the end of the experience.

In the following lines I explain the purpose and the implementation of each data instrument.

**Questionnaire.** In qualitative research, questionnaires offer the possibility of gathering information to achieve the objectives of a study (Bell, 2005, p.136). I designed a questionnaire to determine the professional development needs my colleagues experienced in order to set the purpose of the TSG. I based the design on two of the three domains presented by González et al. (2002) regarding the EFL teachers' professional needs: teachers' needs as instructors and as learners. Although the authors report another domain, teachers as workers, I did not include it because one of the participants in the TSG was part of the school administrative stuff and our discussions regarding salary and work load would not be free and our opinions could be used to make decisions about our contracts and evaluations. I designed a questionnaire using a list of items and the teachers had to select the items that applied to them (Bell, 2005, p. 138).

**Semi- structured individual interviews.** Bell, (2005, p. 157), states that interviews are useful because they allow the researcher to explore feelings and emotions deeply, analyze nonverbal language and clarify confusing information, and develop some ideas.

I planned some questions to guide the interviews, but I was open to other comment the teachers could make. I interviewed four teachers at the beginning of the process (March 2013) in order to gather information about their understandings of ELT methodologies and the methodologies they used (See Appendix E for first interview protocol).Then, in July (2013), I conducted a second interview in order to explore the possible transformation in the teachers' understandings regarding the methodologies discussed along the TSG process. Moreover, I wanted to know their opinions about the TPD experience and their suggestions for further activities and topics in case we would continue in another phase of a TSG. (See Appendix F for last interview protocol).For the second interview, two teachers participated.

**Teachers' notes.** Journals provide information about patterns and activities developed by participants Bell (2005, p.173). Although I intended to have teachers writing a journal of the TSG experience, I could only collect some notes about certain sessions in the process. The content was so small and short that they could not be considered as journal. Along the TSG teachers took notes about their possible changes in the understandings of the ELT methodologies. At the beginning of the TSG I provided some questions that would guide their reflection for the analysis of each methodology addressed. The teachers were supposed to write their thoughts after every session.

**Audio recordings and the transcriptions of the TSG sessions.** Audio recordings are a useful instrument to keep participants' voices in detail. Depending on human memory is problematic because researcher may lose important information. Besides, recordings may be transcribed to have further examinations of the data (Bryman, 2012, p. 482). The

transcription of the audio-recordings allows the researcher to analyze "complex aspects of conversational coherence" Stubbs (1983, p. 20) that could be disregarded or may not be detected just by listening to the recordings.

All the sessions were audio-recorded for two purposes: one, in order to collect the participants' ideas, reflections and conclusions concerning the articles explored; two, to reflect the teachers' understandings of the methodologies discussed. The recordings were transcribed using regular orthography to facilitate the data analysis.

**Retrospective analysis of my performance**. After having finished the TSG, I reviewed the different pieces of information I had collected in order to analyze the outcomes of the initial process I had in mind. Through an analysis with my advisor[1], I realized that the data did not provide enough evidence of the transformation of the EFL teachers' understandings of the ELT methodologies we covered. I decided to do a retrospective examination of what I did and what I did not do according to the literature on TSG. This evaluation of my actions in the process is presented in Appendix G.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, I used an inductive analysis under the qualitative approach. I followed the five steps process described by Taylor and Renner (2003, pp 2-5).The first step consists on reading and re- reading the data in order to get a deep understanding and become familiar with the data set. The second step proposes to identify key questions oriented that help the researcher to focus the analysis to respond the research question. In the third step, data is reduced by creating categories and codes. Once the data

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[1] I began this study under the supervision of one advisor but due to changes in her workload, she could not continue providing supervision for the data analysis and the writing process. For the final phases of the thesis conclusion I had a new advisor.

is organized into categories, the next step to follow is to identify patterns, and connections between categories in terms of dependence. Finally, the fifth step suggests creating a list that comprises the important findings discovered and then developing a master outline which presents the analysis done.

I read and re-read all the transcripts, the teachers' notes and my retrospective analysis of my performance conducting the TSG in order to find relevant information. I highlighted some excerpts, group them when they were similar and named them.  Then I tried to discover common patterns among the instruments. I identified some categories and grouped them bearing in mind my research question. I classified them into three themes. Finally, I created a list of the most relevant specific aspects that might describe the lessons I learned in my retrospective analysis: My role as a facilitator of the TSG, my role as a novice teacher researcher and the positive outcomes of the TSG.

**Trustworthiness**

To guarantee trustworthiness I validated the data with triangulation, I shared my coding with my advisor to have reliability, I used member checking for the interviews,  and I confronted my findings with reality (Creswell, 2007). To validate the data I used data triangulation and investigator triangulation (Guion, 2002). For data triangulation I used different instruments. I compared the data from the TSG (recordings and interviews) with my retrospective analysis where I presented what I did and what I did not do according to the literature on that TPD strategy. For investigator triangulation, I confronted my analysis with my research advisor. In this triangulation process I found out that the TSG experience had the problems I will describe later, mainly because of my role as facilitator. With my advisor I had peer review of my coding and categories. At the end of the interviews, I

summarized the main point presented by the participants and asked for their feedback to make sure I interpreted their points of view and clarified some doubts I had.

In the following section, I report the main findings of the study. I focused on the lessons I learned through the retrospective analysis of my performance conducting the TSG. I provide evidence from the different data instrument to support each lesson.

**Findings**

This retrospective case study aimed at exploring the lessons I learned as a novice teacher researcher after analyzing the way I implemented a TSG with some of my EFL fellow teachers. According to the literature I studied, the formation and implementation of the TSG required that I took into account a certain aspects to achieve the objective I set. Nevertheless, there were some decisions I that affected the way I oriented the process.

In this section I describe the specific sets of lessons I learned regarding my roles as the facilitator of the TSG and as a novice teacher researcher. The lessons are the findings after the retrospective data analysis I conducted.

**Lessons Learned as a TSG Facilitator**

**Identifying the purpose of the TSG.** After the implementation of the professional needs assessment for the teachers through the questionnaire, I analyzed it and found that the teachers' major needs were related to their domain as instructors (González et al. 2002). Four teachers manifested their interest concerning student's motivation to learn and four of them were interested in how to help them work cooperatively.

Nevertheless, I disregarded those needs because there was another growing need among all the elementary English teachers regarding the use of the new textbook they were using. Bearing in mind that the school did not have a significant number of hours of instruction devoted to English and that the English teaching and learning tradition in the school had always been under the EFL approach, the new textbook was supposed to improve the teaching of English. Since it was designed for an ESL setting, the principal

considered that it would improve the students' proficiency level. Besides, the textbook followed the Colombian Standards for English instruction (MEN, 2006).

The use of the textbook brought various problems, especially for the teachers in elementary school. It was not selected by all teachers, was clearly imposed by the principal of the school and was not appropriate for our school context. Taking into consideration the new need expressed by the teachers, I proposed the TSG. I believed it was a way to improve their knowledge about some ELT methodologies mainly those included in the textbook and that it was possible to implement them in our school context. In that way, the teachers who complained about the new textbook could enhance their teaching practices and solve their problem. As a result of my decision, the high school teachers felt quite left behind along the process. They showed their lack of interest and began to participate less within the discussions of the TSG meetings.

At the end of the process, my lesson had to do with the need to listening to the teachers' voices. I realized that it would have been a more successful experience if I had addressed the needs of the whole group. I should have been more attentive to what the questionnaire reported and not setting the goals of the TSG based on the goals teachers of the elementary level. Moreover, I believe that the reason why I suggested the study of the ELT methodologies was because I was influenced by my situation in the masters' program. At that moment I was taking a course on ELT methodologies. As I learned about new approaches to teach English, I believed that I could share my new knowledge with my colleagues and have an impact on the use of the textbook and the English learning process.

**Logistical decisions.** As mentioned in the Theoretical Framework, the implementation of a TSG required that as the facilitator of the group I took into consideration important decisions and actions about the organization and delivery of this TPD strategy. In the next paragraphs I describe the decisions I made and why they affected the outcomes of the TSG.

*Member selection.* With member selection in a TSG, it is of utmost importance to find the appropriate teachers based on their interest in participating in such strategy, their availability and their commitment to carrying out the duties required in the project. The literature about TSG suggests to do this is through a pre-study questionnaire and interviews with the teachers and, if possible, with school officials who can corroborate that the potential teachers are a good fit for the group. I did not take these aspects in full consideration for the implementation of the TSG. Instead of doing a thorough selection process, I invited all the English teachers in my school, elementary school teachers and high school teachers. The English school staff usually met weekly in order to discuss some issues related to the school administrative schedule and other aspects regarding our teaching practices and difficulties within the classes. Therefore, I took advantage of that space to present the TSG strategy as an opportunity to foster their knowledge, improve their teaching practices and help them solve the problem with the new textbook.

Although all the teachers showed interest in participating in the TSG, I did not consider the other above-mentioned aspects (i.e., availability, commitment, etc.) through pre-study methods such as questionnaires or interviews. I believe that this led the teachers to express their enthusiasm to be part of the TSG without considering their real level of interest and the necessary commitment to make this a successful endeavor. My decision to have an open invitation for the recruitment also let one of the school administrators who

was one of the English teachers to take part in the group.  This situation was an impediment for other teachers to express themselves freely. For instance, in session 4, April 3rd; session 5, April 10th and session 9, June 5th 2013, I could observe that when teachers attempted to share their distress about the school rules, they looked at the school administrator and waited for his reaction. Furthermore, in an informal talk, two teachers from elementary school level commented that it was uncomfortable for them to talk in front of him in the TSG. They felt unable to talk about their discomfort concerning the new textbook, as the principal had insisted on the implementation of that resource.

As the group facilitator, I learned a lesson about who should belong to a TSG. I should have done a rigorous selection of the participants bearing in mind their specific needs and interests, their position and roles in the school and the English courses they taught. Moreover, if I had done a more careful recruitment, it may have led the group to reach the goals initially planned avoiding changes in the agenda and optimizing the time of the meetings.

*Delivery of the sessions*.  Here, I refer to the difficulties I experienced assigning tasks to the participating teachers in the sessions and establishing the roles each teacher would have during the TSG.   As the facilitator, I was in charge of the logistics procuring the spaces and needed materials and resources, convoking meetings, assigning tasks, leading discussions, undertaking  interviews, reading journals, doing follow-up and taking minutes of the meetings.  I encouraged teachers to collaborate as time keepers for each session. The teachers had the role of active participants who would attend meetings regularly and punctually, complete the assigned readings, partake of discussions and write their journals.

All these important actions did not happen as expected. In some sessions these tasks were not completed, there was no clear focus and the teachers experienced some confusion in their understanding of some conceptualizations. Another evidence of my problem delivering the sessions was the need to reschedule the agenda and have a second version of the plan because the first one was not working. (See Appendix B and C for both versions).

In my role as the group facilitator, I should have got at the core of why these issues were taking place and have more concrete direction. My major lesson here is that I should have been better prepared to direct the TSG. I could have found more information from people that have conducted TSG and asked for more guidance on specific issues that did not work well.

Some other problems derive from and relate to my inadequate delivery of the TSG sessions. I describe them as follows:

*Time management.* Ideally the time needed to participate in the TSG should not be a hindrance for the teachers, but the undertaking and outcomes of my study were significantly affected by time issues. Although the time available for each session was short (one hour approximately), my initial hope was that it would be devoted completely to our learning experience. However, there were some meetings affected by abrupt changes introduced in our agendas by school authorities. For instance, the meetings programmed for March 6th and 13th, and May 8th and 29th, 2013 were cancelled because the school principal needed that space to talk with the teachers. In other occasions, the sessions were cancelled because the school administrators programed in our meeting time activities such as sports and cultural events or extra meetings to discuss academic issues of other subject matters. The meeting programmed for session two, March 20th, 2013 was interrupted by the school academic coordinator. She needed that space to provide the teachers with some academic

orientations regarding the end of the activities of the first school term. Additionally, the

time planned for session four, April 3rd, session 6, April 24th and session seven, May 15th

2013 had to be divided in two parts. The first part was for the TSG session, leaving us with

only about 30 minutes to work in our agenda. The second part was used for the area

coordinator to present some information or directions concerning school academic and non-

academic activities. Although the teachers and I expected to fully count with the time

arranged for the sessions, we all knew that these changes in the agenda could happen. Some

of the tasks planned had to be omitted. I could not carry out some of the discussions in

small groups; I could not assign the teachers' poster presentations; it was not possible to

show some videos that exemplified the teaching methodologies discussed. The multiple

distractors and the changes imposed by the administrators in our agendas were part of my

concerns, but I felt intimidated to claim respect for our TSG space. Although I felt

uncomfortable, I did not raise that as a problem that affected our work.

Moreover, I did not notice until it was late that there were some topics that required

more than one session to fully address the content. For instance, when the group had to talk

about the Content Based Instruction (CBI), it was necessary to use two sessions. Appendix

C shows the aforesaid change. As this was the main methodology covered within the new

school textbook, teachers wanted to understand better this methodology.  They expressed

their concerns, feelings and understandings about it. That thorough analysis made us spend

session five, April 10th and six, April 24th discussing all their questions.

Another example of the problems with time management I had was the lesson plan

presentation programmed for session eight, scheduled for May 22nd (See Appendix C).

Teachers had to prepare a lesson plan using one or more methodologies we had studied in

order to share what they had learned.  Only four teachers prepared the task assigned. Hence, it was necessary to arrange another session to listen to the rest of the teachers' lesson plan presentations.

Regarding the time for teachers to read and complete the task assigned for each TSG session, I expected them to spend the required time for doing that. However, I failed to recognize that the teachers' responsibilities both at their schools and in their personal lives would make it very difficult for them to fulfill the TSG demands (i.e., writing the journal entries, doing the readings and having information and comments ready for discussions).  Although there is not written evidence, the teachers often claimed in informal talks that their workload at school required them to prepare classes, grade papers, attend parent-teacher meetings, partake in after-school activities and attend administrative meetings.  Moreover, they had to take care of responsibilities at home and all of these duties made it very difficult for them to complete the readings in their free time. The lesson I learned in relation to time management has to do with my underestimation of the time teachers required to undertake the tasks involved in the study. In the end, the research and outcomes were negatively affected because of the planned agendas were not successfully completed.  All these situations became demotivating factors that I should have considered seriously before beginning the study. Through this experience as a novice teacher researcher, I realized that in order to fulfill the group project goals and maintain the cohesion of each session it is necessary carefully plan the time for each meeting bearing in mind the possible troubleshooting that can arose along the sessions. I also learned that I should have been more direct defending the TSG space for our TPD.

*Inadequate materials selection.* Another logistical decision that I had to take into account was whether the group would use particular materials such as readings from a

professional book or articles that could help bring the TSG focus on the topic and provide a starting point for discussion. For the study, I focused on using the materials designed to improve teachers' knowledge of some ELT methodologies as it was supposed to be the main goal for the TSG. Aiming to cover this goal, I considered appropriate to use some of the articles analyzed in the Methodology course I was taking in the Master's program. I believed they were pertinent because they were well written, had new information, and answered some of the teachers' questions. I assumed that if they were interesting to me, they would be of interest to my colleagues.  For that reason, I talked to the professor who taught the course and asked for her advice in order to recommend some possible articles from our reading list that could be analyzed and discussed within the TSG sessions, bearing in mind their English level and the time available to do that.

From the articles recommended, I selected a chart designed by my professor that presented a comparison between some theories of language and their epistemological orientation (See Appendix H). I decided to use it as a warm up activity in one of our sessions on March 20th. I also chose nine articles to be discussed in the TSG sessions. One of them referred to some important conceptualizations and benefits about the study group strategy (Hudelson, 2001), the others were about ELT methodologies. Four articles were under the socio-cultural approach (Brown, 2001; Freeman & Freeman, 1998; McKay, 2002; Rodríguez-Bonces & Rodríguez-Bonces, 2010).The other four were related to the socio-critical approach (Gainer, 2010; Morrell, 2002; McLaughlin & De Voogd, 2004; Sharkey & Clavijo, 2012) (See Appendix I for the list of the readings planned in the first TSG activities plan).

Although the plan had my best intentions, I had to change it during the process of the TSG.  The original content planned and the activities proposed for each of them were

affected by the aforesaid time issues and some teachers' specific needs about some methodologies. As a consequence, I proposed a more realistic plan for the sessions. Appendix C shows the final plan with the defined readings.

In this matter, I have to recognize that I did not negotiate with the teachers the content and materials proposed in the agenda. That is, I did not offer them the opportunity to have an approach to the articles I had selected and decide on the readings they liked most or the ones they did not find adequate. In this issue, I learned that I should have allowed them to suggest the types of articles to read so that they would be more engaged in the content and level. Also, I could have included or asked them to suggest other materials such as audio and visual media that could have made the completion of the tasks more dynamic and less time consuming. Furthermore, I should have been more aware of teachers' changing interests and noticed them in time by asking more questions about their needs during the meetings, creating an environment that would have allowed them to propose other readings or materials based on their own experiences.

**TSG as a positive learning experience.** Despite the mistakes I made in conducting the TSG, there were some other actions that I did which facilitated a good space for reflecting, sharing and especially for learning. This learning comprises not only to approach to theories but also to value the teachers' voice and knowledge. The following excerpt from Laura's last interview, illustrates that:

> I think that when we have these spaces [TSG] to talk among teachers, especially from the same area, many doors are opened and our mind opens to want more knowledge, to learn what is new on methodologies. To share with my co-workers is really important for me and a teacher should be open to every single thing that comes to improve every day as a professional and as a human being. (…) There has been an approach (to her colleagues) and I think that through the sessions I have known my co-workers professional and personal and I have observed other things that have been very useful for me. (Interview 2, Laura, 07/18/13)

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Additionally, the TSG was an opportunity to be more reflective about their teaching practices, reinforce their previous knowledge on the topic discussed and to clarify some conceptualizations. In her last interview, Emilia manifested her satisfaction for having had this experience as she connected her teaching practices with the theory which made her feel more confident and clear.

> The TSG has contributed a lot because when I was working with a methodology or combining them (the methodologies), I was not using a theoretical base, but now I have more clarity about that, not at all, but I feel more secure. Then, the discussion about the methodologies gives us a tool to be more secure to plan our classes. (Interview 2, Emilia, 07/22/13)

In sum, this experience was an excellent opportunity for the participant teachers and me to learn no matter if as a consequence of my lack of experience some actions had been an impediment to create a suitable space to accomplish the agreed purpose or even the teachers specifics needs.

**Lessons Learned as a Novice Teacher Researcher**

In this part I explain the main mistakes I made in the research process. They refer to the data collection management in my double role as group facilitator and researcher. The data were necessary not only for my thesis but for the full understanding of the TSG process and outcomes.

**How to keep a teachers' journal.** As part of the activities the teachers and I agreed on doing in the TSG, they had to do the readings, analyze the assigned articles, be prepared for the discussions and then writing reflections on their journals on a weekly basis. To write the journals, I gave each teacher on the first session, February 27th a blank notebook at the beginning of the TSG process in which they would write their ideas,

thoughts, questions, feelings and concerns about the readings and what they experienced within the sessions. Additionally, I asked them to answer some questions such as: What is the teacher's role under the methodology assigned to read? What is the student's role under that methodology? What are the main characteristics you find within that methodology? amongst others.

When I collected the teachers' journals for the first time, five weeks after the TSG began, I realized that some of the teachers were not working on them as assigned and others had not written in them at all. I insisted on the importance of them writing their thoughts, conclusions and reflections about the articles and the discussions in the journal, but few of them actually did it and the ones who completed this task at least partially, did not follow most of the instructions correctly. An evidence of the very incomplete writings is presented below:
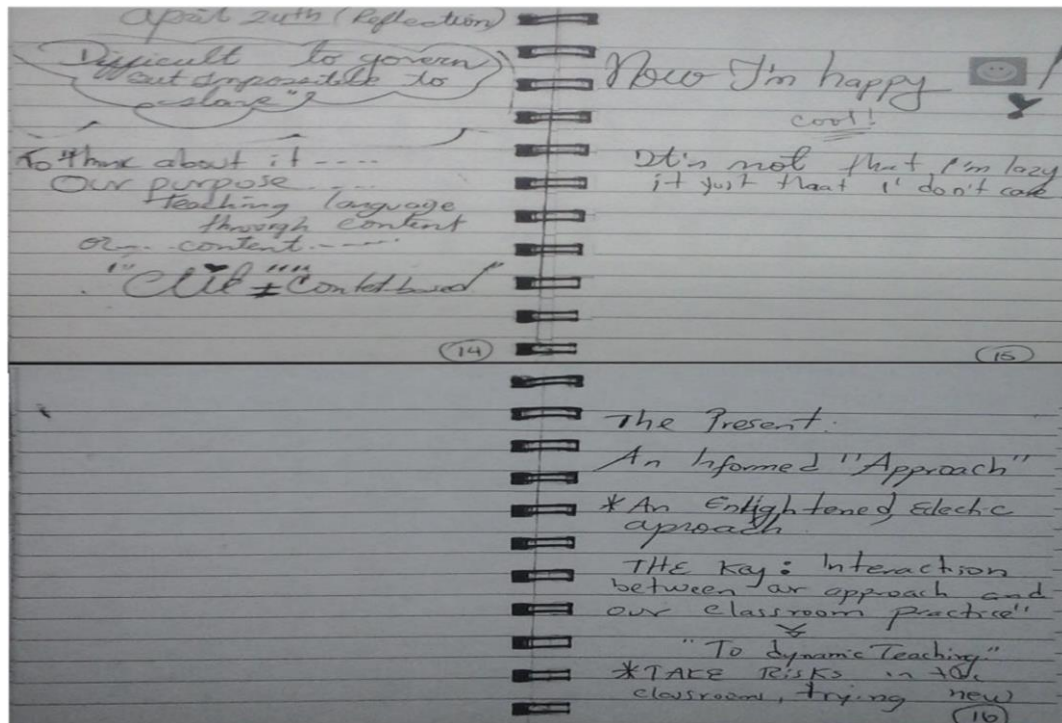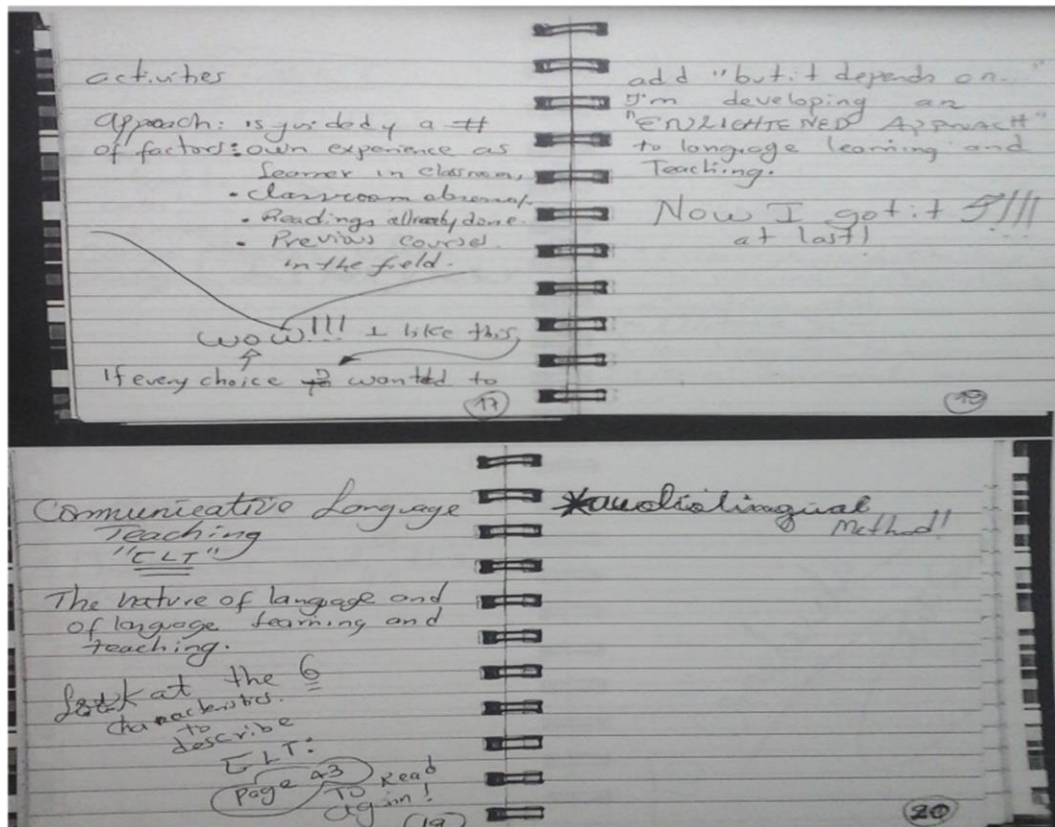


*Figure 1.* Sample of Emilia's notes.

*Figure 2.* Sample of Emilia's notes.

Figure 1 and 2 corresponds to a sample from Emilia's notes. It shows that she did not answer the questions proposed for the analysis of each article assigned. She wrote isolated ideas and thoughts about the methodologies discussed for session six, April 24th and seven, May 15th.

Furthermore, figure 3 relates to a sample from Laura's notes which shows that she did not write her journal entries systematically as she wrote her insights of session four, April 3rd and then the questions assigned for session 8, May 22nd appear. That is, she did not write any entry of sessions five, April 10th; six, April 24th and seven, May 15th.
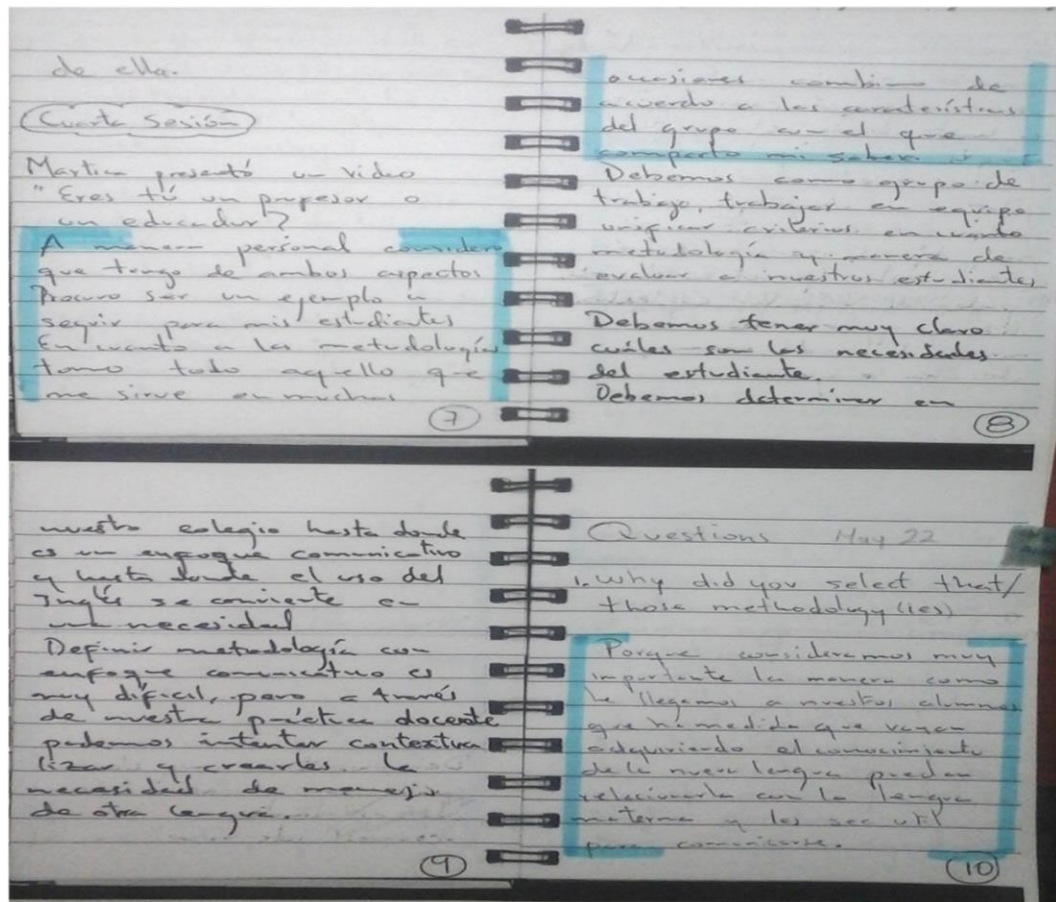
*Figure 3.* Sample of Laura's notes.

Once the teachers' writings were collected again at the end of the TSG meetings, I found that most of them had not kept up with the tasks, resulting in substantial shortcomings in the data collection of evidence for my thesis and for the documentation of the teachers' process in the TSG.

I believe that one of the main issues with this lack of completion of a journal was my little experience teacher researcher, I did not respond on time to their writings and I was not clear enough in the presentation of journal entries models. My lesson concerning this issue is that I should have done more follow-up between sessions responding to their writings weekly through e-mail or even Facebook messages to make sure that the teachers

were on task and received my comments.  I was too ambitious expecting their reflections

and answers to the questions I proposed in order to complete a journal entry. I should have

given them some teachers' writing  excerpts,  having a template ready for them to use as a

guide or giving them more specific instructions on how many words each journal entry

should have.

       **My own journal.** As part of an adequate development of a retrospective case study,

I required to reflect systematically on the experience I had in the TSG. That record would

allow me to analyze different aspects of the teachers' work, the outcomes of the PD

strategy and my own learning through the planning, delivery and evaluation of the TSG.

However, I was not consistent in my writing. I did not manage time well and I ended up

writing some scattered notes in the sessions or after the sessions but they did not reflect an

organized approach. That lack of systematic evidence affected the findings of the study

because I missed the evolution of my thinking and feelings along the study.

       Figure 4 corresponds to a sample of my notes. Although at the beginning of the

TSG process I tried to write my reflections regarding the development of the sessions and

my concerns about the research process, I did not do it regularly mainly because of my

workload, the assignments I had to accomplish for the Master's courses, and the tasks I had

as the facilitator of the TSG and as researcher.

*Figure 4.* Sample of my notes.

In this regard, I should have kept in mind the purpose of this data collection technique being more organized in the way I managed my roles as active teacher, researcher and a TSG facilitator.

So far I have described extensively the problems I faced as a TSG facilitator and stated the major lessons I learned as a novice teacher researcher. However, I must say that the experience was not a failure. In the process, there were many positive things that took place in my experience. I refer to these positive outcomes below.

In the following session, I present a detailed explanation about the main lessons I learned in the light of the literature about the process of teaching and learning.

**Discussion**

The main purpose of this study was to explore on the lessons learned after I implemented a TSG as a novice teacher researcher. Essentially, the outcomes suggest that the main lessons I learned are associated with the primacy of my orientation as a teacher trainer, bearing in mind my prior learning experiences and some perceptual mismatches that emerged in the interaction between the participants and me. In this section, I plan to delve into those learnings explaining them in the light of the theories I presented in the theoretical framework and some other research studies associated with TSG organization and novice researchers' experiences.

**Previous Learning Experiences**

The first reason that explains why the TSG I led did not achieve the goals I had in mind, was my previous learning and teaching history. In my experience as a student, I have been accustomed to accept the decisions made by the teachers. This attitude made me a passive actor. Most of the opportunities that I have had to foster my professional development have been restricted to take seminars, conferences, workshops or courses to apply for a teaching certification. Within this kind of training, other people, instructors or supervisors, were the center of the classes or courses deciding the content, the methodology, the resources and the evaluation processes. I translated my teacher-centered experience into the TSG and brought with me those prior practices which influenced my teaching style. If we teachers were passive learners, we tend to reproduce that pattern making ourselves the center of the classes. This has been discussed by authors such as Marshall (1991, p.225), Stitt-Gohdes et al. (1999) and Diaz-Maggioli (2004, p. 12). I was not aware enough of this influence consequently, the impact of my learning history made

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me orient the TSG under an approach in which I directed the learning, controlled the agenda, selected the materials and decided the activities in the sessions.

Furthermore, the participants in the TSG also experienced the phenomenon of relying on their own learning history in our group work. The last professional development opportunity in which they were engaged was a TKT course. The course methodology was teacher-centered approach. The teachers were all immersed in a situation in which they did not make decisions and depended on an external actor that became the expert. That teacher training experience was based on a managerial perspective of PD (Day & Sachs, 2004) Hence, they expected me to make the most important decisions and act as the expert due to the fact that at that moment I was studying a Masters' program in ELT. The combination of the participants' learning experience and my own previous learning affected significantly the orientation of the TSG.

**Perceptual Mismatches**

A second explanation for the difficulties I tackled in the implementation of the TSG in my school is enlightened by the post-method approach proposed by Kumaravadivelu (1991, 2003). He stated that the learning event often contains mismatches between teacher's and learner's perceptions. Kumaravadivelu (1991, 2003) identified ten sources of potential mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation. Especially for this study, from those ten mismatches, six of them emerged along the group sessions. They correspond to cognitive, linguistic, pedagogic, strategic, procedural and instructional, and as a result of these mismatches, the TSG did not evolve as I had planned.

**Cognitive and linguistic mismatch.** The first source of potential mismatch mainly refers to the general, cognitive knowledge that the learners have and "it pertains to the mental processes such as, remembering, perceiving, recognizing, and inferencing" (p.81). The second source refers to the learners' ability to understand and develop a given task. It refers to "the linguistic repertoire – syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic knowledge of the target language" (p.83). These two mismatches explain the difficulties teachers had in the accomplishment of some tasks such as analyzing the articles I proposed and writing the corresponding journal entry. When I selected the articles for the sessions, I assumed that they had the required knowledge, academic vocabulary, reading and learning skills to tackle them. I thought that their previous in- service training in the TKT course would be enough to approach academic tasks of the TSG. Thus, this cognitive and linguistic mismatch may have affected their performance and motivation to undertake the assignments for each session.

**Pedagogic mismatch.** This mismatch occurs when the learners' perception about the purpose of the lesson may differ from the teacher's. "This source refers to the teacher and learner perceptions of stated or unstated short – or long- term instructional objective(s) of language learning task" (p.83). This mismatch explains the finding in regard to the main purpose of the TSG. While I intended to help teachers improve their knowledge about some ELT methodologies, the purpose perceived by some of the participant teachers was to learn to use the new textbook.

**Strategic mismatch.** This mismatch may occur when the learners' strategies do not match with the strategies teacher expected to be used for the learning event. It "refers to learning strategies: operations, steps, plans, and routines used by the learner to facilitate the storage, retrieval, and use of information, that is, what learners do to learn and to regulate

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learning" (p. 84). This mismatch explains why some of the teachers used their own reading

strategies to approach the material I proposed. For instance, teachers looked for specific

characteristics or aspects within the readings that helped them to cope with their particular

need, instead of implementing the reading strategies I proposed. These reading strategies

intended to help them analyze the most relevant information from the articles, so they could

improve their understanding about the methodologies discussed and reflect that in their

teaching practices. However, although I proposed some strategies to read the articles

aligned with the main purpose of the TSG, some participant teachers decided to use their

own strategies as they had some other interests.

   **Procedural and instructional mismatch.** The first source points to the lack of

clarity learners may have in order to follow specific steps to achieve an assigned activity.

"This source refers to the state or unstated paths chosen by the learners to do a task" (p.

87). In that sense, the steps selected by the learner to accomplish a task may not correspond

to the expectations of the teacher, although they might be correct. The second source

"refers to instructional guidance given by the teacher or indicated by the textbook writer to

help learners carry out the task successfully" (p. 88). That is, the learner is incapable to

understand the orientation given by the teacher in order to develop a specific task. These

mismatches explain the difficulty they had to document their experiences in a journal. I

asked them to write their feelings, concerns, thoughts and questions about the readings and

the meetings discussions. I also assigned them to answer some questions every time they

read and analyze an article. However, when I collected the journal for the first time, I

realized that most of them were not doing the task as I expected. They were just writing

isolated ideas or thoughts about the readings and the discussions, but they were not

answering the questions assigned for the readings and their entries were not systematic

either. Although I insisted on the importance of following the directions given, when I collected the journals at the end of the TSG meetings, I observed that few of them accomplished in some extent the instructions given. Some other teachers did not submit the journal as they stopped writing because of their lack of clarity in the process. Therefore, it is evident that the procedures I used to promote keeping a journal were not understood and the results were not the ones I expected.

**Lack of Experience as Teacher Researcher**

A third explanation for the problems I had conducting the TSG, is my lack of experience in doing research. Despite my attempts to implement what I learned about qualitative research practices in the Master's program and my intention to follow the logistics recommended by several authors for the implementation of a TSG (Birchack et al., 1998; Hudelson, 2001; Oliphant, 2011 and Richards and Farrell, 2005), there were some aspects that I disregarded. As a novice teacher researcher, one can be overwhelmed by the numerous actions that must be considered in doing such work. I had three specific problems that affected the TSG results: One, losing track of an activity. This was clear regarding the purpose of the TSG and the revision of the teachers' journal entries. Two, lack of clarity. That was evident in the orientations I gave the teachers to keep their journal. And three, some logistical decisions related to member selection, time for the meetings and materials selection, as well as the mistakes with my own journal.

Losing track and experiencing lack of clarity are common for novice researchers in different stages of a study process. For instance, one of the participants in Karim and Yusoff (2014) study describes that one of the issues while conducting a qualitative research inquiry was to identify when and where stop collecting and analyzing data. Moreover,

Casanave and Li (2015) reported on the issues that novice researchers may encounter in constructing the conceptual or theoretical framework of their study. They explain ten types of problems in framing, from no framework to methodology missing in order to avoid the lack of clarity. Additionally, Abdullah and Abd Majid (2016) report on the mistakes that a novice qualitative researcher made regarding the organization of her results from several analyses of her data sources. They stated that she lost her track in establishing the connections between the findings and the sources.

In my particular case, losing track refers to the situation in which I failed at being aware about some teachers' pressing needs. This fact transformed the initial purpose of the TSG into finding a solution for their problem with the new textbook that some of the teachers experienced. Trying to create a trusting environment to motivate teachers' participation in the meetings, I lost the track in monitoring and reminding the group about our previous agreed purpose. I also failed in being coherent with the purpose of the teachers' journal and providing feedback to the teachers' entries.

A similar situation about a novice researcher losing track in conducting a study is described by Gesch-Karamanlidis (2015). She reflected about the numerous "interview don'ts" she committed during her first interviewing experience. She found that one of her mistakes referred to lose her track on her role as interviewer and guided the conversations affecting the purpose of the interview (p. 715). Another mistake she committed referred to her lack of clarity about the questions she asked to the participants. For instance, she did the same question multiple times in succession, proposed extended questions and presented different questions at the same time (p. 721).

On the other hand, regarding the lack of clarity, I made some mistakes at giving the instructions to keep the journal. First of all, I did not take into account the teachers' lack of experience to do this task and I did not provide them with examples of how to keep a journal for such process. Second, struggling to motivate teachers to write, my initial instruction was to do it without any pressure, just writing whatever they felt was relevant about the articles and the meetings discussions. A second instruction was to answer some follow-up questions related to the articles assigned allowing them to write their insights freely. This situation may have confused teachers regarding the way to write their journal entries. I found that most teachers assumed that writing "freely" was associated with writing occasionally. That lack of clarity did not let me use the journal as the data source I intended to use in the study.

The third issue that evidences my lack of experience as the facilitator of the TSG regards to some logistical decisions I made concerning the recruitment of the members for the study group, the time available for the meetings and the selection of the appropriate materials. Oliphant (2011) stated that the recruitment of the members will be determined once the goal has been selected (p. 71). Additionally, there could be two types of groups: topical, regarding the main specific topic, and those formed according to membership criteria, for instance, teachers of the same grade (Kirk & Walter, 1981 as cited in Oliphant, 2011). In my case, as the main goal to form the group was initially the same, I invited all the English teachers to participate, but I did not bear in mind that the teachers from elementary school had a particular need to cover, very different from the high school teachers. Then, I did not realize that this situation could affect the group dynamics.

On the other hand, regarding the time for the meetings, although I followed the recommendations given by Birchack et al. (1998, p. 38) for TSG, and met with the principal of the school to arrange the frequency of the meetings, I assumed that the complete period of time assigned for them weekly would be used for the SG sessions. However, it did not happen as expected due to some school schedule irregularities that affected the timetable I had initially designed. Similarly, Birchack et al. (1998) described their experience at the Warren study group and commented that this strategy did not work because of the changes in the school agenda and the principal's needs to have an additional staff meeting (p. 39).

With reference to the selection of the materials, I opted for using the same articles I had to read in my graduate course on new approaches to teach EFL. Contrary to what Birchack et al. (1998, p. 41) described, I did not discuss with the teachers about the possible articles to be read.  This mistake in addition to the limitations of the time for the meetings influenced considerably the initial TSG timetable and may also have affected the motivation of teachers to read the articles as they were not appropriate for their aims and academic background.

Finally, as a researcher, my lack of experience was evident in the way I recorded my own experience about this study. I did not write my own reflections about this experience systematically in a journal. As I was struggling to accomplish my role as the facilitator of the group, I just took jottings during the sessions. In a similarly research situation, Banegas (2012) reported experiencing difficulties in keeping a journal in his PhD research. He said

that his entries were short and usually had little time to write because his research tasks were more important and time consuming. This mistake affected the possibility to collect important data regarding my thoughts, and reflections as well as to record some other meaningful impressions coming from the TSG dynamics.

In the next section, I present some conclusions, describe the major limitations of the study, suggest some implications and propose some questions for further research.

## Conclusions

In this section I propose the conclusions of this study, present the major limitations of this process and pose some implications and questions for further research.

This retrospective study aimed to explore on the lessons learned by a novice teacher researcher after the implementation of a TSG. The findings of this study reveal that the lessons I learned consist of three main themes that have to be taken into account when implementing a TSG. After this study, I conclude that:

First, through this retrospective case study, I showed how a novice teacher researcher may learn important lessons on how to conduct a TSG. It is important to take into consideration setting an adequate purpose for the teachers' needs in order to determine the objectives, materials and content of the sessions. The TSG facilitator must devote enough time to explore the individual and group voices of teachers to make the best choices in this TPD strategy.

Second, the TSG facilitator must be very careful in the decisions regarding the logistics of this PD initiative. It is mandatory to select the right members for the TSG, plan every session with the relevant materials, and manage the working time adequately. Teachers who are to participate in TSG should do it voluntarily and show commitment to the tasks completion and attendance. The group should have a common interest and be alike in issues such as English proficiency and grades where they teach. Planning of each session needs to be done very carefully, especially the materials used to develop the reflections. The facilitator must be aware of the real time he/she may need to accomplish the objectives and make sure every session is devoted to what needs to be done.

Participants should be able to choose if they want to be in a TSG so that they can actively participate in the sessions taking into account the limitations of time that their workload imposes.

Third, despite the limitations of my study, teachers reported gains after being in the TSG. This experience gave them an opportunity to work with others, have a voice in PD, share their concerns, reflect on their teaching practice and construct new learnings. It was a very positive experience and was rewarding for them.

Finally, as a novice researcher, I learned that the data collection instruments in a study need to be carefully planned and administered. Journals are valuable sources of data that require clear instructions for writers. They also need to be supported with samples of good writing pieces. The researcher needs to set time to collect and respond to the journals so that participants may engage in fruitful dialog. Likewise, it is very important for the researcher to keep detailed and organized records of his/her research work. The quality of the texts gives validity and reliability to the study. He/she needs to set the time to make this practice systematic.

In the next lines, I highlight the main limitations to this study that affected the outcomes of this research.

**Limitations of the Study**

In the development of this study, I did not take into account various aspects that may hinder the generalizability of the study. The two main limitations in this case study are:

The major limitation of this study has to do with the methodology I used. Retrospective case studies may have severe bias as the analysis because they are based on memory and may have imperfect recalls of events. My main sources of data come from the retrospective analysis I did of my performance conducting the TSG.

A second limitation is the topic of the study I developed. Although I initially intended to focus the study on the benefits of the TSG on the transformation of the teachers' understandings of ELT methodologies, I had to change the objective to the lessons learned as a novice teacher researcher that was the TSG facilitator. For the first topic, I collected incomplete data and made some mistakes that did not allow me to claim what I intended. In that sense, the data about the TSG may be a little limited.

Bearing in mind my experience in conducting this study and despite its limitations, I present some implications below.


**Implications**

The lessons I learned provide some insights for novice teacher researchers in their task to implement a TSG and conduct a study at the same time. However, this study proposes some implications for stakeholders, teacher researchers interested in forming a TSG and teachers at universities that orient research programs.

First, novice teacher researchers who are interested in the implementation of a TSG initiative should have a strong preparation process anticipating the practical challenges they

may face and learning how to solve them. It would be ideal to have a participant observation phase in which they can learn from more experienced researchers that are leading that initiative.

Second, school administrators should consider the providing EFL teachers from elementary school and high school with adequate spaces to implement a TSG. This time allocation must be different from the regular school academic meetings and agenda. They must consider these spaces as an opportunity that will benefit the school because teachers may find ways to fulfill their specific professional needs.

Finally, teachers who impart courses at university research programs should encourage their students to report the challenges and failures they face when conducting a study for the first time. Usually, classroom practices focus only on successes leaving outside the ups and downs encountered in the data collection planning, administration and analysis. This is valuable information for the novice researchers so that they become more aware of the possible difficulties that may emerge along the study and assume this process with more confidence.

**Further research**

After finishing this study there are some questions that could be addressed in a further study on TSG. It would be important to explore if EFL teachers may incorporate new ELT methodologies in their daily practices after becoming in-service teachers. There are still many traditional practices in our classrooms and we need to change them in new concepts and theories. This may not be necessarily through a TSG, but in a democratic and

participative initiative. Additionally, it would be important to observe if there are new

learning about the methodologies and if they have an impact on students' English learning.

I experienced many difficulties in the development of this study as part of my

Masters' degree completion. It would be interesting to know if this is a common issue for

EFL teachers who are graduate students in ELT programs or if it is more related to

individual conditions. If this is a frequent problem for teachers, I would like to know what

the most common challenges that they face in doing research in their theses.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT TEACHERS' PROFFESSIONAL NEEDS

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS**          April 2012

Dear teachers,

The following are some issues related with frequent teachers' needs on regard to their professional development. They can be considered for you, and please, feel free to add some more, in order to select one we have in common. As soon as we agree in one specific need, we are going to start working together, developing knowledge with the aim of looking for the best strategy or solution to improve our teaching act. Write a cross **X** in front of the aspect of your choice.

**AS INSTRUCTORS**

| Classroom Management | |
|---|---|
| Help teachers deal with class size | |
| Help students work well independently | |
| Help students work well in cooperative groups | |
| Ensure that all students participate in classroom interaction. | |
| Manage time effectively | |
| Develop and maintain consistent school discipline/conduct code | |
| Communicate effectively with students one-on-one | |
| **Instructional Skills** | |
| Teaching aids and techniques | |
| Training on cross curricular integration | |
| Promoting critical thinking | |
| Motivating students to learn | |
| Designing or implementing a challenging curriculum. | |
| Modifying instructional strategies to meet individual needs. | |
| Assessing students' current skills and knowledge. | |
| Working effectively with students who demonstrate special needs. | |
| Design appropriate out-of-class assignments and activities | |
| **Other:** | |
| | |
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| | |
| | |

**AS LEARNERS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Better language proficiency | |
| Networking (Working with peers through interdisciplinary approaches- Professionals from other fields) | |
| Preparing for students with special learning needs / gifted students | |
| Reflective teaching (Study groups- Network) | |
| Communication with families and caregivers (Behavior/Academic problems) | |
| Information Technology use | |
| **Other:** | |
| | |
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| | |
| | |

Thanks a lot for your help. We will discuss the results on the next Area Meeting.

# APPENDIX B: STUDY GROUP ACTIVITIES ORIGINAL PLAN

## STUDY GROUP ACTIVITIES    2013    Marta L. Zapata Espinal

| SESSIONS and DATES | TOPIC | OBJECTIVE | ACTIVITIES | READINGS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| S,1 Feb 27th | Professional development and study group conceptualization | Present the study group conceptualization to the participants. | - The teachers will be encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings about what they read in the article.<br>- The information from the reading will be reinforced by some slides presentation to clarify the main aspects presented in the article about the Teachers' Study Group.<br>- The facilitator will provide teachers a notebook and will give the directions to use this tool. | Hudelson, S(2001). Growing together as professionals. *HOW. A Colombian Journal for English Teachers, Special Issue 9* 20-26 |
| S,2 March 6th | Review about Theories of languages.<br><br>ELT Socio-cultural approaches **Task Based Learning (TBL)** | Compare the cognitive and behaviorist approaches and reflect about if teachers apply them or not and how.<br><br>Present analyze and discuss the article about **Task based learning** | - The teachers will read within the session the chart about theories of languages (comparison between: Grammar based orientation, early communicative orientation, empiricist or behaviorist orientation, cognitivist, rationalist or psycholinguistic orientation, Socio-cultural orientation). Then, they will share with the teachers group the methodologies they think they are implementing at the moment. They will also have to analyze and share which teacher's role they are currently performing.<br>- Regarding the article about TBL, they will group in pairs and discuss about the following questions:<br>1. What is the teacher's role?<br>2. What is the student's role?<br>3. What are the main characteristics of the methodology read/analyzed?<br>4. Could that methodology be implemented bearing in mind the school context?<br>Teachers will have to take into account these questions when they read the next articles about ELT methodologies. Then, they will have to share their answers to the teachers group. | Rodriguez-Bonces, M., & Rodriguez-Bonces, J. (2010). Task –based language learning: Old approach, new style. A new lesson to learn. *PROFILE, 12* (2), 165-169 |
| S, 3 March 20th | ELT Socio-cultural Approaches **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)** | Analyze and discuss the article about **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)** Compare and reflect about TBL and CLT | - Teachers will be asked to share the answers regarding their analysis of the article for the current session.<br>- The facilitator will provide some other questions to discuss about the reading assigned for the current session. Then they will share their answers with the group.<br>1. What beliefs or views did you have about this methodology before reading the article?<br>2. What were your teaching practices before the reading?<br>3. How has the reading informed and supported your learning and actions?<br>4. How has the impact of your learning been in your teaching practices/ workplace?<br><br>- Teachers will have to take into account these questions and those provided in the session two when they read the next articles about ELT. | McKay, S.L. (2002). Teaching methods and English as an international language. In *Teaching methods and English as an International Language* (pp. 103-123). Oxford:Oxford University Press. |
| S, 4 April 3rd | ELT Socio-cultural Approaches **Content Based Instruction (CBI)** | Analyze main characteristics about **Content Based Instruction (CBI)** | - Teachers will be organized in two groups. One group must present in a poster their understandings about teacher's role, the methodology objective and characteristics. The other group must present their understandings about the student's role and the advantages and disadvantages of this methodology bearing in mind the school context. After the posters presentation, the teachers will have the opportunity to add more information or ask for | Brown, D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy.* San Francisco State University, CA: Longman.<br><br>Freeman, Y.S.,& Freeman, D.E. (1998). |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | some clarifications about the knowledge shared. | Contexts and orientations. In *ESL/EFL Teaching.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. |
| S, 5<br>Apr 10th | ELT Socio-cultural Approaches **Whole - Language** | Identify, analyze and discuss the main aspects about **Whole - Language** | - The teachers will be encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings about what they read in the article. They may present the vocabulary or concepts they did not understand.<br>- They will also share their comments with the group about the student's and teacher's role, the main characteristics of this methodology and the possibility to implement this methodology in the school. | Freeman, Y.S.,& Freeman, D.E. (1998). Contexts and orientations. In *ESL/EFL Teaching.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. |
| S, 6<br>Apr 17th | Lesson plan | Teachers present the lessons planned bearing in mind the Socio-cultural approaches they liked the most and the particular context they are involved (TBL, CLT, CBI) | - The teachers will present their lessons and will give and receive feedback about the presentation. | There won't be any readings for this session, since teachers must prepare a lesson plan based on the methods discussed so far. |
| S, 7<br>Apr 24th | ELT Socio-critical Approaches **Community Based Language Teaching (CBLT)** | Analyze and discuss the article about **Community Based Language Teaching (CBLT)** | - The teachers will group in pairs to discuss what they liked the most about the article and they will also provide some ideas about how could this methodology be implemented in the school. Then they will share their comments and ideas with the group.<br>- The facilitator will share her experience about planning a unit using this methodology. | Sharkey, J., & Clavijo-Olarte, A. (forthcoming). Promoting the value of local knowledge in ESL/EFL teacher education through community-based fieldwork. In C., Reichman, & B., Medrado (Eds.). *Práticas e projetos de formação de professors de inglés.* |
| S, 8<br>May 8th | ELT Socio-critical Approaches **Critical Literacies** | Analyze and identify the main conceptualizations about **Critical Literacy** | - Teachers will watch a video regarding critical literacy "Why we need Critical Literacy", then they will share with the group their perceptions about the video and how it could be connected with the article. Then they will group in pairs to discuss about the teacher's and student's role, the main characteristics of this methodology and the possibility to be implemented in the school. | McLaughlin, M. & De Voogd, G. (2004). Critical literacy as comprehension: Expanding reader response. *Journal of Adolescent & adult Literacy, 48* (1), 52-62. |
| S, 9<br>May 15th | ELT Socio-critical Approaches **Critical Pedagogy** | Analyze and discuss the article about **Critical Pedagogy** | - Teachers will be divided in two groups to share their feelings and thoughts about the article as well as how they perceive the teacher's and student's role within this methodology. Then they will be encouraged to give ideas about how could they implement this methodology in their teaching practices and finally both groups will share ideas. | Morrell, E. (2002). Toward a critical pedagogy of popular culture: Literacy development among urban youth. *Journal of adolescent & Adult Literacy, 46* (1), 72-77. |
| S, 10<br>May 22nd | ELT Socio-critical Approaches | Analyze and discuss the article about **Critical Media Literacy** | - Teachers will be encouraged to share with the group their insights about the methodology proposed.<br>- The facilitator will show a web page with an example of a lesson plan under this methodology: http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/critical-media-literacy-programs-96.html#tabs and the teachers will be asked to give ideas about how could they use the media available in the school to use this methodology. | Gainer, J. (2010). Critical media literacy in middle school: Exploring the politics of representation. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, (53)*, 5, 364-373. |
| S, 11<br>May 29th | Lesson plan | Present the lessons planned | The teachers will present their lessons and will give and receive feedback about the presentation. | |

| | | regarding the Socio-critical approaches learned (**CBLT, CL, CP,CML**) Provide some reflections and insights about the study group process. | The group will talk about their feelings, possible gains, and views transformation along the SG process. | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

# APPENDIX C: STUDY GROUP ACTIVITIES REARRENGED PLAN

**STUDY GROUP ACTIVITIES       2013    Marta L. Zapata Espinal**

| SESSIONS and DATES | TOPIC | OBJECTIVE | ACTIVITIES | READINGS DESCRIPTIONS | READINGS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **S,1 Feb 27th** | Professional development and study group conceptualization | Present the study group conceptualization to the participants. | - The teachers were encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings about what they read in the article.<br>- The information from the reading was reinforced by some slides presentation to clarify the main aspects presented in the article about the Teachers' Study Group.<br>- The facilitator provided teachers with a notebook and gave them the directions to use it. | The author describes her experience about her participation in some study groups. The author also describes the advantages and benefits coming from such groups and their organization. | Hudelson, S(2001). Growing together as professionals. *HOW. A Colombian Journal for English Teachers, Special Issue 9* 20-26 |
| **S,2 March 20th** | **MEETING INTERRUPTED.**<br>**TASK ASSIGNED:**<br>- Read and analyze the chart about theory of languages assigned (for March 6th) and identify the methodologies teachers are implementing at the moment.<br>- Focus their attention on the teacher's role presented for each methodology in the chart in order to compare and identify which teacher's role they are currently performing.<br><br>- Read the article about TBL (assigned for March 6th) and identify the main characteristics of this methodology including the teacher's and the student's role.<br><br>- Reflect about the teaching practices that could be done bearing in mind this methodology (TBL) and if they have implemented it before, describe how and if it has been useful for them in their teaching practices. | | | | |
| **S, 3 March 23rd** | Review about Theories of languages.<br><br>ELT Socio-cultural approaches<br>**Task Based Learning (TBL)** | Compare the cognitive and behaviorist approaches and reflect about if teachers apply them or not within their classes and how.<br><br>Present, analyze and discuss the article about **Task based learning** | - The facilitator gave some orientations again about the use of the notebook and assigned some questions that must be answered every time they read an article:<br>1. What beliefs or views did you have about this methodology before reading the article?<br>2. What were your teaching practices before the reading?<br>3. How has the reading informed and supported your learning and actions?<br>4. How has the impact of your learning been in your teaching practices/ workplace?<br>- Bearing in mind one of the tasks assigned in the previous session, teachers answered some guided questions regarding the information from the chart about the theory of languages. Then they were asked to share and discuss their ideas, reflections and thoughts about the article of Task based learning (TBL) taking into account the | - Reading in the session: Chart about theories of languages (comparison between: Grammar based orientation, early communicative orientation, empiricist or behaviorist orientation, cognitivist, rationalist or psycholinguistic orientation, Socio-cultural orientation)<br><br>- Rodriguez-Bonces, M., & Rodriguez-Bonces, J. (2010). The authors present a general overview about Task based learning (TBL) for teaching and learning the foreign languages. The conceptualization of TBL, the framework, the implications and a lesson plan as well as a stage for assessment are presented. | Rodriguez-Bonces, M., & Rodriguez-Bonces, J. (2010). Task –based language learning: Old approach, new style. A new lesson to learn. *PROFILE, 12* (2), 165- 169 |

| | | | orientations given in the previous session.<br><br>**Note**: Only three teachers participated in the meeting. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **S, 4 April 3rd** | Review about Theories of languages.<br><br>ELT Socio-cultural approaches **Task Based Learning (TBL)** (Continuation) | Present analyze and discuss the article about **Task based learning** | - The three teachers who participated in the previous session were encouraged to share what they discussed about the chart of theories of languages.<br>- Teachers who did not come to the last session were asked to share and discuss their ideas, reflections and thoughts about the article of Task based learning (TBL) taking into account the orientations given in session two. | - Reading in the session: Chart about theories of languages (comparison between: Grammar based orientation, early communicative orientation, empiricist or behaviorist orientation, cognitivist, rationalist or psycholinguistic orientation, Socio-cultural orientation)<br><br>- Rodriguez-Bonces, M., & Rodriguez-Bonces, J. (2010). The authors present a general overview about Task based learning (TBL) for teaching and learning the foreign languages. The conceptualization of TBL, the framework, the implications and a lesson plan as well as a stage for assessment are presented. | Rodriguez-Bonces, M., & Rodriguez-Bonces, J. (2010). Task –based language learning: Old approach, new style. A new lesson to learn. *PROFILE, 12* (2), 165- 169 |
| **S, 5 April 10th** | ELT Socio-cultural Approaches **Content Based Instruction (CBI)** | Analyze main characteristics about **Content Based Instruction (CBI)** Pages. 27-36 / 55-61 | - Teachers were encouraged to share their ideas thoughts and reflections about the article read especially those regarding the teacher's or student's role, the view of language learning, the advantages and disadvantages of CBI methodology, taking into account the school context. They were also asked to clarify concepts or terminology from the reading.<br>- The facilitator commented and explained some main aspects about the Content Language Integrated Learning methodology (CLIL), which is associated with the one they were discussing in the session, as a way to compare the objective of this methodology and teacher's and student's role with the CBL.<br>- Bearing in mind the CBI and CLIL objective and characteristics, teachers were assigned to reflect about the objective of the English area regarding the language teaching. | Freeman, Y.S.,& Freeman, D.E. (1998) The author presents in this part of the chapter one, the main characteristics of the CBI. | Freeman, Y.S.,& Freeman, D.E. (1998). Contexts and orientations. In *ESL/EFL Teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. |

| S, 6<br>April 24th | ELT Socio-cultural Approaches<br>**Content Based Instruction (CBI)**<br>(Continuation) | Analyze main characteristics about **Content Based Instruction (CBI)**<br>Pages. 27-36 / 55-61 | **Note:** As teachers showed their special interest for the methodologies presented in the previous session, it was necessary to continue the discussion about them in this session.<br><br>- Teachers continued sharing their ideas thoughts and reflections about the article read especially those regarding the advantages and disadvantages of CBI methodology, taking into account the school context. They were also asked to comment about the reflection assigned in the previous session regarding English area objective taking into account CBI and CLIL methodology.<br>- The facilitator presented some slides to summarize the main characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of the CBI methodology | Freeman, Y.S.,& Freeman, D.E. (1998) The author presents in this part of the chapter one, the main characteristics of the CBI. | Freeman, Y.S.,& Freeman, D.E. (1998). Contexts and orientations. In *ESL/EFL Teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S, 7<br>May 15th | ELT Socio-cultural Approaches<br>**Communicative Language** | Analyze and discuss the information about **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**<br>Compare and reflect about TBL and CLT<br>Pages 42-53 | **NOTE:** This meeting was shorter than the others because the area coordinator needed the time to give some information about administrative issues.<br><br>- Teachers were asked to share in small groups the most important aspects or characteristics that called their attention from CLT. Then they presented to the whole group what they commented.<br>- Teachers were assigned to prepare and present a lesson plan for the next meeting bearing in mind the Socio-cultural approaches they liked the most and the particular context they are involved (TBL, CLT, CBI). | Brown, D. (2001). The author describes in this part of the chapter three, the main aspects of the CLT. | Brown, D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy.* San Francisco State University, CA: Longman. |
| S, 8<br>May 22nd | Lesson plan | Teachers present the lessons planned bearing in mind the Socio-cultural approaches they liked the most and the particular context they are involved (TBL, CLT, CBI) | - Teachers presented their lesson plan to the whole group and then they received some feedback/questions from the group. | There weren't any readings for this session, since teachers were encouraged to prepare a lesson plan based on the methods discussed so far. | |
| S, 9<br>June 5th | Lesson plan (Continuation) | Teachers present the lessons planned bearing in mind the Socio-cultural approaches they | - Teachers were asked to present their lesson plan to the whole group and then they received some feedback/questions from the group. | There weren't any readings for this session, since teachers were encouraged to prepare a lesson plan based on the methods discussed so far. | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | liked the most and the particular context they are involved (TBL, CLT, CBI) | - Teachers were assigned to answer some questions in their notebook in order to reflect about the lesson plan activity:<br>1. Why did you select that/those methodology(ies)?<br>2. Could that/those methodology(ies) be implemented in the institution? Why?<br>3. Have you used that/those methodology(ies) before?<br>4. How did you feel about this experience?<br>5. What would you improve for the appropriated implementation of the methodology(ies) chosen?<br>6. Were the documents useful to prepare your lesson plan? How/why?<br>- The facilitator will introduce the next reading which is related to the socio-critical approach by a video. | | |
| **S, 10 June 12th** | ELT Socio-critical Approaches **Critical Literacies** | Analyze and identify the main conceptualizations about **Critical Literacy** | - Teachers were encouraged to share their thoughts feelings and understandings about the document assigned taking into account the orientations always given for the analysis of the reading (the teacher's or student's role, the view of language learning, the advantages and disadvantages and the suitability for the methodology implementation.<br>- Teachers were assigned to answer some questions in their notebook in order to reflect about the study group sessions:<br>1. Qué le aportaron las sesiones desarrolladas a lo largo de este periodo para su desarrollo profesional y personal?<br>2. Las sesiones trabajadas fueron útiles para su desarrollo profesional frente a la ampliación de conocimientos relacionados con las metodologías de enseñanza del Inglés? Explique su respuesta. | McLaughlin, M. & De Voogd, G. (2004), In this article the authors present some important elements for becoming critically aware. Moreover they provide some ideas to improve learners a critical stance through reading. | McLaughlin, M. & De Voogd, G. (2004). Critical literacy as comprehension: Expanding reader response. *Journal of Adolescent & adult Literacy, 48* (1), 52-62. |

# APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

**PROPUESTA DE INVESTIGACIÓN: EXPLORAR EL IMPACTO DE UN GRUPO DE ESTUDIO EN LOS PUNTOS DE VISTA DE LOS DOCENTES DE INGLES CON RELACIÓN A LAS METODOLOGÍAS DE ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS**
**MARTA LUCÍA ZAPATA ESPINAL**
**CARTA DE CONSENTIMIENTO**

Febrero 25 de 2013.

Cordial saludo.

Usted está invitado a participar en un proyecto de investigación que estaré llevando a cabo desde septiembre de 2012 hasta noviembre de 2013, aproximadamente, bajo la supervisión de la asesora Ana María Sierra. Mi propuesta de investigación consiste en realizar algunas entrevistas, programar las sesiones del grupo de estudio , solicitarle su planeador de clases y solicitarle el llevar un cuaderno de reflexión sobre las sesiones con el fin de hacer un análisis del impacto que puede llegar a generar en usted la estrategia de grupo de estudio en la que le estaré acompañando como facilitadora, con el fin de explorar y profundizar en el análisis de diversos artículos que permitirán el conocimiento de las nuevas tendencias metodológicas en la enseñanza de la lengua extranjera.

Si usted está de acuerdo en participar, será entrevistado al principio y al final del proceso. Igualmente, me permitirá el acceso a su planeador de clases y al cuaderno de reflexión sobre las sesiones del grupo de estudio. Las entrevistas y las sesiones del grupo de estudio, serán audio grabadas con su autorización. La información que quede consignada en los materiales tomados de esas grabaciones será borrada cuando el proyecto haya llegado a su final. Su participación no implicará ningún riesgo personal. Por el contrario, el objetivo de mi propuesta es contribuir con su desarrollo profesional y tener una oportunidad de trabajo y de aprendizaje en mi caso.

Los resultados de este estudio serán presentados en un trabajo final de investigación que será guardado en la Biblioteca Central de la Universidad de Antioquia y en la Biblioteca de la Escuela de Idiomas y serán enseñados a la comunidad académica. Igualmente, podrían ser presentados en conferencias locales y/o nacionales, y/o publicados en un artículo para una revista de investigación. Su nombre no aparecerá en ninguna publicación o presentación oral. Se utilizará un seudónimo para proteger su identidad. No obstante, si usted desea que sus aportes sean destacados y por lo tanto su nombre sea utilizado, al realizar citas textuales o al brindar los agradecimientos, le solicito muy comedidamente, escribir las iniciales del primer nombre y del primer apellido al final de este formato.

Su participación en este proyecto es completamente voluntaria y usted tiene la libertad de retirarse del mismo cuando lo considere. Su elección de participar no afectará su estatus como docente en su institución. Si lo desea, puede hacer una copia de los resultados de la investigación cuando el estudio concluya.

**Información de contacto**

Si tiene preguntas acerca de este trabajo, por favor contacte a Marta Zapata por teléfono al XXXXXXX, al celular XXXXXXXXXX, o por correo electrónico a: corstudygroup@gmail.com o a la profesora Ana María Sierra por teléfono al XXXXXXX o por correo electrónico a: amsierra3@gmail.com.

**MARTA LUCÍA ZAPATA ESPINAL**

AUTORIZACIÓN: He leído la información arriba consignada y entiendo la naturaleza de este proyecto. Estoy de acuerdo en participar en él y acepto las condiciones.

Nombre del participante (en letra imprenta): _____

Firma: _____

Fecha: _____

_____ Autorizo a que mi nombre pueda ser citado de manera directa en publicaciones relacionadas con este proyecto.

**Teachers' Study Group**

**Interview protocol N° 1**

**Interview: March 2013**

**Research question:**

**Interview purpose:**

To explore the study group participants' views and understandings about the English teaching methodologies they know and the ones they have implemented so far.

**Relacionadas con sus conocimientos frente a las metodologías de enseñanza de la lengua Extranjera.**

1. ¿Qué materias relacionadas con metodologías de la enseñanza del inglés cursó cuando estaba en el pregrado?

2. ¿En qué medida /hasta qué punto las materias que usted mencionó contribuyeron a su conocimiento sobre metodologías de enseñanza del inglés?

3. ¿Qué cursos, seminarios, congresos u otro tipo de capacitación docente ha realizado usted que estén relacionados con metodologías de la enseñanza del inglés?

4. ¿En qué medida/ hasta qué punto la capacitación docente mencionada por usted ha contribuido a su conocimiento sobre metodologías de la enseñanza del inglés?

5. ¿Cuál o cuáles de esas metodologías que aprendió en sus materias del pregrado o en cursos, congresos, seminarios u otro tipo de capacitación docente, ha implementado en sus clases? ¿Por qué?

6. ¿Con cuáles de las metodologías que ha implementado ha obtenido mejores resultados? ¿Por qué?

7. Teniendo en cuenta el contexto del colegio, ¿cuál o cuáles de esas metodologías que usted conoce considera serían apropiadas para ser implementadas en nuestra institución y por qué?

8. ¿Cómo describiría una clase habitual suya?

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 2

**Teachers' Study Group**
**Interview protocol Nº 2**

**Interview: July 2013**

**Interview purpose:**
To explore the transformations in teachers' views regarding their English teaching methodologies based on what they have studied in the group.

**Relacionadas con sus conocimientos frente a las metodologías de enseñanza de la lengua Extranjera.**

1. ¿En qué medida/hasta qué punto las discusiones sobre las diferentes metodologías de enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras abordadas durante las sesiones del grupo han contribuido a transformar su visión sobre las mismas?
2. Teniendo en cuenta el contexto del colegio, ¿cuál o cuáles de esas metodologías que se han discutido a lo largo de las sesiones del grupo considera serían apropiadas para ser implementadas en nuestra institución y por qué?
3. ¿Qué cambios ha logrado hacer en su metodología a raíz de su participación en el grupo de estudio?

**Relacionadas con la experiencia en el grupo de estudio.**

1. ¿En qué otros aspectos le ha aportado su participación en el grupo de estudio?
2. ¿En qué medida/hasta qué punto el grupo de estudio ha contribuido en sus relaciones profesionales con los demás profesores participantes?
3. ¿Qué sugerencias podría aportar para mejorar el trabajo de las próximas sesiones del grupo de estudio en el semestre que comienza?
4. Desea agregar algo más que no haya podido expresar a través de las preguntas que se le han realizado?

APPENDIX G: MY RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS ABOUT THIS EXPERIENCE

**RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF MY PERFORMANCE AS THE TSG**

**FACILITATOR AND AS A NOVICE RESEARCHER**

Taking into account the data collected along this study, I describe here the actions that I did and I did not do during this process

**What I Did.**

**Needs analysis.** First, I designed a questionnaire about the PD needs the English teachers in the school may had. This design was based on two of the three domains regarding the EFL teacher professional needs presented by González et al. (2002). One of the domains I selected was the teachers' needs as instructors. According to the authors, it includes teachers' calling for ongoing professional development programs to improve their practices, smaller classes, the availability of teaching resources, cross curricular integration and increasing the amount of classes per week (pp. 39-41). The second domain refers to teachers as learners. In this domain, the authors presented teachers' needs related to the improvement of their language proficiency, the possibility to be reflective practitioners, to construct communities of working and learning, as well as the opportunity to be involved in humanistic approaches bearing in mind the school problems they have to cope with (pp. 41-44).

I had informally shared with my co-workers some of their concerns about their needs as workers. That is, we mentioned some relevant issues such as teachers' better salary, less work load, job stability, teachers' autonomy, amongst others. However, I decided to overlook the remaining domain, teachers as workers, because one of the English teachers was a member of the school administrative staff. I assumed that teachers were not

going to answer objectively the information regarding this domain since they wanted to keep their jobs.

To complement the questionnaire design, I looked for the most appropriate aspects concerning teachers' common needs in my school context and categorized them under the two aforementioned domains. I used some aspects and areas presented in a teachers' needs report by the Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education (2006). For the teachers as instructors' domain, I selected two major aspects: classroom management and instructional skills. The first aspect comprised seven areas regarding teachers' needs and the second, comprised nine areas. Then, for the teachers as learners' domain, I took six areas from different aspects such as classroom diversity and communication with families and caregivers.

I presented and explained to the teachers the purpose of the questionnaire and I encouraged them to answer it. Although I asked the teachers to return the it several times, they failed to bring their answers to the area meetings. Some of them forgot to do the questionnaire and some others did not have the time to answer it. For that reason, I decided to inquire them about their insights in an oral manner to finally systematize them.

Once I had their answers, I analyzed them and I found that the teachers' major needs were related to their domain as instructors concerning student's motivation to learn and how to help them work cooperatively. These two needs had been manifested along several English Department meetings. Although I do not have formal records of these discussions, teachers frequently complained about the difficulties they faced when they assigned students to develop a learning activity in small groups. Regarding students' motivation, the teachers mentioned in several meetings their interest to develop their skills on that area to be able to cope with students' needs and expectations.

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**Design and implement the teachers´ study group**. Although the questionnaire analysis revealed the teachers' needs regarding student's motivation to learn and how to help them work cooperatively, there was an emergent need concerning the appropriate use of a new ESL textbook. The new textbook was not in accordance to the school instruction of English as a foreign language (EFL), it was not selected by all teachers. It was imposed by the principal of the school aiming to improve students´ proficiency level. The new textbook was originally proposed for a different context: English as a second language (ESL). In that sense, as the school is not bilingual, neither the students nor their parents were familiarized with the English learning process under the ESL perspective that the textbook presented.

On their part, the teachers were not sufficiently prepared to work under the ESL perspective and properly use the textbook within their classes. Therefore, there were lots of complaints coming from the students, their parents and the school administrators related to the methodology teachers were implementing with the new textbook. The area coordinator discussed with the English teachers this situation and asked them for an immediate solution. I supposed that a possible solution could be to study some ELT methodologies. In that way, teachers could reflect on their own current practices and improve them in order to reduce the tensions about the use of the new textbook. This decision was derived from my learning about some of the ELT methodologies under the socio-cultural and socio-critical perspective in a course about New Approaches in EFL teaching and learning in my Master's program. Hence, I officially presented this idea to the English area coordinator and the English teachers who showed their interest and approved it.

Once I had the school´s approval, I concentrated on the implementation of the TSG. I first asked for the English teachers' written consent to participate in this PD strategy.

Then, I briefly described them the dynamics of it. I explained them the objective of this strategy, the roles we had to assume, the duration, and the activities that could be developed within each session.

Regarding the materials for the TSG, I talked to the professor who taught the Methodology course in the master program in order to select the more suitable articles for the teachers to read, analyze and discuss, bearing in mind their English level and the time available to do that. Finally, I selected four articles under the socio-cultural approach and four articles for the socio-critical approach.

Apart from the readings previously mentioned, I planned to use a chart which was one of the materials of the Methodologies course. This chart presented a comparison between some theories of language and their epistemological orientation. Besides, as a starting reading, I selected an article concerning some important conceptualizations and benefits about the TSG strategy.

After the selection of the readings to be discussed within the TSG, I considered important to identify teachers' existent knowledge regarding the ELT methodologies before the implementation of the TSG. Likewise, I wanted to know the possible improvements or gains they may have after this process. Additionally, I considered important to know about their concerns, opinions, feelings and suggestions regarding this strategy. To collect this kind of information, I designed two semi-structured individual interviews to be conducted one at the beginning and one at the end of the TSG process.

For more detailed information about the possible teachers' gains, opinions, feelings and understandings about the ELT methodologies and the TSG process, I asked teachers to keep a journal. They had to write their feelings, thoughts and concerns, including the answers of some guided questions, which could help them to reflect deeply about the

articles proposed. I expected to collect this information in the middle of the process and at the end of it.

Besides, I designed a timetable for the period we would work as a group. The timetable included several items such as the time distribution for the eight methodologies, the objectives of each TSG session, the description of the eight articles, and the tasks for planning at least one lesson presenting the methodology or methodologies teachers liked the most under the socio-cultural and socio-critical perspective. Considering that there was very short time for the meetings, I scheduled one reading per session. I initially planned eleven sessions, starting at the end of February and finishing on May 2013. From session one to session five, the teachers had to read, analyze and discuss some ELT methodologies under the socio-cultural perspective and from session seven to session ten, they had to do the same regarding the socio-critical perspective. Within the session sixth and eleventh, the teachers had to present to the group a lesson plan implementing the methodology or methodologies they were comfortable with. The aim of these two planning activities was to know teachers' understandings, and thoughts about the methodologies studied and to observe how they could put them into practice.

As mentioned above, the time available for each session was very short. We only have one hour approximately, and sometimes less, because the area coordinator, the academic coordinator or the principal of the school needed part of the meeting for giving administrative information. Consequently, I decided to implement almost always the same methodology for reading, analyzing and discussing the articles. In that sense, the teachers were familiarized with the methodology and I could save time in explaining the dynamic of the meeting. I also encouraged the teachers to analyze the articles at home thinking about the possibility to implement in our school context the methodology they were reading

about. We usually began the sessions commenting on the process of reading the article. That included teachers' perceptions about the level of difficulty, the unknown vocabulary, and some specific questions retrieved from my graduate course. I found those questions helpful for teachers to have a clear idea about the important aspects to take into account when analyzing and evaluating the possibility to implement a methodology. Furthermore, I assigned some other questions for each session in order to analyze the possible transformation process teachers could experiment regarding their understandings about the ELT methodologies.

   **Reorganization of the timetable.** The original plan for the TSG sessions, unfortunately, was not developed as I intended to.  I had planned to carry out one methodology per session, but some difficulties appeared and made me modify the schedule. The meetings programmed for March 6th and 13th, and May 8th and 29th were cancelled because the school principal needed that space to talk with the teachers or the school administrators programed different kind of activities at the meeting time. The meeting programmed for session two, March 20th, was interrupted by the school academic coordinator.  She needed that space to provide the teachers with some academic orientations regarding the end of the activities of the first school term. Additionally, the time planned for some of the meetings had to be divided in two parts. The first part was for the TSG session. The second part was used for the area coordinator to present some information or orientations concerning school academic and non-academic activities. Subsequently, some of the tasks planned had to be omitted such as discussion in small groups, teachers' poster presentations and some videos that exemplified the teaching methodologies presented within the sessions.

Another issue was that some topics required more than one session to fully address the content. For example, the third session, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, Task-Based Language Teaching and Learning (TBL), was not enough to cover the material. Only three teachers attended the meeting.  As a result, in session four, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, the same article had to be discussed again because the other five teachers did not know what we had studied. In a like manner, when the group had to talk about the Content Based Instruction methodology (CBI), it was necessary to use two sessions (session five, April 10<sup>th</sup> and six, April 24<sup>th</sup>). As this was the main methodology covered within the new school textbook, teachers wanted to understand better this methodology and they expressed their concerns, feelings and conclusions about it.

Another example of sessions lasting more than what I had planned was the lesson plan presentation programmed in the final timetable for the session eight, programmed for April 24<sup>th</sup>. As aforementioned, teachers had to prepare a presentation about a lesson plan using one or more methodologies studied.  Only four teachers prepared the task assigned. Hence, it was necessary to arrange another session to listen to the rest of the teachers' lesson plan presentations.

For all the aforementioned issues, I had to change the original content planned and the activities proposed for each of them. Bearing in mind the methodologies covered within the new school textbook;  the school context for the possible implementation of the methodology (ies);  the articles' length and content difficulty;  and the time available, I selected three methodologies under the sociocultural perspective: Task Based Learning, Content Based Instruction and Communicative Language Teaching; and one under the socio-critical perspective: Critical Literacy.  I had to reduce the number of tasks the

teachers had to present. Instead of two lesson plan presentations per approach studied, they could only present one lesson plan for the sociocultural perspective.

**What I did not do.**

For the design and the implementation of the teacher study group, I tried to take into consideration the logistics presented by Hudelson (2001), Richards & Farrel (2005) and Oliphant (2011). Some of these logistics are: group membership, group organization in which roles would be assigned to the members), group goals, time and place, resources and some possible troubleshooting. However, as this represented my first attempt at conducting a study and being a TSG facilitator, many logistical factors could not be met Unfortunately, I overlooked some of these important issues.

**Selection of the TSG members.** Once I presented teachers the TSG initiative, they were all interested to participate. For that reason, I recruited them all. Moreover, as the English school staff usually met weekly, I found this space ideal for conducting the meetings. However, I did not take into full consideration some of the aspects recommended for the recruitment process in the literature. For instance, I did not do implemented questionnaires or interviews that revealed their real time available for doing the TSG tasks, their level of interest and commitment and their understanding about the TSG dynamics. Besides, I did not notice that the participation of one of the school administrators, who is an English teacher, could be an impediment for some teachers to express themselves fully. Although I could observe that teachers attitude when I implemented the questionnaire, I did not see it as a risk for the TSG process due to the topic we were going to discuss was mainly related to the improvement of our knowledge. All these situations could have

affected the TSG process, especially on the aspect related to work continuously in the purpose initially arranged.

**Consider the time available of the teachers for reading academic articles.**

My initial hope was that teachers would spend the required time to complete the readings and the tasks assigned concerning the analysis of the articles planned for each session. I assumed that, bearing in mind the initial disposition they had showed to refresh their knowledge about some ELT methodologies and to solve the issue regarding the use of the new textbook. However, I did not take into account that the increasing work load and the teachers' personal daily life issues could affect the time for doing their reading tasks.

**Consider teachers voice regarding the TSG materials.** As aforementioned, I selected the articles to be discussed within the TSG sessions, bearing in mind the topic agreed to work and my new knowledge on the ELT methodologies. Nevertheless, I did not present the teachers these articles in order to reach agreements and select the ones they considered appropriated according to their interests. Moreover, I did not encourage them to look for some other materials and activities that could help us to achieve the TSG purpose.

**Consider real teachers' interests and needs about the knowledge on ELT methodologies.** I also should have taken into more serious consideration the teachers' real interests and needs about the knowledge on ELT methodologies. I proposed the TSG strategy in order to improve their knowledge in some current ELT methodologies. I assumed that through this process, the teachers could progressively transform their understandings about the methodologies and consequently improve their teaching practices. Hence, the teachers who had the issue about the use of the new textbook could find a solution either. However, I did not noticed until it was late that those teachers

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progressively showed their special interest only for the methodologies specifically covered by the new textbook, TBL and CBI.

**Assume properly my role as the TSG facilitator.** I also believe that my inexperience as a researcher did not allow me to properly assume my role as the TSG facilitator. Given the time constrains and my lack of experience in the implementation of this PD strategy, there were some actions that I did not do as facilitator in some of the TSG sessions such as beginning the meetings by presenting feedback of the previous sessions, ending all session with a concrete wrap-up, and confirming teachers' learning or comprehension about the main ideas of the methodologies discussed. I believe that these issues may have led to some confusion with the teachers, leading to them not completing the assigned readings, low participation and high absenteeism at the TSG sessions.

**Revision of the teachers' journal.** At the beginning of the sessions, I gave each teacher a notebook in order they write their ideas, thoughts, questions, feelings and concerns about the readings and what they experienced within the sessions. Additionally, I assigned them to answer some questions any time they read an article related to the ELT methodologies proposed and I repeated the orientations to manage the journal notebook within the first three sessions. I planned to read their journals in the middle and at the end of the TSG process. When it was the time to collect the teachers' journals for the first time, I realized that some of the teachers were not writing the entries as assigned and some others were not even using it. I insisted on the importance to write their thoughts, conclusions and reflections about the articles and the discussions. However, I did not present them an example about how to keep a journal, and I did not do a systematical revision of their journal entries. Due to this fact, few of them continued writing and they did not followed

most of the instructions given. Once they were collected for the second time, I found that most of them had not kept up with the tasks.

**Keeping my own journal.** In order to register the process of the TSG and my own reflections about development of this study, I had to keep a journal. Nevertheless, I did not write systematically the entries related to this experience. Although at the beginning of the process I tried to do it, I was not consistent in my writing. I was overwhelmed with my workload, the assignments I have to accomplish for my Master's courses, the collection and analysis of the data for this study and the organization of the TSG sessions. Consequently, I just wrote disorganized and isolated notes during the sessions or after them. Additionally, I did not manage my time to read them again and analyze them.

# APPENDIX H: CHART ABOUT THEORIES OF LANGUAGES

## Comparing Theories of Language

| Grammar-based orientation | Early Communicative orientation | Empiricist or Behaviorist orientation | Cognitivist, rationalist or psycholinguistic orientation | Socio-cultural orientation |
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| **1800: classical method (later known as Grammar Translation)**<br><br>Lrng a lang=lrng grammar<br><br>**Focus** on: Dividing sentences up into subjects and predicates Reading the classics Translating Memorization of vocabulary<br><br>Lesson begin with reading and sts practice the grammar and vocabulary in the reading, Classes in mother tongue, focused on grammar explanations, practice with inflections, drills and exercises with disconnected sentences, no attention to pronunciation, rote exercises | **1880:** Francois Gouin (Latin teacher trying to learn German)<br><br>**Methods: Series Method-** invented by Gouin based on observations of newphew's lang learning<br><br>Focus: series of connected sentences. No translation or grammar.<br><br>**Direct method or Berlitz Method**<br><br>**1900:** Berlitz (German linguist)<br><br>**Focus** on: Interactions and instructions in the TL No L1 allowed Readings on the culture of the TL Realia, pictures, mimic Oral interactions in carefully graded progress Grammar taught inductively Vocabulary taught through demonstrations, objects and pictures Spontaneous use of language, everyday voc Correct pronunciation and grammar emphasized. Lessons organized around topics such as body parts, food, clothing, work on pronunciation & grammar Ts help sts self | **1945- Fries-** language consists of certain structural patterns<br><br>**1957:** Burrhus Frederic Skinner (Am. psychologist)<br><br>**Language** as a stimulus response process or as a set of habits<br><br>Langs are learned through habit formation<br><br>**Methods**: Army method: 1945s-after WWII Focus on conversation practice, pronunciation and patter drills, no grammar or translation<br><br>Audiolingual method **Focus** on: words and sentences learned in context, repetitive drills & exercises in TL dialogues introduce new material, natural colloquial speech memorization & fill-in the blanks exercises intensive practice of pronunciation, immediate error correction grammar taught inductively use of labs, tapes, visuals, no use of L1 production of error free utterances lots of mimicry no focus on content, **suggestopedia** | **1959:** Noam Chomsky (Am. linguist)= transformational generative grammar<br><br>**1966**: Robert Kaplan: contrastive rhetoric<br><br>**1977**: R.C. Anderson: schema Theory (psychologist)<br><br>**1979:** James Cummins: BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills) CALP cognitive academic language<br><br>**1983**: Howard Gardner: multiple intelligences and learning styles<br><br>**1989**: 3 learning strategies: Metacognitive, cognitive and social-affective **Language** as a mental ability that is innate and that needs to be developed<br><br>Lang as a set of universal patterns & as rule-governed<br><br>Lrng a lang: transforming deep structures into surface structures & using rules that have been internalized to create new sentences<br><br>**Methods:** Silent way Community Language Teaching (Charles Curran, 1972) TPR (Asher 79) The Natural Approach (Krashen / Terrell 83) CALLA (Chamot & O'Malley89)<br><br>**TPR:** Based on idea that memory increases if stimulated or traced | **1955: Jean P**iaget (Swiss Psychologist) Developmental stages determined by biological factors and learner's experiences<br><br>We develop psychologically as we act and interact with the environment<br><br>**1962:** Lev Vygotsky (soviet psychologist)<br><br>Lrng happens when we are helped by amore capable peer to perform tasks that are in the ZPD<br><br>**1977:** Michael Halliday (British linguist)'context of culture and situation<br><br>**Language** as a social practice, situated, purposeful and contextual<br><br>**Methods:** Communicative language teaching, Content-based teaching, whole language, theme-based instruction, task-based instruction, sheltered instruction.<br><br>**CLT :** Widdowson (1978) **Focus** on: real world simulations, meaningful tasks, sociocultural and pragmatic featurs of language, real life communication, fluency and accuracy as interconnected, unrehearsed language performance, development of communicative competence, aided by technology (videos, tv, etc), teacher acts as facilitator and guide, less grammar and more use of authentic language<br><br>**CBI (Brinton, Snaow & Wesche, 1989)** Integration of content learning with language teaching aims Language as a vehicle for accomplishing a set of content goals Sts learn voc and structures associated with a subject mattere Ts build on the background knowledge of sts Lessons include contextualized language use rather than fragmented study of usage, authentic texts. Ts select specific lang structures or functions found in these texts to focus the lesson on lesson begins with learners needs and |

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| | correct<br>Focus on spoken lang but rdg & wrtng also included<br>Ts create situation sin which sts can communicate for real purposes in everyday speech | Bulgarian psychologist Georgi Lozanov 1979 | through associations with motor activity, lots of listening before speaking, stress free exercises, gret deal of listening and acting, imperative and interrogative moods, rdg and wtg come after sts have developed oral proficiency<br>Extended by Sealy & Romjin (1995): include dialogues, roles plays and storytelling<br>**Natural approach**<br>Based on Krashen's 1982 theory of SLA:<br>**Focus** on: Natural order, affective filter, comprehensible input , silent periods, delaying production until speech emerges naturally, use of TPR in the beginning,<br><br>**CALLA**<br>Designed to teach content to L2s & to develop academic language skills. 3 componenets: grade appropriate instruction, academic language development and learning strategies<br>1 science and math, then social studies and literature<br>Use of maps, manipulatives, demonstrations, written responses and discussions to increase context, think alouds | interests<br>input can come from listening or reading.<br>Sts acqueire English by reading in English, discussing the content, and writing about the subject area.<br>Examples: ESP and Canada immersion programs.<br>Teaching is whole to part, centered on learner, meaningful, includes all modes, takes into account sts culture, and sts learn lang and content together.<br><br>**Task-based instruction** (Skehan, 1998). Communication problems to solve, real world activities, tasks as center of methodology, learning seen as a set of communicative tasks<br><br>**Whole-language:**<br>Use of lang to construct meaning and reality, integration of 4 skills, anchored in vision of democratic, equitable and diverse society.<br>1. Language takes place whole to part<br>2. Lessons should be learner centered<br>3. Lessons should have meaning and purpose for learners now<br>4. Learning takes place in social interaction<br>5. Lessons should include all four modes<br>6. Lessons should support students' first languages and cultures<br>7. Teachers need to have faith in the learners<br><br>**Sheltered instruction**<br><br>Founder: Krashen (1985) model for older sts with an intermediate level of proficiency.<br>Ts use special techniques to help sts understand the content. Needs for both lang and content aer taken into account.<br>Divided into ELD-english lang development courses for lower level sts to learn English through conent, and SDAIE-spaecilly designed academic instruction in English for intermediate and advanced sts to learn content through speacil techniques |

APPENDIX I: READINGS DISCUSSED IN THE STUDY GROUP ACCORDING TO THE FIRST PLAN

1. Task –based language learning: Old approach, new style. A new lesson to learn (Rodríguez-Bonces & Rodríguez-Bonces 2010).

2. Teaching methods and English as an international language (McKay, 2002), chapter 5.

3. Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy (Brown, 2001), chapter 2: A Methodical History of Language Teaching. Chapter 3: The present: An Informed Approach.

4. Contexts and orientations (Freeman & Freeman, (1998), chapter 1: Contexts and Orientations, chapter 2: Teaching Language through Context, chapter 3: Learning Goes from Whole to Part.

5. Promoting the value of local knowledge in ESL/EFL teacher education through community-based field assignments (Sharkey & Clavijo-Olarte, 2012) (pp.39-58)

6. Critical literacy as comprehension: Expanding reader response (McLaughlin & De Voogd, 2004), chapter 2: Teaching Critical Literacy.

7. Toward a critical pedagogy of popular culture: Literacy development among urban youth (Morrell, 2002) (pp. 72-77).

8. Critical media literacy in middle school: Exploring the politics of representation (Gainer, 2010) (pp.364-373).