

A pedagogical journey into the English classroom at Célamo Rueda School in Cali – Valle:

My experiences as an English teacher with 3th graders

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A pedagogical journey into the English classroom at Célamo Rueda School in Cali – Valle:

My experiences as an English teacher with 3th graders

Research Field: The use of the English Language and its Contexts

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to:

God, the merciful, I dedicate this humble work.

My mother, who was very enthusiastic, proud and supporting through my study at Santo Tomas University. For my mother patience in the difficult situations and for encouraging me

To my family, for their patience and collaboration

To my teacher, Sandra Milena Rodríguez, who help me in developed this work.

Bogotá, Abril 18 de 2018.

Señores:

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Cordialmente,



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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to illustrate pedagogical reflections and the teaching practice in the language classroom. The research was carried out with third graders at Célimo Rueda School in Cali. One group participated in the inquiry through of a pedagogical proposal, which were applied by a series of strategies and activities to bring the students something different that let them living new experiences, and to answer the main question about how does the English teacher's narrative could illustrate those pedagogical reflections and teaching practices.

The research involves qualitative data; the information was collected through a teacher's journal, students' artifacts and video recordings. The data analysis was conducted subjectively and descriptively by the researcher; the findings of the study indicated that students could face and participated in meaningful situations into the classroom which were related with their context and also helped to improved students and teacher's performance and attitude; besides it gave to the participants the opportunity to tell the story by themselves while took part on it.

Key words: narrative, illustrate, context, pedagogical practice, telling stories.

Section 1. CONTEXTUALIZATION

Célimo Rueda School is located in Cali, in the south of the city. It has six grades of primary, from preschool to fifth; each grade has approximately 40 students per group, most of them live in the hillside area, in poverty conditions; some of them do not have scholar supplies, because their parents cannot pay afford them, even uniforms are donated by students who finished the primary school, at home the food is not enough, in many cases if they have breakfast, do not have lunch or dinner. Apart from these difficulties they love the school, they feel it is a safe place for them, a place to escape from the reality, when someone is paying attention to them, a place to share with their classmates and teachers, and for many of them it is a place where they can find food, also it is a place to learn too. School curriculum seeks foster English learning as a foreign language, to facilitate children a contact with English, motivating them from knowledge of the sounds and words; it is hard to get the goals facing students' difficulties and teachers' limitations, so the teacher can and must create its own material according to the purposes or activities planned. Teachers are not professional English teachers so different strategies have been implemented at school to enhance English learning, like Speaks Now Project which includes an English day, teachers meeting to share experiences and difficulties, teacher English texts, training courses, and small classroom projects. Teachers are always looking different actions to increase students' English level, taking into account the facts that affect the learning process; for example lesson planning: time is not enough to reach the planned objectives of the course, because sometimes English class is reduced to one hour or none per week; the lack of students' vocabulary that limit them to participate during the classes, they do not how to answer or write by using the target

language; students' motivation, the attitude and expectations they may have or how they perceive to face a new language; family support, the use of target language in other contexts, among others; students need the teacher's support to reinforce their learning process and help them to gain self-confidence and use the target language.

In the language classroom, third graders are excited and they always expect learn something new. However, they feel uncomfortable because they feel they cannot use English at all, it is hard for them to complete the activities, and they think it is a difficult task to do by themselves; when they have to use the target language they feel insecure, and certainly that affects their performance.

These circumstances reveal needs for English learning, not only from the teacher's role, but also from the students' perception. In that way it is important to know the perspective of participants, their interests, goals, intentions, wishes, etc. It is essential to know what really happen in the school environment, through point of view of those involved, to get a wider vision of the situation. To know these aspects will allow the teacher-researcher to include the voices of the students, their perceptions and point of view about their English learning process.

To get a broader perspective which include my personal experience as a teacher and students' experience as learners, it is fundamental to hear what participants have to say, what they have and want to express, and narrative inquiry allows to do that, because it involves stories; it is based on personal and others' experiences. According Connelly & Clandinin (1990), narrative is the study of the ways in which human beings experience the world, so narrative research is a process of collection of information through the stories, it is the way to do the research by using the story as a means to support those experiences.

Through narrative we can describe and contextualize, construct, analyze, check constantly and tell stories, as a way to show my reality in a contextualized action; narrative inquiry focus on action, looking for instruments and new facts, to a better comprehension of the problem. When I do an observation, field notes or students' interview, I can get their opinion, their view, but most important I can get the story.

Narrative let me reconstruct, I can describe a historical development of a series of events, and it is a method of interpretation based on participants' testimony. This research gives a point of view into the situation, answering the questions and identifying the factors influencing the students' performance, to provide some clues that let to propose some strategies to improve the research problem.

Section 2. RESEARCH STATEMENT

I have been English teacher for eight years, mostly I have been taught in secondary, but always I have felt a special connection with kids, because they have not lost their capacity of wonder, they see a teacher as a guide, as a model to follow and sometimes as a mother.

When I arrived at this school, one and a half year ago, I was a little nervous because I had to face many situations new for me, but at the same time I was excited because it was a new way to do the things I used to do.

My English classroom is constituted by the five groups at Célimo Rueda School. I decided to involve my students of third grade as the participants of this study because this group has some particularities that make teaching a challenge, such as age range (from 8 to 11 years old), familiar contexts and support, and some of them have special educational needs. Although it is true that not everyone learn in the same way, I want to find a way to hook them all in the class, and make the learning and enjoyment take the first place.

As an English teacher in the region of Cali and the institution aforementioned, I have noticed how my students struggle and face difficulties related to develop activities which involving speaking or writing, because they want to participate but they do not how to do it correctly. Also I have noticed how the amount of participants may be affect to do certain kinds of activities, because they need more time to be developed. For example, when I try to do speaking exercises, the students pay attention at the beginning, but they lose concentration and feel bored if they have to wait 35 participations.

Some difficulties were observed during the English lessons, when they were asked to answer a question; students' vocabulary was not enough to express their opinions, most of

them answered in Spanish and said “teacher, I do not know English, May I speak Spanish?”, while others did not even try. English lessons are always full of pictures, sometimes flashcards and sometimes drawings on the board; because I want they make a connection between the picture and their meaning without using Spanish.

As a teacher I feel some concerns: the most crucial one is related to my students’ learning process; what they do in the classroom and differences among them. Something that really worries me is their passive attitude and lack of participation.

Additionally, as a teacher I identified the necessity of listening to their interests, their feelings and perceptions because I needed to contrast what I was living with their own voices and perceptions. I asked my students what would they like to learn in English, most of them feel identified with music and rhythm and they would like more English songs, others would like to talk each other and a few of them would like to read stories.

I talked to them about their difficulties to learn English and most of them agreed on how hard is speaking for them. They expressed this because they do not know the words, they feel confused when they have to express themselves; the rest of the class think reading is the most difficult ability especially because they used to pronounce it with the same sounds in Spanish

The teacher’s role is essential, it has to be motivating and provide confidence to them, to understand that learning a foreign language is a process, and they have all they need to do it.

As a teacher I decided to do a research project that could involve both their voices as English learners and also my pedagogical concerns, feelings and actions in the language classroom. It is important to me tell my experience, let other teachers that may be are

facing similar situations into the classroom, can hear my story, how I put into practice some strategies in the language lessons to encourage my students to be active participants; in this context I have established as a main question to direct my research: how does the English teacher's narrative illustrate pedagogical reflections and the teaching practice in the language classroom of third graders at Célamo Rueda School in the region of Cali? And my objective research is to illustrate through the teacher's narrative pedagogical reflections and English teaching practices in the language classroom of third graders at Célamo Rueda School in the region of Cali.

Section 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Teaching implies interact with others, this interaction involve feelings, emotions, moods, it means, teacher as a person is linked to his educational function. Hence, teaching is not just about topics, it is about positive feelings into the classroom, which are conditioned for teachers' practical or personal knowledges, as a result of the personal interaction within the context over time.

Bruner (1997) set that teachers give sense to our life through a narrative thinking, we built stories from the events which are involved, and according to the meanings we established, we create beliefs and values, which will conditioned the kind of teacher who we will be. Whereas, students talk about what they think is teaching, what they think is and have to be taught, what they think have to be a teacher, and the things they have to learn and the teacher have to teach. Teachers have a lot of stories to tell about what happen in our classrooms, usually we used to tell them to our colleagues as an informal conversation, just to share our experience, through narrative we can continuum telling stories but in addition, we can interpret, give them sense; it is not just talk about our point of view, it is about understand the world in different ways, and communicate new ideas, giving valuable information; maybe much more valuable than information get from a traditional research.

Lately, tell stories have become popular, specifically in educational context, due to research proposals can be developed into the classroom, through the point of view of people who are involved. Narrative approach gives us the opportunity to collect and analyze data, and at the same time we can construct knowledge in the research. Narrative inquiry allows the meaning and comprehension of the actions and facts that have been

implemented. One of its objectives is tell a story with words, reflecting and explaining what is happening, either individual, collectively or socially.

Connelly & Clandinin (1995) said that narrative studies are “the study of how humans being experience their world”, it means, stories’ construction and reconstruction, even if these are personals or socials; because in this kind of research the people who is into the situation, is the same people who tells the story, and the stories represent teachers and students’ voices. These authors’ points out that “narrative inquiry is both research phenomena and research method”, adducing that story is related to the phenomena and narrative is related to inquiry. Tell my story as a teacher makes me goes beyond what I do in my professional life, answering why, what an how, it means, doing the analysis, the critic and the justification (Soares 2002).

Narratives of language teaching and learning experiences is not a simple task to do, actually it is about tell stories, but taking into account the identity to the narrator; “narrative analysis studies in which the researcher work with participant to construct stories to emerge in the course of the research” (Barkhuizen, 2011), studies language memoirs for example, let the research make relations between cognitive and affective dimensions, therefore the researcher can use aspects of his private life to understand the situation, or help to the reader to understand, contextualizing and giving sense to the knowledge produced along the research work. It is the same with biographical and autobiographical case studies, where the story is told in first or third person, but it is a story full of complexity because the human being who is been describing is a dynamic person, who is always moving, changing, is a human made of life experiences, fantasies and projects. Also this kind of narratives can include past experiences, and some of them can be recovered, deciphered and interpreted in a different way from the previously seen when it was happening. Although, those are

narratives with a linear vision of the story, on the contrary multiple narratives studies is about many narrators within a story, there are different characters, and each one take turns to tell the story, giving a personal version of the events. Consequently, the facts are narrated using their own voices, offering different points of view of the same event. Each character contributes from his perspective, and according what he knows, how they speak, even his tone of voice, and his intention.

All of these approaches from narratives of language teaching and learning experiences, are based on conviction and truth from the person who speak, but multiple narratives in addition takes the reader to build his own vision of the story, his own opinion based on the different ways to see the facts. This kind of methodology gives the possibility to know the educational process, and the teacher's reflection about his life, involving all your personal and professional experiences, to modify the situations which he considered, because the stories tell about him, tell about different contexts teacher faced, different environments in which he become a person and become a teacher. Narrative inquiry increase the knowledge about what really happen in school world, letting teachers make sense about their job, and also they can express their feelings, purposes and desires; all of this around how they act in an educational context, since experience is the starting point and the meaning about it. The interpretative perspective is intrinsically, and what you see is not the only important, is also what you say about it, the way you interpret and perceive what you see; all of this reflections will have repercussions in teacher's educative work. Because of narrative research involves not only cultural influences but also historical and social, we can gets a student point of view from his learning experience, which includes his own ideas and perceptions, enriching much more the story. As Polkinghorne (1995) said "narrative is the only suitable linguistic way to show the human existence as a

contextualized action”; narrative is closely related to qualitative research, due to the different meanings, significances, motivations, intentions and perceptions take part in it. According to Connelly & Clandinin narrative can be taken in three ways: the phenomenon which is investigated, the method of investigation and the use of the narrative.

So, the research process includes four components:

- Narrator (who tells the story)
- Researcher or interpreter (who does the report)
- The texts (information about the story and the report)
- The reader (who receive the texts)

This kind of narration is interdisciplinary, because includes different elements from different social and human sciences, such as linguistic, social anthropology, ethnography, oral history, narrative, etc. Narrative makes teacher reflect on his own practice and at the same time let him enrich it.

On the whole narrative inquiry is not limited to collect and data analysis strategy, it represents a specific approach of inquiry to build knowledge in education. Narrative makes a story from experience, the teacher reconstruct his past experience, make comparisons between past and now, and identify improvement opportunities.

The story which is told integrate all the teachers’ life experiences, mixing personal, private and professional facts; another characteristic of narrative is the context, the narrative texts are always within a social context, from where and to where the story is directed; due to education is about people, we cannot separate the context and the participants, humans has passion, intentionality, feelings and emotions, humans are nor automatons, educational context involve people able to feel and reflect about it.

Section 4. RESEARCH DESIGN

Narrative inquiry is a methodology approach based on experience, it fits in educational research because its objective is to find a vision of humans life's, it is looking for collect data from the subjects, to narrate and present some people's life as an individual or collectively case of study, into a social phenomenon. Narratives let the participants take an active role in the research process, they can speak, their voices can be heard, and theirs opinions, perspectives and reflections can be told by a story as an interpretation and meaning of the actor's experiences.

In the B.A.in English a foreign language program that I study narrative inquiry is related to the subproject Voices of the LLEI: life stories and experiences of pre-service teachers. In this way, my research has the purpose of contribute to pedagogical reflections and English teaching practices sharing my experiences in the classroom, starting form students' learning experiences and my personal and professional experience, interpreting what was happening and what is happening now in the classroom and the meaning for this events to my students and to me as a teacher.

The participants of my research are the third grade students at Célimo Rueda School in Cali; this is a heterogeneous group, there are thirty-five students with different personalities, different range of ages, different learning rhythms, cognitive skills, interests, goals, familiar contexts, some of them has especial educational needs, and a series of characteristics that make this group especial, not in a negative way, this group is an opportunity to do a better job, they are not an usual class, so they do not need usual lessons, they need something to give them the chance to improve overcome all theirs particular situations.

These kids have not chances to access to alternative learning scenarios to develop their skills, they just have the time at school, this is their only chance to learn and to get access to the knowledge, through interaction between them as a students and interaction with me as their teacher. So, it is very important to me be their teacher, because I know some of them feel I am one of the few persons around them they can count, a person who pay attention to them, someone who can give some affection, and as a teacher a person who can offer them others ways to think and act.

When I teach English the students know I was introduce them to another way to express, to communicate with others, they are conscious another language increases the opportunities to progress, so they show interest to learn. They need a guide and I feel and know this is me, in this moment I am there, I am the person who is in charge, and my responsibility moral and professional is to offer them a different reality to their homes, a different perspective about what kind of place school is.

To me is important to improve as a teacher, for that reason I decided to use narratives to document my research through a pedagogical reflection and teaching practices that allow me gather past and present to transform gradually what I do and make plans about the future strategies or techniques to put into practice in the language classroom.

In order to do this I have to collect data, I need relevant information that let me develop the research, according to the situations I found, I need to know how direct the investigation, and for that there are a series of instruments that I can apply according to my needs and interests.

The instruments used in narrative inquiry, facilitate the interpretation of the aspects in the past, and how this aspects take part in the present to influence and improve them. All of this pretends analyze the situation through stories from the participants; also we cannot forget that humans are storyteller by nature, so narrative belongs to humans.

In that way is relevant to mention the variety of instruments that can be used; Connelly & Clandinin (1995) proposed the following: field notes, interviews transcripts, observations, letters, lesson plans, photography, projects, stories, school reports, etc. and taking into account the great amount of them, there is the possibility to used them in a particular or collectively way.

The data collected will be from three instruments:

- Oral narratives, which let me know what students have to say about their learning experience. As Barkuizen (2002) set, in narrative inquiry interviews are mainly used to elicit oral accounts of language learning and teaching experiences, I will apply a semi-structured interview based on the issues that concern the research proposal, It will be conducted by a social encounter between the researcher (me) and the interviewee (students), in order to get meaningful information it will be recorded, this way let me capture valuable information such as the tone of voice of the speaker, the mood of the speaker, emphases placed, etc.
- Written narratives, which let me describe my own story as a teacher with the group of students. Through narratives approaches a detailed description of the phenomena can be done, in addition the process can be explained at the same time it is happening, linking what happen in the past with what is happening at the present moment (Rodríguez 1999). I will carry on a journal, where I can register the natural occurrence of the actions exactly

how they are happening; I will write not only what I remember but also my reflections, expressing my feelings and thoughts produced from the observation.

- Multimodal narrative, which let me, included visual components to complement and enrich the written narratives texts (Barkuizen 2014). I will use some digital and non-digital material to support the activities in the classroom. I will include some photographs videos, images, texts and sounds as part of my lesson plan activities.

Instrument	Objective / Information
Teacher's journal and teacher's biography	Through this instrument I registered all my experiences in class during nine sections, writing what was happening and making my own reflections about it, describing students' attitude or comments about the activities done in each section. A critical point of view about my role and my students' role, let me create or include strategies concerning the educational process, taking into account the context where the observation was taking place.
Student's artifacts	This included all the worksheets and notes the students done during the sections; such as: cards, graphics, comics, handcrafts, mini book story, etc., these workshops showed students' perception of the lessons and the activities.
Semi-structured Interviews Video recording	Students were interviewed about what they thought and what they felt about the experience in the English lessons, they answer questions related to what kind of activities they enjoyed more and why; also some of the activities were recorded in order to get the students' performance while they were doing the task required.

In order to do understand and to extend the knowledge of what is really happening in the school world using the subjects' point of view, I set as a general objective: To illustrate through the teacher's narrative pedagogical reflections and English teaching practices in the language classroom of third graders at Célamo Rueda School in the region of Cali. And specific objective: To gather information about events occurring in the school context, taking into account the different aspects and points of view from the perspective of the subjects.

Section 5. DATA ANALYSIS

This research project describes the performance and the impact of applying some activities and strategies in an educational context, the goal of this research is to listen, to observe, to document and tell the experiences through the context of the study and implementation; narrative inquiry gives the possibility to me and the participants, to living our stories while at the same time reflecting on it, and explaining what is happening. As a narrative researcher I had different perspectives because multiple stories and feelings were happening at one time; it let me describe the experiences and the impact of these into the classroom, making sense of the experiences through participants' voices telling the story. Also, collecting and analyzing the stories of the participants within their natural setting provides me the context from which narrative data come out.

Making emphasis on understanding the phenomena with an inside perspective is related to a qualitative research method for treatment information; including participatory and interactive inquiry process needs an analysis method which help researcher to get a deeper appreciation for the situation, in that way thematic analysis let to identify, organize, analyze in detail and set patterns or themes from the information collected, all of this emerge from a careful reading which is seeking and appropriate interpretation and comprehension of the phenomena (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis let to gain knowledge from data gathered, let to determine patterns using the findings, depending on the context of the research study, it gives the possibility of establish shared themes as well as individual differences comparing the narratives, through the narrative inquiry the process is described

in their natural environment, the participants are taken within a social context; the research includes action in the reality.

As the researcher I must be an active listener to get a variety of data and documents, I collected data from: reflective journal, students' interview, photographs, videos and students' artifacts with the purpose of get a general view of the participants and their performance in the lessons and throughout the course of the study.

The following data collections were: 1) Students' interview: my goal as an interviewer was to get students' perception within a naturally conversation, I used every day and common language, I directed focus to their experiences and feelings related to the classroom practices, this instrument elicits oral narrative because this kind of conversation has a purpose and it is a way of interaction between persons involving asking and answering questions into a research. I did the interviews in different moments and different places, inside and outside of the classroom. In this study I used conversational interview as a way to elicit responses I could analyze but also to make the participants comfortable while were answering it. I did four interviews, one of them had three questions, to get a general idea and perception about all of the activities done during the research and the rest of the interviews had only one question, focus on a specific activity and its impact. 2) Reflective journal: this were kept in both a handwritten journal and a digital file, which helped me to my own construction in the analysis process, I registered on it the lesson plans, teacher and students ideas, concepts, reactions, thoughts, expressions, any kind of clue which was relevant to my research. The journal had three parts, in the first one I registered the lesson, its objectives, resources, language pattern and vocabulary, opening, closing and development; the second one had the description about what happened during the class, and

the last part had my reflections, my own conclusions after the activities. This instrument elicits written narrative, as a means for document analysis of teaching practices, including phrases or expressions of naturally occurring interactions between the participants.

3) Student's artifacts: I collected students' works, worksheets and any class material where they intervened as a tool to document the activities carried out; in every lesson students had to do a task where they had to put into practice something learned in the class, some of those task involving work group, others were done individually, someone included writing, drawings, handcrafts or speaking. This instrument elicits written and multimodal narrative, it let students talk in different ways and different moments, while some of them express better in a written way others prefer drawings to communicate, so through these elements I could do a cooperative work in which students were communicating me something but no necessarily in a direct way. 4) Videos and Photographs: these instruments also documented the context and the activities carried out, as a means of contextualizing my research as much as possible, also those are visual aids for me and give me multiple perspectives and interpretations. One of the ideas of these instruments was to combine oral and visual aspects, in that way all the activities have done include a video or photo.

Narrative analysis brings many experiences together, in order to get meaningful information from the collected data I began organizing the data instruments and selecting those who were more relevant, after a deeply reading and re-reading I highlighted some key words and concepts to set themes and subthemes, and finally I named the themes by a brief description that helps to communicate its meaning:

Written narrative: Teacher’s Journal	Visual narrative: Students’ stories of the English classroom	Multimodal narrative: Videos of the English classroom Students’ narrative: Describing the stories	THEMES
<p>“I felt good because it was not a usual English class, it was so different, and I think the students felt the same as me, they were surprised. Students attitude showed me they feel comfortable in English lessons, they noticed the class changed and they liked it, they know English is a totally different language, but it is easy and fun, they can do many things in English, even if they do not know how to speak or read it.”⁷</p>	<p>English lessons used to have a routine, during and after the investigation the lessons changed, because every time the kids did a different activity, not only related to the new topic also related to the previous. Go to appendix A photographs.</p>	<p>“Eh...because I don’t know English but I like it, because it is very funny and I can learn new things and wonderful things.” <i>Sofia</i></p> <p>“...estamos bailando salsa y no estamos haciendo las mismas canciones de siempre” <i>Lesly</i></p>	<p>Theme 1: Rebuilding English teaching and learning through narrative research</p> <p>Re-thinking and changing the pedagogical practice: <i>Students’ interests re-signify the teaching of English and redirect my role as a teacher.</i></p>
<p>“I review the vocabulary learnt about special fest on September in Cali, asking students match flashcards with the names. After that I placed on the floor some footprints and explained that day we were going to learn to dance salsa...”</p>	<p>The kids identified an important festival in the city and build meaningful associations using foreign language vocabulary learning while dancing salsa. Go to appendix B photographs.</p>	<p>“I liked Salsa Festival because I learnt to dance salsa and because we could share and do things with our classmates and have fun together” <i>Laura</i></p> <p>“I liked Salsa Festival activity because I learnt to dance I did not know” <i>Estevan</i></p>	<p>Theme 2: Integrating local culture and regional background in the English classroom</p> <p>English teaching and learning from authentic cultural experiences: <i>Students found connection between their cultural and regional traditions with the learning experience in the English classroom.</i></p>
<p>“The workgroup was so better this time; they made a real team work... The students love guessing and match games, they like competition and this kind of activities let them to do that and be winners. To me as a teacher is great to get all my students involved, enthusiastic and happy, they are playing but learning at the same time”</p>	<p>Work in groups gave the kids the opportunity to put into practice values while they were learning; they assumed different roles within the activities sharing their feelings and emotions. Go to appendix C photographs.</p>	<p>“I liked this activity because we could work in groups, about how to say broom in English, how to say cat...” <i>Lesly</i></p> <p>“I liked it because we learnt everything in English, we shared with our classmates and we could have fun” <i>Laura</i></p>	<p>Theme 3: Understanding the values and behaviors as a way of life between members of a group</p> <p>Encouraging students to develop confidence, leadership, friendship and teamwork: <i>Students created group interactions, promoting leadership skills and teamwork.</i></p>

Written narrative: Teacher’s Journal	Visual narrative: Students’ stories of the English classroom	Multimodal narrative: Videos of the English classroom Students’ narrative: Describing the stories	THEMES
<p>“The students used their creativity to do the mask, also they had family help; students feel really happy when they can say any word or phrase in English, they feel they know a lot, and this is so good, because the objective of all those planned activities was increase students vocabulary and confidence during the English lessons”</p>	<p>Students were learning to communicate, they listened to others, talked with others and learned from their peers; this interaction experience foster their communicative competence.</p> <p>Go to appendix D photographs.</p>	<p>“I liked it because I could share with my classmates and I did and activity, because I said words in English and I liked because my friends had fun with those masks” <i>Laura</i></p> <p>“I liked it because I had a lot of fun doing the mask and because it was cool to show the art you can do” <i>Jhon</i></p> <p>Go to appendix videos.</p>	<p>Theme 4: Bringing language experiences to use English vocabulary to interact each other</p> <p>Motivating students to communicate orally and gain confidence to use the target language: <i>Students used words and phrases to speak with others, increasing the vocabulary and activating the previous knowledge.</i></p>

5.1. Theme 1: Rebuilding English teaching and learning through narrative research

As a teacher I want my students learn but also have fun during the lesson I always try to include some games or songs, but unfortunately sometimes we have not enough time or just we fall into the mistake to do same activities, so students get bored because they know what will happen or the results are not what we are expect; it is time to stop and think, what kind of activities or strategies can motivated the students but at the same time follow the syllabus in a contextualizing way.

My students of third grade loved movement, loved action so I knew I had to plan new lessons where they have to take an active role, as I set on my journal *“I as a teacher feel better after all of this process, sometimes you feel tired or disappointed because you think you cannot do any more, or cannot do anything different, but that is not true, you just need look at your children and plan activities or lessons they can enjoy but at the same time reach one general objective”* and so I did, I created from them another experiences into the classroom.

In every lesson they were surprising me, *“this lesson plan was so intimidating, I had a lot of expectations, not just from the students, also from me, I did not know how they were going to react, I did not know if they were going to answer as I expected...But it was so good, they showed confidence, they wanted to participate...”* kids teach us every day, they act like sponges if you give them more they receive more, and then ask you more too.

Although students liked English classes and enjoy when we sung, they noticed something different, they noticed new resources in the class, new instructions and new vocabulary, I was amazed when a girl told: *“we are not doing the same songs...”* another students said: *“...we are getting used to do different things...”*, this comments definitely opened my eyes.

5.2. Theme 2: Integrating local culture and regional background in the English classroom

In order to renovate and stimulate students I connected the topic with the context, we were talking about months of the year, in Cali (our city) a Salsa festival takes place on this month, and it is an important event for the city “capital of salsa music”, even most of the students had been enrolled in salsa schools. I looked information and videos about the festival and show them how important it is, and how important is to know about culture especially about the place where you live.

I planned three lessons focus on the festival, each one had different activities for students, and some took place into the classroom, others were done outside, I describe some moments in my journal *“I showed a salsa championship video before introduce the new vocabulary, and another video after identify the new words. All the words were related to the video and the topic. Most of the students felt identified with dance, because they were in a salsa school, they were enthusiastic and they wanted to show their abilities” ...” During the first video the kids applauded and wanted to imitate what they had seen” “When I played the music kids immediately started moving, when I asked them follow me they were shy, but later all of them wanted to participate and show others they can do it”.*

The Salsa World Festival opened the new English lessons, it was something totally different that gave students another perspectives and ways to learn English, when I asked them about what they think about it, I got answers like: *“Music caught my attention...”*, *“I liked dance activity by the steps kids were doing in the video and the steps I learnt”.*

5.3. Theme 3: Understanding the values and behaviors as a way of life between members of a group

Some of the activities were planned to set groups, not only because teamwork help students improve their communicative competence and their performance in interpersonal relationships, but also because we learnt vocabulary about values and friendship, and it was a good way to put it into practice. The fact that I was the researcher and the participant let me reflect and modify or reinforce where necessary, the first task in group let me see that the next time I had to reinforce values and team work: *“I need to reinforce workgroup, sometimes the students act like a selfish person who do not respect or accept the others’ opinion. At the end of the lesson I talked to them, about values, friendship, fellowship and the differences between each other”*, I did some changes in the groups structure and the next time the results were different: *“The workgroup was so better this time; they made a real team work, my intervention to solve group problems was not necessary”*.

As a strategy of team work I established short vocabulary contests, I know kids love competition and they had the opportunity to enjoy and explore the target language getting their classmates support, after those activities their answers to what did you like most about the activity were: *“I liked this activity because I could guess the words, I could think and it was so competitive”*, *“I liked it because we learnt everything in English, we shared with our classmates and we could have fun”*, *“English classes liked me because I learn new things about English and I share with my classmates”*.

5.4. Theme 4: Bringing language experiences to use English vocabulary to interact each other

Speaking plays an essential role in communication, when we use a communicative situation in the classrooms learners learn to use the target language, learners learn to speak better in communication contexts; students participate in work group and can play roles to speak with others, so they can help each other and work together to reach the goal. Providing interaction speaking situations into the classroom, can be beneficial and enriching, because that kind of activities bring rehearsal opportunities, provide feedback and activate the previous knowledge; leading to the development of the skills that let students use words and phrases fluently without very much conscious thought.

In this activity students had to make a mask to represent some nature elements, one of the purposes of that personification was to bring confidence to students to talk in front of others, playing to be another character and acting in groups: *“the students did their oral presentation, most of them were afraid to speak English in front of their classmates, so I made groups to give them some confidence to talk. They were excited to show their mask”* this activity also involved family help: *“The students used their creativity to do the mask, also they had family help; students feel really happy when they can say any word or phrase in English, they feel they know a lot, and this is so good, because the objective of all those planned activities was increase students vocabulary and confidence during the English lessons”*. I felt happy with their work, and the kids were happy to: *“I liked this activity because I shared with my friends and I did a work”* , *“I liked this activity because I had fun with it, I did a butterfly mask and finally I learnt to say butterfly in English”*.

Section 6. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

I began this project seeking to find my own way to transform my pedagogical practice as an English teacher, I found myself trying to change classroom experiences by looking for meaningful situations to my students, because I am a teacher who believe we can do much more, we can offer them a place where they can learn but also a place where they can dream and enjoy. This narrative research gave me the opportunity to tell my story with my own words, the chance to live within my story, to be a researcher and participant; narrative inquiry let me to feel the process, and make my students be starring of the story. The experience was wonderful from the beginning to the end. I grew up with the research, while it was being developed I was more motivated and the lessons were improving like my students' performance and attitude. One of the most grateful things is the fact that narrative approach let to restate, to change, to transform, because you are a witness of what is happening and your own reflection allowed to analyze and make decisions during the research process.

Narrative inquiry is based on telling stories, which gives you the confidence to use your own expressions, feelings and thinking, but at the same time, it demands more detail, more precision to describe, and the fact that it is an active research process, you need to be fast and skillful to plan according students' reaction.

This awareness guided to me into a relationship with the students to begin challenging my pedagogical practice into the classroom, besides school has not many tools and resources, and the class schedule is too limited, this project let me showed the students can live a different experience, and the most important thing, it let me showed they can learn a new language through activities focused on their interests and cultural environment.

Giving meaningful experiences into the classroom not just transform the way to learn, also transform the way teacher think, plan and create the lessons to give students better experiences using the foreign language.

This narrative experience has been magical to me, because I can share my experience to others, I can tell how I used the tools, the concept, the knowledge and create new experiences into my classroom, I learned to be a good observer of my students, I learned to be reflective about my pedagogical practice, I learned that everything I do has to be focus on the students not just to reach the curriculum syllabus, it is about teaching and learning with sense, establishing an objective and checking all the time what is happening and how it is working, and if it is necessary make changes according to the goals.

The students as research participants can describe their experiences and feelings, to hear one of your students telling “I like the activities we do in class, I learned new words, I have fun, I like English...” is amazing, it shows you are doing the right things, you are in the right way. The research process has been a positive experience; students could face situations that fostered a communicative approach and also contributes to understand how we can involve students without a fear to make mistakes, the research project included collaborative work providing students situations to work as a team.

When students were aware on their responsibility in the learning process they take more independency and make an effort to get better results, also giving students pre-teaching, explicit explanation and correction mistakes, improves their performance.

When teachers considered an active students’ role important in the learning process in a foreign language, and if they know students’ weaknesses and design activities to help improve their difficulties, teacher can give support and proposes extra activities to help less confident students and also that a communicative interaction must be focused on students’ interest, and it first

proposal is to motivate and show students they can do it; also it could offer students the possibility to participating and simulating real context and connecting the class with their context.

Students used the strategies and activities proposed, they felt motivate to perform, and even they saw mistakes as a part of their learning, they knew they were learning and it was permitted to make mistakes, also they knew the teacher supported and guided them, and also the fact that students took more participation changed their perception of English. Students took more responsibility in the learning process because they know they need more practice and interaction with others, materials and topics were motivating elements during the research implementation.

This narrative inquiry is based on the subproject Voices of the LLEI: Life histories and experiences, which implies to communicate who we are, what we do, how we feel, this let us to talk about our feelings and thoughts from a perspective of relator and helping to the comprehension of the world, of our context. Narrate stories is create and modify with the time, it is to adapt to a new situations, it is to change the sense; it is also to reproduce experiences in a relevant way, it is talk to what we lived, talk to what happened it is talk about culture, people and environment.

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ANNEXES

APPENDIX A

I want to try and match the words and pictures



I love to learn English because it is very funny.



We are playing with the new words.

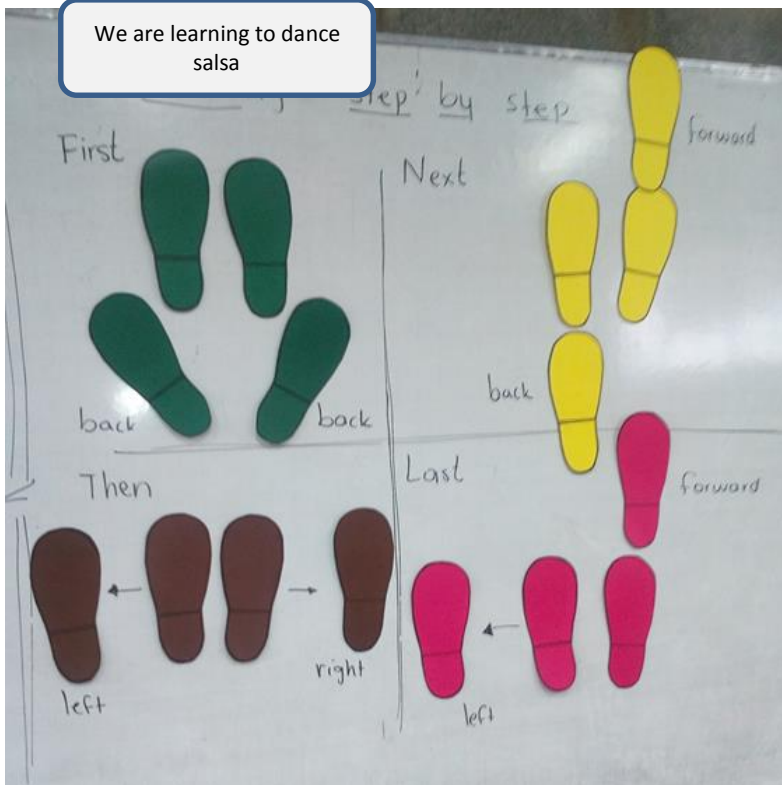


We are watching Salsa World Festival videos.



APPENDIX B

We are learning to dance salsa



Dancing Salsa in the schoolyard



APPENDIX C

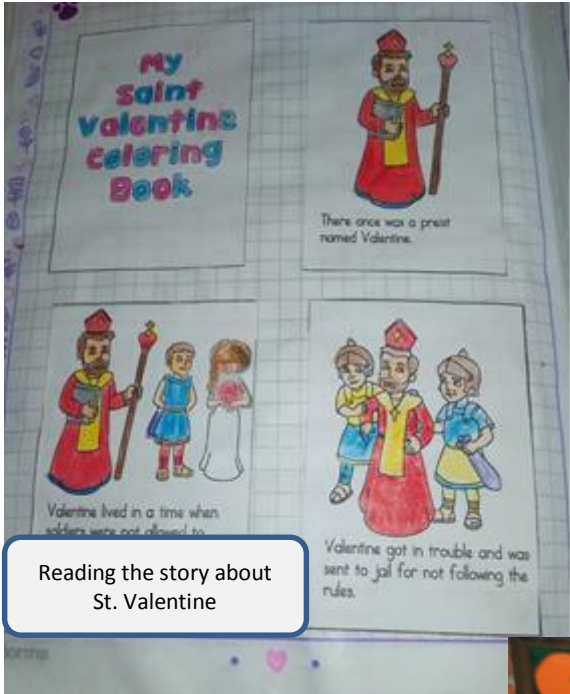
We're making cards to our friends



Working in group with values



We love playing vocabulary games



Reading the story about St. Valentine



Using the new words

APPENDIX D

My friends and I had fun
with those masks



It was cool to show the art
you can do.

VIDEOS

APPENDIX E

Interview 1.

1. What are you doing in English class with the teacher and classmates?
2. What has caught your attention?
3. What was your favorite activity? Why?

Video 1. Answers:

1. With my teacher...she teaches me and I help my classmates.
2. Salsa Festival
3. Salsa Festival because it is about dance, and I like dance.

Video 2. Answers:

1. Sometimes she teaches us to dance, we did things in English, the teacher teaches us to speak in English, for that reason I like English classes.
2. English classes.
3. English classes liked me because I learn new things about English and I share with my classmates.

Video 3. Answers:

1. With my classmates I do funny things like paint, I paint beautiful drawings, with the teacher I talk to her, for example, with my friends I can do the mask and drawings.
2. Music caught my attention and English things and drawings.
3. Eh....because I don't know English but I like it, because it is very funny and I can learn new things and wonderful things.

Video 4. Answers:

1. Well.... We did activities in the school yard, also the teacher asks us to color and we do it in group, she asks us a bulletin board and we do it in groups and the teacher helps us.
2. It is better that I learn to speak English and I love to learn English because it is very funny.
3. What I liked most is that... we have been learning more things and because I like a lot to learn English.

APPENDIX F

Interview 2.

1. What did you like most about dance activity?

Answers:

- I liked dance activity by the steps kids were doing in the video and the steps I learnt.
- I liked dance activity because we danced, we learnt to dance and I liked the steps because these taught me dance more salsa.
- I liked Salsa Festival because I learnt to dance salsa and because we could share and do things with our classmates and have fun together.
- I liked Salsa Festival activity because I learnt to dance I did not know.

APPENDIX G

Interview 3.

1. What did you like most about bulletin board activity?

Answers:

- I liked this activity because I could guess the words, I could think and it was so competitive.
- I liked it because we learnt everything in English, we shared with our classmates and we could have fun.
- I liked it because I could learn words in English.
- I liked this activity because we could work in groups, about how to say broom in English, how to say cat...

APPENDIX H

Interview 4.

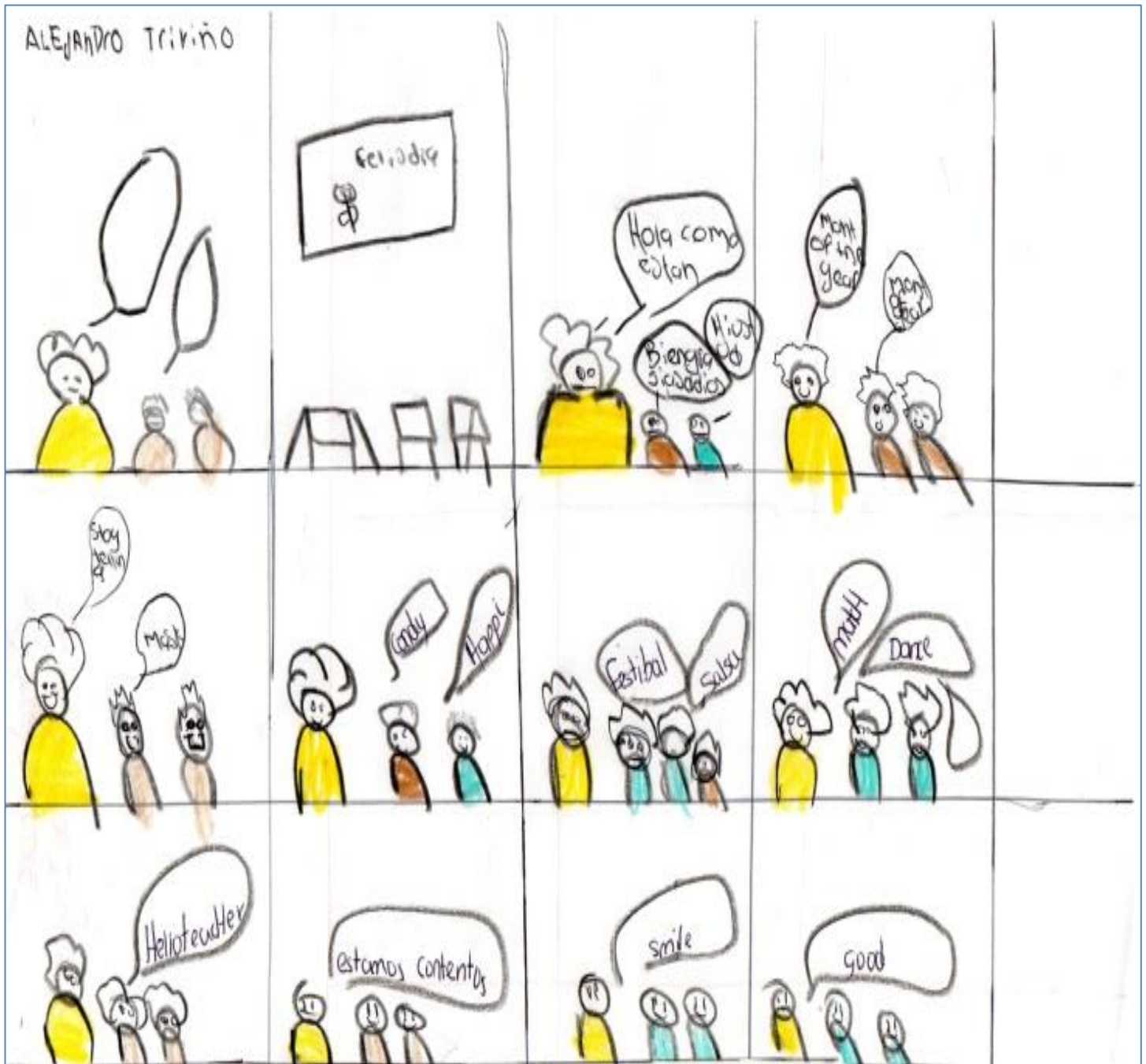
1. What did you like most about mask activity?

Answers:

- I liked this activity because I shared with my friends and I did a work.
- I liked it because I could share with my classmates and I did an activity, because I said words in English and I liked because my friends had fun with those masks.
- I liked it because I had a lot of fun doing the mask and because it was cool to show the art you can do.
- I liked this activity because I could use it, I did a butterfly mask and finally I learnt to say butterfly.

APPENDIX I

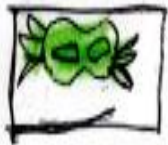
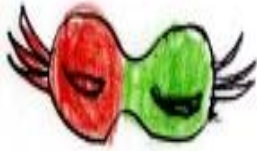
Students' cartoons and drawings about English classes.



La clase de Inglés me gusta

porque tiene música en Inglés

tiene libros



me gusta todo de Inglés como



Las

Musica



también aprendemos Inglés me gusta





a mi me gusta porque vemos *
 cosas * de Ingles y tambien *
 canciones de Ingles y *
 actividades con grupos * y *
 mas * cosas bonitas y poner
 las Fichas en el tablero y
 escribir y cantar y bailar
 muchas mas cosas *
 bonitas con los niños y
 niñas. ♥ * * *



me gusta tambien divertieme
 con todos en la clases de
 * Ingles y poner les * las
 fichas de los chef *

* valeya * gomez
 * Chara * ♥



Niños le
en canto baila
Si profesora
vamos a la
cancha
Profesora
Que divertido.

Que divertido
Profesora es
tuy feliz
bailando merele-
gan las pies
y la cabeza



De las clases de
Inglés.

al fin
jugamos
al salon
es taba
cansadas
y
cansadas.



Profesora
vamos otraves
abailar llamere
lage un poquito.



Profe hoy es
jueves vamos
a bailar
es tamos contentas
y contentas.

Buenas tardes
Las clases
de ingles
son muy
importantes
por lo menos
lo de words



Buenas tardes
Hoy les voyo
a decir que
las clases que nos
enseñaron como
lo de salsa



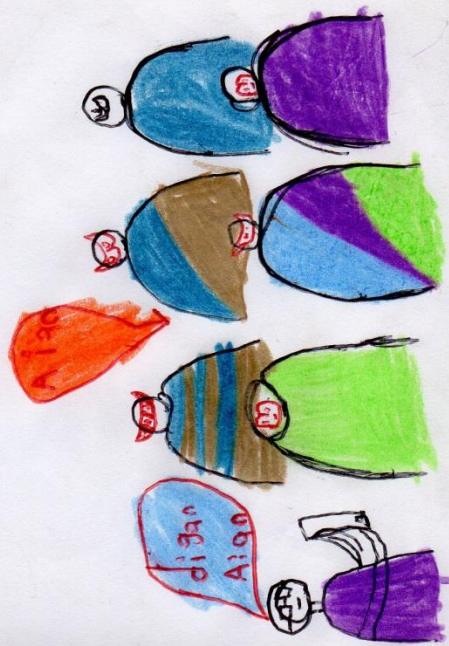
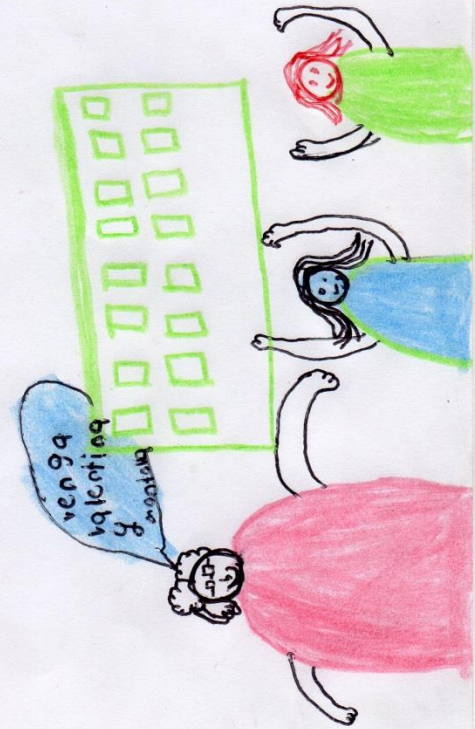
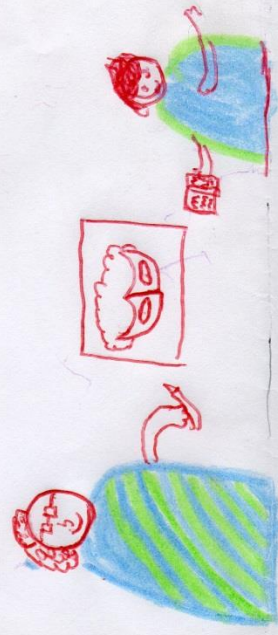
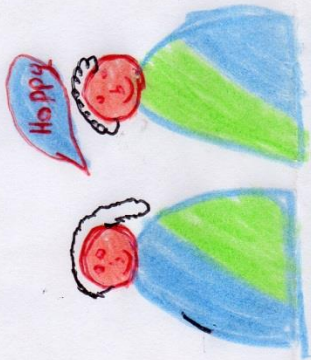
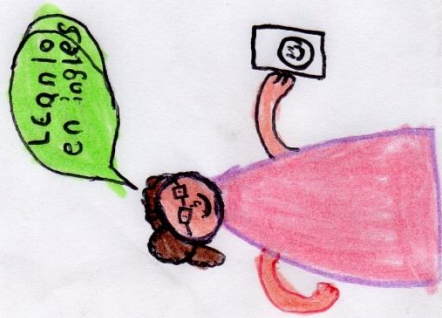
Buenas tardes
Hoy les voyo
a contar que
las clases
de ingles son muy
importantes como
lo de salsa



Buenas tardes
Hoy les voyo
a decir que las
clases que nos
enseñaron hoy
les voy a decir
una de esas
el antifa?

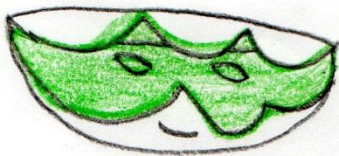


Jeff: 34
Jeff: Alejandro



Story telling

Mask



Months of the year



Dancing step by step



Mental math

October
Halloween

...recurso es b...
...ico y a p...
...plicando sobre...
...UN VIDEO...
...MUSIC...

niños de
aprendemos
las diferentes
músicas

Música de
los meses

Proce que
de música
se sonda en
son tiempos

festival
de 1950

vailaron
muy
bien

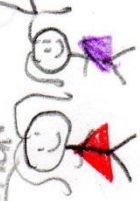
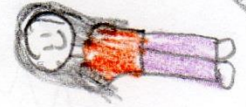
tien que escogea
pareca y hacer un
Paso de saiso

vamos
baillar

Proce
vamos
a bailar

esto
bien

Se ganon
un 2.0





Niños le en canta bailar si profesora
 vemos a la cachá profesora que dixer
 tido bailar en la cancha a un viento
 música profesora

Que divertido profesora es feliz bailar
 merelega los pies y la cabeza profesora