

Understanding and Promoting Personal Learning Environments for Oral Production

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	3
List of tables	4
List of figures	4
Abstract	5
Contextualization	6
Research Statement	8
<i>Research Question</i>	10
<i>Research Objective</i>	10
<i>Specific Objectives</i>	10
Theoretical framework	12
<i>Blended learning</i>	12
<i>Oral production</i>	13
<i>Personal learning environments</i>	15
Design.....	19
<i>Research Design</i>	19
<i>Implementation and Data Analysis</i>	23
<i>Instructional design</i>	23
<i>Data Analysis</i>	31
Conclusions and Implications	50
Appendices	55
References	79

List of tables

Table 1. Project timetable

Table 2. Course syllabus

Table 3. Description of blended learning implementation

Table 4. Categorization

List of figures

Figure 1. Oral Production activities: CEFR 2022.

Figure 2. Consolidated rubric scores

Abstract

The present report describes an action research study carried out at a binational language center in Bucaramanga. The study aimed at getting a better understanding of Personal Learning Environments (PLEs) by gathering and analyzing information from a blended learning implementation, carried out by the author, and from the perceptions of a group of students regarding their use of digital tools to improve their speaking skills, and then using this information to design an online resource to promote the appropriation of PLEs among the students. Data was collected through evaluation rubrics, teacher's journals and a questionnaire, and then analyzed through process coding. The results of the study yielded insights regarding the introduction of technology to promote PLEs, the students' performance and perceptions to guide the design of PLEs, and the reflection on learning strategies to guide the promotion of PLEs.

Keywords: PLE, blended learning, language learning, action research, oral production.

Contextualization

Centro Colombo Americano (CCA) is a private institution located in downtown Bucaramanga, Santander. This Institution is sixty-three years old, with long experience teaching English to every person who is interested in studying the language. The institutional model or *Proyecto Educativo Institucional* (PEI) focuses on English as a foreign language (EFL) learning with an emphasis on the communicative aspects of the language, and a social approach, all this with the purpose of enabling students to communicate in their personal environment and prepare them to go on further educational or academic endeavors. This PEI agrees with a communicative approach where the students express their realities or personal viewpoints, engage in real communication, and participate in problem-solving spaces through real spoken contexts that allow the individual to become the center of the process. There is a focus on the development of fluency, using the language not only with the objective of grammatical accuracy but also considering errors as part of the learning process. There is a special emphasis on the linguistic, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics approach (CCA, 2021). The institution reaches its goals thanks to the development of a curriculum oriented by the guidelines of the Ministry of Education (MEN) for institutions that offer education for employment and human development, *Instituciones de educación para el desarrollo del trabajo humano* (MEN, 2016). One of the goals of the institution is to promote English learning with technology in order to enhance learning, make it easier and meaningful for the students, and strengthen their academic processes (CCA, 2020).

Even though the emphasis is on meaning-making and the use of the language, the institution also focuses on the identification of the basic structure of the language. This is done through a methodology based on Presentation, Practice, and production (PPP) that provides

students common expressions used in specific types of conversation models. Oral and written activities may be used from the beginning; for example, in role- plays, dialogues, games, and problem-solving activities. On the other hand, the role of the teacher is that of facilitator, tutor, and guide that helps and motivates the students to work with the language, since one of the most important goals of the institution is to have students produce language. Teachers try to involve the students in activities so learners may interact with each other through pair or group work. The four skills are developed simultaneously.

The participants in this study were 18 students of level 7 who filled in a questionnaire administered at this level. The questionnaire was mainly related to technology use as a tool to practice their oral production in their learning process. Of these students, 55.5% were women, and 44.4% were men, with a range of ages between 18-30. In addition, the other participant of the research was me in the role of participant researcher through my perceptions and reflections registered in the journals of a blended learning implementation I applied to a course in the beginning levels as a strategy to overcome the lack of time to practice the student's oral production.

Research Statement

Through some observations carried out with a group of students of levels 4 and 5 at CCA Bucaramanga, it was evidenced that these students had difficulties in using the speaking skill. There was a general perception that the limited time available to complete lessons of 4 units each, and the need to complete the program in a period of 38 hours of class, did not allow enough time to focus on speaking practice, and consequently, to achieve the expected results in oral production. Among the activities used in class to enhance speaking, conversation role-plays, short discussions, and short interviews are usually put into practice to develop this ability. The students' main struggles to reach oral competencies are related to the aspects of fluency and accuracy, as understood in the Global Scale of English and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) that are in turn referenced in the Pearson Material followed at CCA Bucaramanga (Saslow & Ascher, 2020). Some of the can-do statements of the book that are used to guide English learning in these levels are:

students can ask and answer simple questions about people they know in a limited way.

students can understand simple directions for how to get somewhere on foot if spoken slowly and clearly and using a map.

students can communicate in routine tasks requiring simple, direct exchanges of information;

students can ask and answer questions about what they do at work and in their free time; and,

students can describe basic events in the past using simple linking words (e.g., then, next). (Saslow & Ascher, 2020).

Provided the nature of the difficulties found in this group of students, I initially proposed a blended learning implementation, which is a term that applies to any program of formal education where students learn in both online and face-to-face modalities (Horn & Staker, 2014). After this implementation, I learned about the concept of Personal Learning Environments (PLEs) and got interested in the possibility of using it to address the lack of practice in oral production. I took the decision to promote the use of PLE among students and complement the information gathered about the implementation of blended learning with the perception of a new group of students through a questionnaire that looked for ways to get information related to the student's use of technology to practice their oral skill. PLEs can be defined as a world designed by an individual using all technological tools available to satisfy their learning, social, and recreational needs (Loertscher, 2011). The reasons that supported the use of PLEs were the great variety of materials available to develop oral language, such as tools for listening and practicing pronunciation or conversation group sites that can be formed among students who share common interests in particular topics, as well as the number of tools and programs that can be used to improve oral production and allow students to develop tasks that focus alternatively on planning, accuracy, error correction and fluency (Chapelle & Levis, 2020).

The interest of the present study is closely related to the subproject *Pedagogical innovations in EFL teaching and learning contexts* because it looks for a way to support the students' learning with the help of technology. Given the lack of enough time in the classroom to practice this ability and considering that students had smartphones and access to computers, there was potential to take advantage of different tools that the internet offers like free messaging apps or social networks to improve the student's speaking ability in different contexts, not only in the classroom.

Speaking skill is one of the language abilities most sought after by language users. Students of English enrolled in CCA Bucaramanga are not the exception, and require mastering this skill, not only in class but also in different contexts; hence the potential to improve this skill through the implementation of PLEs for supporting out-of-class language learning to ensure in students and teachers the enhancement of the learning and teaching process of this skill. Technological apps commonly used in smartphones such as WhatsApp or Facebook among others might state the difference between learners who master spoken English and those who are not able to have a satisfactory command of the language (Pollard, 2015, P.25-32). The use of these technological tools also requires a great amount of independent learning which can be promoted by the implementation of real-world activities (Vorholt& Harris, 2014, P.52) like chatting about the last news, sending activities related to graphic organizers, participating in conversations organized by the teacher, among others.

The above situations led me to state the following research question and objectives:

Research Question

What do the students' perceptions and my own experience as a teacher of a blended learning implementation reveal about the creation of Personal learning Environments to promote oral production?

Research Objective

To increase understanding regarding the creation and promotion of PLEs based on the students' perceptions and my own experience as a teacher of a blended learning implementation.

Specific Objectives

To identify the impact of a blended learning implementation on the student's performance regarding oral production.

To reflect about my own experience and perceptions as a teacher of a blended learning implementation focused on oral production.

To identify the students' perceptions about the use of technology to practice and improve their oral production.

Theoretical framework

In this section, I will present the notions of blended learning, oral production, and Personal Learning Environments (PLE), which are concepts that I had to understand clearly to design and plan this research proposal.

Blended learning

It is necessary to talk about blended learning since part of the information I collected for this project was based on a teaching experience I had while using this model that combines classroom and online learning. Blended Learning is a term that applies to any program of formal education where students learn partially online and face to face (Horn & Staker, 2014). As a result, the students have some control of the time, pace, and path of their learning process. In this learning modality, the students are supervised in part in what is called a brick-and-mortar location away from home, which in this case would be the classroom.

Both modalities, online learning, and face-to-face classroom learning are interconnected to afford an integrated learning experience (Horn & Staker, 2014). The asynchronous nature of the blended component of the course has the positive effect of expanding the time students spend on course material. As a result, the face-to-face time can be used more effectively, with students extending the material beyond what might be achieved in a conventional face-to-face course. The students in a blended course make more and richer connections between their progressive learning and their current knowledge, creating a robust scaffold to organize information (Glazer, 2011).

The Blended learning model used in the pedagogical implementation I collected data from was the Rotational Model. This model refers to a course in which students rotate on a fixed schedule or at the teacher's discretion between online learning and other face-to-face modalities

such as small-group or full-class instruction. For example, in my implementation, I assigned group projects such as role-plays that my students did in class; then, I assigned my students tasks to make individual videos or audio recordings to check them later and to evaluate the progress of each student. For the purposes of this project, this concept of blended learning can also include the use of tools, platforms and services since the students reported their use to complement their learning processes.

Oral production

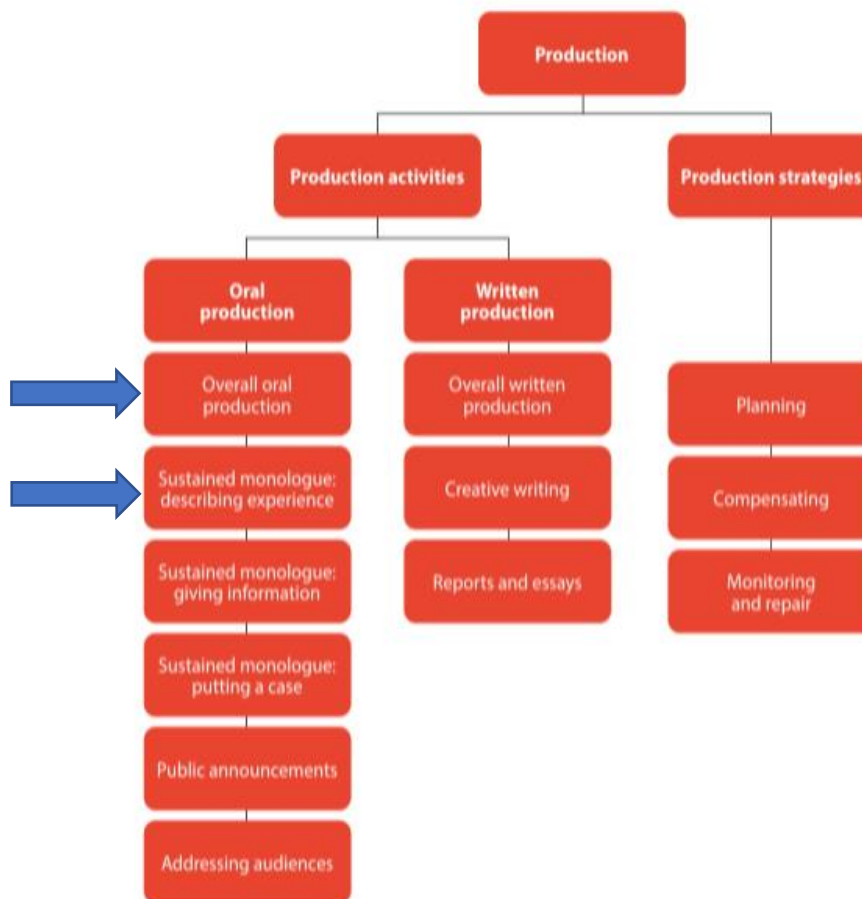
This project was focused on providing opportunities for speaking practice. However, we cannot understand the speaking ability as a unit since this skill, or rather this set of skills, is too complex to approach it in a single study. According to the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR), there are different communicative language activities, and strategies that are related to the speaking ability: oral production, oral interaction, and production strategies. Out of these activities, the one that was emphasized in this project was oral production. “Oral production is a ‘long turn’ which may involve a short description or anecdote, or may imply a longer, more formal presentation” (CEFR, 2020, p. 61).

When we talk about oral production we talk about a sustained monologue. The CEFR proposes five types of activities for oral production: Describing the experience, giving information, putting a case, public announcements, and addressing audiences. For the purposes of this project, I decided to focus on the first two: describing experience and giving information (Figure 1). Describing experience refers to spoken interventions that focus primarily on descriptions and narratives. Giving information is a production activity concerned with explaining information to a listener in a long turn. The recipient may interrupt to ask for repetition or clarification, but the information is clearly unidirectional, not an exchange. It’s important to mention that in this project I am using this concept to emphasize the fact that I did

not focus on interactive spoken communication (conversation, short turns) which, according to the CERF is a completely different communicative activity called oral interaction.

Figure 1

Oral Production Activities. CEFR, 2020.



In the pedagogical implementation, these production activities were observed when the students were able to give a simple presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes etc., as well as short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list. The students also produced sustained monologues when they described themselves, the

places where they live, plans and arrangements, habits and routines, past activities, and personal experiences.

Personal learning environments

The purpose of this project was to get a better understanding of PLEs to promote the utilization of a combination of digital tools by the learner in an autonomous way. PLEs are strategical worlds designed by users to meet their individual needs in every aspect of life. These needs could be recreational, individual, information search, social, or learning needs (Loertscher, 2011). We can explain the concept of PLE with a description of each individual word in the term, as follows:

Personal: PLEs are related to the interests and needs of the person, who can be a child, a teenager, or adult. The tools, resources, and connections should be chosen by the learner; otherwise, the PLE will have no relevance.

Learning: PLEs focus on the fact that learning should be self-directed. The students control the scope of their learning by creating, collaborating, correcting errors, and continuing working on the learning process. This approach is relevant in both formal and informal learning.

Environment: Learners create powerful learning spaces in which their needs are fulfilled. The role of digital spaces is to assure that everyone may have access to the best tools, resources, skills, and support to work, play, or learn. Learners find and organize information, and create a culture of learning by fostering routines of mind to learn and to do it simply and easily (Loertscher, 2011).

In language learning, the use of PLE is doubtlessly useful because it offers a large repertoire of materials to support every skill of English learning. Students can reach their goals

regarding their learning needs and styles through their communication channels from formal to informal paths (Cinganotto & Cuccurullo, 2017).

Regarding speaking skills, learners can use collaboration tools that allow them to interact with others. These tools can offer them the possibility to work together with authentic native speakers for advanced students, as well as have interactive practice with other peers. The use of these tools can be synchronous or asynchronous, giving the students the opportunity to develop scripts or an outline of their ideas to share with their collaborators (Reinders, 2014).

Due to the issues found in the lack of oral production among my students, and because of my reflections about the implementation of blended learning environments, I decided to promote the use of PLEs among my students to take advantage of the online resources they offer to practice the oral production found in these spaces. In addition, the use of PLEs help students to develop collaborative learning given the communicative tools learners can use to connect with others, autonomy and take responsibility for their own learning (Reinders, 2014, P14). With all these findings, I decided to develop a communication strategy to teach my students about PLEs and introduce specific online tools to empower their oral production in subsequent courses.

There has been plenty of research on PLE in recent years. A study conducted by Reinders (2014) aimed at the encouragement of learning autonomy on university students in Thailand and New Zealand. These students had busy schedules with difficulties spending a lot of time on planning and organizing their own language learning process. Students were encouraged to use PLEs after being explained what they are and the reason to use them. The teacher asked them to record, via YouTube, a note-taking app, or on their phones, the language items they wanted to learn in a week, both in class and out of it. The learners had to identify the most difficult issues they face related to English skills or their learning process, share their notes with their peers, and

brainstorm possible solutions to those issues to start taking control of some areas of their learning.

Then the students had to decide on one topic they were learning. They had to find resources online and define the approximate time they would spend and the tools they would use to record and share their learning. The students were shown a model of a portfolio to share their improvements at the end of the course. The researcher found that PLEs give the students control over their learning putting them in the center of the process. PLEs gave learners the option to explore their needs and likes and to share them with their teachers. This allowed the teacher to learn more about his students regarding their preferences, and backgrounds. A conclusion was that the teacher must develop flexibility and become more of a monitor or facilitator of the students' learning process. PLEs also affected the way assessment or evaluation was perceived by the students.

Another study conducted by Shahin and Uluyol (2016) aimed to evaluate the current real-world usage of PLEs by developing scales to evaluate preservice teachers' usage and perceptions of PLEs. The study was conducted in a public university in Turkey in the fall semester of the 2014-2015 academic year. The participants were 109 preservice teachers' students (66 females and 43 males). All participants had regular access to the internet in several environments. Data collection took place through a survey developed in Google forms and explanatory statements posted on the students' social networking group.

This study revealed, from a perception scale of PLEs, that students found them easy to use because they could access learning content easily and interact with other users within these environments. All these students assured they used PLEs in their learning process. Nevertheless, this usage was more related to the access and sharing processes than to the purposes of management and learning construction. The PLEs most used were email, social networks,

document sharing, video sharing, search engines, and encyclopedias. The negative aspects found on the survey were: the emergence of Q&A cycles during the use of PLEs that can make them boring and a possible phishing attack. Also, the students did not show a negative perception of cyberbullying being this a great problem in these environments. The low rate of application of PLEs to construction in learning in contrast to their use for access and sharing could be thought as inadequate for getting active learning results if we consider learning as constant interaction with other learners through discussions, practices, reviews, and applications.

A study conducted by Marín and Juarros (2014) aimed at promoting collaborative learning through the creation and maintenance of PLEs and personal learning networks (PLN) and their incorporation inside institutional virtual learning environments (VLE) at a University in Spain. The study was held on a group of teachers and students on the course “Technological media and resources for primary education” in the third year of studies for the Primary Teacher’s Degree. The course group was composed of 3 teachers and 192 students. The study started with the implementation of an initial questionnaire to create an internet profile of the students and the development of some tasks related to the creation of PLE and PLN and their integration with VLE, as well as the design and building of collaborative tasks. Findings showed there was a change in the student’s construction of the PLE and PLN. During the progress in the management of their learning process, the students changed from passive consumers of information and resources to be creators of materials and content in different formats. The students developed the foundations for the creation of PLN and learned how to organize a social learning network and get involved in sharing culture. Nevertheless, there were some issues related to their level of participation and the degree of interaction to establish a truly collaborative process based on communication. There were interactions among the participants of the study, but there was poor or no interaction with external contributors or experts.

Design

Research Design

The present research project was developed within the framework of action research and a descriptive tradition. Action research is a group of research methodologies that seek change and understanding simultaneously. Several authors have explained action research in multiple ways, but most of them include two different aspects: 1) the use of a cyclical procedure that switches between action and critical reflection, and 2) the adjustment of methods, data, and interpretation in the subsequent cycles, because of the understanding achieved in the earlier cycles (Dick, as cited in Saleh & Khine, 2012).

In the education field, action research is an approach used most of all to foster research among teachers. In this way, they may use their research as a tool to enhance their teaching practice and consequently their student's learning process.

Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) have defined action research as a helicoid of successive self-reflective cycles. Each cycle starts with the design of implementation. In educational settings, action research involves collecting information about the ongoing situation in a classroom, and the drawbacks -or advantages- that might appear. Subsequently, the design of a pedagogical plan can bring the conditions of new actions or strategies that the teacher-researcher will put into practice.

The next stage is acting and monitoring the progress and the effects of the modification. This involves putting into practice the actions that were designed and collecting information from those activities at the same time.

Afterward, the teacher-researcher needs to think over the action that occurred, and the repercussions that were detected in the prior step. It is essential to emphasize that, contrary to the kind of analysis that could happen in the standard practices of a teacher, action research implies a methodical and more robust approach to data evaluation. All the results of the first cycles are then used as means for planning and beginning a new cycle, and the overall operation can be repeated any number of times.

The data collection instruments that I designed and used during the project were the following:

Evaluation rubrics: I used this instrument in the blended learning implementation. I designed it myself considering the aspects that are evaluated at the CCAB to assess the students' speaking performance (Bachman and Palmer, 1996:50) (mentioned in (Luoma, 2004, p. 52) (Appendix A). This instrument allowed me to give immediate feedback to the students. They were graded using a 1-5 grade. The rubric included the following aspects: content, which evaluated the way the students accomplished the tasks; comprehension which evaluated the way students understood the tasks, and the appropriateness of responses; intelligibility, which evaluated how clear the speech of students was; accuracy, which evaluated the use of grammar and language functions; and finally, fluency, which evaluated hesitations, and intonation.

Journal writing: This instrument was a reflective journal. Reflective journals are considered one of the most common strategies employed by teachers because of their practical utilization and their essential role in helping developing self-awareness and have a better concept comprehension (Göker, 2016). This journal allowed me to gather my perceptions and reflections on the way students were reacting and working in every step of the learning process before and after the interventions. It also allowed me to see the relationships between the group as well as their individual response at that moment of working in every proposed activity. I was able to see

the student's anxieties, problems, excitements, and joys during the tasks in class and my fears, excitements, frustrations, and joys as well. It also helped me to summarize ideas and reflections about the experiences, the group, tools, and online materials before and after the instruction. (Appendix B).

Questionnaire: I designed a questionnaire with open-ended items and a few closed questions for students to give their opinions and perceptions. A questionnaire is an instrument with several questions related to a research topic, with a heuristic function (Griffie, 2018). The purpose of this instrument was to collect information about the use and knowledge of the students regarding different tools online to enhance their speaking skills. I inquired about the names of the technological tool used by the students to practice their speaking skills, the way they work, how they knew about the tools and the time they dedicated to use them. An open question was formulated related to their opinion on the effectiveness of the tool to improve their speaking. The easiness of tool's use was asked with a "yes" or "no" question. A scale from 1 to 5 to find out their perception regarding its effectiveness in the speaking improvement was asked and a reason to support their answer was asked as well. Finally, a question related with the way they would recommend their use to their classmates and the way they would do it was asked (Appendix C).

The table below presents the general organization of the project, its stages and timetable:

Table 1.
Project timetable

		Activities	2017 Feb- May	2017 Sep- Nov	2018 Feb- May	2018 Sep- Nov	2019 Feb- Nov	2020 Feb- Nov	2021 Feb- Aug
Cycle 1	Planning /act and observe	● Blended learning implementation							
Cycle 2	Planning	● Work on the research statement							
		● Build up Theoretical Framework							
	Act and observe	● Journal writing							
		● Build up a questionnaire							
		● Application of the questionnaire							

	Reflect	• Data analysis							
		• Organization and categorization							
Cycle 3	Planning / act	• Design of online resource (communicative strategy) to promote PLE							

This study, as seen in the previous chart, is the result of a process of examination that has taken more than three years and has been developed in three cycles. Initially, in the planning, act, and observe section of cycle 1, I designed and implemented a pedagogical intervention through blended learning that focused on providing students with additional speaking practice. In these lessons, the language performance of the students was assessed by means of a rubric (appendix A), which considered aspects such as content, comprehension, intelligibility, accuracy, and fluency.

In the reflect section of cycle 1, I analyzed the results of the rubrics that I applied throughout the different lessons. In general terms, I observed an improvement in some aspects of the students' speaking performance (mainly accuracy and fluency). All this information helped me to realize that the implementation of these blended learning exercises was valuable since they allowed me to identify my student's oral production features and weaknesses through their scores.

In the planning stage of cycle 2, I considered the utilization of PLEs because of intense research to find a strategy that was able to promote autonomy and prepare my students for long-lasting learning as an alternative within the implementation of Blended Learning. I started the planning phase by creating a plan of action to reflect and analyze the way students might use PLE to improve their oral production. In this phase, I also built up the problem grounded on the available theoretical framework. In the act and observe stage (cycle 2), I wrote a teacher's journal based on the blended learning intervention to complement the data I had gathered from the

rubrics. This action led me to think about the utilization of technological tools through the production of a questionnaire and its application. Then, in the reflect section (cycle 2), data analysis, organization, and categorization of the information took place. I found significant clues in the journal and questionnaire. In the journal, I gathered information about the positive and negative experiences throughout the Blended learning implementation. The questionnaire allowed me to collect information about how students reflected on and used different online tools to support their oral production learning. With all this information, I organized and supported this research proposal. The two first cycles involved a process of reflection and analysis that culminated with the development of a communication strategy to promote the use of PLEs among the students (cycle 3).

Implementation and Data Analysis

Instructional design

English teaching at CCA is based on the communicative approach, also known as Communicate Language Teaching (CLT), which implies the implementation of communicative tasks to promote the students' interaction and to help them reach communicative proficiency. CLT is an approach to teaching grounded on the premise that learning a language is to learn how to communicate adequately in the world outside the classroom. This approach is shaped by an understanding that language has a communicative function (Lindsay & Knight, 2011). Communicative lessons are task-oriented, and tasks are designed to have a real-world outcome. CLT lessons are also based on the student's needs and interests. What's more, these tasks are learner centered. The students can personalize the activity and the material is prepared in a way it can scaffold learning on the students. They are contextualized, authentic both in communicative events and in learning experiences. These tasks relate, to learner experience, course objectives

and they are situated in discourse. The sources that are used in these tasks are comprehensible and there is a negotiated input. The lessons in this communicative approach are recursive in the sense that lexical items are reintroduced in an across them. Besides, these tasks promote pair and small group problem -solving and they are sequenced with attention to learning and acquisition. (Richards, 2006). Hence the tasks are developed to reach the communicative proficiency in the students. The emphasis is oriented to train and strengthen the basic competences such as: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. To reach this approach, we use textbooks and audio books developed in practical units which cover different topics of daily use and grammatical information utilized in these contexts.

The program is structured in eighteen levels following the CEFR guidelines for learning English language to reach a proficiency level B2 (CCA, 2020). The students in the class are given chances to use their English productively and receptively through tasks that equip them with the necessary skills for communication in those contexts. Additionally, students are encouraged to promote their awareness on their learning styles through their autonomous work on tasks such as homework or searching tasks where they can use online tools to look for information.

This implementation was carried out in the levels 4 and 5 of CCA which are the levels A1 and A2 (CFER). The communicative goals for A1 (level 4) are stated in the table below (see Appendix D for the syllabus of level 5):

Table 2
Course syllabus

Centro Colombo Americano Bucaramanga						
Course Design						
Teacher:	Bertha Castro	Hours per week:	8 hours, 20 min	Level:	4	
Methodology:	CLT and PLE	Scope:	4 weeks / 19 sessions overall			
Main Goals:	By the end of the term, the students will be able to: Getting acquainted, Going out by accepting and declining an invitation, expressing locations and giving directions, making plans to see an event, talking about the extended family. Through role-plays in class and activities recorded in and out of class through Facebook messenger.					
Objectives	Communication Goals	Vocabulary	Grammar	Conversation Strategies	Listening Pronunciation	Reading/ Writing
Getting Acquainted	- Meet someone new. - Identify and describe people. - Provide Personal Information. - Introduce someone to a group.	-Formal Titles. - Positive adjectives. - Personal information. - Countries and nationalities.	-Information questions with: be: Review contractions -Modification with adjectives: Review. - Positive adjectives. - Yes/no questions. - Review -Information questions with be, possessive nouns and adjectives. - Verb be usage and form. - Short answers with be	- Begin responses with a question to confirm. - Use let’s to suggest a course of action. - Ask personal question to indicate friendliness. - Intensify an informal answer.	- Listen for details - Infer information. - Intonation of questions.	- Reading: An enrollment form - Personal profiles - A photo story. - Writing: Write a description of a classmate.
Going Out	- Accept or decline an invitation. - Express locations and give directions. - Make plans to see an event. - Talk about musical tastes.	-Music genres. -Entertainment and cultural events. -Location and directions.	- Prepositions of time and place: Questions with when, what time, and where: Review. - Contractions. - Preposition of time and place: Usage rules. - Would like for preference: Review and expansion.	- Use would you like to go? To make an invitation. - Repeat with rising intonation to confirm information. - Provide reasons to decline an invitation. - Use too bad to express disappointment. - Use thanks, anyway to acknowledge an unsuccessful attempt to help.	- Listen for key details - Draw conclusions. - Listen for locations. - Rising intonation to confirm information.	- Reading: A music website. An entertainment event webpage. - Authentic interviews - A survey of musical tastes. - A photo story. - Interpret maps and diagrams. - Confirm content Make personal comparisons - Writing: Write about oneself and one’s musical tastes.

The Extended Family	-Report news about relationships. - Describe extended families. - Compare people. Discuss family cultural traditions.	-The extended family -Relationships and marital status. - Other family relationships. - Similarities and differences.	The simple present tense: Review. Contractions. The simple present tense information questions: Review The simple present tense: Usage and form. Information questions in the simple present tense: Form questions with who- Common mistakes.	Use actually to introduce a topic Respond to good news with congratulations! Respond to bad news with: I'm sorry to hear that. Use thanks for asking to acknowledge an inquiry of concern. Use Well to introduce a lengthy reply. Ask follow up questions to keep a conversation going.	Listen to classify. Listen to infer. Listen to identify similarities and differences. Listen to take notes. Listen for details. Pronunciation: Linking sounds	Reading Family tree diagram. A self-help website. A survey about adult children. A photo story Writing: Make a Venn diagram. Compare two people in a family.
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Table 3*Description of blended learning implementation*

Pedagogical objective: To provide additional opportunities for out-of-class practice of oral production in regard to the communicative goals proposed in levels 4 and 5.	
Topic	Session where Facebook was used
Session 1. Diagnostic test. Mary McLeod Bethune's life. Level 4.	February 16th, 2017. Reading and listening exercise. The students did a reading and listening exercise and recorded their answers on the Facebook account group called Colombo's Group level 4Top Notch 1, through messenger. They had issues with the accuracy and fluency aspects of speaking. Individual feedback was given through Facebook messenger. 15 out of 18 students participated here.
Session 2. Going out/ Music Genres. Second intervention out of class.	February 22, 2017. I posted a video about how English songs can help students to learn the language (https://youtu.be/33qbMCuJ5XI) on the Facebook account. The students listen to the video and related questions posted on the wall and uploaded their answers through Facebook messenger. They had issues in the comprehension, accuracy, and fluency aspects of speaking. I did feedback individually through messenger and to overcome the issue of fluency I recommended www.howjsay.com to check pronunciation. 12 out of 18 students participated in the activity.
Session 3. Going out / Music Genres. Second intervention in class.	February 23, 2017. I asked the students to gather in groups of three, choose a song, choose a student who sang the song on messenger and other students recorded what kind of grammar structures learnt in class were found in the song. In this way they were able to improve accuracy by identifying grammar structures in the song. I found issues in accuracy, and fluency in the assessment through messenger. We did more exercises about grammar in class. 16 students participated in this intervention. We spent the whole class in this activity which in some way prevented me to cover most of the material of the class.
Session 4. Going out/ giving directions. Third activity out of the class.	February 27, 2017. I posted a video about how to give directions to learn how to identify

	some vocabulary related. (https://youtu.be/HrkUJ-ZTN3I) on the Facebook account. The students listen to the video and related questions posted on the wall and uploaded their answers through Facebook messenger. They had issues with comprehension, accuracy (with the use of prepositions of place), and fluency aspects of speaking. I did feedback individually through messenger, and to overcome the issue of fluency, I recommended www.howjsay.com to check pronunciation. 16 students participated in this intervention.
Session 5. Going out/ giving directions. Third activity in class.	March 3, 2017. The students were grouped in four, three and two. They received audio recordings per group on the Facebook account. They had to listen to these instructions at the main entrance and follow directions to knock on the right classroom and ask for an envelope with instructions. Then they had to do a role-play in the classroom with the instructions given there. They had issues with the aspect of comprehension. They had to listen to several times, and it was difficult for them to understand some teachers' questions. 12 students participated in this activity. Some extra exercises were posted on Facebook to practice grammar.
Session 6. Diagnostic test. A Couch Potato. Level 5	March 17, 2017. Reading and listening exercise. The students did a reading and listening exercise and recorded their answers on the Facebook account group called Colombo's Group level 5 Top Notch 1, through messenger. They had issues with the accuracy (conjugating verbs in the present tense for third person singular) and fluency (hesitations) aspects of speaking. Individual feedback was given through Facebook messenger. I sent them the web site: www.howjsay.com as a tool to check pronunciation. 15 out of 18 students participated here.
Session 7. Food and Restaurants. Discuss food and health. First activity out of the classroom.	March 18, 2017. I posted a video about people's feeding habits. (https://youtu.be/6Pdut_d524k) on the Facebook account. The students listen to the

	video and related questions posted on the wall and uploaded their answers through Facebook messenger. They had issues with the fluency (hesitations and pronunciation) aspect of speaking. I did feedback individually through messenger, and to overcome the issue of fluency, I recommended www.howjsay.com to check pronunciation. 15 students participated in this intervention.
Session 8. Food and restaurants. Discuss food and health. First activity in the classroom.	March 29th, 2017. Following the same video about foods, the students had to gather in pairs and interview their classmates. They recorded their participations in Messenger. They had issues in accuracy (cohesion of ideas and vocabulary) and with fluency (hesitation and pronunciation). Some feedback was given individually through messenger. All the students participated.
Session 9. Technology and you. Complain when things don't work. Second activity out of the class	March 30th, 2017. A padlet was open for the course and the students had to make a video of a complaint about a broken electric appliance or some issues in a hotel room and upload it to Padlet. All the aspects of speaking were reached satisfactorily. 12 students participated in this activity.

A regular class (appendix E) started like this: The class is organized in a semicircle or a horseshoe, so the students can have a close contact with the teacher and with each other. The class started with a question related to the main goal that was written on the board for each lesson, and the students could answer with their own words. For instance, the main goal of lesson 3, unit 5 in level 5 is: Complain when things don't work. I asked a question to the students like this: If you are staying in a hotel, but the air conditioner doesn't work, how do you let know the receptionist about the problem? Some students gave several examples of their answers. I copied the most relevant on the board. Then I presented the students some other appropriate ways to do it. After that, the lesson is displayed on the TV. The activities are done following the lesson plan and the activities proposed by the book. The first activity was conducted by watching the

presentation of the English course software on TV. Some vocabulary related with Illustrations like the window won't open /close, or the air conditioner won't turn off are shown and the pronunciation of each is repeated after the second listening (appendix F). Then I asked the students about replacing names of electronic appliances which may have had similar issues. I copied these sentences on the board, so the students were able to see their ideas using a similar structure. Then a listening exercise was developed to identify the source of a complaint and details about the room, the customer and solutions offered by the person at the front desk. Immediately after that, I asked each group to complete orally the information collected from the listening exercise. Next, I asked the students to gather in groups of two or three to discuss about which problems from the listening were the most serious. When they finished their discussion one person from the group explained their reasons. Additional critical thinking questions were asked, such as: "What would you think about a hotel with such problems" to elicit answers with their opinions. After that, some pictures with different situations presented in the program were shown as well as conversation models to do role plays among the groups organized previously.

To our online interaction for oral production at the beginning of the course, I chose Facebook messenger as our main communicative platform with the students in all our sessions where we could post messages, activities, and other online materials. Padlet was our interactive platform to record some activities. Facebook Messenger is an instant messaging app and platform developed by Facebook and Padlet is an online collaborative tool that works as a board for sharing a variety of content.

For the assessment, an interactive board (Padlet) was introduced to the students and the way to use it was explained. I asked the students to record an individual video at home with their complaints given an example I posted in advance. This was an out-of-the class interaction. The students were able to see the example of the Padlet post on the Facebook page for level 5, which

was our interaction platform (appendix G). Finally, a short review of stating problems was done. Here the teacher stated a problem with an electronic device in a hotel room and the chosen students stated their complaint and offered solutions.

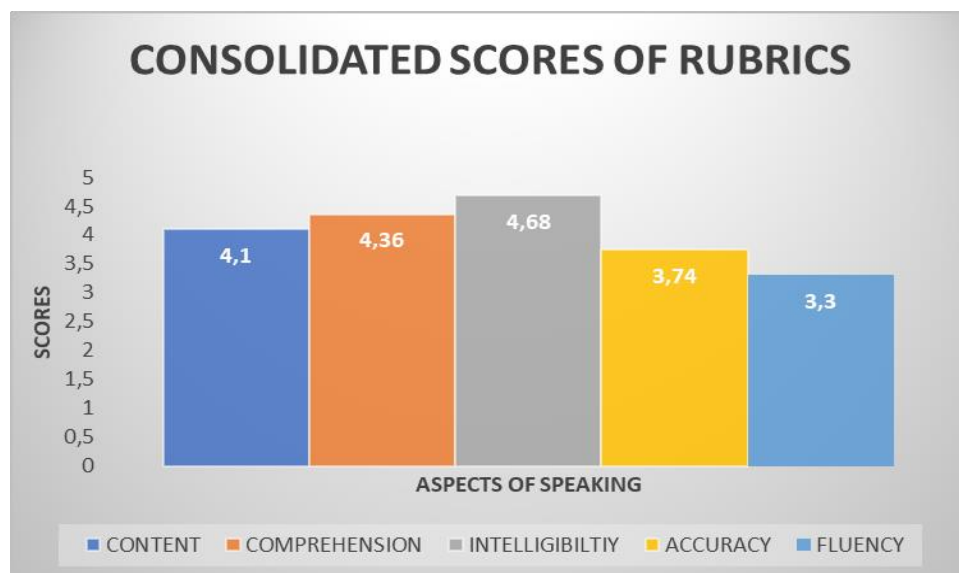
To assess the students' participation in the speaking activities in and out of the classroom, I designed a rubric considering what Bachman and Palmer, (1996:50) (mentioned in (Luoma, 2004, p. 52) stated about the development of an efficient rubric. To design this rubric, I considered the organization of each speaking aspect as: content, comprehension, intelligibility, accuracy, and fluency. I asked the students to record their activities in and out of class in Facebook Messenger, which was our speaking platform and Padlet where only one video activity was recorded. All the activities were assessed through these platforms included the diagnostic activities. I used the rubric (appendix A) for each student. I assessed the five aspects of speaking using a score from 0 to 5. Where zero indicated the student did not do the activity at all, and 5 indicated the maximum possible score due to an excellent performance. There were nine interventions in total in both courses.

Data Analysis

Once I finished the blended learning pedagogical intervention, I analyzed the results of the rubrics that I applied throughout the different lessons. This information led me to find some clues after the intervention with the blended learning activities. The aspects which showed more variation during the intervention were accuracy and fluency in both classes I worked with. The students' performance in these two aspects tended to be poor, but in those activities that required more interaction with other people out of the classroom, the scores were even lower. However, there was a substantial improvement of these scores in the last activity out of the class in the most advanced course (level 5). The aspect that had a high score, in general, was intelligibility.

Although the final scores of the activity for all the speaking aspects were low, this aspect tended to be the highest of all. In general terms, the aspects of content and comprehension did not show an important variation, during the first two activities of level 4. On the other hand, these aspects showed a striking decline in the activity related to the interaction with other people out of class. Nevertheless, the aspects of content and comprehension showed positive results in most of the activities in or out of the class.

Figure 2
Consolidated rubric scores



After this, I wrote the journals related to the nine interventions of blended learning applied on both courses. My journals were based on all the information I collected from the Facebook platform, Padlet, and some videos. After this, I organized these journals into a table to start a coding process which consisted on highlighting key phrases or ideas that gave me more insight of what took place during the intervention. I used a method called process coding, (Saldaña, 2014) which consisted of discovering the meanings of individual sections of data. A code in qualitative data analysis is understood as a short phrase that symbolically assigns an

evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data. the data can consist of interview transcripts, participant observation fieldnotes, or journals among others. Long sections of fieldnotes are divided into small chunks of information. These chunks are grouped into more manageable units for coding assignments and analysis. After coding a categorization process takes place to sort similar or comparable codes into groups for pattern construction which allows the researcher to reflect upon how they might interact and interplay. Finally, **analytic memos** are done to reflect in writing on the nuances, inferences, meanings, and transfer of coded and categorized data plus the researcher's analytic processes. (Saldaña, 2014).

From the procedure described above I obtained 98 codes, which were clustered into preliminary categories.

For example, to do the coding process of one of the lessons implemented in the class of fifth level (Appendix J), I read the journal related to this lesson and underlined the situations that gave me a clue about the positive aspects or the drawbacks in the lesson. In this way, I was able to determine a code for a specific situation. In this lesson the codes were the following:

Introducing Padlet as another portal to record their answers through video. Recording a complaint to build on previous learning (building on experiences learned class). Accomplishing intelligibility and comprehension by following instructions. Reaching accuracy and fluency through an amused activity.

To complement the information collected from the journals, I included data from the students themselves. To approach this, I designed and applied a questionnaire with open questions, related to the available online tools the students used to improve their speaking skill. I applied this questionnaire to the students of level 7. (Appendix C (questionnaire)). For the analysis of these questionnaires, I transcribed the student's responses and organized them into short divisions to make the coding process easier. Here I obtained about 34 codes (Appendix K

codes of the questionnaire). After that I did a triangulation process through a memo writing that consisted in underlining similar categories in the journal and in the questionnaires and group them. I reflected on the codes and categorizations obtained from both sources, and I wrote my analysis (Appendix L memo). The final categories that emerged from my data analysis are explained as follows:

Table 4

Categorization

Research question: What do the students' perceptions and my own experience as a teacher of a blended learning implementation reveal about the creation of Personal learning Environments to promote oral production?
Categories: Category 1: Introducing online resources and tools to promote PLEs. Category 2: Identifying students' performance and perceptions to guide the design of PLEs. Category 3: Reflecting on learning strategies to guide the promotion of PLEs.

Category 1: Introducing online resources and tools to promote PLEs

This category refers to the findings I obtained regarding the features that online tools, resources and services should have when trying to promote the use of PLEs among students. These results were informed by the categorization process that was based on the teacher journals, and from the emerging codes from the opinions, the students shared in the questionnaires.

The use of technological online tools with different purposes is the basic ground to promote PLEs. To take advantage of PLEs, students must have some fundamental knowledge of the use of communication platforms, websites, and apps. This knowledge is called technical literacy, but it is also known as technological knowledge, technical competence, technological expertise among others (Radyushin, 2021). One of the relevant codes in this category is called *Assessing technological literacy* (Appendix M). The code referred to the difficulties students had with creating accounts for an app called Edmodo, as reported in the journal:

Excerpt Journal session 1, analytic memo.

“This website would help us to be our virtual platform to ease our communication. Nevertheless, some students complained about the fact that they weren’t able to receive the teacher’s invitation to be part of it. Even though I had the correct emails of these students, for some reason it was not possible for them to receive the invitation or to open the site. After seeing this difficulty, I decided to use Facebook as the only platform for mutual interactions, avoiding the use of Edmodo.”

The fact of being able to open an account on websites demonstrates that a student has a fundamental knowledge of the use of platforms to interact, learn and communicate with others. Teachers aiming at promoting the use of PLE should include ways to assess the students’ technology literacy to make better choices when selecting online tools.

Another important insight in this category has to do with how easy-to-use online tools and services are. I addressed this issue in the journals when I referenced the importance of selecting apps or websites that provide clear instructions to let the students work easily and as frequently as possible on them. The students themselves also referred to this aspect in the questionnaires; they indicated that it was crucial for them to access easy-to-use apps to learn English. I consider this statement as a principle for every user of online tools who plans to participate in PLEs to improve their speaking skill.

From the blended implementation I found that using smartphones to record a spoken message has great value because it allows students to interact with the teacher and other participants in an asynchronous way. PLE should favor using mobile devices to offer greater flexibility since most students use their smart phones more frequently than their computers. From the questionnaires, it was clear that six out of the eighteen students claimed to use mobile phones to study English.

During the intervention, there were tasks where students needed to listen to instructions, figure them out, and perform accordingly to reach effective communication with other participants. From this experience, I can conclude that the use of online tools should be connected to real-world tasks to be more meaningful.

Finally, the action of recording audios in different apps, allowed students to create content to solve issues related to oral production and other areas of interest of the English learning process. The experience helped me to realize that audio and video recording allows asynchronous peer and self-evaluation. This aspect should therefore be highlighted when promoting the development of PLE to practice the speaking skill.

Category 2: Identifying students' performance and perceptions to guide the design of PLEs

This category refers to the results obtained from the journal's information on assessing the students' performance during the intervention, through the students' responses to the questionnaire regarding the online tools and resource they used for improving their speaking skill, and on my research of other Apps. The aspects of the students' performance that were assessed were intelligibility, accuracy, comprehension, fluency, and content. The results indicated that the students had more drawbacks with the aspects of intelligibility, accuracy, and fluency. From these results, the students should look for an online tool, social website, or app that offers them the possibility to record, rate or assess their pronunciation of individual words or short phrases so that they can monitor their progress. In this regard, some students described the use of tools like Google translate since it displays the word translation when students use the right word pronunciation.

Sample student reponses

¿Cuál es el nombre de la tecnología que ha usado? Google Translate

¿Cómo funciona? Se selecciona el lenguaje a hablar y el lenguaje a traducir y reproduce el sonido con su respectivo texto.

¿Cómo conoció esta herramienta tecnológica? Está incorporada en el navegador de Google.

¿Cuánto tiempo dedica al uso de esta? Alrededor de 15 minutos diarios.

¿Cree que le ha ayudado a mejorar su Speaking en inglés? De algunos ejemplos. Cuando escucho trato de imitar el sonido y si la App lo traduce bien se está (sic) bien pronunciado.

(Appendix N)

Other students reported the use of apps such as Ewa which offers ways to pronounce sentences from books, or videos, Voscreen, which has statements or words used in movies and TV series that users need to select from some options to discover their correct pronunciation, Memrise based on tests, and Duolingo which help to develop good pronunciation.

Another aspect of the speaking skill that was emphasized was the aspect of accuracy. In the same way, the students should look for websites, apps, and interactions with other people where they may be able to use grammar functions while they speak or communicate with others when they design their own PLEs. In addition to this, a student who participated in the questionnaire activity, mentioned that they used an app called English Grammar Practices, Agenda web, the book used in the course called Top Notch, www.myenglishlab.com, that provide useful listening comprehension activities to practice, Voscreen app, Duolingo and Deezer as other interesting apps to study the grammar aspect of the language. Most of these apps focus on grammar exercises per level which give tracks on progress and Deezer on its part, shows the lyrics of songs and allows students to improve their grammar, by identifying the grammar function in the lyrics of songs.

Sample student reponses

¿Cuál es el nombre de la tecnología que ha usado? Deezer and Duolingo.

¿Cómo funciona? Deezer es una app que adicionalmente muestra las letras de las canciones y me permite mejorar mi escucha y gramática...

¿Cómo conoció esta herramienta tecnológica? internet

¿Cuánto tiempo dedica al uso de esta? 2 o 3 horas por semana.

¿Cree que le ha ayudado a mejorar su Speaking en inglés? De algunos ejemplos. Si porque cuando escucho música puedo ir observando la letra y corrigiendo mi speaking...

It is important to say that these apps target the attention on grammar, but they don't spotlight directly the accuracy aspect of the oral production, which is acquired by using grammar structures in their regular conversations or in other social websites through synchronous interactions with English speakers, like Open Talk. This app may help student by choosing one world zone and then have a phone call with a person of that part of the world.

Another aspect that evidenced difficulties when trying to understand native and nonnative speakers was comprehension. Due to this difficulty, it is necessary to look for listening activities in which speakers use both accents. Apps like "Hello talk" can offer feedback from native and non-native speaker asynchronously and at the same time, they may listen to different pronunciations.

As seen before, some students talked about Google translate, and Duolingo as tools used to translate and consequently understand meaning. However, it is known that the use of translations is part of an audiolingual method, which is opposite to the communicative Language Teaching method used to learn a language (Lindsay & Knight, 2017). From the overall reflections above, I can say that it is important to use listening comprehension exercises to reach the comprehension aspect of oral production since there is an intimate connection between oral

production and listening comprehension. That is why we can say, the more we listen the better we speak.

Category 3: Reflecting on learning strategies to guide the promotion of PLEs

This category has to do with information regarding the learning strategies that students provided in the responses to the questionnaire, and my reflections on the blended learning experience as the fundament to promote PLEs.

From the student's responses in the questionnaire, I can say that autonomous students evidence a high appreciation of receiving immediate feedback on their pronunciation since they can't have a teacher providing feedback on it all the time.

This is evidenced from this excerpt of the questionnaire.

Sample student response

¿Cuál es el nombre de la tecnología que ha usado? Duolingo

¿Cómo funciona? Funciona con unos temas y ponen oraciones y palabras y tú debes repetirlas por una nota.

¿Cómo conoció esta herramienta tecnológica? Por publicidad.

¿Cuánto tiempo dedica al uso de esta? 1 hora diaria.

¿Cree que le ha ayudado a mejorar su Speaking en inglés? De algunos ejemplos. Si me ha ayudado con la pronunciación.

¿Cómo cree que mejoró su Speaking en una escala de 1 al 5? 4

¿Por qué? Porque te corrigen si estas mal y mejora.

I can state from the analysis of the blended learning experience, the students' answers to the questionnaires and my research to provide solutions to this aspect, that there are several apps and websites that can help students to refine their pronunciation through different exercises to promote their PLEs. Among these apps and websites, we have the VOA Learning English Player

app, EWA, Babbel app, Voscreen app, Memrise app, Duolingo app, Google Translates website, ELSA, Awabe, Hello Talk, and Bussuu among others. The positive aspect of these apps is the overall feedback they provide.

This is evidenced in the excerpt of my journal and questionnaire analytic memo.

...In my opinion the app VOA Learning English Player offers a lot of practice in the reading, listening, and speaking of current news and events that may be interesting for a wide variety of public. This allows the students to read and to listen to a short paragraph of the news and it also allows the speaker to record their voice. At the end it grades the activity with a percentage of proficiency showing the words that were pronounced incorrectly.

I also found out that some of these apps allow practicing the shadowing technique (Lagos,2020) that involves listening to an example of a model given by the app, which the student then records imitating the given pronunciation; the student obtains a score based on how accurate their pronunciation was. Apps such as VOA Learning English Player, and Babbel app also show the words that were pronounced incorrectly. These Apps can be a plus in the development of PLEs.

Regarding the opinions provided by the students in the questionnaire, one student had the perception that Google Translate was a good tool which provides immediate feedback; the student said that it was useful to identify if they were doing a good job in pronunciation because if the word was well pronounced the website would translate it. In this point of the analysis, it is important to say that the previous examples refer to pronunciation assessment, not oral production.

This is evidenced from this excerpt of the questionnaire.

Sample student response.

¿Cuál es el nombre de la tecnología que ha usado? Traductor Google.

¿Cómo funciona? Tiene una herramienta en la cual tu le hablas y puedes observar si estás pronunciando correctamente.

¿Cree que le ha ayudado a mejorar su Speaking en inglés? De algunos ejemplos. Si debido a que me daba cuenta que no estaba pronunciando bien y lo que estaba diciendo significaba otra cosa.

¿Cómo cree que mejoró su Speaking en una escala de 1 al 5? 4 ¿Por qué? Por que me ayudo a darme cuenta como era su real pronunciación.

In the questionnaire, some students referred to Voscreen as an app that helped them with their listening and speaking.

This is evidenced from this excerpt of the questionnaire.

Sample student response.

¿Cuál es el nombre de la tecnología que ha usado? Voscreen.

¿Cómo funciona? Es una aplicación que pasa escenas de películas o series. Dan varias opciones y elegir la correcta, en otras oraciones repetir lo que dice cada escena.

¿Cree que le ha ayudado a mejorar su Speaking en inglés? De algunos ejemplos. Tanto el listening como al speaking un poco.

¿Cómo cree que mejoró su Speaking en una escala de 1 al 5? 3 ¿Por qué? No responde.

From my personal research after analyzing this response and reflecting about the blended experience with my students' fluency issues, I found this app shows movie scenes and then two caption options are offered. The translations of these two options are shown and the participant must choose the correct one. This app can be a good way of using short movie videos to identify meaning through reading, listening, and pronunciation. Nevertheless, students should avoid translations so they may stay focused on listening. There are different tools and services that use videos to promote listening and speaking. Some of them are Youtube, Awabe, Youghish, and Voscreen.

This is evidenced from the excerpt of my journal and questionnaire analytic memo.

“...A good website that Involves subtitles to aid comprehension would be Youghlish. This website not only let students read subtitles of conversations in TV programs, movies, or documentaries, but let the students see the use of the word in different contexts.”

Another aspect of learning that should be considered in PLEs designing is gamification.

This is evidenced from the excerpt of my journal and questionnaire analytic memo. “... Duolingo app has the advantage of providing a different game if you make a mistake until you can correct your mistake. This app offers symbols and badges to motivate the students, which is known as gamification.” These kinds of apps have appealing formats and most of them are gamified. Students need to look for some fun online apps and websites that may be easy to use and help them practice their accuracy and fluency. Regarding gamification and the analysis of the students in the questionnaire activity, a student mentioned that websites like Kahoot and apps like Duolingo offer different topics to learn in a didactic way.

Sample student responses

¿Cuál es el nombre de la tecnología que ha usado? Computador, Internet, Páginas didácticas, etc. Kahoot, Duolingo.

¿Cómo funciona? Contiene diferentes temas para aprender de forma didáctica y jugando para no hacer tan monótonos los temas.

¿Cómo conoció esta herramienta tecnológica? Internet.

¿Cuánto tiempo dedica al uso de esta? Cuando tengo tiempo 1 -2 horas diarias.

¿Cree que le ha ayudado a mejorar su Speaking en inglés? De algunos ejemplos. Si, a medida que uno va pronunciando diferentes términos, se va cogiendo más fluidez. (Appendix N)

In regard of this, Memrise and Busuu are other options that offer appealing content and games to make PLEs.

Not only that, but a student mentioned Memrise as an important tool to improve speaking.

This is evidenced from this excerpt of the questionnaire.

Sample student response

¿Cuál es el nombre de la tecnología que ha usado? Memrise.

¿Cómo funciona? Se avanza por nivel superando pruebas.

¿Cree que le ha ayudado a mejorar su Speaking en inglés? De algunos ejemplos. Practicar pronunciación de palabras similares.

¿Cómo cree que mejoró su Speaking en una escala de 1 al 5? 3 ¿Por qué? Practica la pronunciación.

From my own research given this answer, I discovered that Memrise allow the students to create vocabulary content learned in class. Undoubtfully, this aspect must be pursued by PLE developers. Students can create content such as repositories for new vocabulary. Students should look for good apps to create vocabulary content learned in class in their PLEs, which allow them to create flashcards with sounds that help them memorize vocabulary and give them feedback. This is evidenced from the excerpt of my journal and questionnaire analytic memo.

“...A good app to reinforce vocabulary learned in class, is spaced repetition, which allows the student to create flashcards that help them memorize vocabulary in daily basis and it gives a score that shows the progression of the memorization.”

In the questionnaires, one of my students mentioned the use of an app called English Grammar Practices.

This is evidenced from this excerpt of the questionnaire.

Sample student response

¿Cuál es el nombre de la tecnología que ha usado? English Grammar Practices..

¿Cómo funciona? Tiene tres niveles; principiantes, intermedio y avanzado. Cada uno de ellos tienen ejercicios correspondientes al nivel. A medida que desarrolles los ejercicios avanzas.

...¿Cree que le ha ayudado a mejorar su Speaking en inglés? De algunos ejemplos. Si, porque en unos ejercicios debo repetir la palabra tal cual para seguir avanzando.

¿Cómo cree que mejoró su Speaking en una escala de 1 al 5? 3 ¿Por qué? Me hace falta dedicarle más tiempo.

This information gave me clues about the fact that the student had to work on the exercises repeating the word to continue going on.

From this information and from my journal analysis of the intervention with the blending strategy, I reflected on scaffolding and did research on another app that supports scaffolding called Pimsleur since this audio-based program can use the structures that you have learned before, to explain some other new structures.

This is evidenced from the excerpt of my journal and questionnaire analytic memo.

“...When we talk about scaffolding or reinforcing on previous structures and learn to solve a practical problem, we are talking about the use of a particular word or structure used in different situations. I would recommend the Pimsleur app since this audio-based program is able to use the structures that you learned before to explain you some other new structures. So, it will use these structures in future lessons to consolidate learning.”

Another aspect of speaking learning that the students referred to in the questionnaire is conversation drills. Some students found it useful to listen to conversations and repeat what was said by one of the interlocutors. Concretely, a student reported in the questionnaire the following:

Sample student response

¿Cuál es el nombre de la tecnología que ha usado? Speaking English.

¿Cómo funciona? Se elige la opción deseada sobre los temas propuestos ejemplo: small talk, college life, entre otros. Se escucha la conversación, permite grabar la misma conversación y luego permite escuchar como la hicimos.

Here, the student is referring to Speaking English Practice, an app that allows drilling conversations through role-plays. From my personal research on this app, I learned that students could read and listen to different conversations. Then they can practice identifying the expressions learned in class and use them in conversations they can develop with other students through different apps such as WhatsApp or Facebook messenger. From the student's perspective, the app Speaking English Practice offers different conversations related to small talks or college life experiences which could support scaffolding. After listening to the conversation, the students must record their own repetition and listen to it later. When students think about designing their own PLEs, they should consider apps that may help them scaffold and do drillings.

In the journal analysis, there was a situation where a group of students had a difficult interaction with a native speaker. From this difficulty I considered the importance of Learning Meaningfully Using Information in a Collaborative Way. After doing some research I can say that there are some apps that can help students with the collaboration of a native speaker.

This is evidenced from the excerpt of my journal and questionnaire analytic memo.

...We can say that there are some apps that were mentioned before which can help students with the collaboration of a native speaker. Some of them are Busuu which works as a social website. Here you can ask for correction from a native speaker and the person cannot only give feedback but look for correction of their production in the partner's native language. Hello Talk and Lingbe, are other free community-based apps where people help each other and share their native language. So, they are a give and take app where students are both the teacher and the learner.

These kinds of apps are important to include in the development of PLEs, since they would help students learn collaboratively and as it was mentioned before this is one of the important aspects that PLEs offer to students when they want to practice their speaking. Another aspect that was observed in this category is related to the frustration reached when there was a lack of comprehension due to the kind of interaction with native speakers and the consequent affective filter raise.

This can be evidenced in my journal in the third session.

“...Then another group found an American teacher, and he started to ask them questions about the thing they were expecting to receive, but due to the fact they didn’t know what they would receive, they didn’t know what to answer. After that, the teacher gave them the envelope. When they returned to the classroom, they were upset because of the struggles they had with the teacher and felt bad since they could not understand most of what he was saying to them.”

To avoid this, it is advised to students to include in the design of their PLEs a preoperational phase where they may become familiar with the listening, pronunciation and fluency of situations seen in their class material through online tools that allow them to use the language, receive feedback, and progress assessment (asynchronous interactions), before facing the operational phase with synchronous interactions with native speakers. Some of the apps mentioned by the students were Duolingo, Memrise, Speaking English Practice, Voscreen and EWA mainly.

On the other hand, in additional research of apps such as, Lingbee and Hello Talk I reflected on the fact that these allow students to create their questions or any other statements before interacting with their peers when they use chats or messages. These free apps allow students to record a complaint to build on experiences learnt in class for example. This is one of

the advantages of these tools, since they let the student become autonomous in their learning to explore whatever function and ask or show examples with their peers through videos or audios. This is evidenced from the excerpt of my journal and questionnaire analytic memo.

“...Talking about the practice to ground learning through a post on the wall of a social website, the apps busuu, Hello talk are good apps which help students receive feedback from other students and from other native speaker students. The students here will have to think carefully about the sentence or post since these posts will be read by most people of the community. So, the good thing of this is the requirement to plan their post content in advance.”

From the interventions proposed to the students in the blended activities, and my reflections of these experiences, I was able to state that students should be aware of the fact of establishing specific, clear, and reachable goals that can be measured over time. In this way, they might be easy to verify individually. One of the relevant aspects in this category is called Reflecting on Stating Specific Goals in Advance for Students to facilitate activities. (Appendix M). From my reflections in the Journal and questionnaire analytic memo about the lack of clarity of the instructions given to the students during the intervention in session two, it is important that students know what the goal of the activity they were doing was, as reported in the journal:

Excerpt Journal and questionnaire analytic memo,

“Another thing in which I have to be very careful is to be very specific about the goal of the activity and explain the thing they are going to look for in each classroom such as the “envelope” in this case.”

These goals may orient the students to look for the right features of online tools that allow them to find good results in their PLEs development to improve oral production.

Another important reflection for the students' PLEs development is linked with my reflection of learning from difficulties such as, the ones appeared in the blended experience which I call a pre-operative stage and using these experiences to avoid future sidetrack communications in real contexts which I call here the operative stage. The operative stage can be gained by joining an online social community where the student can have the possibility to speak in a synchronous way, this is in real-time with other members of the community. From the questionnaire experience, one tool mentioned by a student was Open Talk.

This is evidenced from this excerpt of the questionnaire.

Sample student response.

¿Cuál es el nombre de la tecnología que ha usado? En mi caso encontré una herramienta muy practica para conversar en tiempo real llamada Open Talk.

¿Cómo funciona? Uno se registra, escoje una zona del mundo con la cual uno quiere interactuar y se hace la conexión con otra persona con la que uno puede practicar oralmente.

...¿Cree que le ha ayudado a mejorar su Speaking en inglés? De algunos ejemplos. Claro que si porque me voy obligado a sostener una conversación y pensar en inglés.

¿Cómo cree que mejoró su Speaking en una escala de 1 al 5? 4 ¿Por qué? Porque esta práctica me ha permitido incrementar mi vocabulario y a la vez la confianza en mí mismo.

From my personal research on this app, I can state the advantage of this tool is that the student can gain confidence after having interacted with other English speakers repeatedly. It is necessary for students to realize that the interaction with the teacher in class is not enough and they have to look for real future interactions with other speakers when they think about their PLEs.

Regarding my reflection in the journal related to lacking time as a limit to do more blended learning activities in class,

Excerpt Journal in the session 3.

... We spent the whole class in this activity which in some way prevented me to cover most of the material of the class.”

The recommendation to the student is to look for online or virtual tools that can help them take advantage of time out of class, due to the limited time the teacher has, to orient them in their learning process. It is essential that students follow the above recommendations interconnected with the fact of establishing realistic goals, working cooperatively, working on a pre-operative stage (asynchronous activities) as much as possible, and then venture into an operative stage (synchronous activities). In this way, with some organization and determination, the students will be able to reach their set goals of learning a foreign language as the English language through the development of PLEs. On this regard, students cannot forget the importance of devoting enough time to practice the activities provided by these apps.

Conclusions and Implications

The analysis of a blended learning experience along with the responses of students in a questionnaire, and my research on online tools shed light on the creation and promotion of PLEs with a focus on oral production. These insights came from the analysis of evaluation rubrics, teacher's journals, and questionnaires, which involved a process of coding and categorization in an analytic memo. The analysis of data gave rise to the following conclusions:

In relation to the introduction of online tools, it is important to state that both teachers and students should include ways to assess the students' technology literacy before starting any kind of online English learning. The easiness of online resources is crucial to assist students in their way to reach a satisfactory oral production, and asynchronous interactions are key. Mobiles are some of the devices preferred by the students due to their ease and practicality in communication. It is important to develop meaningful activities in these types of interactions. This meaningfulness can be guaranteed by the connection between online tools and real-world tasks. In the early stages of English learning, asynchronous activities are very appropriate to develop this oral production, so audio and video recording allow asynchronous peer and self-evaluation.

The promotion of PLEs among students should also be based on their specific performance needs. For instance, the participants in the blended learning implementation had difficulties in the aspects of intelligibility, accuracy, and fluency. To tackle intelligibility, there are online tools that offer the possibility to listen to, record, rate or assess the students' pronunciation to monitor their progress. Spoken accuracy can be reached through online resources that offer exercises divided into topics that allow progress tracking. However, accuracy should not be excessively spotlighted to avoid affecting fluency. The students in this experience had some difficulties when interacting with native speakers. Online tools can help overcome

comprehension difficulties with both native and non-native speakers and may facilitate receiving feedback from native and non-native speakers in asynchronous and synchronous ways. On the other hand, online translation should not be used excessively since it affects the communicative aspect of learning.

The development of PLEs should be related with the teaching and learning strategies that the teacher normally uses in their classes, along with the learning strategies that students are familiarized with. In this regard, oral production may be reached in two stages: the pre-operational and the operational stage. The preoperational stage focuses on language presentation, drilling exercises, and feedback to identify mistakes, and using this information collaboratively. The students should look for online tools that focus on pronunciation, with instant automatic feedback. It is important to recognize that oral production can be gained only by speaking; consequently, students should expose themselves to communities that use the target language, such as those communities described in Lingbee, Hello Talk or Open Talk. Likewise, it is important to understand that online tools that focuses on voice recordings to grade performance as in the shadowing technique are not evaluating oral production, but pronunciation. Additionally, it was interesting to identify online dictionaries or translation websites as useful tools to practice pronunciation through word dictation.

I found that autonomous students highly appreciate receiving immediate overall feedback since they cannot have a teacher providing it all the time. In this way, students should center on online tools such as, videos to learn English, without translations, so they may focus more on the listening comprehension and look for gamified online tools that help them learn through appealing content and overall feedback for their PLEs development. Another autonomous learning strategy could be the use of online tools which offer resources to let students create courses to learn vocabulary, and other learning material. Students can look for online tools that

allow them to reinforce structures learned before, so they may identify and use them in other contexts, and they should look for online tools that allow them to drill conversations to gain fluency before using them later in real interactions. Students should consider online tools such as learning communities to learn cooperatively and work asynchronously in those communities by preparing their contribution, before interacting synchronously with other peers.

There should be a reflection phase about the learning process in the development of PLEs. In this way, students should be aware of the importance of establishing specific, clear, and reachable goals that can be measured along time, and might be easy to verify individually. Besides, they should be aware of the importance of working cooperatively with peers, teachers, or external communities, and the crucial role of interacting with English speakers from different nationalities, to refine the listening comprehension from different varieties, since working in collaborative way is one of the advantages of using PLEs. In addition, students need to realize that the interaction with the teacher in class is not enough and in virtue of this, it's necessary to include online resources in the PLEs designing that can provide that interaction among English speakers. Finally, it is important to say that the implementation that took place in these courses had originally an emphasis on oral production, but the findings of this intervention can be applied to language learning in general.

Implications

After having worked on this research, I was able to develop a communication strategy through the media creation platform Genially to guide students to understand and create their own PLEs (Appendix P). This will be a new approach to be adopted by students who would like to take advantage of all the available online resources to learn English. I used all the online tools that resulted from both my personal research and the students' recommendations. This communication strategy presents clear concepts on PLEs, its use and recommendation to use

these online resources as means to complement their English learning, not only in the speaking skill, but in some other aspects of the English learning, and ultimately, in learning about other areas of interest.

Another implication of this research has to do with the need of developing digital competencies for both the teachers and the students who acknowledge the need to mediate their teaching and learning process through online tools, but who don't have these competencies. It is necessary to have basic concepts of these competencies and identify our own drawbacks on their management to implement actions that may help fulfill these shortcomings, before deciding to implement PLEs as an English learning strategy.

When doing the data analysis, especially in the questionnaires, it was possible to observe that certain affective factors were relevant for the students. They reported that they favored platforms and resources that were engaging, appealing, and those that were not monotonous. They also appreciated motivating platforms that encourage them to continue working on their learning progress and gamified resources. These affective factors become relevant when designing PLEs. It is important that students look for material that can help them learn while enjoying it. Therefore, they need to look for some online apps and websites that may be appealing, easy to use, and help them to practice their English around their own interests. Another relevant affective factor that was identified was students' confidence. In this regard, students can gain confidence by using resources and developing asynchronous activities with a focus on vocabulary, listening comprehension, fluency exercises, and drillings. In this way, students have control over the time they dedicate to practice their oral production before engaging in in-class oral production.

After working on this proposal, the role that formative research has for the educational endeavor has been evident. It has become part of a teacher's routine tasks, as much as planning,

implementing, assessing, and guiding, since it may offer answers to problems that may appear during the teaching and learning process. Not only that, but it may propose other subsequent research topics of additional study on the educational field. Formative research is part of the teaching task and the collaborative learning among teachers since they and their students can obtain great benefits and solutions on similar problems that the teaching action often entails.

Further research that may stem from this project can be related with other specific areas of the English learning, such as the listening, writing, and reading skills with PLEs, considering the vast material that can be found on the web and their use for learning purposes. It is also necessary to inquire about ways to improve the learners' decision-making when choosing the right online tool to approach their learning needs and the specific goals the student has established to accomplish them.

Appendices

Appendix A

Institution: Centro Colombo Americano. Speaking section. Name: Lucy Cifuentes. Level:

4

Rubric to evaluate the speaking skill for the second activity out of class. Speaking

Section: 4,2

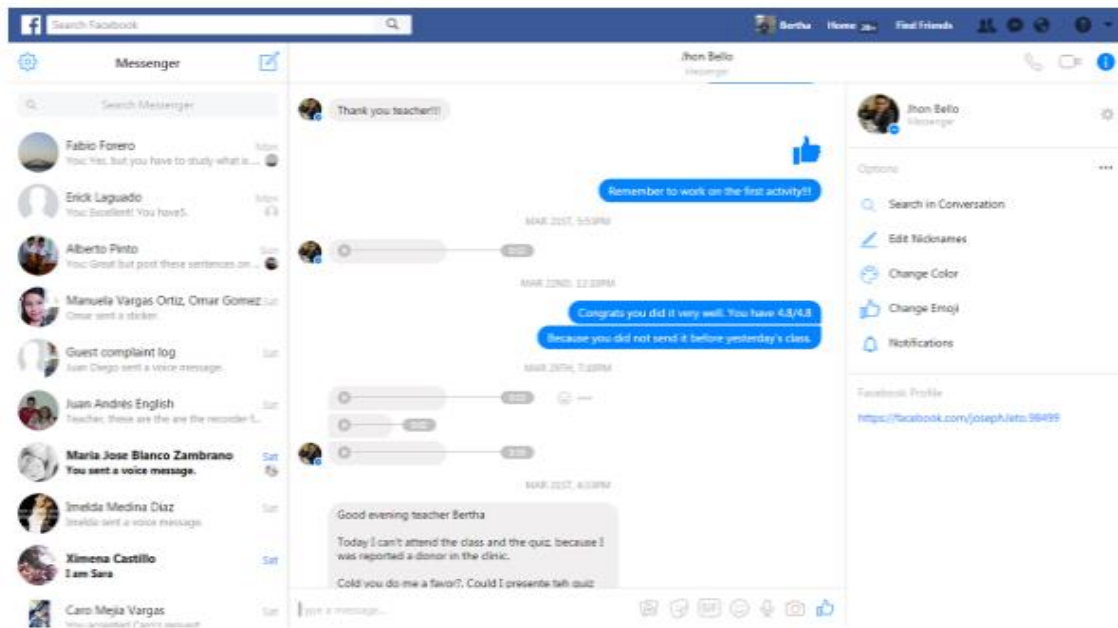
CONTENT	The students exceeded the requirements of the assignment and put a lot of thought and effort into this task. Incomplete task.	1 0,8 0,6 0,4 0,2
COMPREHENSION	The student understood what was said in the listening and responded appropriately to the assigned task. Wrong answers for the given questions.	1 0,8 0,6 0,4 0,2
INTELLIGIBILITY	The listener was able to understand what the student tried to communicate during the activity.	1 0,8 0,6 0,4 0,2
ACCURACY	The student correctly used the language functions and grammar necessary to communicate his/ her ideas about the given questions.	1 0,8 0,6 0,4 0,2
FLUENCY	The student spoke clearly and without hesitation. His / her pronunciation sounds natural.	1 0,8 0,6 0,4 0,2

Appendix B

Journal about the implementation of Blended Learning to improve the speaking skill of level 4 and 5

According to the timetable the first approach to use Blended learning in and out of the class was with the introduction of the technological tools and resources that would be used in the course. This introduction took place on February 13, 2017. Initially I asked the students to open an account on Edmodo and they would give me their emails to send those videos or recordings that Edmodo would not allow to download. This website would help us to be our virtual platform to ease our communication. Nevertheless, some students complained about the fact that they couldn't receive the teacher's invitation to be part of it. Even though I had the correct e-mail of these students, for some reason it was not possible for them to receive the invitation or to open the site. After seeing this difficulty, I decided to use Facebook as the only platform for mutual interactions, avoiding the use of Edmodo. As I stated before, I asked the students to **open another Facebook account** if they already had one, since their regular Facebook accounts would be used for social purposes but this one would be used just for English learning. Even though some students asked the teacher to use WhatsApp better, since it was available for all of them, the teacher explained that due to Colombo's policy of preventing sharing personal information between teachers and students the cellphone numbers wouldn't be used in this intervention. All students opened their accounts on Facebook as tools for learning.

This is a screen shot of the instrument: Facebook Messenger, which was used in this project. |



Then on February 16th, 2017, the first approach to the implementation took place through blended learning out of the class as a homework related with the reading and listening of Mary McLeod Bethune's story which was posted on the Colombo's group Level 4 Top Notch on 1 Feb-Mar 2017. This was a diagnostic activity, whose deadline would be on February 17th. Initially this activity was proposed to be done in the computer lab, but due to the lack of time **it was implemented as a blended learning** out of the class for the next day. In this activity the students had to read a short text about the life of Mary McLeod Bethune and the listening of four questions recorded by the teacher and posted on the group.

Appendix C

Cuestionario acerca de los ambientes personales de Aprendizaje del Ingles

Nombre: _____ **Fecha:** _____ **Nivel:** _____

Gracias por tomar parte en este proyecto. Responda las siguientes preguntas de acuerdo a su experiencia personal con diversas herramientas tecnológicas para mejorar su speaking en este nivel de estudios en inglés.

1. ¿Cuál es el nombre de la tecnología que ha usado?

2. ¿Cómo funciona?

3. ¿Cómo conoció esta herramienta tecnológica?

4. ¿Cuánto tiempo dedica al uso de esta?

5. ¿Cree que le ha ayudado a mejorar su Speaking en inglés? De algunos ejemplos

6. Marque la respuesta correcta con una "x". ¿Le pareció su uso fácil ☐ o difícil ☐ ?

7. Si su respuesta fue afirmativa, ¿Cómo cree que mejoró su Speaking en una escala de 1 al 5? _____

8. ¿Por qué? _____

9. ¿Recomendaría su uso a alguno de sus compañeros? _____

10. ¿Cómo recomendaría su uso a sus compañeros? _____

Cuestionario acerca de los ambientes personales de Aprendizaje del Inglés

Nombre: Karen Vanessa Torres Fecha: Octubre 10 Nivel: 1

Gracias por tomar parte en este proyecto. Responda las siguientes preguntas de acuerdo a su experiencia personal con diversas herramientas tecnológicas para mejorar su speaking en este nivel de estudios en inglés.

1. ¿Cuál es el nombre de la tecnología que ha usado?

Traductor Google

2. ¿Cómo funciona?

Tiene una herramienta en la cual tu le hablas y puedes observar si estas pronunciando correctamente

4. ¿Cómo conoció esta herramienta tecnológica?

la recomendo un amigo

5. ¿Cuánto tiempo dedica al uso de esta?

30 min diarios aproximadamente

6. ¿Cree que le ha ayudado a mejorar su Speaking en inglés? De algunos ejemplos

Si debido a que me daba cuenta que no estaba pronunciando bien y lo que estaba diciendo significaba otra cosa

7. Marque la respuesta correcta con una "x". ¿Le pareció su uso fácil ☒ o difícil ☐.

8. Si su respuesta fue afirmativa, ¿Cómo cree que mejoró su Speaking en una escala de 1 al 5? 4

9. ¿Por qué? Por que me ayudo a darme cuenta como era su real pronunciación

10. ¿Recomendaría su uso a alguno de sus compañeros? claro que si

11. ¿Cómo recomendaría su uso a sus compañeros?

Appendix D (Syllabus Level 5)

Centro Colombo Americano Bucaramanga						
Course Design						
Teacher:	Bertha Castro	Hours per week:	8 hours, 20 min	Level:	5	
Methodology:	CLT and PLE	Scope:	4 Weeks / 19 sessions overall			
Main Goals:	By the end of the term, the students will be able to: ask for a restaurant recommendation, order from a menu, discuss food and health, recommend a brand or model, express sympathy for a problem, talk about different activities and plans, ask about someone’s vacation, describe good and bad vacation experiences. Through role-plays in class and activities recorded in and out of class through Facebook messenger.					
Objectives	Communication Goals	Vocabulary	Grammar	Conversation Strategies	Listening Pronunciation	Reading/ Writing
Food and Restaurants	-Ask for a restaurant recommendation. - Order from a menu. - Speak to a server and pay for a meal. Discuss food and health.	Parts of a meal. Categories of food. Degrees of hunger. Communicating with a waitress or a waiter Adjectives to describe the healthfulness of food.	There is and there are with count and no count nouns: Anything and nothing. Definite article “the.” Non-count nouns: Expressing quantities. Some and any. Questions with how much and how many. Words that can be count nouns and non-count nouns. Spelling rules	Use could you...? To make a polite request. Use sure to agree to a request. Clarify a request by asking for more specific information. Indicate a sudden thought with actually. Use I’ll have to order from a server.	Listen to take notes. Listen to predict. Infer the location of a conversation. Pronunciation The before consonant and vowel sounds.	Reading Menus A nutrition website. A photo story. Writing Write a short article about food for a travel blog. Connecting words and ideas: and or in addition.
Technology and You	Recommend a brand or a model. - Express sympathy for a problem. - Complain when things don’t work. - Describe features of products	-Electronic devices. -Replacing products. - Positive descriptions. - Collocations for using electronic devices. - Activities.	-The present continuous: Review. Spelling rules for the present participle of verbs. Rules for forming statements.	Use Hey or how is it going for an informal greeting. Use what about...? To offer a suggestion. Use really? To indicate surprise.	Infer meaning. Listen to predict. Listen for details. Listen for details. Listen to classify. Pronunciation Intonation of questions.	Reading: Newspaper advertisements Online review for a product Writing: Write a review of a product. Placement of adjectives: before nouns and after the verb be.

		- Ways to sympathize. -Negative descriptions. - Household appliances and machines. - Ways to state a problem. - Features of manufactured product.	Rules for forming questions.	Use You Know to introduce a topic. Express sympathy when someone is frustrated.		
Staying in Shape	-Plan an activity with someone. -Talk about habitual activities and future plans. - Discuss fitness and eating habits. - Describe your routines.	-Physical activities. - Places for sports and exercise. - Frequency adverbs.	-Can and have to. - The Present continuous and the simple present: Review. - Can and have to: Form and common errors. - Information questions. - Present and past forms. - The Simple Present tense: Non- Action verbs. - Placement of frequency adverbs. -time expressions.	- Use: Why don't we...? To suggest an activity. - Say: Sorry I can't to apologize for turning down an invitation. - Provide a reason with have to. - Use: Well, how about...? To suggest an alternative. - Use: How come...? To ask for a reason. - Use a negative question to confirm information.	- Listen to activate grammar. - Listen for main ideas. - Listen for details. - Apply and personalize information. - Pronunciation: can't/can. - Third person singular.	- Reading .A bar graph. -A Fitness survey. - A magazine article. - A photo story. - Interpret a bar graph. - Infer information. - Summarize. - Writing: - Write about exercise and health habits.
On vacation	-Greet someone arriving from a trip. - Ask about someone's vacation. - Discuss vacation preferences. - Describe good and bad vacation experiences	- Some life events. - Academic subjects. - More leisure activities. - Some dreams for the future.	- The past tense of verb be Review. - Contractions. - The simple past tense: review. - Regular and irregular verb forms.	- Say Welcome back! To indicate enthusiasm about someone's return. - Acknowledge someone's interest With.	- Listen for main ideas. - Listen for details. - Infer meaning. - Pronunciation: The simple past tense ending.	- Reading: - Travel brochures. - Personal travel stories. - A vacation surveys. - A photo story. - Activate language from a text. - Identify supporting details. - Support an opinion. - Draw a conclusion.

			Spelling rules for regular verbs. The simple past tense. Usage and form	Decline an offer of assistance with: It's ok I'm fine. Confirm that an offer is declined with are you sure? Use absolutely to confirm a response. Show enthusiasm with No kidding! And tell me More.		Write a guided essay about a vacation.
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Appendix E

LESSON PLAN FORMAT

Lesson Number: <u>3 of Unit 5</u> Institution: <u>Centro Colombo Americano Bucaramanga</u> Pre-service teacher's name: <u>Bertha Esther Castro</u> Grade/ Level: <u>5</u> Date of implementation: <u>March 22, 2017</u> Duration: <u>90 minutes</u>	
Learning outcomes: • Pragmatic: <u>By the end of the lesson the students will be able to complain when things don't work.</u> • Linguistic: <u>The students will be able to use expressions such as, something that won't close or open, won't turn on, or turn off, making a funny sound, won't flush, and something that is clogged.</u>	
Warm up:	
Procedure The teacher asks an introductory question to the students. "If you are staying in a hotel, but the air conditioner doesn't work, how do you let know the receptionist about the problem? "I expect that some students will give several examples of their answers. I will copy the most relevant on the board. Then I present the students some other appropriate ways to do it.	Time 15 minutes
Stage 1	
Procedure The class is organized in a semi-circle. The first activity is conducted by watching and listening the presentation of the English course software on TV. Some vocabulary related with Illustrations like the window won't open /close, or the air conditioner won't turn off is shown and the pronunciation of each is repeated after the second listening. I ask the students about replacing names of electronic appliances which may have similar issues. I copy these sentences on the board, so the students can see their ideas using a similar structure.	Time 10 minutes
Stage 2	
Procedure A listening exercise is developed to identify the source of a complaint and details about the room, the customer and solutions offered by the person at the front desk. Immediately after that, I ask each group to complete orally the information collected from the listening exercise. I ask the students to gather in groups of two or three to discuss about which problems from the listening were the most serious. When they finish their discussion one person from the group must explain their reasons. Additional critical thinking questions must be asked, such as: "What would you think about a hotel with such problems" to elicit answers with their opinions. After that, some pictures with different situations are presented. Some conversation models are introduced to the students so they may do role plays among the groups organized previously.	Time 35 minutes
Stage 3	
Procedure Once the students have finished their role play practice, a member of each group will pass to the front of the class representing the person at the front desk, and other two are representing the customers. Every group will be graded by their students through numbers from 1-5 they will write on a piece of paper, to vote for the best performance.	Time 25 minutes
Assessment and evaluation In Facebook messenger, a link of Padlet for course 5 is shared. The students must go to the link and see the teacher's recording pretending to be the person at the front desk. An explanation of the use of Padlet is given in class for this assignment. The students must record their videos by explaining their complaints when things don't work. Then they must upload their videos to Padlet for their individual assessment using the rubric to evaluate the speaking skill of this activity.	
Resources Top Notch 1 Students books and teacher's software for TV. Facebook messenger for course 5, Padlet for Course 5, the rubric to evaluate the speaking skill.	

Appendix F

LESSON 3 GOAL Complain when things don't work

BEFORE YOU LISTEN

VOCABULARY • Ways to state a problem
Read and listen. Then listen again and repeat.








The window **won't** open / close. The iron **won't** turn on. The air conditioner **won't** turn off.
The fridge is **making a funny sound**. The toilet **won't** flush. The sink is **clogged**.

B Write the names of machines, appliances, and devices that sometimes ...

- 1 won't open or close. _____
- 2 won't turn on or off. _____
- 3 make a funny sound. _____

LISTENING COMPREHENSION

LISTEN FOR DETAILS Listen to the conversations. Write the room number for each complaint. Then listen again and write another problem for each room, using the Vocabulary.

ROOM	PROBLEM	OTHER PROBLEM?
203	The toilet won't stop running.	
	The fridge won't stop working.	
	The sink is clogged.	

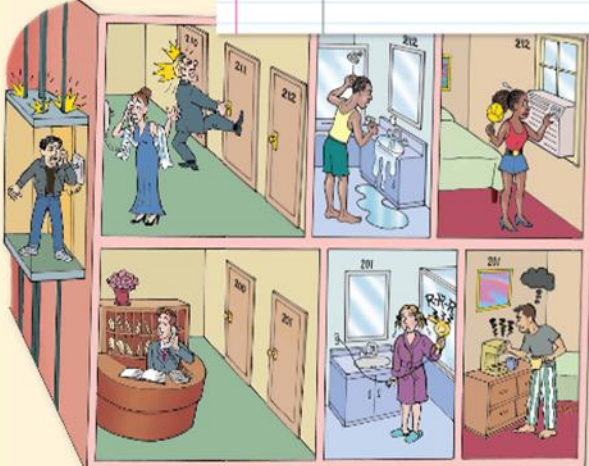
B DISCUSSION Which problems on the guest complaint log are serious? Which are not serious? Explain your reasons.

It's serious when the sink is clogged.
Water on the floor is very bad.

NOW YOU CAN Complain when things don't work

A NOTEPADDING Find all the problems in the hotel. Write the problems on the notepad.

Room / Place	Problem(s)



B ROLE PLAY Create conversations between the front desk clerk and the hotel guests about things that don't work.

RECYCLE THIS LANGUAGE.

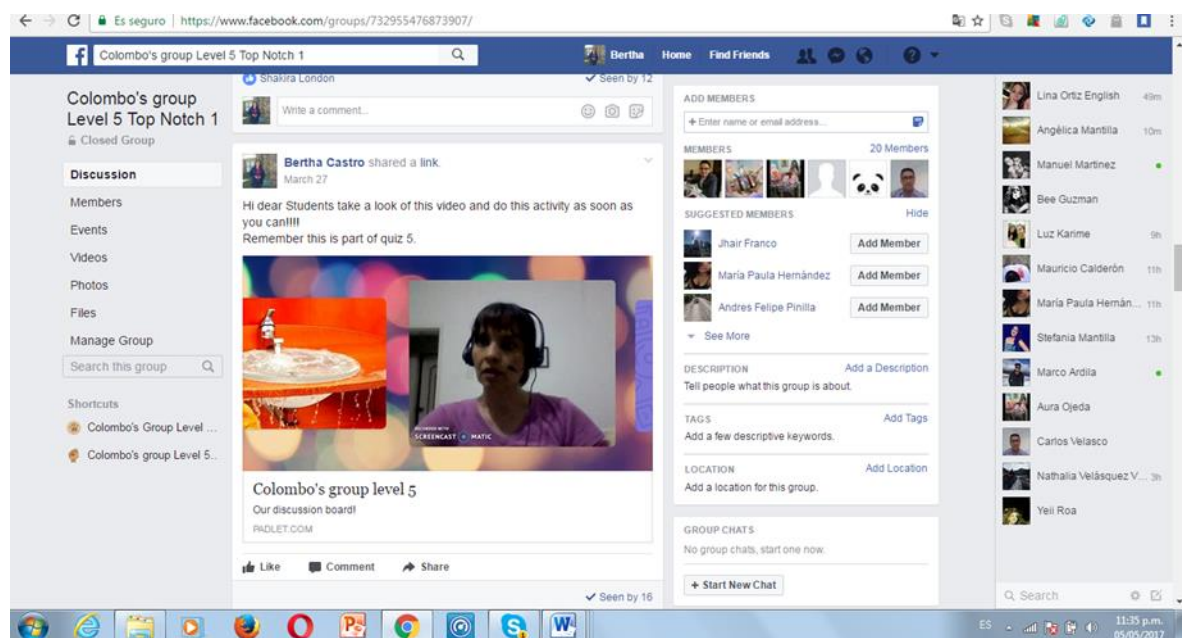
Telephone language	State a problem	Respond
Hotel?	— won't open / close.	What's the problem?
This is room ____.	— won't turn on / off.	I'm sorry to hear that.
Bye.	— won't flush / stop flushing.	Oh, no!
	— isn't working.	Well, that is a problem.
	— is clogged.	
	— is making a funny sound.	
	— is driving me crazy.	
	— is broken.	

Hello, front desk. Can I help you?

I'm in the elevator. It's not working and the doors won't open.

I've sent someone right away.

Appendix G



Appendix H



Appendix I



Appendix J

Transcriptions of the Teacher's Journal level 4 and 5

JOURNAL	CODES
According to the timetable the first approach to use blended learning in and out of the class was with the introduction of the technological tools and resources that would be used in the course. This introduction took place on February 13, 2017. Initially I asked the students to open an account on Edmodo and they would give me their emails to send those videos or recordings that Edmodo would not allow to download. This website would help us to be our virtual platform to ease our communication. Nevertheless, some students complained about the fact that they weren't able to receive the teacher's invitation to be part of it. Even though I had the correct emails of these students, for some reason it was not possible for them to receive the invitation or to open the site. After seeing this difficulty, I decided to use Facebook as the only platform for mutual interactions, avoiding the use of Edmodo. As I stated before, I asked the students to open another Facebook account if they already had one, since their regular Facebook accounts would be used for social purposes but this one would be used just for English learning. Even though some students asked me to use <u>Whatsapp</u>	Introducing technological tools Opening accounts on Edmodo Focusing on communication Assessing technological literacy Not having invitation Focusing on Interaction Opening another Facebook account as a portal to interact (personal learning network)

there was a mistake and I gave them the wrong instruction so they got confused and frustrated. Another thing in which I have to be very careful, is to be very specific about the goal of the activity and explain the thing they are going to look for in each classroom such as the “envelope” in this case.	Reflecting on stating specific goals in advance for students to facilitate activities
I also need to tell the teachers not to ask so many questions to these students since their level is low and they won't be able to answer all their questions, as it actually happened with the American teacher. I think the students enjoyed the activity very much, even though they had these issues, but in some way these ones prepared the students to look for proficiency in circumstances when they need to use the language in a different context.	Reflecting on working cooperatively with other teachers Learning to use difficulties to propel learning in conversations with backgrounds related to real contexts and real contexts
On the Facebook wall some extra exercises were posted as extra help and preparation for their final written exam. At this point I can say that the pedagogical	Making practice to ground learning

Appendix K

Codes per category obtained from the Questionnaire analysis

1. Focusing on Grammar
2. Focusing on Repetition
3. Focusing on Pronunciation
4. Focusing on Listening
5. Focusing on writing
6. Focusing on Vocabulary
7. Focusing on drilling
8. Focusing on speaking
9. Focusing on conversation
10. Focusing on Confidence
11. Focusing on Meaning
12. Focusing on fluency
13. Focusing on Practice
14. Vocabulary practice
15. Vocabulary review
16. Grammar review
17. Reading review
18. Pronunciation review
19. choosing Expressions
20. Using Mobile
21. Constant use
22. Time dedication
23. Daily use
24. Weekly use
25. Practical use
26. Easy use

- 27. Highly efficient
- 28. Medium efficient.
- 29. Partially efficient
- 30. Low efficient
- 31. Online access
- 32. Play Store access
- 33. Posting a resource
- 34. Friends, TV and Internet

Appendix L

Understanding the activity as a way to **probe comprehension** (t)

Understanding the activity as a way **to probe intelligibility** (T)

Showing difficulties in the **accuracy** and **fluency** components of Speaking. (s)

Reaching satisfactorily the aspects of **comprehension** and **intelligibility** on the recording. (S)

Showing **hesitations and issues in pronunciation** on the recording. (S)

Understanding instructions as a way to check the aspect of **comprehension** (S)

Showing issues in the **accuracy** and **fluency** aspect. (S)

Showing minor mistakes in the **pronunciation** component. (S)

Accomplishing **intelligibility** and **comprehension** by following instructions. (S)

3. Memo, July25,2021.

The aspects of the students' performance that may be useful to create and promote PLE among them, considering this experience, are intelligibility, accuracy, comprehension, fluency, and pronunciation. I used a rubric to assess each of these aspects of the spoken production in this experience. One aspect of speaking that was highly considered was intelligibility. This means the way the students are understood when they speak. The students of this experience had certain difficulties in this aspect, together with pronunciation and fluency. Students should look for an online tool, social website or app that offers them the possibility to record, rate or assess their pronunciation of individual words or short phrases so that they can monitor their progress.

This aspect of pronunciation was referred by the students who participated in the questionnaire experience. Some of them described the use of some websites or apps to reach a good performance in this aspect of speaking. One of the tools they mentioned was, Google translate. They explained that when one talks, the tool tells if the person is pronouncing correctly. Likewise, another student mentioned that they tried to imitate the sound of a word and if the app translated it alright the pronunciation was correct. Other students reported the use of apps such as Ewa and Voscreen, as means to improve pronunciation. They say that Ewa for instance

Appendix M

Codes per category obtained from the Journal analysis

Category 1 Introducing online resources and tools to promote PLEs

Opening accounts on Edmodo.

Focusing on communication.

Assessing technological literacy.

Opening accounts on Edmodo.

Not having invitation. Interacting through Facebook.

Opening another Facebook account as a portal to interact (personal learning network).

Avoiding using cell phone numbers.

Using Facebook Messenger.

Using technological tools to obtain precise instructions.

Understanding and following instructions through asynchronous communication.

Sending recordings.

Opening another Facebook account for Fifth level as the new portal to interact (personal learning network).

Assessing technological literacy. Using their smartphones as a tool to assess speaking.

Using Facebook Messenger in an asynchronous way as a tool to record participation.

Introducing Padlet as another portal to record their answers through video.

Category2: Identifying students' performance and perceptions to guide the design of PLEs.

Using a rubric on speaking. Characterizing the students' English-speaking skill First approach. Performing well in content.

Putting a lot of thought and effort.

Performing well in intelligibility.

Having issues in grammar structures.

Having issues in pronunciation.

Having issues in fluency.

Low score for poor understanding.

Low comprehension of native accent.

High comprehension of non-native accent.

Limited accuracy.

Making mistakes in pronunciation.

Lack of accuracy.

Lack of fluency.

Struggling with grammar and pronunciation.

Characterizing the students' English-speaking skill.

Showing difficulties in comprehension. Understanding the activity as a way to probe comprehension.

Understanding the activity as a way to probe intelligibility.

Showing difficulties in the accuracy and fluency components of Speaking.

Reaching satisfactorily the aspects of comprehension and intelligibility on the recording.

Showing hesitations and issues in pronunciation on the recording.

Understanding instructions as a way to check the aspect of comprehension.

Showing issues in the accuracy and fluency aspect.

Showing minor mistakes in the pronunciation component.

Accomplishing intelligibility and comprehension by following instructions.

Category 3: Reflecting on learning strategies to guide the promotion of PLEs..

Reading and listening through blended learning.

Giving overall feedback. Motivating through a symbol.

Suggesting planning answers in advance.

Online modeling of pronunciation.

Recommending a tool (pronunciation).

Choosing songs on a video.

Singing a part of the song.

Explaining grammatical structures through songs.

Encouraging interest through environmental change.

Using a video to promote listening and speaking.

Using an appealing content to boost achievement of tasks.

Reinforcing vocabulary learned in class.

Involving subtitles to aid comprehension.

Scaffolding on previous structures learnt to solve a practical problem.

Using expressions learned in class through Role-plays.

Learning meaningfully using information in a collaborative way.

Looking for help to develop the activity given a mistake. (Cooperative learning, in a constructive way).

Drilling structures previously learnt as a plus for fluency.

Making practice to ground learning through a post on the wall.

Avoiding making mistakes when using technological tools.

Giving feedback about grammar issues in class.

Giving feedback about fluency through a website.

Posting a resource to foster grammar practice.

Creating their questions to interact with their peers.

Recording a complaint as a way to build on previous learning (building on experiences learnt class).

Posting a resource to foster grammar practice.

Suggesting a tool to support pronunciation (posting a tool on messenger to support pronunciation).

Facing a communicative issue with a native speaker.

Feeling Frustrated after a communicative failure.

Raising Affective Filter.

Lacking interest in working with the posted material.

Reaching accuracy and fluency through (an amused activity) enjoying an activity.

Lack of motivation to participate actively in students coming from the previous course.

Lacking time on the part of students to watch a video as blended learning out of class as a flip classroom.

Lacking time to participate on some high school students, workers, and College students.

Complaining about lacking time to work on assignments.

Appendix N

CODES	INFORMATION
Focusing on Pronunciation Focusing on fluency On line access Daily use Easy use Medium –High efficient Focusing on Practice	1. Computador, Internet, Páginas didácticas, etc. Kahoot, Duolingo 2. Contiene diferentes temas para aprender de forma didáctica y jugando para no hacer tan monótonos los temas. 3. Internet 4. Cuando tengo tiempo 1 -2 horas diarias. 5. Si, a medida que uno va pronunciando diferentes términos, se va cogiendo mas fluidez. 6. Fácil uso. 7. Mejora en Speaking en escala del 1-5: 3,5 8. No responde. 9. Si. 10. Descargando la App y practicando con ella a diario.
CODES	INFORMATION
Focusing on Listening Focusing on pronunciation Online access Daily use Easy use Medium efficient	1. Google Translate. 2. Se selecciona el lenguaje a hablar y el lenguaje a traducir y reproduce el sonido con su respectivo texto. 3. Está incorporada en el navegador de Google. 4. Alrededor de 15 minutos diarios. 5. Cuando escucho trato de imitar el sonido y si la App lo traduce bien se está bien pronunciado. 6. Fácil uso. 7. Mejora en Speaking en escala del 1-5: 3 8. Tiene muchas opciones adicionales. 9. Si. 10. si

Appendix O

CENTRO COLOMBO AMERICANO BUCARAMANGA

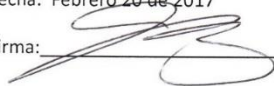
CENTRO COLOMBO
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BUCARAMANGA - CÚCUTA60
AÑOS

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CENTRO COLOMBO
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BUCARAMANGA

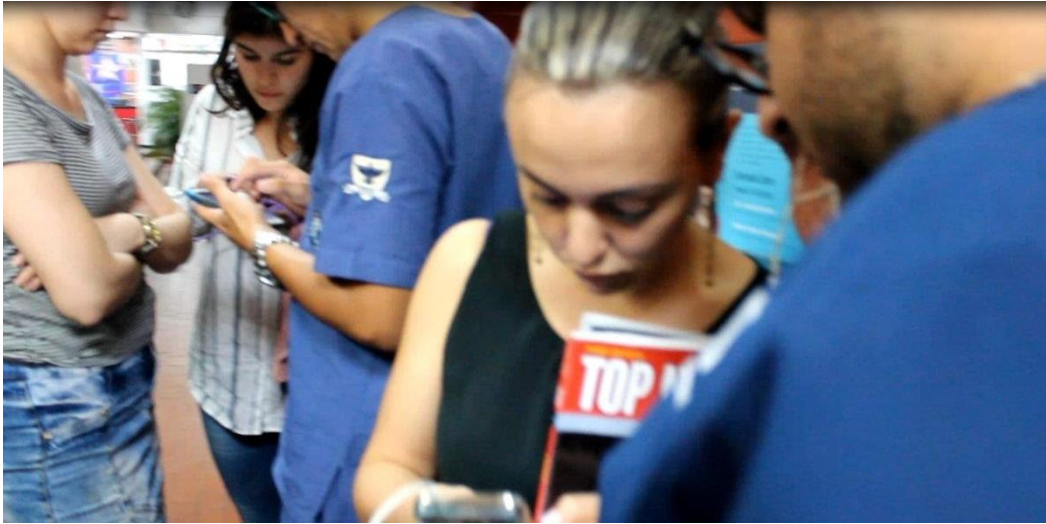
PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN DE LA DOCENTE BERTHA CASTRO

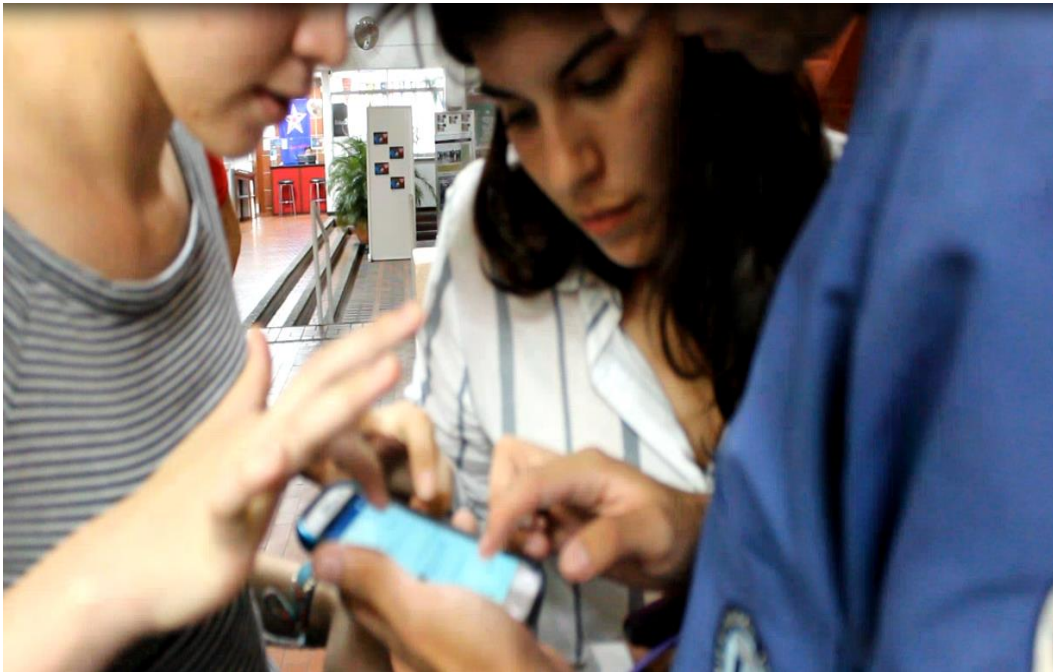
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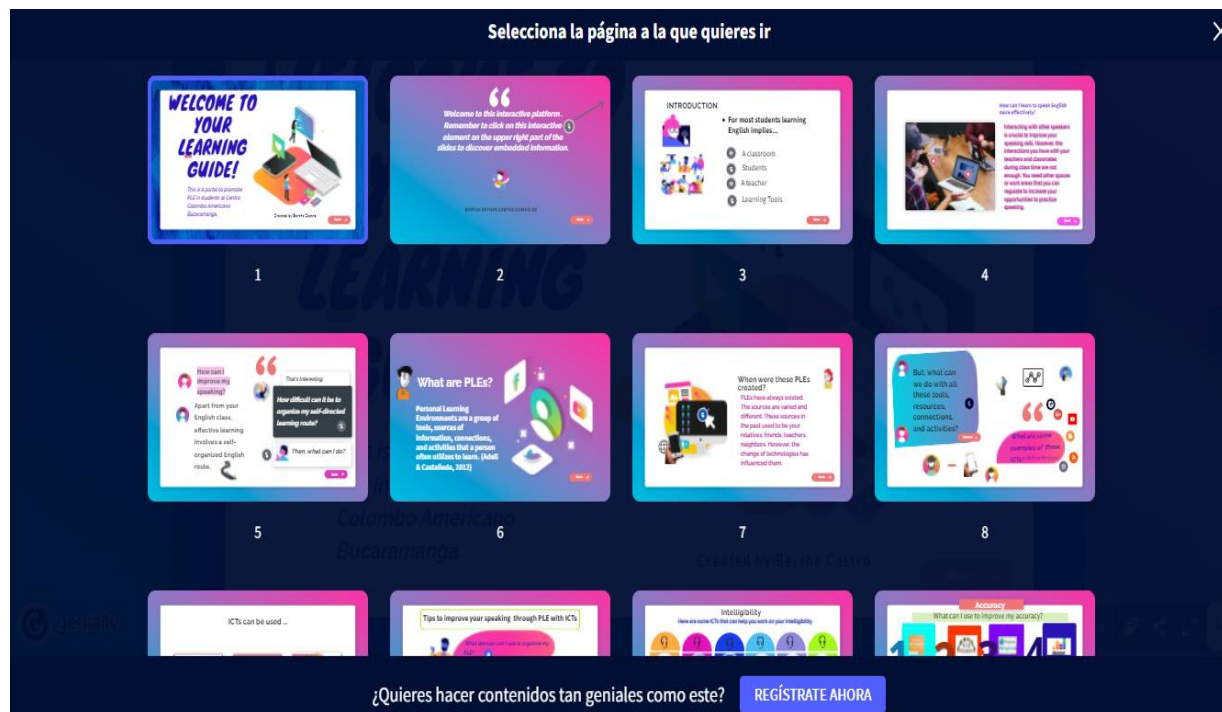
Fecha: Marzo 15 de 2017

Firma: María Paulina Torres





Appendix P



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