

IMPLEMENTING SHORT STORIES AS A DIDACTIC TOOL TO REINFORCE STUDENTS'
READING AND WRITING SKILLS AT BETHLEMITAS BRIGHTON HIGH SCHOOL IN
PAMPLONA, COLOMBIA

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ENGLISH – FRENCH FOREIGN LANGUAGES PROGRAM

PAMPLONA-2015

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English has become the most commonly used language among foreign speakers. Therefore many countries have highlighted the importance of learning it. And Colombia it is not the exception, hence it has promoted a new institutional English program called “Colombia very well” (2015-2025) which aims to improve the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language in all the national educative institutions from basic to superior education. This program has a goal to arise under graduated and graduated Colombian students to get a B1 and B2 English language proficiency level according to the Common European Framework of references for languages.

So that, Colombian’s teachers are challenged to implement a variety of new teaching models, strategies, and didactic tools, to encourage students to learn English and reinforce their students’ linguistic, communicative and cultural competences in this second language learning process.

Accordingly, the teacher trainee aims to implement short stories as a didactic tool to reinforce students’ reading and writing skills in English at Brighton High school, in order to improve their literacy skills, allow them the opportunity to express their creativity through the creation of their own short stories. In addition, through the use of short stories the researcher aimed to enhance student’s vocabulary acquisition, to reinforce their grammatical competence and improve their reading comprehension process.

PROBLEM

After carrying out four non-participant classroom observations in 7th and 8th grades, the researcher identified the following aspects.

Lot of use of L1: almost the 70% of the class the teacher uses the L1, to give instructions, explain the topic, and advise students. At the same time, teacher uses the method “let’s learn”, it is a new English method implemented in the school but it is still in the edition process, and it presents some spelling and grammar mistakes. Most of the class is centered on resolving the book activities, and students do not have the opportunity to practice other skills such as speaking and listening.

On the other hand, the students’ behavior most of the students participate in the class, and seem to be interested in learning English. They give short answers to the questions asked by the teacher, and also most of them love going in front of the class and give their own examples about the exercises proposed by the teacher or by the book “let’s learn”.

Finally, students’ productions are imitated because of the activities proposed by the book, most of them are matching exercises, filling the gaps, write short sentences, as a result students are not allowed to develop their own written productions.

JUSTIFICATION

This proposal consists on reinforcing reading and writing skill through the use of short stories among 8th graders, it allowed participants the opportunity to enhance their reading comprehension competence and produce their own writings by the creation of their own stories in order to improve their literacy skills.

On the other hand, it is important to highlight the advantages of using short stories over other literary texts. Arigol (2001) stated that:

Short stories makes the students' reading task easier because it is simple and short. They give learners a better view of other people and other cultures. They require more attention and analysis helping students to be more creative and raise the critical thinking skills. They raise cultural awareness. They reduce students' anxiety and helps them feel more relax and they are good for multicultural contexts because of its universal language, also they offer a fictional and interesting world that motivates student's creativity. (p. 12)

Taking into account all of these aspects, the pre-service teacher aims to implement these literary texts as a didactic tool in order to enhance 8th graders' reading and writing skills.

OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

- To implement short stories as a didactic tool to reinforce students' reading and writing skills among 8th graders at Bethlemitas Brighton high school.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- Reinforce students' lexical competences through the implementation of short stories.

- Develop students' reading comprehension competence using two reading techniques (Skimming and Scanning).
- Motivate students to create their own short stories in order to develop their writing skills in English language.

INSTITUTIONAL OBSERVATION

Bethlemitas Brighton School is situated on Carrera 4 N°6-84 in “El Carmen” neighborhood in Pamplona, Norte de Santander, Colombia. This Educative Institution was founded on April 13th, 1896 by Pamplona sisters' founders. And it was opened as a Home called Holy Family On April 17th.

Nowadays, the main authority of this institution are represented by: the principal nun, the academic coordinator and the discipline coordinator.

On the other hand, in the “Proyecto Educativo Institucional” (PEI) an important document that establishes general aspects from the institution such as mission, vision and principles with the following characteristics

MISION

Formar integralmente a la niñez y juventud, a la luz de la filosofía Bethlemita mediante una educación de calidad, inclusiva fundamentadas en principios éticos, científicos, tecnológicos, investigativos y colaborativos, hacia la promoción de ciudadanos comprometidos, en el cuidado y preservación del medio ambiente, el respeto de lo público, una sana convivencia y un buen desempeño en el mundo laboral.

VISION

La institución educativa Bethlemitas Brighton será reconocida en sus procesos de formación integral de personal altamente cualificadas cimentadas en la vivencia de valores humanos-cristianos, con proyección hacia el liderazgo en la innovación educativa, pedagógica y técnica, de carácter inclusiva, para afrontar con dignidad la era del hombre nuevo, ejerciendo procesos de cambio en la familia y la sociedad hacia la construcción de un mundo más humano.

PRINCIPLES AT THE BETHLEMITAS BRIGHTON SCHOOL

The institute documents of Bethlemitas Brighton School have confronted the challenges of today's culture through a discovery and assessment of Bethlemitas education expressed in the following principles stated in the proyecto educativo institucional (PEI):

1. The Bethlemitas education is based on Christian anthropology which sees the person as “a unique and unrepeatabe being”. With awareness that he/she has been created in the image and likeness of God.
2. The person is free, responsible, autonomous, as well as fraternal and supportive; recognizing others as brothers and the world as the element which has been delivered for its improvement.
3. Community dimension of the human being: the human being is better with and for the others: principle of fraternity-solidarity and communion.
4. The educative pastoral: it streamlines the relationship science-culture- gospel; therefore, Bethlemitas School education lights from faith the different disciplines of knowledge in order to build new men and women creators of a new fraternal and fair society.

5. The academic excellence: for instance, the curriculum encourages the adequate use of reason and intelligence, the right judgment, the knowledge, the conceptual rigor, the research process; the artistic and cultural creation, as well as the interaction between theory and practice.
6. The Community Outreach: it is founded on actions which strengthen the sensibility, the tenderness, the affection, the commitment and the solidarity with the needy.
7. The civic education: it is founded on respect and love to the person and on the knowledge, defense and promotion of human rights; it engages all the members of the community in the education of honest, fair, democratic, solidary citizens, constructors of peace.
8. The new global culture: it encourages the defense and care of life in all its forms; the protection of the environment, the dignity and equality of human beings as well as the appreciation and respect of the cultural diversity.
9. The institutional Bethlehemite culture: it is strengthened through the free, autonomous, reflexive, critical, and democratic participation; the human, spiritual and professional quality; the sense of ownership and the interaction among the different members of the educational community.
10. Mary: “Our mother of Belen”, model of human dignity and welcoming and humble service to others.

CHAPTER I: PEDAGOGICAL COMPONENT

IMPLEMENTING SHORT STORIES AS A DIDACTIC TOOL TO REINFORCE STUDENTS' READING AND WRITING SKILLS AT BETHLEMITAS BRIGHTON HIGH SCHOOL IN PAMPLONA, COLOMBIA.

INTRODUCTION

Learning a second language requires mastering four communicative skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing, for the learner to understand and being understood in the target language and to become more competitive in many real world situations (finding a new job in a foreign country, meeting new cultures, people, etc.).

So that, the teacher trainee used short stories as a didactic tool to reinforce students' literacy skills in order to help them to rise the goal of becoming more competitive in their ESL (English, Second, language) learning process, by practicing their communicative competences (reading comprehension and written production). But without letting behind speaking and listening skills. Also this project allowed the students the opportunity to develop writing skill and express their creativity through the creation of their own short stories.

JUSTIFICATION

After carrying out four classroom observations, and revising students written productions, the pre-service teacher found that students lacked an in-depth knowledge of vocabulary and

grammar structures. Due to that their productions are very limited and they do not engage in spoken English. Taking into account all of these issues, this proposal aimed to overcome these shortcomings, allowing the students space for them to practice English language mainly reading comprehension and writing skill through the implementation of short stories as a didactic tool.

The pre-service teacher implemented pre, while and post reading activities such as: titling a story, changing parts of a story, discussions about the stories, puzzles, role plays, dialogues, writing their own story. etc...), in order to motivate students to actively participate in the class development. Also, this was an opportunity for students to develop writing skill and to express their creativity through their own written compositions since it has been limited because of the activities proposed by the book “lest learn 8”.

1.1.OBJECTIVES.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE.

- To reinforce reading and writing skills through the use of short stories among 8th graders.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES.

- To enhance reading comprehension competence through the use of short stories by the implementation of skimming and scanning exercises.
- To reinforce students' vocabulary.
- To develop students' writing skill through the creation of their own short stories.

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This proposal aimed to improve literacy skills (reading and writing) through the implementation of short stories as a didactic tool, and it is important to highlight some key concepts such as: Literacy, Literacy skills, Short story, Reading, Writing, Skimming and Scanning in order to better understand what this component is about. On the other hand, this component is supported by some previous studies that point the advantages of working with short stories over other literary text.

1.2.1. Literacy.

Defined as the state of being able to read and write. (Dictionary of contemporary English. Longman. p.1020)

1.2.2. Literacy skills.

Bainbridge (2015), Literacy skills are all the skills needed for reading and writing. They include aspects such as awareness of the sounds of language, awareness of print and the relationship between letters and sounds. Other literacy skills includes vocabulary, spelling, and comprehension.

1.2.3 Short story.

A kind of story shorter than the novel or novelette, characteristically developing a single central theme and limited in scope and number of characters. (Webster's New World College Dictionary definition. 2004)

A fictional prose narrative that is shorter than a novel and that usually deals with only a few characters. The short story is usually concerned with a single effect conveyed in only one or a few significant episodes or scenes. The form encourages economy of setting, concise narrative, and the omission of a complex plot; character is disclosed in action and dramatic encounter but is seldom fully developed. Despite its relatively limited scope, though, a short story is often judged by its ability to provide a “complete” or satisfying treatment of its characters and subject. (Encyclopedia Britannica Inc.2015)

1.2.4 Productive skills

Golkovaa D. & Hubackovab S. (2014) also called active skills - mean the transmission of information that a language user produces in either spoken or written form. Productive skills would not exist without the support of receptive ones. Passive knowledge - such as listening and reading - symbolizes a springboard to active implementation of grammar structures, passive vocabulary lists, heard and repeated sounds of a foreign language. This theoretical background applies to any studied language. This should also prove that both types of skills are inseparable and one cannot exist without the other. When learning a foreign language, receptive skills usually come first and should be followed by practical application of productive ones. If a learning process lacks one of them, the final outcome will not be complete. p. 477 – 481

1.2.5. Reading.

Ríos & Valcárcel, (2005) point out that reading is a receptive language process in which the reader recognizes and decodes any kinds of symbols. This process ends when the reader gives sense and meaning to the decoded written language and transfers the information understood into his experience and thought”.

Among the many definitions of reading that have arisen in recent decades, three prominent ideas emerge as most critical for understanding what "learning to read" means:

Reading is a process undertaken to reduce uncertainty about meanings a text conveys. The process results from a negotiation of meaning between the text and its reader.

The knowledge, expectations, and strategies a reader uses to uncover textual meaning all play decisive roles way the reader negotiates with the text's meaning.

Reading does not draw on one kind of cognitive skill, nor does it have a straightforward outcome—most texts are understood in different ways by different readers.

1.2.6 Writing.

Daniel, et al. (1996) describes writing as a system of more or less permanent marks used to represent an utterance in such a way that it can be recovered more or less exactly without the intervention of the utterer.

Coulmas, (1999) describes writing as a set of visible or tactile signs used to represent units of language in a systematic way, with the purpose of recording messages which can be retrieved by everyone who knows the language in question and the rules by virtue of which its units are encoded in the writing system.

1.2.7 Skimming and Scanning techniques

Acuña (2013) defines Skimming and Scanning techniques as follow:

Skimming: refers to the process of reading only main ideas within a passage to get an overall impression of the content of a reading selection.

Scanning: is a reading technique to be used when you want to find specific information quickly.

In scanning you have a question in your mind and you read a passage only to find the answer, ignoring unrelated information. (P. 24-25).

1, 3, METHODOLOGY

Next, they are presented some important aspects that allow accomplish the pedagogic objective established by the pre service teacher in order to overcome the educative needs observed in the institution.

1.3.1. Working on reading skill.

Brown, (2001) states the following stages in order to guide reading comprehension activities.

Pre-reading activities: they draw students' attention to a text and allow them to make predictions on the text content by activating their prior knowledge and schema.

In this stage the pre-service teacher will develop activities to contextualize students in the content of the readings. For Example.

Skimming the title.

Showing images with the main character of the short stories.

Ask students to organize puzzles with images taking from the texts in order to encourage them to formulate hypothesis about the story.

While-reading activities: help students to read strategically by focusing on decoding skills.

Implementing some scanning activities to enhance students' reading comprehension such as look for the meaning of the unknown words, highlight grammatical patterns: past tense of the verb, regular and irregular verbs, etc..., look for specific information about the events, characters, places presented in the story.

Post-reading activities. They expand the knowledge students have acquired through reading by allowing them to discuss and critically analyze the text content, thus deepening their understanding of the text.

After reading the short stories students will develop the following activities:

Matching exercises.

Titling exercises, create a new title for the story.

Change parts of the story, create new endings, to add a new character in the story.

Create a new story after reading one.

WRITING:

Guiding writing activities.

The pre-service teacher guided writing process, following the four main stages proposed by Harmer, (2004) to develop writing skill.

Planning: On this stage, students will create the structure of the story. In addition, they will decide about purpose, audience they will write to and the topic they will write about.

Drafting: On this stage, student will write the first version of the story as a draft.

Editing: (reflecting and revising) after producing a draft students will read about they have written to see where it works and where it doesn't. This process is often helped by other readers or editors (in this case the teacher) who comments and makes suggestions that will help the author to make the appropriate revision and changes if it is necessary.

Final version: Once students have edited their draft making the changes they consider necessary, they will produce their final version.

1.3.2. The lesson plan.

To develop each lesson the pre-service teacher will use the planning model proposed by Brown H.D (2001).

(1) Warm-up/Review: It encourages learners to use what they have been taught in previous lessons. (2) Introduction to a new lesson: focuses learners' attention on the objective of the new lesson and relate the objective to their lives. (3) Presentation: introduces new information, checks learner comprehension of the new material, and models the tasks that the learners will do in the practice stage. (4) Practice: provides opportunities to practice and apply the new language or information. (5) Evaluation: enables the instructor and learners to assess how well they have grasped the lesson, the classes taking into account all these stages.

(See appendix #1)

Implementing the short stories

Date	Title	topic	objective	Activities
First week	<i>The lion and the mouse.</i>	An animal's story	To Practice the future with going to and will.	<p>Pre- reading Puzzles Glossary</p> <p>While- reading Stuck in the middle</p> <p>Post- reading Vocabulary game Write a short comment.</p>
third week	<i>The uncle John ghost story.</i>	horror story	To reinforce past continuous.	<p>Pre- reading Skimming the tittle. Glossary</p> <p>While- reading Highlight the verbs in past tense.</p> <p>Post- reading Scamming the test to answer questions.</p>

fifth week	<i>A strange experience.</i>	Suspense story	To explain simple past.	<p>Pre- reading</p> <p>Listening the story Organizing the story Answering questions</p> <p>While-reading</p> <p>Create a glossary</p> <p>Highlight verbs in past tense.</p> <p>Post -reading</p> <p>Write a new strange experience students had before.</p>
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In ten weeks the pre-service teacher implemented three short stories “The lion and the mouse”, “The Uncle John ghost story” and “A strange experience”. There were designed a three hours lesson planning per week for working with each story.

Here an example of the implementation of one of them.

In the week number one, it was developed the short story called “The lion and the mouse” the teacher followed the next steps proposed by Brown (2001).

1.3.3 Working reading skill.

“The lion and the mouse” short story

Pre-reading activities: during this stage students organized puzzles with some images taken from the story. Then they had to do predictions about what would happen in the story using the images portrayed in the puzzles, Also they had to highlight the unknown words and create a glossary. (See appendix #2 and #3)

While-reading activities: Activity stuck in the middle. During this stage students read the first part of the story and they had to write sentences using future with “going to” and future simple. The will do predictions about they thought that would happen in the story, after this

exercise they had to read the rest of the story in order to compare their versions with the original one.

(See appendix#4)

Post-reading activities. On this stage students developed a vocabulary exercise, the pre-service teacher displayed on the board some flashcards with images representing new words taken from the story for students to look for the meaning of each one of them. Then they wrote a short comment about the story using some of the new words they learned. (See appendix #5)

Developing writing skill.

One of the objectives of this proposal was to develop writing skill through the creation of a short story in English. Accordingly the pre-service teacher implemented the stages for developing writing skill proposed by Harmer (2004).

Planning: for students to start writing their short stories the pre-service teacher designed a chart for them to do the planning section of it. In this chart they had to write ideas about the story they will create, for example, the title, the characters, the setting, and the time in which the story will be developed.

(See appendix #6)

Drafting: in this part students wrote their story as a draft for the teacher starting the revision.

(See appendix #7)

Editing: in this stage the pre-service teacher did the revision of all the stories and corrected the mistakes (spelling mistakes, word order, grammar mistakes, and vocabulary) students wrote.

Final version: after the pre-service teacher's corrections students designed their short story as a book in which students could show linguistic and extra linguistic competences, such their ability to draw and design their own stories.

(See appendix #8)

1.4 Outcomes and conclusions

The main purpose of this research was to reinforce reading and writing skills through the implementation of short stories, due to that the pre-service teacher worked on literacy skills for students to improve their English learning process. There were implemented a sort of activities proposed by two main authors Brown (reading skill) and Harmer (writing skill). In order to accomplish the main goal of this pedagogical proposal.

During this all of this process the pre-service teacher could apply three short stories, it was very challenging to fix the school schedule for applying them, because of the institution's extracurricular activities but at the end it was done. It was not easy to find stories to catch students' attention because most of them admitted that they did not like reading too much even in their L1, but with the implementation of the Pre, while and post activities proposed by Brown, (2001) the pre-service teacher could find a variety of activity such puzzles, games (the hung man, noughts and crosses etc.), role plays, creating glossaries etc., that engaged students in the classes development, and most of them actively participated in class.

Another aspect to highlight is the importance of productive skills in English language learning, this proposal allowed the students the space to produce the language meanly in written exercises through the creation of their own stories but also in an oral way. And also it showed that learning English does not have to be boring as much of the students thought it was.

I strongly recommend new teachers to work on productive skills. This pedagogical proposal showed that it does not matter if students do not have a high second language level, they are able to produce it with the adequate guided activities. For instance Harmer (2004) stages to develop writing skills evidenced in this project to be an excellent guide for students to practice and produce written products.

Finally, I stand out the potential that short stories had over students' English learning process improvement. After carrying out this proposal students agreed have improved their literacy skills, thanks to the short stories they admitted have learned lot of vocabulary, have improved their grammatical competence and also they highlighted the effects that short stories produced over their creativity and imagination which was evident in their final products.

CHAPTER II: RESEARCH COMPONENT

INTRODUCTION.

Literacy skills (reading, and writing) play an important role not only in educational and professional fields but, in real-life communicative situations. They promote problem solving approaches and thinking skills – asking questions and seeking answers, finding information, forming opinions, evaluating sources and making decisions fostering successful learners, effective contributors, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

Taking in to account all these aspects, the pre- service teacher applied an action research study focused on the implementation of short stories as a didactic tool to reinforce students' reading and writing skills, in order to know how short stories can be used to enhance students' literacy skills and how them motivate students to produce their own written product as a media of using the English language in an authentic way.

In this chapter the researcher explains how this study was carried out, the data collections instruments, the participants and the process of the data analysis in order to know if short stories can be an efficient didactic tool to reinforce students' reading and writing skills. As a result it was found out that most of the participant showed a significant improvement in their linguistic competences.

Justification

With the implementation of this action research study, the researcher aimed to know how the use of short stories reinforces 8th graders students' reading and writing skills. And how these stories motivate students to develop their productive skills in English, mainly written but also

oral production. This project was a way for students to use the English Language in context, a way to show them what they were able to do with all those grammar structures and new vocabulary they learned. In the other hands, this study was an opportunity to show them how the language can be used with a communicative purpose and also provide them space to express their creativity through the creation of their own short stories.

Problem

After observing four classes the researcher realized that 7th and 8th graders students presented some difficulties for developing reading comprehension exercises, answering questions, asking for permission, also their oral and written productions were very limited because of the activities proposed by the book. In most of the cases students developed matching, filling gaps exercises, crosswords, etc. and they do not have the space for practicing oral and written productions.

In addition, the lack of vocabulary and grammar structure problem could be easily noticed in most of their evaluations.

PURPOSE.

The purpose of this study was to implement of short stories as a didactic tool to reinforce 8th graders' reading and writing skills. It allowed students the opportunity of working on productive skills mainly in writing skill, also they could develop some linguistic and extra-linguistic competences such as grammar structures, vocabulary, and creativity through the creation of their own stories.

2.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

2.1.1 Grand-tour question:

- In which way do short stories reinforce 8th graders students' reading and writing skills?

2.1.2 Sub questions:

- How does the use of short-stories enhance students' reading skill?
- How does the use of short-stories encourage students to develop written skill?
- How do short-stories enhance students' lack of knowledge on vocabulary?

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to better understand this chapter it is necessary to define the following concepts action research, qualitative approach and productive skills.

2.2.1 Qualitative approach.

This study followed a qualitative approach, which according to Kakai (2008) "refers to a method of research interested in the meaning and the observation of a social phenomenon in its natural environment." This means that qualitative studies are focused on the social phenomena that are closest to people. Kakai also cites the authors Taylor and Bogdan (1984) "Qualitative research generates and analyzes descriptive data such as written or spoken words or people's behavior".

2.2.2 Action research approach.

In schools, action research refers to a wide variety of evaluative, investigative, and analytical research methods designed to diagnose problems or weaknesses—whether organizational, academic, or instructional—and help educators develop practical solutions to

address them quickly and efficiently. Action research may also be applied to programs or educational techniques that are not necessarily experiencing any problems, but that educators simply want to learn more about and improve. The general goal is to create a simple, practical, repeatable process of iterative learning, evaluation, and improvement that leads to increasingly better results for schools, teachers, or programs. (Definition given by *the Glossary of Education Reform*).

2.2.3 Literature Review.

Khatib M. & Nasrollahi A. (2012) on their research called “*Enhancing Reading Comprehension through Short Stories in Iranian EFL Learners*” stated that, in recent years literature came back to language classes. Literature has been discovered as a valuable and interesting material for improving students’ language ability (Premawardhena, 2005). It has been found that if appropriate literary texts are chosen it would —be an effective tool for stimulating and achieving language learning and equipping learners with relevant linguistic and socio-cultural competences| (p. 52).

Pardede, (2010), stated that literature has a rich potential to provide an authentic model of language use for FLS. And among literary genres, short stories seem to be the most suitable choice for helping students enhance the four skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing—more effectively because of the motivational benefit embedded in the stories.

Oster, (1989) affirms that literature helps students to write more creatively. Also, instructors can create a variety of writing activities to help students to develop their writing skills.

Pourkalhor & Kohan N. (2013) conducted a research on teaching reading comprehension through short stories in advance classes, with a group of 22 Iranian students, and it was found

that all respondents in a group that the researchers thought reading comprehension through short story showed improvement after the reading course and the result of the present study showed that the control group and experimental group had a significant difference in their posttest, which meant that the experimental group had higher scores than the control group, after applying a T-Reading comprehension test . (p. 56)

2.3 METHODOLOGY

This study will adopt an action research design which stated the following steps for the researching process:

The Action Research Process

- **Selecting a focus:** What element(s) of our practice or what aspect of student learning do we wish to investigate?
- **Clarifying theories:** The second step involves identifying the values, beliefs, and theoretical perspectives the researchers hold relating to their focus.
- **Identifying research questions:** Once a focus area has been selected and the researcher's perspectives and beliefs about that focus have been clarified, the next step is to generate a set of personally meaningful research questions to guide the inquiry.
- **Collecting data.** To ensure reasonable validity and reliability, action researchers should avoid relying on any single source of data. Most teacher researchers use a process called triangulation to enhance the validity and reliability of their findings. Basically, triangulation means using multiple independent sources of data to answer one's questions. Triangulation is like studying an object located inside a box by viewing it through various

windows cut into the sides of the box. Observing a phenomenon through multiple “windows” can help a single researcher compare and contrast what is being seen through a variety of lenses. For this study the researcher collected the data bias three instruments: four non-participant observations that were carrying out during two weeks, another instrument was a Journal in which the researcher took notes about the activities proposed for the class development and finally a questionnaire with five open-ended questions about students’ English learning process improvement after the implementation of the short stories.

- **Analyzing data.** Although data analysis often brings to mind the use of complex statistical calculations, this is rarely the case for the action researcher. A number of relatively user-friendly procedures can help a practitioner identify the trends and patterns in action research data

- **Reporting results:** The reporting of action research most often occurs in informal settings that are far less intimidating than the venues where scholarly research has traditionally been shared. Faculty meetings, brown bag lunch seminars, and teacher conferences are among the most common venues for sharing action research with peers. However, each year more and more teacher researchers are writing up their work for publication or to help fulfill requirements in graduate programs.

- **Taking informed action:** Taking informed action, or “action planning,” the last step in the action research process, is very familiar to most teachers. When teachers write lesson plans or develop academic programs, they are engaged in the action planning process. What makes action planning particularly satisfying for the teacher researcher is that with each piece of

data uncovered (about teaching or student learning) the educator will feel greater confidence in the wisdom of the next steps.

2.4 POPULATION.

This study was conducted at Bethlemitas Brighton high school. The participants were 76 students who ranging 13- 15 years old, from which the researcher selected a sample of twelve students for applying a questionnaire for the data collection process.

2.5 Data collection.

The data collection process was through the use of the following instruments.

2.5.1 Non-participant observation: GORDON MARSHALL (1999) definition: a research technique whereby the researcher watches the subjects of his or her study, with their knowledge, but without taking an active part in the situation under scrutiny. This approach is sometimes criticized on the grounds that the very fact of their being observed may lead people to behave differently, thus invalidating the data obtained, as for example in the famous case of the so-called Hawthorne effect. To overcome this, researchers normally observe a number of similar situations, over a period of time. Although video-recorders can now be used in non-participant observation, this too may alter (indeed almost certainly will alter) the behavior of the research subjects. For this study the researcher implemented four non-participant class room observations in a period of two weeks, in order to identify the main aspects that had to be reinforce.

(see appendix #9)

2.5.2 Journal: Bloor & Wood (2006) state that a research journal is a written record of the researcher's activities, thoughts and feelings throughout the research process from design, through data collection and analysis to writing and presenting the study. During this stage the

researcher wrote three journals extracts in which there were recorded the different activities to be applied, researchers' feelings and perceptions about students' behaviors.

2.5.3 Questionnaire: Definition given by Business dictionary electronic dictionary. List of a research or survey questions asked to respondents, and designed to extract specific information. It serves four basic purposes: to (1) collect the appropriate data, (2) make data comparable and amenable to analysis, (3) minimize bias in formulating and asking question, and (4) to make questions engaging and varied. For this study the researcher applied a questionnaire consisting on five open-ended questions about the participants feelings towards their English learning process, in order to know participants' perceptions about their improvement on literacy skills after working with the short stories.

Schedule for the data collection and analysis process.

Activities and Instruments	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
Non-participant observation	X	X										
Applying journals			X		X		X					
questionnaires									X	X		
Analysis											X	X

2.6 Data Analysis. The data analysis was developed through the five stages of the inductive Analysis for qualitative data proposed by Thomas D. (2003)

1. Preparation of raw data files (“data cleaning”)

Format the raw data files in a common format (e.g., font size, margins, questions or interviewer comments highlighted) if required. Print and/or make a backup of each raw data file (e.g., each observation, journal extract and questionnaires).

2. Close reading of text

Once text has been prepared, the raw text should be read in detail so the researcher is familiar with the content and gains an understanding of the "themes" and details in the text.

3. Creation of categories

The research identifies and defines categories or themes. The upper level or more general categories are likely to be derived from the research aims. The lower level or specific categories will be derived from multiple readings of the raw data (in vivo coding). For “in vivo” coding, categories are created from meaning units or actual phrases used in specific text segments. Several procedures for creating categories may be used.

4. Overlapping coding and uncoded text

Among the commonly assumed rules that underlie qualitative coding, two are different from the rules typically used in quantitative coding: (a) one segment of text may be coded into more than one category. (b) a considerable amount of the text may not be assigned to any category, as much of the text may not be relevant to the research objectives.

5. Continuing revision and refinement of category system

Within each category, search for subtopics, including contradictory points of view and new insights. Select appropriate quotes that convey the core theme or essence of a category. The categories may be combined or linked under a superordinate category when the meanings are similar. (p. 4-5)

(See appendix #10)

2.7 Findings

After and carefully process of data analysis of the Journal and questionnaires the following themes and categories emerged which helped me to answer the grand tour question and sub-questions that guided this research proposal:

2.7.1 Linguistic competences

After the implementation of the short stories participants agreed having had a significant improvement in the following aspects:

Grammatical competence.

Sentences structures: most of the participants admitted that after working with the short stories they learned how to write more structured and clear sentences. Due to they had to develop written exercises such as changing parts of a story, creating a new ending for the stories etc. they started using grammar in a contextualized way. Here some of the students' answers forwards this statement:

P1 *“hora se escribir una oración con sentido”*, P2 *“ahora hago mejor las oraciones”*;

P3 *“ya se el orden de las oraciones, sujeto, verbo, Complemento”*; P4 *“escribo más claro”*.

Responses taken from the questionnaires of the data collection.

Verbs conjugations: The main topics to study during the final period of the recent academic year were past continuous and simple past, hence short stories provided a clear examples of the uses of these tenses in an authentic context, Pardede (2010). Which facilitated student's comprehension about these topics. In most of activities students highlighted the verbs that were conjugated into the past tense and they were asked to create new sentences with these verbs, as a way to prepare them to develop their own written productions (their own short stories). In addition here we got some extracts taken from the questionnaires that show participants' perceptions about their improvement in this competence.

P3 "aprendí el pasado simple, Play – played"; P4 "*ahora se conjugan verbos, más que todo en el pasado simple*"; P5 "*Mejoré conjugando verbos Work - worked*".

Vocabulary acquisition.

Agricol (2001) "*thanks to their multicultural contexts short stories are very rich in vocabulary*". Which was very evident in students' written productions. All of the participants agreed having improved their vocabulary acquisition after working with the short stories as they were asked to create glossaries with the new vocabulary taken from them, it was seemed that this activity significantly worked. Most of them agreed that with the new vocabulary they learned it was easier to understand the reading and to produce their own stories.

P1 "*aprendí nuevas palabras como Graveyard, ghost*"; P10 "*hice glosarios y aprendí nuevas palabras*"; P12 "*aprendí nuevo vocabulario con los glosarios*"

2.7.2 Extra-Linguistic competences

Creativity: Oster (1989) affirms that literature helps students to write more creatively. Which was clearly identified in the students' final products. This project allowed the students the opportunity to create their own stories and through this process they were able to express their creativity with the design of them. Most of the participants drew, painted and designed the story as a short book during the edition stage. Here one of the fragment taken by the questionnaire that illustrates how the stories encourage them to show their extra-linguistic abilities.

P12 "*aprendimos más y pude elevar mi imaginación*"; P11 "*las historias que me enseñó la profe me sirvieron de modelo para hacerla mía*".

Motivation: participants were very engaged in this process, they actively participate in the activities proposed by the teacher and most of them wrote great stories even if they admitted that they did not like reading too much or working on writing productions in English language. According to their responses to the question ¿Consideras que después de haber leído las historias cortas en Inglés se te facilitó el proceso de escritura de tu propia historia? It was evident that they felt motivated towards their significant improvement in reading comprehension and writing skills in English language.

P1 "*pude hacer una historia en inglés por primera vez. Eso fue lo importante*"

P2 "*pude hacer bien mi historia esto me hace sentir que soy buena para el Inglés*"

P4 "*aprendí a hacer una historia con las palabras y las estructuras que la profe me enseñó eso es importante para mí*"

Conclusions

After categorizing all the information given by the participants, the researcher could respond the grand tour question of this study and its sub questions.

To the question in which way do short stories reinforce 8th graders students' reading and writing skills? Students pointed out that after working with the short stories they learned lot of new vocabulary and grammar structure which helped them to better understands new readings.

In the other hand, participants admitted have improved their writing skills because they were able to create their own stories in English for the first time, they said that they had improved a lot in grammar structures, and that they learned how to write coherent sentences, also they stated that learning new vocabulary motivated them to develop writing skill in an easier way.

Finally, I strongly recommend future teachers to keep on using literary texts as didactic tools in order to reinforce literacy skills, since that through this study was found out how significant they can be, providing vocabulary and authentic situations of language uses. Also they can be can be easily applied thanks to their flexibility to implement a variety of class room activities.

CHAPTER III: OUTREACH COMPONENT

INTRODUCTION.

This component lets the pre-service teacher to get involved in activities that engaged the whole institutional community, it was an opportunity for the teacher trainee to generate spaces to promote social activities that benefited the students and the scholar community. Furthermore the pre-service teacher developed a series of tutoring classes to support students who presented difficulties in English class. Also he/she collaborate in some extracurricular activities such as role-play contest and English song festival.

Justification

The tutoring classes aimed to help students to overcome the difficulties they present when learning English. Due to the time established for each class was not enough for them to perfectly understand the topic explained by the pre-service teacher. This space allowed the students the opportunity for they to reinforce the topics studied during the classes' development.

3.1 OBJECTIVES.

3.1.2 General objective.

- To support students in activities outside the classroom.

3.1.3 Specific objectives.

- To help students to overcome the difficulties they face when learning English as a second language.

3.2 METHODOLOGY.

The pre-service teacher conducted the tutoring classes four hours per week, in this space students will ask the teacher trainee questions about the topics they present more problems when dealing with the activities proposed by the teacher in the classroom. The pre-service teacher did explanations and applied exercises for students to practice and reinforce the topics already explained during the class.

Schedule of the activities in which the pre-service teacher participated.

Date	Activity	Role- of the teacher	Hours
24/09/2015	Role-play contest	Creating the script. Preparing students for the presentation and helping them with the pronunciation.	2 hours 14 hours (see appendix 11)
From 2nd week to 9 th week	Tutoring classes	Giving extra classes in order to reinforce the topic in which some students presented more difficulties.	Four hour per week. 32 hours (see appendix 12)
15/10/2015	English song festival	Helping students with artistic abilities such as singing with the pronunciation of the songs.	4 hours (see appendix 13)
			Total hours 52

CONCLUSION

During all this stage; I had the opportunity to share with the students of this institution, and I could support them in extra-curricular activities (role play contest, English festival song etc.).

Also with the tutoring classes I could help all those students who presented difficulties with the topics explained in the class-room, I have to admit that most of them showed a significant improvement in their English classes after having taken the tutoring classes, which was evidenced in their final tests.

Finally, I have to say that all the objectives that I stated for this component were successfully accomplished, I had the opportunity to meet my students, and they could reinforce the topics of the classes and also they could participate in different events with my help. It was a great experience and opportunity for me to get involved with the whole Brighton community.

CHATER IV: ADMINSTRATIVE COMPONENT

INTRODUCTION.

All the academics institutions develop a series of extracurricular activities in which all the members of the institution (students, teachers, the principal, and administrative workers) are seriously engaged. Taking into account all of these aspects the pre-service teacher will take part of all the activities proposed by the institution during his/her practicum stage.

JUSTIFICATION.

The pre-service teacher aims to generate a good impact in the institution, for that reason he/she will cooperate in the organization of all the activities established by the institution, at any time the educative institution requires to be helped.

4.1 OBJECTIVES.

4.1.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE.

- To take an active role in all the extra-curricular activities proposed by the academic institution.

4.1.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES.

- To support students in the different instructional activities proposed by the institution.
- To cooperate in organizational aspects (decoration, planning, creating etc.) of the institution's festivities such as: Valentines' day, Halloween celebration etc...

4.2 METHODOLOGY

Schedule of the activities developed by the institution.

date	activity	Role of the teacher
7-11/09/ 2015	Pruebas de calidad tercer periodo.	Observing students while taking the tests.
23/09/2015	Izada de Bandera grado 6	Attendant (see appendix # 14)
	Día amor y amistad	Attendant
10/09/2015	Día de la paz	Attendant (see appendix # 15)
06/11/2015	Feria micro empresarial	Attendant (see appendix # 16)
09-13/11/2015	Pruebas de calidad	Observing students while taking the tests.
18/11/2015	Entrega de símbolos grado 11	Supervising 7 th grade students' discipline. (see appendix #17)
20/11/2015	Entrega de notas cuarto periodo.	Informing student's parents about their final grades.

CONCLUSIONS.

The main goal of this component was taking part in most of the administrative activities proposed by the institution during the ten weeks of this practicum stage. As a result, I have to amid that this goal was satisfactory accomplished. I took part in most of the activity developed by the institution, it allowed me the opportunity of being engaged with the whole Brighton community, I had the pleasure of participate in different events such as “ Izada de Banderas”, Reuniones de

padres de familia” festividades”, etc. which demonstrated my responsibility and engagement with this institution.

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Links to visit:

http://bie.org/about/what_pbl

<http://coerll.utexas.edu/methods/modules/reading/01/>

<http://edglossary.org/action-research/>

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O88-nonparticipantobservation.html>

APPENDICES.

Appendix #1

Planning model by Brown 2001.

GROUP: 8 th grade	LEVEL: A2	CLASS N°: 1 DATE: September 7-11
TEACHER: Alexandra González	TOPIC: practicing future simple and going to.	
COMMUNICATIVE OBJECTIVE: By the end of the class students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use “going to” to express future plans. ✓ Use future simple to make predictions. 	LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To practice future tenses (going to, will) their structures and uses. 	SOCIO-CULTURAL OBJECTIVE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To know how to talk about the future events and make predictions in English language.

STAGES	DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY	TIM E	SKILLS	MATERIAL
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Warm up	Puzzles: In group of five students, they will organized a puzzle with images taken from the story, as fast as they can.	10'		Puzzles With images of the story.
Presenting the story.	After organizing the puzzles, the teacher will ask students about the character they have in each puzzle. Who are the character of the story? What they think is the role of each character? The set of the story, the places where the events happened ...	10'	Listening speaking	Puzzles
Developing	Reading the first two paragraph of the story: The teacher will give students the first two paragraph of the story, students will read it, then they will highlight the unknown vocabulary and will look for the meaning of each word in their dictionaries.	20'	reading	Story
	Stuck in the middle activity: once students had read the first two paragraphs of the story, the teacher will ask them to answer the following questions. (Appendix 2)	20'	writing	
	Once students had finished their predictions, one by one will read them in front of the class. After finishing reading students productions the teacher will give then the rest of the story and they will read it, in order to compare which students were closer to the original version.	20'	reading	
closing	Matching exercise: the teacher will divide the board into two sections, in the first part he is going to paste six images and in the second part he will write the definition of each one. Students will pass in front on the board and will match the definition with the correspondent image. See appendix 3	15'	Lexical competence	Board Markers Images

Evaluation	Write a comment about the story	10'	writing	
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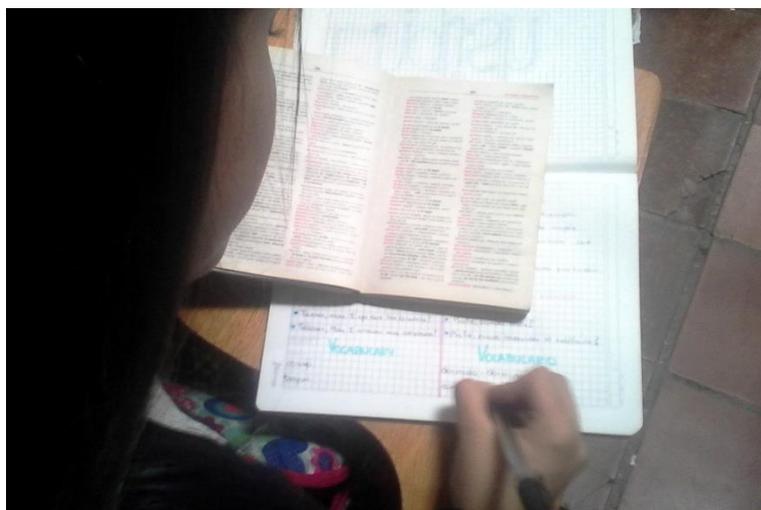
Appendix 2

Pre-reading stage (puzzles)



Appendix # 3

Pre-reading stage (creating glossaries with the unknown words)



Appendix # 4

While- reading activities (Stuck in the middle activity)

THE LION AND THE MOUSE



Once when a Lion was asleep, a little Mouse began running up and down upon him.
This soon wakened the Lion, who placed his huge paw upon him and opened his big jaws to swallow him.
"Pardon, O King!" cried the little Mouse, "Forgive me this time. I shall never repeat it and I shall never forget your kindness. And who knows, but I may be able to do you a good turn one of these days?"

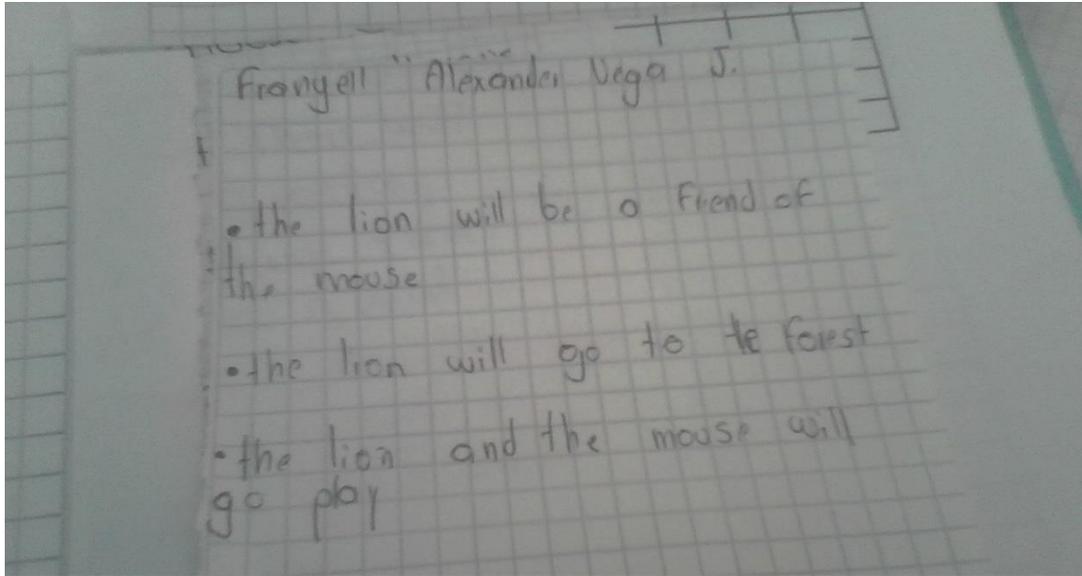
Which are the characters presented in the first part of the story?

What do you think is going to happen in the story?
Write 4 sentences using going to.

How will be the end of the story?
Write 3 sentences doing predictions about the end of the story.
Use simple future (will)

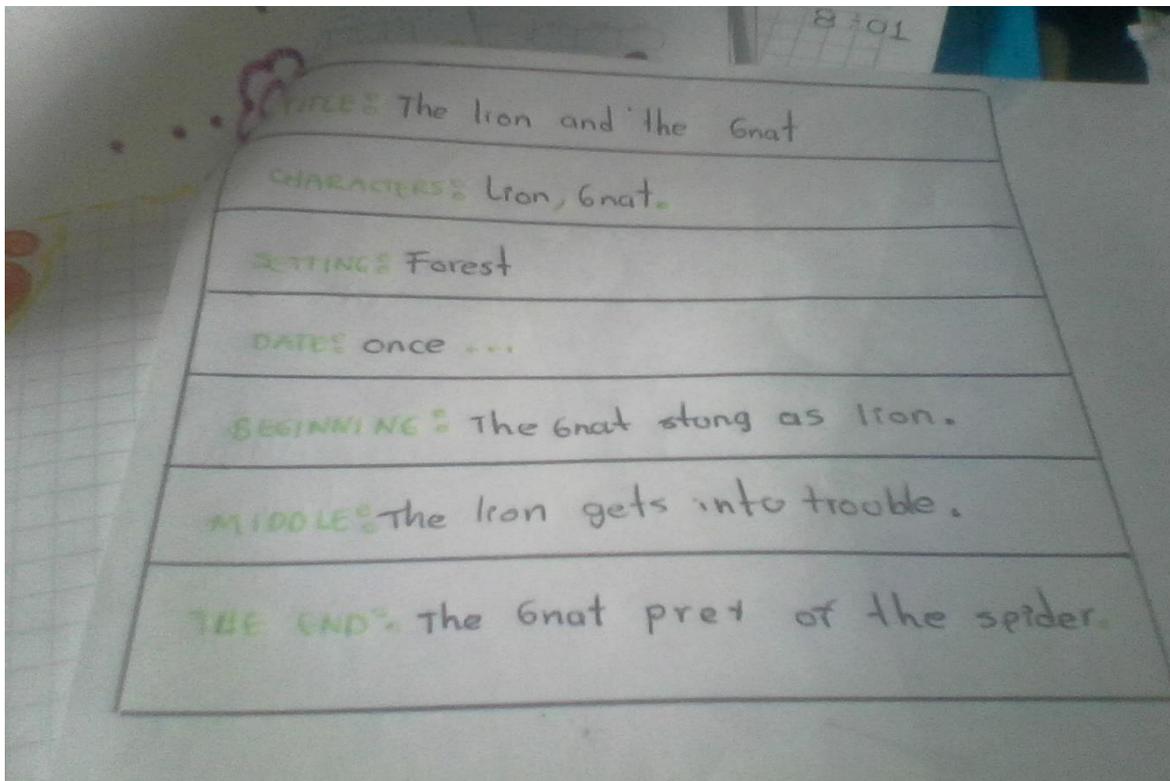
Appendix #5

Post-reading activity (creating an end for the story)



Developing writing skills

Appendix # 6 (planing the short stories)



Appendix # 7

Drafting stage and edition (correcting the drafts)

Once, a Lion had just finished his meal and decided to take his afternoon nap. The lion had just closed his eyes, when a Gnat saw him.

Now, this Gnat, ^{was} though active and young, was also haughty and over-confident. He was extremely daring and he attacked the lion. The lion was very angry and woke up with a start. But the Gnat did not stop. He kept stinging the lion's nose, eyes and ears. The lion ^{was} roared in pain. He tried to crush the Gnat but all his attempts went in vain, the Gnat had no fear on the poor beast.

At last, the poor Lion ^{was} exhausted and bleeding on the ground. The Gnat, extremely pleased on his victory over the king of the forest, ^{was} hovered over the lion, praising himself and feeling joyful. His pleasure blinded him so much, that while flying, he suddenly got stuck in a spider-web. No matter how hard he tried, the Gnat could not escape.

Thus, the Gnat who had defeated the mighty lion became a prey.

Appendix # 8

Final products.



Appendix #9

Questionnaire.

1) ¿Has leído alguna historia en inglés anteriormente?

Si

No

Justifica _____

2) ¿Consideras que después de haber trabajados con las historias cortas en Ingles has mejorado algunos aspectos de esta lengua?

Estructuras gramaticales:

Si

No

Justifica _____

Adquisición de vocabulario en Ingles:

Si

No

Justifica _____

Conjugación de verbos en Ingles:

Si

No

Justifica _____

3) ¿Consideras que tu comprensión de lectura en Ingles ha mejorado después de trabajar con las historias cortas?

Si

No

Justifica _____

4) ¿Consideras que después de haber leído las historias cortas en Ingles, se te facilitó el proceso de escritura de tu propia historia?

Si

No

Justifica _____

Appendix #10

Questions	P1 Answers	P2 Answers	P3 Answers	P4 Answers	P5 Answers	P6 Answers	P7 Answers	P8 Answers
¿Has leído alguna historia en inglés anteriormente?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
¿Consideras que después de haber trabajado con las historias cortas en inglés has mejorado algunos aspectos de esta lengua?	SI GS: "hora se escribir una oración con sentido" VO: "aprendí nuevas palabras Graveyard, ghost" VC: "ahora sé conjugar verbos"	SI GS: "hago mejores oraciones" VO: "gracias a los glosarios se nuevas palabras" VC: "ahora se conjugar verbos, más que todo en el pasado simple"	SI GS: "aprendí el orden de las oraciones" VO: "conocimos nuevas palabras" VC: "subrayábamos verbos y los conjugábamos"	SI GS: "escribo mejor las oraciones" VO: "se nuevo vocabulario" VC: "Mejoré conjugando verbos" Work-worked	SI GS: "mejoré las estructuras de las oraciones" VO: "se palabras nuevas por que hicimos glosarios" VC: "aprendí el pasado simple" Play-played	SI GS: "sujeto, verbo, Complemento" VO: "sacamos vocabulario y aprendimos nuevas palabras" VC: "conozco nuevos verbos"	SI GS: "ahora hago mejor las oraciones" VO: "mejoré mi vocabulario" VC: "conozco más sobre ellos"	NO GS: "no me gusta el Inglés" VO: "aprendí algunas palabras" VC: "aprendí a conjugar algunos verbos" drink-drink
¿Consideras que tu comprensión de lectura en Inglés ha mejorado después de trabajar con las historias cortas?	SI "aprendí muchas palabras que me pueden ayudar a comprender textos más adelante."	SI "comprendo nuevas palabras y expresiones que antes no"	SI "aprendí nuevos verbos, palabras para comprender más otras lecturas"	SI "se mucho vocabulario o nuevo, comprendo mejor las lecturas"	SI "Al mejorar mi vocabulario o comprendo más"	SI "si porque conozco más palabras"	SI "leímos mucho y esto me ayudó bastante"	NO "no me gusta leer en Inglés"
¿Consideras que después de haber leído las historias cortas en Inglés de te facilitó el proceso de escritura de tu propia historia?	SI "pude hacer una historia en inglés por primera vez. Eso fue lo importante"	SI "fue más fácil, porque aprendí nuevas palabras que use en mi historia"	SI "aprendí a hacer una historia con las palabras que la profesora me enseñó"	SI "ya sabía más conjugaciones con sus reglas para una mejor escritura"	SI "porque hice uso del vocabulario y la estructura de las oraciones"	SI "ya se escribir mejor las oraciones"	SI "porque implementé muchos verbos que no sabía"	NO "se me dificultó mucho el inglés"

Data analysis

Categories

GS: GRAMMAR STRUCTURES

VO: VOCABULARY

VC: VERBS CONJUGATION

C: CREATIVITY.

M: MOTIVATION.

Appendices for the Outreach and Administrative components

Appendix # 11

Role-play contest.



Appendix # 12

Tutoring classes



Appendix #13

English song festival



Appendix 14

Izada de Bandera



Appendix #15

Día de la paz



Appendix # 16

Feria micro-empresarial Brighton 2015



Appendix # 17

Entrega de símbolos grado 11

