THIRD GRADERS AS COMMUNITY INQUIRERS

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Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas

School of Science and Education

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Abstract

This action research study attempts to portray the literacy development of a group of third graders through two main pillars: Community Based Pedagogies (CBP) and inquiry oriented learning. This work came about in the bilingual international environment of a private school in Bogota and as a response to an educational situation in which the institutional requirements arisen from an international curriculum and the literacy practices conducted in the language classroom seemed to be divorced. The objectives it addressed were, firstly, to portray the development of children as inquirers through community based tasks; secondly, to evidence the manner in which they develop a sense of community throughout their inquiries; and thirdly, to determine the formal aspects of text that might be developed in EFL writing on community issues. Attempting to use CBP and inquiry as a means to educate children as thinkers, inquirers, and good communicators, this research was founded on a qualitative methodology in which the main methods for data gathering were students’ artifacts and field notes. The results show that CBP provide language learners with inquiry talents that allow them and their teachers to co-construct curriculum on the basis of the local knowledge embedded in their communities and to become lifelong learners through their own meaning making. Furthermore, place-oriented inquiries fostered a sense of belonging to the local communities through the acknowledgement and appreciation of the assets immersed in their barrio, city, and school; developing a critical view towards community issues was also initiated among students. An enhancement of students writing with regards to the formal aspects of textual genre was also an outcome of the innovation.

**Key Words:** Community Based Pedagogies, literacy, inquiry
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Chapter 1
Introduction

This study aims to portray the development of third graders as inquirers and accomplished writers on the basis of community-based inquiries. Such an aim includes a vision of literacy instruction beyond the traditional teacher imposed assignments and brings writing to learners’ lives and experiences in relevant and meaningful manners. This undertaking lies on the necessity to address an educational concern about the demands of New York School in terms of bilingualism and an International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum focused on inquiry and the literacy requirements of international education. The bilingual and international nature of the school’s curriculum demands students with highly developed skills as communicators and inquirers. However, the current situation with students’ communicative performance in terms of writing and their attributes as inquirers broadly differ from what the school demands. Therefore, there is an evident necessity to adopt suitable pedagogical practices that lead students to achieve the learning outcomes in terms of literacy development and inquiry that the international bilingual curriculum of New York School requires.

The characterization of the problematic situation through a structured questionnaire administered to students, a semi structured interview administered to teachers, and the analysis of some of the institutional documents revealed the mismatch abovementioned. The needs analysis was generated through the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) documents that lead the pedagogical practices in the school as well as students’ and teachers’ responses to the instruments mentioned that considered the context in which the school is embedded, its curriculum, and the conceptions on language instruction and learning. The research questions and objectives arisen from the needs assessment process are also exposed as well as the reasons that
justifying a shift in writing instruction. In the school, writing is viewed by teachers as a series of skills they have to equip students with in order to help them attain the rules of conventional written language, as a practice imposed on students. In this project, writing is viewed as a socially contextualized practice generated through learners’ inquiries; a means to meet the school’s situational demands and students’ wants and needs as well as a possibility for unveiling students’ potential as curriculum builders.

**Statement of the Problem**

New York School is a private bilingual institution which has recently achieved a certification as a member of the IBO. The institution meets the educational needs of a diverse population of students under the principles of globalization and internationalization. The epistemological, ideological, ethical and aesthetic dimensions of New York School’s curriculum (Beyer & Apple, 1998) lie on bilingualism and international mindedness, as stated in the IBO publications (*Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education*, 2009; *Approaches to teaching and learning across the diploma programme*, 2013). This means that one of the main goals of the school’s education is global citizenship through effective communication under three criteria of assessment in the target language (TL): oral language, written language, and visual language.

The institution then demands accomplished, motivated, and independent writers who are also inquirers and achieve high academic standards, what Hutchinson & Waters (1993) define as a necessity in the so called target needs: “what learners need to function effectively in the target situation” (p. 55). However, the needs analysis carried out from March to May, 2014 and administered to the target group, a class of 18 third graders aged eight to nine, shows a situation widely different from the expected one. When asked to describe writing tasks, students wrote
words such as “boring”, “difficult”, “hard”, “dislike”, “is not interesting”, and “tiring”, among others (students’ structured questionnaire: March, 2014). In terms of students’ wants, it shows that the participants lack confidence toward their writing skills. When asked about their preferences regarding class activities, they showed a marked tendency to oral (46.1%) and listening (34.6%) practices over reading (15.3%) and writing (3.8%) tasks as shown in this excerpt of the questionnaire:

![Structured questionnaire](image)

**Figure 1.** Structured questionnaire. This figure illustrates students’ responses with respect to their preferences in the English class.
Considering the questions directed to the reasons why English is important in their lives, there is a common view of the language seen as a tool for oral interaction and/or understanding heard or written information rather than as a tool for written expression. Demotivation toward writing practices in the classroom is evident in students’ responses since only 7.6% considers writing as the most important skill to be learned in the English class compared to the remaining 92.3% of students who consider the other three skills more relevant.

The findings also evidence weaknesses in written compositions in terms of paragraph organization; 0% of the students demonstrated a high performance; 34.6% of the students demonstrated an average performance; 65.3% of the students demonstrated a low performance. The participants’ responses also account for their prior knowledge in the field of writing. There is evidence of vocabulary knowledge regarding their closer settings: family, home, friends, school, and surroundings. Knowledge on basic sentence structure was also evident on one of the tasks assigned through the questionnaire. A 96.1% of the target group has a wide knowledge on vocabulary in contrast to a 3.8% with a basic knowledge in this field. An 80.7% demonstrates a high performance regarding sentence structure compared to a 19.2% of the students with an average performance. The following extract from the questionnaire is a sample of an average performance in writing tasks:

*Figure 2. Structured questionnaire. This figure illustrates an average performance in writing tasks.*
These results provide key data with reference to the current state of writing in the school. Such a panorama suggests, as noted above, that there is a gap between what students know about writing and what they are expected to achieve in terms of New York School’s institutional demands.

The target group evidences substantial differences concerning their performances in the communicative tasks assigned. Compared to the speaking performance, which is outstanding due to their daily exposure to spoken English, students’ writing performance is poor. As stated by Vygotsky (1986), written and oral expressions are not developed at the same pace since children acquire oral language in a natural manner through live communication with others whereas writing has a set of rules that they do not manage. In line with Vygotsky’s claim, moving from oral to written language is a complex process for our students because they are embedded in a bilingual environment in which oral English surrounds them naturally; something which does not happen with written language. Therefore, the writing process needs to be conducted through instruction and practice, meaningful experiences and learning practices relevant to our learners’ lives.

Having found an inconsistency between the aims of IB and what is actually occurring in the writing classroom in New York School brought the need to search for data in an institutional document different from the IB papers, the English Department Syllabus of New York School; it states the following aims in the field of writing:

- We aim to enable our children:
  - To write clearly, accurately, and confidently for a variety of purposes and audiences, including word processing with ICT.
- To develop a consistent, clear, fluent, and joined handwriting style and to be aware of the importance of the presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
- To understand the conventions of writing including grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- To plan, draft, and edit their writing.
- To feel valued as writers and to appreciate the writing of others.

English Department Syllabus (2014, p. 24)

These goals basically display the three approaches to the teaching of writing which are clearly instructional according to Biglar. et al. (2012) and Li (2013): The Product Approach, The Process Approach, and The Genre Based Approach. In this sense, writing is assumed as an academic practice and not as a social contextualized practice. This issue was confirmed by a fifth grade English teacher during the needs assessment process, she manifested:

The strategy that I use to develop this skill [writing] in students is giving them a topic, so they then, answering some questions posed by the teacher, write the topic sentence […] they write two drafts before the final paper. In the first draft they make a lot of mistakes, they misspell words and make grammar mistakes […] this term students are going to write about an invention. They are going to write three paragraphs. The first one is going to be written in passive voice […] in the third paragraph they are going to use might for probability […]

Teacher’s semi-structured interview (April, 2014)

This evidence shows a conception of writing as an activity which is teacher generated in terms of providing students with topics to write about. It also displays the relevance of text structure and linguistic features in written production and the necessity to follow a process in order to get a final piece of writing. As regards students’ attitudes towards writing, a fourth grade
teacher confirmed what had been found through students’ comments, demotivation towards writing tasks:

The one [skill] that they are lazy about is writing. It’s very difficult for the teacher to engage students on writing. They can write but they are not like conscious about the importance of what we demand from them. They think it [writing] is just a duty, not that it is something they need to develop ideas, or to make an argumentation, or to support something […] they just consider that writing is something like a punishment.

Teacher’s semi-structured interview (April, 2014)

As shown through the needs analysis process, students evidenced low performances in the production of written texts, this finding was compared to the information obtained through direct observation in which the grades students generally get in writing tasks and written production in internal tests are lower than the ones obtained in the other communicative skills. A pattern could be found out through the description two second grade teachers made on the students’ scores in English tasks:

They [students’ scores] are lower in writing because at that age […] they omit the writing rules […] the scores they get [in writing] are lower than in listening or speaking […] I think speaking is easier for them because they are communicating in English all the time during the classes […] When they [students] perform interactive or receptive skills, they get better scores than when they write […] the reason is that they are starting to write in their mother tongue, so it’s not easy for them to write in the second language.

Teachers’ semi-structured interview (April, 2014)
Furthermore, language instruction in the school should be aimed at fostering the IB Learner Profile stated in the IBO document entitled *Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education* (2009):

**IB learners strive to be:**

**Inquirers**
- They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

**Thinkers**
- They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions. (IB Learner Profile, para. 2)

Besides the two attributes of the IB learner profile defined above, the IBO states that our students ought to be knowledgeable, risk-takers, good communicators, reflective and open-minded beings. Such a characterization of our children is not portrayed in the pedagogical practices of the language teachers in New York School since there is still a tendency to see the Target Language (TL) as an object of study that sometimes privileges form over function and in which it is taken for granted that our students are mere receptors of information that have to be filled with the knowledge of the language. Such a situation constraints the chance to empower students as active and informed agents of their own learning process as the IB philosophy proposes and brings demotivation and passiveness in the language classroom.

The aforementioned findings, drawn on the needs assessment process, evidence a huge mismatch between New York School’s institutional demands in terms of bilingualism and international education and the current learning situation in New York School which does not
exactly portray the accomplished and motivated writers and inquirers who have what they need to successfully function in the target situation. This problematic panorama brings writing and the pedagogical practices adopted in the language classroom as the area for improvement and serves as a basis for stating the research questions and objectives which could possibly tackle the problem from a contextualized perspective and a more social dimension of language learning.

Research Questions:

- How do community situated tasks develop EFL writers as inquirers?
- How do third graders develop a sense of community when inquiring into their surroundings?
- What developments in the formal aspects of text are evidenced in writing as meaning construction on community issues?

Research Objectives:

- Portray the process through which EFL writers become inquirers on the basis of community situated tasks
- Determine the manner in which third graders develop a sense of community when inquiring into their surroundings
- Identify the formal aspects of text that might be developed in EFL writing as meaning construction on community issues

Justification

The core issue of this study lies on community situated and inquiry based writing; this is precisely the significance of this study since it adds to the EFL field in the sense in which Community Based Learning (CBL) and inquiry are integrated to achieve writing development.
As this work arises from a needs assessment process which portrays a language classroom that does not respond to the institutional demands of New York School and its philosophy, its practical relevance also lies in the fact that it directly responds to the institutional requirements of a bilingual international curriculum that demands outstanding inquiry and communicative skills on the part of students. Since it is imperative to innovate on the way in which children are conducted through language learning, this work proposes a shift to the curriculum to adopt inquiry as stance. An inquiry curriculum therefore proposes writing instruction as a social experience rather than as an academic issue imposed on learners (Lerner, 2001; Norton & Toohey, 2002; Rodari, 1999; Vygotsky, 1986). A noticeable aspect of the study has to do with leading learners through community based inquiries that feed their thought and serve as entry points to write on issues that interest them and are meaningful to them, in other words, a new view of writing that invites students to independently construct meaning, to develop appreciation for the communities they are embedded in, and to express their worlds by means of the written word in a number of text genres.

A relevant contribution this study makes to language learning in New York School is the inclusion of a social constructionist view in the EFL classroom that focuses attention on the relevance of the learners’ social dimension in their writing process rather than on internal processes of writing, as noted by Benesch (1996), “[…] a reaction to cognitivist ESL composition research and pedagogy that focus on writers’ internal processes and ignore the social context of writing” (p. 729).

The study has practical significance for students since it is a must for them to take external examinations in fifth, ninth, and eleventh grade. A noticeable necessity students have is to improve writing competences with the goal of succeeding in such tests since the writing
component of such examinations has traditionally been the one with the lowest scores. The school’s population has access to immersion programs abroad which are academically focused. In this sense, they must be prepared for facing academic tasks of high level that demand high achievers as writers and inquirers. Furthermore, the bilingual and international features of the school’s curriculum imply the development of very high performances in the target language (TL) in order to finish their studies at school. The internationalization of the school also brings the opportunity for students to access education in international universities in which thinking and writing as inquirers is very important to be able to have access to the available opportunities of studying abroad. This study then potentially contributes to fostering the profile of New York School’s students as proficient writers in the TL, as informed inquirers, and as children with a high sense of belonging and membership toward their local communities that surpasses the mere appreciation for the target culture.
Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

Intending to give a theoretical response to the research questions, this chapter defines the constructs on which the study rests. The socially situated literacy practices this work proposes involve understanding on two theoretical pillars: community based pedagogies and literacy. The first section of this chapter is devoted to the presentation of such theoretical foundations and the second one includes an overview of research based studies that support mine on the basis of the two constructs theoretically defined.

Community Based Pedagogies

The integration between community life and educational goals in which students’ local surroundings serve as primary sources for learning is basically what Community Based Pedagogies (CBP) deal with. In this sense, Sharkey (2012) defines CBP as “an asset based approach that does not ignore the realities of curriculum standards that teachers must address, but emphasizes local knowledge and resources as starting points for teaching and learning” (p. 11). Such a conception acknowledges the richness local communities and the necessity to consider the local in curriculum development.

CBP engage children’s realities and contexts in educational processes and help students build a sense of connection to their communities. It is worth then mentioning the main features of the community based learning model:

1) Meaningful Content: Learning occurs in places and focuses on issues that have meaning for students; 2) Voice and Choice: Learning tasks are active and allow students to take an active role in decision making; 3) Personal and Public Purpose: Learning goals connect personal achievement to public purpose; and 4) Assessment and Feedback: Conducting
ongoing assessment gives students the opportunity to learn from their successes and failures (Coalition for Community Schools, 2006, p. 9).

CBP imply living and learning. Learners are enabled to achieve academic, social, work, and civic goals and improve their communities. They are engaged in the learning process and enrich it on the basis of community’s history, culture, and resources. By fostering student interest in their own communities, lifelong learning is also promoted and learners become citizens who take responsibility for their local contexts.

In agreement to CBP’s implications, Chavis and Wandersman (1990), as cited by Stringer (1997), claim that a sense of community is developed through relationships between the individual and the social structure in which they are embedded on the basis of opportunities for membership, influence, mutual needs satisfaction, emotional connection, and support.

Furthermore, Schecter, Solomon, and Kittmer (2003) claim that community situated pedagogy deals not merely with language learning but with students’ and teachers’ work in and with the community fostering inclusive learning environments. Apart from positioning the “community as a curriculum source” (p. 84), Schecter et al. consider the inquiry skills children gain when embedded in community-engaged pedagogies and the relevance of such an approach in teachers’ professional development programs.

The implementation of CBP involves a change in regards to the roles teachers and students play in the educational process and challenges the banking concept of education (Freire, 2011) since they are empowered as curriculum creators. In consideration to the implications of a community teacher in education, Clavijo (2015) asserts:

When teachers inquire in the local community to identify valuable resources to establish connections with the curriculum, it is possible to broaden the opportunities for meaningful
learning and to recognize multiple literacy practices used by learners that account for their local knowledge surpassing the traditional practices promoted by schools (p. 3).

Considering the traditional school practices above mentioned, Knapp (2014) confers an essential role on CBP, referred to as placed-based education in his work, since it leaves behind the traditional divorce between schooling and community life and promotes learning that is rooted in what is local since “teaching means extending the classroom beyond the four walls of the classroom and the two covers of the books. It means immersing students in direct experiences with people and places in order to learn in the context of realistic community situations” (p. 9).

In this line of thought, local knowledge is what Canagarajah (2002) describes as context bound, community specific, and non-systematic because it is socially generated in everyday life.

Although historically talking, the movements of modernism and colonialism have attempted to denigrate and suppress the diversity immersed in local knowledge on the reason of obtaining uniformity and guiding communities towards success, Canagarajah raises the issue that the local assumed as “the sediments of text, talk, poetry, art, memory, desire, dreams, and many unstated assumptions that people have developed through history about their community” (p. 249) is being recovered. Celebrating local knowledge is, rather than conceiving a finished product based on beliefs and practices from the past, opening the possibility to negotiate dominant discourse in the local context. Locality shapes social and intellectual practices, so all knowledge is local. Knowledge is constantly being reconstructed on the basis of local perspective, and this local perspective is precisely what this study intends to include in the literacy development of the participants since there is a necessity to bring community specific issues into the educational setting of New York School and to establish a dialogic interaction between the local and the global in the construction of meaning.
Literacy

Literacy has been defined from different perspectives by many authors starting with the basic conception that considers it just as the skills required reading and writing. Scribner (1984) describes a broader definition in her “literacy as adaptation” metaphor (p. 9). She presents functional literacy as the necessary proficiency to successfully perform in specific settings and situations. In this sense, the role of literacy education is limited to equip learners with the tools required to communicatively succeed according to certain situational demands. This vision implies a sense of uniformity of human societies and decontextualization of literacy that can only be coherent with traditional pedagogy. A wider perspective of literacy has to be included in this framework since this innovation adopts a progressive vision of literacy education.

A sociocultural approach, according to Moll (1994), “tries to study literacy in connection to the complex social relationships and cultural practices of human beings” (p. 179). Literacy, in this sense, cannot be considered in isolation from culture and language is never independent from the social world. The linkages between students’ communities, language learning, and inquiry this study proposes imply a sociocultural view of literacy since meaning making is embedded in students’ close surroundings and mediated by language.

This work rests on the three major sociocultural theories of literacy described by Perry (2012): literacy as social practice, critical literacy, and multiliteracies. Literacy as social practice, more than the acquisition of language kills, is “what people do with reading, writing and texts in real world contexts and why they do it” (p. 54) and is shaped by values, attitudes, feelings and social relationships.

Writing assumed as social practice in this research excels the theories that explain it as a mere intellectual, cognitive activity (Bean, 2001; Kellog, 2008) and involve context and cultural
Accordingly, Freire and Macedo (1987) argue that “literacy cannot be viewed as simply the development of skills aimed at acquiring the dominant standard language” (p. 142) and, from a critical literacy perspective, add that the sociocultural experiences of the subordinate linguistic groups must be restored.

Critical literacy, the “literacy as power” metaphor of Scribner (1984, p. 11), considers literacy as an instrument for social change and human liberation. Similarly, Freire and Macedo (1987) define literacy as both reading the word and reading the world. This means that literacy is not merely related to cognitive skills but deals with power relationships. They claim that literacy empowers or disempowers, advocate for fighting inequalities through literacy education and emphasize the fact that the voices of the disempowered must be raised. They “reiterate that educators should never allow the students’ voice to be silenced by a distorted legitimation of the standard language” (p. 152).

In tune with the sociocultural perspective of literacy that underlies this study, three conceptions of what being literate means are adopted in the pursuit to educate children as thinkers, inquires and good communicators that develop appreciation for the local:

- Being literate gives the opportunity to guarantee a further comprehension of reality, and empowers humans to change the contexts they are part of. Thus, the learner becomes his or her own social instructor (Quevedo, 2008, p. 33).
- A person is literate to the extent that he or she is able to use language for social and political reconstruction (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 159).
- To become literate is to gain access to the valued resources of the culture. For literacy to function as an intellectual resource, it must involve learning as the means to exploit the
resources of a literate culture [...] what matters then, especially in schools, is not what literacy does to students but what students do with literacy (Moll, 1994, p. 201).

**State of the Art**

Since this study intends to bring writing to learners’ lives through community situated inquiry, I have already explored the various approaches that potentially support it from a theoretical view. The subsequent lines account for what has been done so far in connection to my research interest. Literacy then becomes an umbrella term under which Community Based Pedagogies and writing instruction are approached in this state of the art.

Considering the three major sociocultural perspectives on literacy outlined by Perry (2012); namely literacy as social practice, multiliteracies, and critical literacy; five research works on this realm are worth portraying in this state of the art since they closely relate to my investigation: Guccione (2011), Huang (2011), Maybin, (2005), Rogers (2014), and Souto-Manning (2010).

To begin with, an overview on two works whose orientation is literacy as social practice (Souto-Manning, 2010 and Maybin, 2005) is provided. The essence of those studies resides on the view of literacy as what people can do with reading and writing in a real world permeated by beliefs, thoughts, cultural values, social relationships, and all the complexities of the individual in relation to the social world. Firstly, I quote Souto-Manning (2010) to give account of the research questions guiding her study:

In what ways can teachers incorporate young people’s home and community literacy practices into classrooms when such practices vastly differ from the teachers’ literacy experiences? How can teacher education curriculum and teaching influence teachers’
pedagogical practices? How can children’s role be pedagogically reframed and become meaningful strengths to curriculum and teaching in classrooms? (p. 151)

From these questions I can infer that the pedagogical goal of the investigation is to transform curriculum and teaching through the integration of home and community literacy practices in Head Start classrooms. This two-year qualitative study was carried out by an action researcher who used culture circles as an approach to document teacher’s pedagogical practices, generating themes through axial coding that moved towards problem solving and action in the classroom. The two white Head Start Teachers who participated in the study manifested a desire to better comprehend the home and community literacy practices of their 37 mostly African American and Latino preschoolers whose families represented a high percentage of poverty and positioned as having deficits or being inferior. There were therefore home visits to directly observe such practices which were then used as resources for designing classroom activities.

With respect to the findings of such study, there is evidence of the need for teachers to recognize the knowledge learners bring from homes and communities. The study points out that local knowledge, seen as a resource rather than as a deficit, positions learners as co-researchers and curriculum designers. Home and community being integrated into Head Start classrooms and teachers providing children with realistic choices instead of pre-designed activities also need to be acknowledged. Equally important is the need for a shift in the goals of early intervention, less centered on a deprivation and inferiority paradigm and more centered on a diversities paradigm; and a close examination of the manners in which early intervention models aim to socialize children into white middle-class ways of being. In tune with this study, I am committed to employing a curriculum based on authentic classroom activities in which the interactions and
experiences of my students as members of a community are at the core of every written production.

Secondly, the work by Maybin (2005) was focused on answering questions such as what is children’s informal talk in school about and which the recurring themes in it?, what kinds of learning take place through children’s talk?, what collaborative communicative practices emerge when children explore and negotiate knowledge among themselves and how do these compare to the communicative strategies in teacher-pupil dialogues?, and what is the role of talk in children’s literacy practices? The researcher, in this qualitative investigation, adopted an ethnographic perspective since data were gathered from real-world natural contexts. Children’s talk across the school day was recorded in order to naturally observe their literacy practices in different contexts. Such data collection was carried out in two middle schools serving council states in south-east England. In the first one, a radio microphone was attached to the collar of a ten year old girl who appeared to be talkative and a typical average child over three consecutive days. In the second school the focus was on two groups of friends (three boys and three girls) wearing radio microphones, too.

The data gathered showed how a number of distinct activities and interactions go on simultaneously in children’s talk and how there is a close intertwining of the cognitive and social functions of talk. It was found that a lot of children’s informal talk was about curriculum activity in which they were simultaneously negotiating personal relationships and positioning themselves as social beings. Regarding children’s talk about issues outside the curriculum, the recurring themes had to do with their back and forth movement between the worlds of childhood and adolescence depending on context and communication purposes. In reference to teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil dialogue, the finding lies in the fact that the former is characterized by the formal
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initiation-response-feedback pattern while the latter is more intensely interactive, open, and provisional. The researcher argues that relevant learning events are given in children’s informal talk, both about school issues and their social worlds. In addition, intertextuality was found in such interactions; a tendency to use authoritative voices to pursue social goals especially when moving from play to work frames. In the same manner, intertextuality was found in switches from work to play in which children’s tendency was that of invoking voices from popular songs, media characters, or personal experience.

Maybin (2005) concluded that “children used the cultural resources available to pursue personal relationships and to explore and try out aspects of their own developing identities” (p.105). In this sense and, although this work is not as updated as the other research based works referenced in this state of the art, it is worth to be reported since it emphasizes the social dimension of children’s literacy practices.

Another sociocultural perspective of literacy, critical literacy, is portrayed in the investigations of Rogers (2014) and Huang (2011). The common point underlying both studies is the conception of literacy practices as being shaped by power relationships and empowerment. The former, whose pedagogical goal appears as that of engaging teachers and learners to use literacy practices in ways that matter in the world, aims to respond to two research questions: firstly, when teachers are given the opportunity to construct critical literacy education, what practices emerge? And secondly, how does the researcher, as a course instructor and literacy coach, support teachers as they design critical literacy practices?

Rogers’ research work (2014) was developed in The University Literacy Lab located in an urban elementary school in upstate New York. Such a lab is a practicum course in a master’s program focused on literacy specialization. It provides learning opportunities for eleven teachers
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(graduate students), students from the elementary school participating in the lab (most of them African American), their parents, and the teachers who teach the course. Although Roger does not explicitly state what research design was employed in the study, she points out how the course in which the eleven teachers were enrolled was developed. It was focused on the integration of accelerative literacy instruction within critical frameworks and included literacy tutorials, observations and talks with the course instructor, seminar discussions, viewing of recorded lessons, written assignments, and teachers’ interviews with the parents of their students. The pedagogical outcomes of such a course were framed within the exploration of local literacies and resources, the analysis of books for social issues, and the social and ideological goals accomplished by authors. This qualitative study seems to adopt an action research approach because, as claimed by Creswell (2002), it is aimed at improving the practice of education by inquiring on local issues or problems, to reflect upon them, to collect and analyze data, and to implement changes based on findings.

The coding process brought a major category named Approaches to Critical Literacy with three subcategories: 1) social justice approaches, 2) multiple literacies, and 3) genre approaches. A finding on the first category was that students were enabled to critique social issues in their communities and empowered as agents of change. The role of the teacher was that of “pull[ing] knowledge out of the student; follow[ing] the student’s interests, hopes, and desires; and make a change in the world as the student is learning to read and write.” (Rogers, 2014 p. 252). With respect to the second subcategory, it was evidenced that students became active readers of their social world and enabled to make meaning of the community issues around them. Students’ multiple literacies triggered educators’ learning of their communities and encouraged them to become more engaged with their students’ interests. Regarding the third and last subcategory,
students gained an extended comprehension of the sociopolitical dimension of their world through the reading of different versions of their favorite genres. They became active examiners of characters’ roles, perspectives, social roles depicted in texts, and author’s use of language and authorial intentions. Findings on how the coach supported educators on their journey along teaching critical literacy revealed the multiple opportunities teachers were provided with in order to experiment different possibilities for educating on critical literacy. As tensions arouse throughout the process of teaching critical literacy, it was found that the coach’s role is to use them as learning opportunities. Raising awareness among educators about their strengths as literacy teachers as well as liberating them from the uncertainties between critical literacy in theory and in practice was found as another relevant issue on a critical literacy coach’s role.

One of the teacher participants’ interpretation of what critical literacy means to her is closely related to the core of my research work and directly connects to the essence of what researchers such as Clavijo (2015), Medina (2013), Schecter, Solomon, and Kittmer (2003), Schneider (2005), and Sharkey and Clavijo (2012) intend to attain through the implementation of Community Based Pedagogies: “I think taking the knowledge of what kids bring in from their community and their background and their lives and using it as a gateway to getting them to desire and need reading and writing” (Rogers, 2014 p. 245).

In tune with Rogers’ work, Huang (2011) proposes two research objectives in his inquiry: explore how critical literacy and conventional literacy can be simultaneously promoted in an EFL reading and writing course and examine students’ perceptions on critical literacy in relation to their own language development. From such objectives the pedagogical goal can be inferred: foster reading and writing competencies through the integration of critical and conventional literacy practices. The study took place in a university in Taiwan through a reading and writing
elective course for non-English majors with thirty-six students participating in it. Its methodology lies on a qualitative teacher research approach since here the teacher is the one who inquires into their own educational setting, improves their teaching practices, and contributes to theory formation in the teaching-learning realm.

Three main categories emerged from data analysis: what critical literacy meant to students, how critical literacy supported their reading and writing development, and how the students’ EFL had improved as a result of the course. Learners understood critical literacy as an opportunity for them to unveil underlying information and consider multiple perspectives within texts. Students moved away from reading as bystanders to reading as active participants. Critical literacy was found also as an opportunity for better comprehension and as a reason to write since students started using their increasing critical awareness to develop their writing competencies. Students said critical literacy had motivated them towards writing and had made such academic activity more meaningful. In this sense, this research work directly connects to my study in the sense in which the participant students found that, “critical literacy provided them with food for the thought and, therefore, a reason to write” (Huang, 2011, p. 151). Students also concluded that critical literacy integrated with conventional literacy had improved features of writing such as paragraph and essay organization, knowledge and skills to handle different genres of writing, enhanced comprehension of the writing process as a result of self and peer review, and improvement from regular practice.

In addition to the aforementioned works, but from a sociocultural perspective focused on multiliteracies, Guccione (2011) explores the connection between literacy and inquiry through the following research interrogation, in his own words: “I sought to discover firsthand what transpires with respect to literacy practices in a first-grade classroom where the teacher engages...
children with an inquiry mindset” (p. 568). Such investigation then is aimed at unveiling the literacy practices of first graders when engaged in inquiry-based instruction and its pedagogical goal can be understood as foster content knowledge and language skills in first graders through inquiry based instruction.

Guccione’s yearlong qualitative study, framed within an ethnography approach, required an immersion in the cultural setting of a first grade classroom and used a thick rich description to report findings. Although native speakers of English as well as English language learners (ELLs) were in the class, the study was focused on three ELLs (two boys and a girl aged 6-7) who had been labelled as non-English proficient according to their level of performance on the Colorado English Language Assessment. The data captured were organized into a broad category, Literacy Practices (LP), and eleven subcategories: viewing, I learned, interactive components, schema, connections, questions, art strategies, decoding, text features, code-switching, and sources as the literacy practices observed during one year in the 90-minute language arts block.

As the children were involved in literacy practices that drew on inquiry through expository texts, multiple literacy practices were documented within single literacy events. There was then evidence of the effectiveness of simultaneous use of a varied number of literacy practices while researching. During their inquiries learners constructed meaning through a multiplicity of language arts of reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and representing among others. Such literacy strategies were used simultaneously and triggered the scaffolding of students’ learning. Guccione reported the integration of inquiry and literacy practices as beneficial in the sense in which it fosters students’ engagement, comprehension, and skills to search out information of their interest. In short, this study’s main finding lies in the fact that “[when engaged in an inquiry environment that integrates literacy practices], children […]
became self-regulated learners who saw learning as an enjoyable, rewarding activity” (Guccione, 2011 p. 575).

Inquiry, as one of the pillars in the aforementioned study, was attained through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology: “an effective way to develop language skills while acquiring academic skills” (Rodriguez, 2011 p. 84). Inquiry plays also a pivotal role in my investigation, not from CLILL as a content based approach to Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) but from the perspective of Community Based Pedagogies (CBP) in the sense in which communities become the object of inquiry on which situated writing practices emerge. It is worth, therefore, reporting the research works attained by community educators and researchers whose main linkage consists in positioning learners’ communities as powerful sources for curriculum design as well as teachers and students as curriculum makers from a bottom-top perspective in education (Clavijo, 2015; Medina, 2013; Schecter et al., 2003; Schneider, 2005; and Sharkey & Clavijo, 2012).

In the very first place of this walk along research based studies on CBP is a practicum that consisted of preservice teachers at York University working collaboratively with others in their school cohort to build language arts, social studies, math, and science instructional units by using the community as a curriculum source. Schecter et al. (2003) proposed to engage teacher candidates and communities in meaningful manners on the basis of community-involved-pedagogy conceptualized as “a process of experiential, relational learning [in which] students learn from the community, from personal experiences, and from classmates” (p. 83). Through the practicum preservice teachers were provided with theoretical instruction on situated constructivist learning as well as with examples of the work of colleagues whose work had been framed within this same community based perspective. They were then started with the work on
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their community-as-curriculum units, lessons, and materials which were informed by students’, parents’, and other community members’ experiences. Afterwards candidate teachers were asked to submit a collaboratively built group report and to give an oral presentation in which they showed how they and their students had conducted the contents of the curricula and the process undergone to incorporate community knowledge into learning experiences.

Aimed at fostering an inclusive, community-responsive learning environment, this practicum promoted inquiry through assignments in which learners were also researchers. The professors who conducted the practicum described some community-as-curriculum projects.

As regards the benefits of community-based pedagogies, Schecter et al. (2003) conclude that caregivers’ involvement in their children’s academic lives increase, the development of language skills is fostered, inquiry skills are developed by learners who gain confidence in their abilities as researchers, and students’ respect for family members is enhanced. In reference to this practicum’s contribution to the actual research work, a similar community-based approach is intended to be the basis for situated writing practices in which the targeted group’s community is to be used as a curriculum source.

Along with the line of such a practicum, a collaborative project informed on community-based pedagogies and developed by Sharkey and Clavijo (2012) intended to value local knowledge in teaching and learning practices. Situating their educational scenarios in Bogotá and Manchester respectively, these professors-researchers observed a lack of connection among teachers, students, and curricula and portray a problematic situation in both contexts in which minority languages were displaced and diversity neglected.

CBP, defined by Sharkey and Clavijo (2012) as “practices that reflect knowledge and appreciation of the communities in which schools are located and students and their families
inhabit” (p.130), was the bases for Clavijo to involve English language teachers in the mega libraries promoted under the library network project in Bogota (bibliored), aiming mainly to 1) foster libraries as places where children can experience multiple literacies, 2) provide poor urban areas with rich resources of knowledge, and 3) connect the library network project to innovative teaching practices. The study found that teachers became more aware of issues such as the multiple manners in which children and grown-ups use literacies, the community activities and events held in the library, and the pedagogical value that libraries offer to parents and teachers. Based on the knowledge gained through their approach to libraries, teachers designed lessons which connected schools with the learners’ worlds out of school.

In the same study, Sharkey (2012) investigated the community in innovative ways and generated new possibilities and curricular connections through community based activities such as the neighborhood alphabet, a visit to a key community place, and asset mapping. After having carried out such projects in their educational settings, Sharkey and Clavijo (2012) conclude that a shift from a deficit to an asset-based view of learners and their communities is key to enrich curriculum in meaningful manners.

Following this same line of linking the community and language/literacy instruction in two different contexts, Clavijo (2015) reports part of a collaborative study between Universidad Distrital and University of New Hampshire. Graduate students’ sharing of experiences in regards to sources offered by communities to be linked with the school curriculum was the origin of a collective case study carried out with eleven teachers from a public school, a public university, and a private university in Bogotá. The school from which the report is given belongs to a low income strata, attends to the educational needs of 1200 students in each shift (morning and afternoon), is surrounded by micro industries and local businesses, and is focused on vocational
instruction in order to provide students with working opportunities. A language arts teacher, a chemistry teacher, a social studies teacher, and a primary school teacher from this school participated in the study; three researchers and three graduate students from the Master’s Program in Applied Linguistics to TEFL were the research team.

The project was focused on how to foster the knowledge from and in local communities as valuable sources for the teaching of language. From a pedagogical perspective, I would say this collaborative work was aimed at implementing community projects in the teaching of literacy and content areas. As such research question and pedagogical goal might suggest, a teacher professional development component was pivotal in the study. Teachers were instructed on how to establish linkages between community assets and content areas and a number of community projects were planned, designed, and implemented.

Interviews with teachers, direct observation, and a public presentation on the outcomes of such pedagogical experience provided insights such as teachers’ raised awareness of the usefulness of community sources in their pedagogical work; students and teachers as active participants in curricular transformation; and community knowledge as an opportunity to face content related problems. The enhancement of students’ content knowledge through community assets was also evidenced.

In a similar attempt to explore community as a source for curriculum development but with the additional component of digital literacy practices, Medina (2013) intends to “analyze the ways in which community based projects shape students’ EFL literacy practices in a virtual course [and] describe the literacy practices students engage in when exploring the[ir] university as a community in an EFL virtual course” (p. 7). Adopting a qualitative netnography methodology, this investigation was developed in an online based EFL course carried out in a
public university in Bogotá. The participants were then 18 to 25 year-old undergraduate students from diverse programs offered by the university who were about to finish their studies and with an intermediate proficiency level in the foreign language.

In consideration to the insights gained through this study, Medina (2013) emphasizes that the university community became a multimodal book in the sense in which its cultural, linguistic, human, historical-ideological, communitarian, and ecological assets were the sources for students to consider issues affecting their community and to critically act upon them. Students’ shared pictures, postings, and videos throughout the virtual course accounted for a critical reading of the university since issues such as inequality, budget problems, and social struggle emerged from their community based projects and awareness upon such problematic situations was raised. In short, these multimodal, socially situated, and mediated by digital literacy community projects fostered not only linguistic and literacy skills but social awareness that empowered students as agents of change.

Similarly, Schneider (2005) addressed local issues in the English classroom and claimed that the two advantages of bringing community into the classroom are, “[on the one hand,] a way to give local culture and local concerns a prominent place in the English language classroom; and [, on the other,….] an opportunity to make learning more engaging and relevant” (p.298).

As the paper’s title might suggest, *Teaching Grammar through Community Issues*, what the author proposes is that language lessons structured around local issues can be successfully linked to explicit grammar instruction by means of a very detailed description on how grammar lessons on the passive voice were taught in the context of a local issue: an on-campus labor dispute at an American university. The pedagogical practice was carried out with a group of advanced international graduate students just when the Teacher Assistant Union at the university
was threatening to strike. This meaningful community issue was brought into the classroom and linked to grammar and to speakers’ and writers’ viewpoints towards it.

Schneider (2005) found that these practices have the potential to raise learners’ awareness on community issues that surround them and help them understand how ideologies and viewpoints can be expressed through grammatical choices. Although this pedagogical experience was carried out with university students and the actual research work is developed with primary students, the community-oriented approach it is based on as well as the steps the teacher used to integrate community issues and the English classroom are valuable in terms of how to link writing and community based activities.

Although I have not found research based studies which directly link CBP and writing instruction in EFL, I consider it is worth reporting on three research works carried out by Gutierrez (2010), Quevedo (2008), and Ghiso (2011) that specifically deal with socially situated writing and learners’ own motivation for authorship. The former illustrates a writing process in which a group of thirty four fourth-grade students of a public school exhibited the funds of knowledge they drew upon when writing personal narratives. Funds of knowledge, defined in this action research as the knowledge obtained through life experiences, become the sources for the written production of the participants through the exploration of their close contexts and communities. The pedagogical intervention carried out throughout the study is designed on the basis of the communicative approach, task based learning, and funds of knowledge. This work, framed under a qualitative approach and based on the principles of action research, revealed that learners draw upon affective and sociocultural funds of knowledge when expressing themselves through the written word. The contribution of Gutierrez (2010) to this research proposal has to do with the proposed view of writing through social lenses that enable learners to raise their voices
by means of writings which portray their own lives, conceiving writing as a meaningful practice and not as imposed on them.

In tune with the vision of funds of knowledge as the point of departure for writing development, Quevedo (2008) developed a qualitative interpretive case study aimed at exploring and describing children’s understanding of the social issues depicted in their personal narratives. From a pedagogical view, this study intended to provide learners with opportunities to portray specific events from their lives through writing. The research site was a catholic school in Bogota following Ignacio de Loyola’s philosophy and framed within a constructivist view of education. Ten fifth grade students aged 10-11 belonging to high strata took part in the study.

After a pedagogical intervention developed through preliminary, in-action, and culmination phases, it was found that children not only revealed their personal experiences through writing, but that they went beyond by expressing their viewpoints towards the social issues portrayed in their own experiences. Children’s narratives showed a connection among their life experiences, emotions, and reflections; this led them to learn about themselves, test their reality, and develop a social sensitivity.

Accordingly, Ghiso (2011) reports on a yearlong ethnographic study carried out in a first grade urban class made up of 20 children of African American, European American, West African, Algerian, and Native American descend. The teacher was European American. Such work “examine[d] what it mean[t] to be a writer in this first grade class, […] how the teacher orchestrated writing invitations, how students interact[ed] with such invitations, and how the students and teacher talked about writing” (p. 347).

Closely observing the dynamics of the lessons in this setting, it was evidenced how writing became a tool for inquiry. The teacher played a relevant role in such dimension of writing
practices since she triggered children’s active participation along the process by constantly questioning them about issues that mattered in their lives. Themes such as civic issues, homelessness, poverty, and gun violence, among others, emerged from the intentional pedagogical choices of the teacher and merged from the state of being individual worries towards sources of knowledge for the class as a whole. The writing curriculum was then permeated by individual and collective engagements on the part of the children and social awareness was raised among first graders.

This study encloses various components which emerge from the works reported in this state of the art which are also relevant in my research study: community knowledge as curriculum source Clavijo (2015), Medina (2013), Souto-Manning (2010), Schecter et al. (2003), Schneider and (2005) Sharkey and Clavijo (2012); inquiry based learning Guccione (2011); intertextuality in children’s literacy practices Maybin (2005), and elements of critical literacy practices Huang (2011) and Rogers (2014).

After having examined local and international research based works on literacy, CBP, and writing instruction, I found relevant connections between my own work and investigations that adopt the teaching of literacy and language from a sociocultural perspective. Even though most of the international studies referenced in this state of the art adopt home and community experiences as the point of departure for literacy development, they do not mention CBP as their pillar. Conversely, national studies do tend to frame community knowledge based practices within such content based approach. Although some of the studies reported refer to writing as a socially situated practice, none of them is directly and specifically devoted to the teaching of writing through CPB and this makes my work worth doing since it may potentially contribute to EFL.
Chapter 3
Research Design

This chapter presents the research framework of the study aimed at responding to the following questions: How do community situated tasks develop EFL writers as inquirers?; How do third graders develop a sense of community when inquiring into their surroundings; and What developments in the formal aspects of text are evidenced in writing as meaning construction on community issues? This methodology chapter describes the research approach of the study, the context in which it was developed as well as its participants, the ethical considerations and role of the researcher, and the instruments employed for data collection.

Type of Study

As this research work explores the social dimension of writing and its focus is on how third graders become community writers, it relies on participants’ experiences and the contexts they are embedded in. This is precisely a key feature that makes it a qualitative study, as posed by Heigham and Croker (2009):

[Q]ualitative researchers […] focus […] on participants - how participants experience and interact with a phenomenon at a given point in time and in a particular context, and the multiple meanings it has for them. They are interested in the ordinary, everyday worlds of their participants – where they live, work, and study (p.7).

Regarding the research methodology employed, this study corresponds to action research since, as claimed by Creswell (2002), it intends to “improve the practice of education by inquiring on local issues or problems, to reflect upon them, to collect and analyze data, and to implement changes based on findings” (p. 580). In this study, action research helped bring up insights on the way a shift from writing viewed as a school practice to writing viewed as a social
practice may influence third graders’ inquiry skills, use of formal aspects of written language, and meaning construction on the communities that they inhabit.

Besides, the procedure implemented is, as described by Burns (1999), “[seen] not so much as a cycle, or even a sequence of cycles, but as a series of interrelated experiences […]” (p. 35). Such experiences include: 1) exploring, identifying writing instruction as an issue of interest; 2) identifying, finding facts that document the writing situation in the school; 3) planning, designing an action plan to improve the writing situation and collecting data on the outcomes of the action; 4) collecting data, going more deeply into the writing situation by putting into action procedures for data gathering; 5) analyzing/reflecting, systematically analyzing and reflecting on the gathered data on how writing and inquiry evolve through the intervention; 6) hypothesizing/speculating, predicting what is likely to happen in terms of writing and inquiry development on the basis of data collection; 7) intervening, redirecting pedagogical practices on according to the hypotheses drawn; 8) observing, examining and reflecting on the outcomes of the intervention, establishing new teaching strategies, and planning further data collection; and 9) reporting, articulating intervention, data collection and analysis, and findings to share the final piece of work with others.

Context
The context in which this study was carried out is New York School, a private bilingual institution founded in 1974. Located in the north area of Bogotá and surrounded mainly by other private bilingual schools, New York School attends to the educational needs of about 1200 female and male students who come from the most popular neighborhoods in the city (Kennedy, Suba, Castilla, etc.) to the ones that only the highest social strata can access to (San José de Bavaria, Mazurén, Rosales, etc.). The diverse social settings students come from make New York
School a research field made up of individuals with a wide range of experiences, academic and cultural backgrounds, and linguistic knowledge.

It is worth mentioning that the school has recently achieved a certification as a member of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). Therefore, and regarding the ideological epistemological, ethical, and aesthetic dimensions of the curriculum stated by Beyer and Apple (as cited in Clavijo, 2007), there are two components at the core of New York School’s curriculum: bilingualism and international education.

The aforementioned key elements of the curriculum appear as relevant issues in the mission of the institution (Proyecto Educativo Institucional, 2014) which, apart from stating the development of independence, self-esteem, assertively and a pronounced level of academic, sporting, artistic, as well as cultural awareness and appreciation, also points out that “students will acquire a high level of competency in English, which will permit them to function effectively and efficiently in an extremely globalized society” (p.3). In that same document, the vision of the institution poses that the school will be among the best education institutes in Bogotá and the country by the year 2020. This national recognition will be the result of the “high levels of formative and academic attainment, excellent command of English as a second language, the high level of service offered to all members of the institution, and the expertise and professionalism of the Human Resources department” (p.4). The international perspective adopted by the school is also stated by the IBO (2009) who claims that “The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world” (IB Learner Profile section, para. 1). Among the ten key features that the IBO proposes for the IB community, it states that IB learners strive to be good communicators by expressing ideas and information confidently and
creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. New York School then demands accomplished, motivated, and independent writers who achieve high academic standards.

With respect to the English Language Teaching (ELT) methodology adopted, it must be claimed that, in tune with the bilingual nature of the school, Content Based Learning (CBL) underlies it since English is one of the means of instruction. Subject areas such as math, science, and religion are taught through the foreign language. English is also a subject area on its own; elementary students attend six hours of English class per week. The textbook employed in the English lessons is *Best Friends* (*Alston Publishing House, 2012*). Such material offers very few opportunities for improving listening and speaking skills. The way writing practices are presented in it does not include activities on text structure or the steps required in the writing process (planning, drafting, proofreading, correcting, and publishing). Writing practices provided by the textbook tend just to replicate given models focusing form over function. Besides, topics to write about are given by such teaching material and therefore imposed on students.

**Participants**

The participants of this study are all the students belonging to a class of third graders; a group of eighteen children, eight female and ten male students who range between eight and nine years of age. In regards to English performance, the participants can be described as a heterogeneous group since not all of them have gone through the process of bilingualism in the school. Ten children entered the school in their early preschool years; four started the process as first graders, and four of them as second graders. As a result, there are high achievers, average performers, and low achievers in terms of command of the foreign language. According to the needs analysis carried out, most of them manifest demotivation or lack of interest towards the writing
component of their English lessons and the lowest scores they get in the assigned tasks have to do with writing.

In consideration to the criterion used for participant selection, a non-probabilistic sample corresponds to this study since it does not intend to generalize on the basis of wide populations but targets a particular group of participants. Within the non-probabilistic sample, a convenience sampling is employed because it, understood as “[…] accidental or opportunity sampling – [which] involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents […]” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 113), is focused on the access to available participants to the researcher. In the case of this study, the most accessible or available group of respondents was a class of 18 third graders assigned to me since the beginning of the year 2015; I was able then to intervene, collect, and analyze data with ease since the group was constantly in close contact with me.

**Ethical Issues.** As this is a qualitative study, it relies on participants’ views and experiences. Data gathering therefore includes private aspects of participants’ lives within the communities that surround them. For this reason, the potential ethical issues of the study have to be anticipated. In this sense, the three basic principles stated by Burns (1999) have been adapted to serve as guidelines for the ethical considerations of this research study: 1) confidentiality, protecting the anonymity of participants by assigning fictional names to them and, in case confidential documents are used, keeping them also anonymous; 2) negotiation, informing parents and school about the purpose and benefits of the study, gaining parents’ permission to use their children’s pieces of work, audio and video recordings, and photographs (see Appendix A for parent consent form), obtaining the authorization of the directive staff to use the school as the site for the research work and to gather information from the group of third graders (see Appendix B for school consent form), providing respondents with the right to refuse participation in the study
and the option to withdraw from it; and 3) responsibility, defining roles of participants in the study, informing on the possible uses of the findings obtained, defining the researcher’s and the school’s rights regarding the finished work.

**Instruments**

The two instruments piloted as the main tools for the data collection process of this research study are field notes and artifacts. A brief account of what these instruments are, their content, validation process, and an analysis on how they worked for data gathering is given below.

**Field Notes.** Characterized as the written account of what is observed in the classroom, field notes is an observational technique used for collecting data. As stated by Burns (1999), “[T]hey are often referred to in qualitative research [as] descriptions and accounts of events in the research context which are written in a relatively factual and objective style” (p. 87). As this tool is useful to report on direct observation, it serves to record verbal as non-verbal information, classroom organization, and interactions given among participants. Furthermore, Hopkins (1995) argues that they can be focused on “a particular issue, on a general understanding of what happens in the classroom, on descriptions of individual cases, and on teachers’ pedagogical work in the classroom” (p. 117).

Concerning form and as Lankshear and Knobel (2004) claim, the field note layout employed for the data collection of this work is divided into two rows, one for keeping notes “in the heat of the moment [and the other] for making methodological, theoretical and analytical annotations, and anecdotal or personal comments written during reflective moments” (p. 230) (see Appendix C for field note layout).

The validation of the field notes was given by the piloting stage itself. Writing the classroom events in the form of a narrative and using full sentences and verbatim in the notes
provided an entire picture of what was going on in the classroom; the development of each activity on community issues was then systematically traced. This allowed data gathering on how individual and collaborative inquiries on community issues become the cornerstone of the shift in writing that this research work proposes as well as on how students develop appreciation for their communities and gained inquiry skills. It is worth clarifying that audio and video recording supported field notes since teaching and gathering data simultaneously made “in the midst” notes difficult to make, they were made “after the fact” (Hubbard & Miller, 1999, p. 106).

**Artifacts.** These instruments are, in a general sense, “[the] physical props people use to get things done within the contexts of their daily lives. [They] are concrete evidence and can alert researchers to useful avenues of investigation and provide additional insights into participants’ everyday lives” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 235). In the particular case of this research study, artifacts constitute visible pieces of work used throughout the research process that become useful tools for data collection on the way writing evolves through community situated tasks as well as on the manner learners integrate local knowledge and inquiry within their academic lives.

Student artifacts collected were validated through the piloting phase of this study. They basically constitute the planned student inquiries and productions on community themes and provide data firstly, on the way inquiry-based writing is developed (see Appendix D for KWL sample, Appendix E for survey sample, and Appendix F for graphic organizer); secondly, on the way writing evolves in terms of text structure (see Appendix G for planning stage sample and Appendix H for drafting stage sample); and thirdly, on the way a sense of community is raised among learners (see Appendix I for power point presentation on “remember when stories”). As argued by Hubbard and Miller (1999), “[e]xamples of student work can be one of the richest sources of data for teacher-researchers […] tangible evidence of what kids are able to do and of
the range of responses kids make to different learning tasks” (p. 102). In this sense, student artifacts are directly connected to the core of this research study.

Role of the Researcher

With reference to the role of the researcher, this study adopts a participant observational approach which, as its name may suggest, implies a double role of the researcher in the sense of becoming a participant and an observer in a simultaneous manner. Assuming such an observational role, as noted by Creswell (2002), allows the researcher “[t]o truly learn about a situation, […] become involved in activities at the research site [and] see experiences from the views of participants” (p. 214).

Becoming responsible for the design and implementation of pedagogical activities which integrate writing and community awareness and for the process of data gathering and analysis from an insider perspective will provide me with an ample view on how the study unfolds from an emic rather than from an ethic view. Such a role will imply then to “us[e] the participants’ own terms and concepts to describe their worlds when analyzing data and presenting findings” (Heigham & Croker, 2009, p. 8).
Chapter 4

Instructional Design

This chapter provides information on the pedagogical component of the study. It portrays, from an instructional point of view, the development of EFL writers as they inquire into their close communities. First, an overview of the educational context where the pedagogical intervention takes place is presented. Then, the curricular platform with the articulation of visions regarding curriculum, language, learning, and classroom is exposed. And lastly, an account of the instructional activities goals, stages, and learning experiences of the pedagogical intervention is offered.

The particular context in which the instructional design is implemented is New York School, a private bilingual institution that serves a population of about 1200 students from socioeconomic strata 3, 4, and 5. The participants, a class of eighteen third graders aged 8 to 9, are embedded in a bilingual environment framed within an international curriculum with high demands with regards to the management of English and the inquiry skills required to become citizens of the world. As posed in chapter 1, this study addresses the curricular requirements from an international school concerning language instruction and students’ inquiry competences. Such an educational situation implied pedagogical transformations that focus on creating curricular content that engages students as thinkers, inquires and language users and fosters situated learning through community oriented learning experiences. Therefore, a necessity to innovate my pedagogical practices came about and made me reflect on my blended role as an English teacher, researcher, theorizer, and materials designer (Kumaravadivelu, 2006) and led me towards a shift from writing as a school, teacher imposed, and decontextualized practice to a more learner
centered experience which fosters situated learning through community oriented learning experiences that leaves place for students’ initiated inquiries in their worlds.

**Curricular Platform**

The pedagogical intervention of the study is designed as a response to the IB requirements for the school mentioned above. Consequently, it aims to contextualize writing instruction and promote the inquiry skills required by the IB curriculum on the basis of a “problem-posing” (Freire, 2011, p. 79) community situated pedagogy depicted by Schecter et al. (2003) as “[…] a […] view of learning as a problem-solving process that cannot be understood outside of the different collective contexts in which learners interact and construct knowledge” (p. 83). Students’ close settings which include families, neighborhoods, school, and city become the sites for student community-based inquiries and also powerful sources for curriculum construction in the specific case of the pedagogical intervention that underlies this study.

The role of the students, according to the community based approach of the intervention, implies active immersion in field exploration in which they work closely to their immediate surroundings carrying out tasks such as interviews, surveys, and video making, among others. Students gathered information from multiple community sources and it was presented as the outcomes of their learning experiences in different text types according to the pedagogical objectives of the inquiry projects that made up this educational innovation. The functioning of the learner’s role within a community based approach is defined by Schecter, et al. (2003) as follows: […] children develop valuable inquiry skills and gain confidence in their own abilities as researchers, incorporating terms such as data, example, and evidence into their academic registers. In addition, we have found that learning within a community situated framework
enhances students’ respect for family elders […] as they grow to recognize these family and community members as legitimate sources of knowledge (p. 88).

Taking into consideration the inquiry process learners go through in order to achieve community informed pieces of writing, as proposed by community based pedagogies (CBP), the authoring cycle (Burke & Short, 1991) is the curricular framework that underlies the pedagogical intervention. Such a framework includes a series of stages whose point of departure is the connection to students’ life experiences, moves into community-based inquiries that feed uninterrupted writing and ends with the sharing and celebration of the writing pieces and the planning of new inquiries.

Having CBP and the authoring cycle at the core of the curricular platform proposed in this chapter challenged my own teaching methodology and redirected it beyond the mere teaching of contents imposed by fixed programs and materials to place me as a curriculum designer. As claimed by Sharkey and Clavijo (2012), “[…] teachers have more pedagogical autonomy than they realize but they tend to doubt their knowledge and expertise, instead of privileging the textbook as authority” (p. 130). Therefore, CPB turned my role into an agent of change through the implementation of a methodology that permitted us, teachers and students, to construct curriculum.

In tune with the objectives of the pedagogical intervention, the articulated organization on the visions of curriculum, language, learning, and classroom that underlie it are presented as follows.

**Vision of Curriculum**

In agreement with the curricular platform presented, the pedagogical intervention is framed within what Nunan (1999) termed learner-centeredness in the sense in which students are enabled
to participate in curricular decisions such as what to learn and how to learn and also because “[They] are actively involved in the learning process [and] the focus is on the learner […]” (p. 14).

The specific type of curriculum on which the pedagogical intervention rests is curriculum as inquiry (Short et al., 1996), a vision of curriculum that broadly differs from the models that emphasize the mere teaching of content and focuses on what learners want to understand and explore as the result of their interest in the world that surrounds them. The inquiry approach to curriculum is suitable for the pedagogical implementation of this research work since learners are active agents who build knowledge on the basis of their close communities.

Pineda (2001) claims that “inquiry relates to appropriately posing questions of interest to the inquirer and examining endless perspectives to answer those questions or to come up with more of them” (p. 16). In the specific case of this work’s pedagogical intervention, knowledge construction is given through learners’ active explorations of their communities, tensions that arise from their explorations, questions they pose as a result of the tensions encountered, and the investigation of those questions or tensions to create new meanings and pursuits. Curriculum as inquiry stimulates learners to grow and construct meaning as a result of interacting with the physical, intellectual, and social environments that their communities offer.

**Vision of Learning**

With reference to the nature of the learning process, this pedagogical intervention is based on experiential learning as the theory that supports the students’ progress in acquiring communicative competences as writers and inquiry skills. In the experiential view of learning, as Nunan (1999) claims, the learner is the center of a self-discovery learning process in which “[their] immediate personal experiences are taken as the point of departure for deciding how to
organize the learning process” (p. 5). In line with community and inquiry based pedagogy, experiential learning bridges the distance between the known by the individual and the new through immediate experience which, through a process of transformation, results in the construction of new meanings by the individual.

Learning as experience, according to Dewey (1900), goes beyond the mere absorbing of facts and truths of learners as individuals which is measured under a competitive view by comparing learners’ results through recitation of stored and accumulated information or exam taking with this very same purpose. Learning, in this innovation, is not just an “individual affair” but the site for children’s affiliation with life, the site for children to establish contact with reality, the site “with a real motive behind and a real outcome ahead” (p.12), the site for children to become active and alert, the site for cooperation and association in the construction of meaning, and a site where children are not acknowledged for the amount of information individually absorbed but on the basis of the quality of their work.

As posed by Short et al. (1996), “we can only learn by connecting to and building from our experiences” (p. 263). Such experiences, in this intervention, are the community inquiries that feed the students’ writing production; the process they actively go through in order to gather, organize, share information, and construct their community informed pieces of writing.

**Vision of Language**

As for the vision of language on which this curricular platform rests, it is viewed as a tool for learning through experience. Language, in concordance with the experiential vision or learning, is not just a linguistic system or a mere object of study. It is seen not only as the “goal of learning but also as a means of learning” (Tudor, 2001, p. 79).
Language, used by community inquirers, far from being out there is a means for personal and collective fulfillment. In concordance with the community oriented nature of this intervention, language is the vehicle through which students construct meaning on the basis of their unique and personal learning agendas. Authentic communication takes place in the classroom since students convey information of personal interest to them and communicative involvement takes place among them. In this sense, Dewey (1933) asserts that language is organically linked to the range of ideas and worlds that are in vogue outside the school. Such a conception of language in the classroom empowers students as effective communicators and open new learning horizons since discourse is no longer monopolized by the teacher.

Vision of Classroom

Framed within the articulated views of curriculum as inquiry, learning as an experiential matter, and language as a tool to construct meaning through experience, the vision of classroom that underlies this pedagogical intervention is that of classroom as a site for organizing learning experiences. As this innovation implies an active learner’s role as a community inquirer-researcher, the classroom is then the place where students learn through experience, where not only a language is learned but where the possibilities for making meaning on the local knowledge that close communities possess is open. The classroom that fosters students as inquirers, thinkers, and communicators is not a place set apart in which to learn lessons but a part of the active community life, as stated by Dewey (1900):

[The classroom] has a chance to affiliate itself with life, to become the child’s habitat, where he learns through directed living, instead of being only a place to learn lessons having an abstract and remote reference to some possible living to be done in the future. It gets a chance to be a miniature community, an embryonic society (p. 18).
Since the IB curriculum of New York School aims to reach students’ global citizenship and this intervention supports such an aim through the local, the language classroom transcends the boundaries of the school’s facilities and triggers students’ learning interests when they do research on their city, neighborhoods, family circles, and school community helpers. The classroom of this pedagogical work is then permeated by the realities of the communities that our students inhabit; it becomes “a place where agendas of social nature are pursued in addition to or by means of the learning of a language” (Tudor, 2001, p. 124).

The language classroom of this pedagogical intervention, as claimed by Dewey (1998), broadly differs from the traditional classroom since in the latter “the school environment of desks, blackboards, a small schoolyard [is] supposed to suffice. There [is] no demand that the teacher should become intimately acquainted with the conditions of the local community, physical, historical, economic, occupational etc., in order to use them as educational resources” (p. 36). The classroom that this innovation fosters is not just a physical area surrounded by four walls but it is open to the students’ communities and permits the connection between learning and experience; it allows the teacher to utilize physical and social surroundings to build up learning experiences that lead students to grow.

**Pedagogical Intervention**

The forthcoming section of this chapter presents the goals, methodology, stages, and learning experiences of the pedagogical innovation. Respecting the goals that it underpins, they are stated as follows:

- Provide students with a relevant context for their EFL school literacy practices through community based learning
- Promote students’ close communities as powerful sources for curriculum development.
THIRD GRADERS AS COMMUNITY INQUIRERS

- Empower students as active agents and informed community inquirers
- Foster writing of different genres as a means to express shared meaning on community issues

With such goals in mind and in concordance with the demands of the IB curriculum of New York School presented in chapter one, I designed a pedagogical intervention based on the authoring cycle (Burke & Short, 1991) as curricular framework. This model is based on the vision of curriculum as inquiry and intends to respond to three key issues: “how students learn, what should they be learning, and what contexts support that learning” (p. 33). The authoring cycle promotes the interaction between different knowledge and sign systems and fosters the development of inquiry skills and autonomy among students through a series of stages described by Short, Harste, and Burke (1996) as follows: (a) life experiences, building from the known; (b) interrupted personal engagements, taking individual time to find questions for inquiry; (c) exploring meaning constructs with collaborative others, gaining new perspectives from others; (d) reflection and revision, group revision on inquiry; (e) presenting and sharing meaning with others, inquiry presentations; (f) examining the operation of sign system processes, strategy instruction based on the processes students are following; and (g) invitation to further engagements, taking action on new inquiries. The authoring cycle is illustrated through the following visual display based on the stages Burke and Short (1991) propose:
The pedagogical implementation, carried out from April to October 2015, is made up of three curricular units through which students were invited to inquire into their communities and accomplish the construction of particular text types in regards to their built meaning on local themes, as shown in the table below:

Table 1 Curricular units and text types accomplished

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Curricular Unit</th>
<th>Accomplished Text Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 6 to May 28</td>
<td><strong>Brothers &amp; Sisters:</strong> An inquiry into family stories and relationships among its members</td>
<td>Opinion Paragraph</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE FIRST CURRICULAR UNIT, BROTHERS & SISTERS (SEE APPENDIX J FOR WORKING PLAN UNIT ONE: BROTHERS & SISTERS), WAS INITIATED WITH STUDENTS’ LIFE EXPERIENCES WITH REGARDS TO THEIR FAMILY CIRCLES. IN THE FIRST STAGE OF THE UNIT, ASPOSED BY SHORT ET AL. (1996), STUDENTS’ FIRST ENGAGEMENTS WERE OPEN ENDED AND ALLOWED THEM TO START BUILDING FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCES RELEVANT TO THEM. SUCH A STAGE WASCalled “BRINGING OUR BROTHERS & SISTERS INTO THE CLASSROOM”. STUDENTS Explored FAMILY ISSUES BY MEANS OF LITERATURE CIRCLES ON TOPICS CLOSE TO THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES. READ-ALoudS WERE NOT PASSIVE BUT PERMITTED STUDENTS TO CONNECT FAMILY ISSUES DEPICTED IN THE STORIES WITH THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES WITHIN THEIR FAMILIES AND Triggered CONVERSATION ON THE TOPICS PRESENTED AND INTEREST IN FURTHER EXPLORATION OF THE ISSUES THAT CONNECTED TO THEIR OWN LIVES.

INTERESTS ARISING FROM THE LITERATURE CIRCLES WERE FURTHERLY EXPLORED WHEN STUDENTS’ FAMILY STORIES WERE BROUGHT INTO THE CLASSROOM. PREVIOUS TO THE FOLLOWING ENCOUNTER, STUDENTS WERE ASKED TO INTERVIEW FAMILY MEMBERS AND COLLECT “REMEMBER WHEN STORIES” THAT DEPICTED THE ISSUES FOUND THROUGH THE READ-ALoudS; STUDENTS BROUGHT THEIR NOTES ON THEIR STORIES AND COLLECTED FAMILY PHOTOS THAT ILLUSTRATED THEM. AS FAMILY STORIES DEPICTING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SIBLINGS WERE SHARED, WE COULD OBSERVE PHOTOS DISPLAYING FAMILY EXPERIENCES SUCH AS TRIPS, CELEBRATIONS, AND DIFFICULT SITUATIONS, AMONG OTHERS.

ORAL TESTIMONIES WERE ALSO PART OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LEARNING AND LIFE EXPERIENCES. MEMBERS FROM THE STUDENTS’ FAMILY CIRCLES WERE INVITED TO THE CLASSROOM. A VARIETY OF PEOPLE...
visited us: a student’s mom who was expecting her third child, two fifth graders who are twin sisters, another student’s older brother, and a mom and dad with their newborn baby. Students were actively inquiring into different issues regarding family themes: how life is when one’s mom is going to have a baby, what the relationship among twin siblings is like, how it is to be the older or the younger sibling, and what life is like with a newborn baby in the family.

After having explored life experiences in relation to family issues, the second stage of the intervention, uninterrupted personal engagements (Burke & Short, 1991), which was called “brothers & sisters around us”, allowed students to engage themselves in learning for particular purposes according to the personal interest that emerged from the “life experiences” stage. Students were able to complete the “what I know”, and the “what I want to learn” sections of the KWL chart having into account their life experiences as the point of departure for posing new questions in regards to the manner in which relationships among siblings function. Students started investigating and collecting data on the basis of the posed questions. They designed a data collection tool and administered it to friends, classmates, relatives, and teachers, among others with the purpose of responding to the questions raised. Students brought and shared their findings with peers. Common findings on family issues were discussed and listed as the five generalizations that would serve as the basis for the organization of the different inquiry groups; students signed up for the group that most interested them.

Students were then given time for reflecting on their personal interests and they started pursuing their own learning agendas according to the inquiry group they had signed up for. They continued to interview community members again, but with more focused questions on their personal inquiries. Findings were brought and shared in class and I provided them with an instructional lesson on how to organize data gathered and personal opinions about family issues
within an opinion paragraph. Students went through the process of writing that included the planning, drafting, and re-drafting of their community-based writing.

The subsequent stage of the intervention was called “sharing our constructed meanings on brothers and sisters”, this corresponded to what Burke and Short (1991) described as exploring meaning with collaborative others. In this stage, students were “faced with perspectives and ideas that challeng[ed] their thinking” (Short et al. 1996, p. 278) since they were encouraged to work in an author’s circle with peers in which they shared the drafts of their opinion paragraphs, asked questions about each other’s work, and made suggestions in order to make the paragraphs better pieces of writing. Then, through the editor’s table, students sat together and revised their opinion paragraphs after the corrections suggested had been made. They exchanged texts and proofread them; I supported such proofreading process by providing each group with feedback on their work.

Students went then through the reflection and revision stage (Burke & Short, 1991) which was called “how effectively do I express my meanings on brothers and sisters issues? Such a stage consisted of students’ individual reflection on others’ contributions to their writing pieces. Students modified their opinion paragraphs according to peers’ comments and suggestions; such modifications included corrections in terms of grammar, spelling, text structure, and communicative function.

After having accomplished the goals in terms of gained knowledge on family issues and the construction of opinion pieces on such a community theme, the following step termed by Burke and Short (1991) as presenting and sharing meaning with others, was “celebrating our new understandings on brothers & sisters”. Students went public with their meaning constructed on family issues. The five inquiry groups publicly presented the outcomes of their investigation to
the class as a whole; they shared their edited opinion paragraphs and also their learning outcomes through a number of sign systems such as family photos, student-drawn pictures of their own families, timelines on important events in their family lives, family trees, remember when stories on their families, and family collages and mobiles, among others.

Then, students examined the operation of sign system processes (Burke & Short, 1991). Such a stage was called “What can we improve in our next community inquiries?” and it consisted of an examination of the inquiry process on the part of the students. They were encouraged to think of how well they had achieved every goal throughout the inquiry process as well as of the difficulties they had faced. At last, there was an invitation for further engagements which was called “What new inquiries are we going to pursue?” As its name may suggest, this stage consisted of encouraging students to think of new ways of investigating their close communities on the basis of constructed knowledge about family issues. Students were asked about what new interests they would like to pursue in regards to their community. Students came out with the idea of investigating broader communities such as their neighborhoods and city.

Having as a basis their meaning constructed on brothers and sisters issues, students were invited to think of a possibility for transferring immediate experiences on family issues to a broader field of their community life. Teacher proposes “community” as an umbrella term for future engagements and students brainstormed on new interests arisen from their community inquiry. Ideas were written on the board in the form of a word web with the word community as the concept to be explored in a broader sense for the coming pursuits on community themes.

The second curricular unit, Getting to Know our Barrio & City (see Appendix K for working plan unit two: Getting to know our barrio & city) was initiated as the result of the students’ interests towards community issues that surpassed their family circles. Students’
collected ideas for their inquiries in their own neighborhoods and city and independently organized a “community museum”. Printed and visual sources on students’ communities such as art prints, posters, photographs of important places or people, brochures, booklets, pamphlets, fliers, and newspapers from the community were the starting point for exploring meaning constructs with peers. Sharing community sources broadened students’ perspectives on the communitarian sources that surrounded them, and they started planning their personal learning agendas on different themes: community helpers in the neighborhoods, graffiti around the city, libraries, museums and landmarks, among others, were the themes inquiry groups decided to investigate in more focused manners. Such investigations included interviews to community people and visits to community places. Time was left for individual reflection and revision on gathered data; students independently organized the information.

Through a literature circle, students explored informational texts presented as alphabet books or ABC books in terms of their main features as a text type genre. They were also provided with an instructional lesson on how to display their gathered data through an ABC book with reference to layout and content.

Community inquiries on barrios and city were therefore the entry points for the writing of an informational text presented as an ABC book. Students examined and evaluated their writing outcomes through author’s circles and editor’s tables to redraft and correct their writing pieces which were then shared and presented publicly among the different inquiry groups. Students and teacher examined the whole process and identified the opportunities and difficulties they had faced to achieve their writing products. Students were finally invited to think of new community inquiries they were eager to conduct.
Based on the concept of community students had already constructed, they expressed a common interest to gain new understandings on the way their school works as a community. This new interest became the initial point of the third curricular unit, The People Who Help my Education at School (see Appendix L for working plan unit three: The people who help my education at school). Students’ life experiences triggered students’ inquiries into another of their close communities: their school. Oral testimonies from the school community members such as the maintenance helper, the chef, the principal, the media professional, the psychologist, the nurse, the director of the human resources department, and the systems engineer, among others, permitted students to connect close life experiences with literacy practices in the classroom. Having heard the life stories of the community workers that help their education enabled students to start understanding the way their school works as a community. Students became interested in investigating the different aspects of the school’s functioning on the basis of the oral testimonies shared.

Personal pursuits were discussed and students could identify what they knew and what they wanted to inquire further in relation to their school community. Students signed up for the inquiry groups they desired to belong to on the basis of the area of the school they were eager to know more about. Inquiry groups planned their investigations, field work started when each of the inquiry groups conducted more focused interviews with the community helpers of their interest. Therefore, the school’s facilities were the sites for students’ engagements. The nurse’s office, the parking lot, the soccer fields, the principal’s office, the kitchen, and other areas of the school were usually visited by third graders who started inquiring on the way their school worked by taking photographs, audio recording and video recording the school life beyond their classroom.
Through literature circles, students explored another text type, biography. Such genre was revised and explored in terms of text structure and communicative function. An instructional lesson on biography writing was provided in order to equip students with the tools to structure their text accurately. Independently students reflected and revised gathered data and organized it as the input for their biography pieces. Author’s circles and editor’s tables were carried out throughout the collaborative process of drafting, correcting, and editing the biographies.

Presenting and sharing meaning with others consisted of the publication of the biographies in the institutional newspaper “Puertas Adentro”, time to celebrate and go public with the outcomes of the community inquiries carried out in the school and materialized in the biographies of the people who are really meaningful in the life of the school’s community.

Afterwards, students had the opportunity to reflect on their inquiry process and achievements in terms of writing production. As students identified and critically viewed some community issues, new invitations for future inquiries were proposed by students in terms of what they could do to help overcome problematic situations encountered throughout their personal pursuits.

After having described, in detail, the three curricular units implemented, the following chapter presents the main findings of the study on the basis of the research questions and objectives posed.
Third Graders as Community Inquirers

Chapter 5
Data Analysis and Findings

The preceding chapters presented the literature, research methodology, and pedagogical platform which underlie this pursuit to link literacy instruction on writing with third graders’ lives and inquiries in their communities. Three research questions emerged from such an attempt: firstly, how community situated tasks develop EFL writers as inquirers; secondly, how third graders develop a sense of community when inquiring into their worlds; and thirdly, what developments in the formal aspects of text are evidenced in EFL writing as meaning construction on community issues. Consequently, this study aims at portraying the process through which EFL writers become community inquirers; determining the manner in which third graders develop a sense community through community based tasks; and identifying the formal aspects of text developed in EFL writing. This chapter then depicts the process by which the above stated questions were responded, that is to say, the data analysis procedure through the grounded theory approach and the categories that emerged from such a procedure.

Data Management

The data for this qualitative study was gathered throughout the implementation of three curricular units carried out between the period of April to October 2015. The pedagogical intervention involved students’ uninterrupted inquiries on their close communities: family, school, neighborhood, and city. As children actively investigated their surroundings, a diversity of sources arose from their community based explorations: interviews and surveys conducted with community people, literature circles, remember when stories, talks with guest speakers, group discussions, and written texts, among others. Students’ productions became tangible evidence of the process; therefore, artifacts were the primary source of information by which community
inquiries and writing development were documented. The episodes which took place in the school were all video recorded as a means to examine in detail the inquiries students conducted. The videos were then used as sources for making “after the fact notes” (Hubbard & Miller, 1999); field notes became then the secondary source for data gathering.

Data Analysis Framework

The grounded approach served as the framework of analysis in this action research work since in it theory is generated as qualitative data is gathered and analyzed. In such a framework, once sufficient data have been collected and transcribed, they are broken down, labelled, examined, compared, conceptualized, and categorized to build theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In the specific case of this research study, the grounded approach permitted me to establish an uninterrupted dialogue with the data so that I could code them according to their relevance to my research interest, connect and group them, and establish relationships among the arisen categories. Grounded theory coding resulted, as stated by Charmaz (2010), “the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data” (p. 46).

Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis process conducted consisted mainly of the three major types of coding in grounded theory: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Such techniques permitted me to identify patterns, groups, and categories that served to inductively generate theory from the qualitative data gathered and to respond to the research questions. The process followed is described in the subsequent lines.

After having collected and transcribed the data of the first curricular unit entitled Brothers & Sisters, I decided to use the Atlas.ti software for qualitative data analysis version 6.2.25 in order to get started with open coding. Such type of coding, as Strauss and Corbin (1990) pose,
is the stage in which “the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and [in which] questions are asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data” (p. 62). I began to read and reread students’ artifacts and field notes and started coding the instances that could potentially nurture my research interest, always keeping in mind the research questions and objectives of the study. In this first step of naming data, I intended to find actions and leave theoretical categories aside, as suggested by Charmaz (2010): “[i]nitial coding should stick closely to the data. [The researcher should] try to see actions in each segment of data rather than applying preexisting categories to the data [and] attempt to code with words that reflect action” (p. 47). Students’ artifacts such as the surveys and interviews they conducted in their families, the opinion paragraphs they wrote as a result of their inquiries on family issues as well the field notes on talks with family members as guest speakers, remember when stories, narrations on family experiences, among others, were initially coded as follows:

Field notes – May 21, 2015
It is important to note that, as the data collected from the first curricular unit was going through open coding, the data from the second unit was being gathered. As Strauss & Corbin (1990) claim, data gathering and data analysis are interwoven processes that occur alternately so that analysis can guide data collection. The fact that both processes were conducted simultaneously made open coding for the subsequent units more focused since having noticed the most salient and frequent codes served as a basis for the future data sampling. Gathered data from unit two, *Getting to Know Our Barrio and City*, and three, *The People Who Help My Education at School*, went through more focused open coding.

After having fractured and labelled the data by using distinct codes, the next stage consisted of axial coding which Strauss and Corbin (as cited by Charmaz, 2010) refer to as “[a] strategy for bringing data back together again in a coherent whole” (p. 60). At this point, Atlas.ti had provided me with the list of codes and their corresponding groundedness and this allowed me to compare code to code and group them according to the commonalities found. The initial codes were then put together in broader abstract groups that became the preliminary categories and subcategories which responded to each of the research questions posed.

Identifying the preliminary categories and subcategories was followed by selective coding. In this phase, I started writing code notes in order to keep ideas that possibly connected the three categories found. I also used memos in order to keep track of the theoretical concepts I found relevant to explain each of the categories. As for the links among categories, I used the organizing scheme Strauss and Corbin (as cited by Charmaz, 2010) propose. 1) Conditions, understood as the circumstances that form the studied phenomena and answer the why, where, how come, and when questions; 2) actions/interactions, participants’ responses to issues and answer the by whom and how questions; and 3) consequences, the outcomes of participants’
actions or interactions and answer the what happens questions as a result of such actions/interactions.

Findings

After having kept a constant interaction with the data, gathered the initial codes, and grouped them according to patterns encountered, the following categories emerged to respond to the three questions posed. 1) How do community situated tasks develop EFL writers as inquirers? ; 2) How do third graders develop a sense of community when inquiring into their surroundings? ; and 3) What developments in the formal aspects of text are evidenced in writing as meaning construction on community issues? The categories are shown in the visual display below.

Figure 5. Visual display. This figure illustrates the three emergent categories and subcategories and the interactions among them.
Using community sources to construct meaning through inquiry. The first category, defined as the investigation on local sites as the building blocks of gained knowledge, is based on the view of learning depicted by Schecter, Solomon, and Kittmer (2003): “learning as a problem-solving process that cannot be understood outside of the different collective contexts in which learners interact and construct knowledge” (p. 83). Such a statement brings to mind two aspects at the core of this research work, community-based knowledge and inquiry. The inquiry processes students went through were triggered by the sources found in their communities: people, places, visual, and printed materials. When inquiring into family issues, students started making meaning from siblings in their families; photographs and remember when stories (stories told by family members on significant moments of their lives) were collected to build from the known. Chantal’s (students’ names are pseudonyms to protect their identities because of ethical issues) gathered data on her father’s experiences as a sibling illustrates family issues:

![Image](image.jpg)

*Figure 6. Student artifact.* This figure illustrates a student’s artifact: Remember when story) – April 7, 2015
Students conducted community-based research by obtaining accounts directly from the community members as well as from visual material available in local sites. They actually inquired into their lives outside of the school and this provoked an interest in bringing community members as guest speakers in the classroom in order to gain new perspectives on initial interests. In so doing, a range of community people fed students’ inquiries: family members such as pregnant moms, twin siblings, families with newborn babies; community helpers such as taxi drivers, social helpers, shop assistants, teachers; and people who support the educational services in the school like the nurse, the principal, the chef, the psychologist, the maintenance professional, the media and communication professional, and the systems engineer, among others, became valuable community sources of information for meaning making. Community people in as well as beyond the boundaries of the school became one of the primary sources that supported students’ inquiries and helped them make meaning according to their personal engagements, as the photos taken by students during their investigations show:

*Figure 7. Community people as knowledge holders. This photo illustrates how community members helped students develop as inquirers.*
Interviews and talks with variety of community members were carried out throughout students’ inquiries in order to get insights on community life, experiences, and skills to build meaning on the manner surrounding communities function. Local knowledge from people became, as Moll (1994) claims, a resource for the children who experienced that “valuable knowledge existed beyond the classroom and that it could be movilized for academic learning [and that inquiring into] the community, as represented by the people in the various social networks and their collective funds of knowledge, could become part of the classroom routine” (p.201). Some of the interactions between students and community members were registered in my field notes as follows:

I asked Taleb how his routine had changed since the baby had come to the family and he said that in the moment in which the baby had been born, it was too hard for him since he had to help around the house, go to work, and help the older children with homework. Isabella asked him what he liked most from the baby and he said that the baby was really cute and since he had come, the family had become more united; he added that now the baby was the center of the family and everybody wanted to care about him. When Taleb asked his dad if he felt proud of his baby, he said, “claro, yo me siento el hombre más feliz y orgulloso de tener no sólo a mi bebé, sino a tres hijos porque gracias a Dios las cosas se nos han dado y nos ha regalado tres hermosos hijos sanos, inteligentes y que nos han hecho felices a nosostros como papás.”

Field notes (class as a whole interview to a couple of parents with a newborn baby) – May 21, 2015

- David: ¿Tú cuando naciste?
- José Quiroga (chef): David yo nací exactamente el 7 de septiembre de 1958, tengo más o menos 58 años, nací en una provincia hermosa y muy famosa de mi Colombia que se llama Vélez, Santander. Es muy famosa porque de allá es el bocadillo veleño y tenemos fama por que la iglesia es atravesada.

- Sara: ¿Cómo así atravesada, don José?
- José Quiroga (chef): ¿Han ido a viajar a los pueblitos de la provincia? Normalmente aquí está el parque principal, y aquí queda la alcaldía mirando para el centro del parque, aquí el centro comunitario mirando… y la iglesia mirando al parque? En mi pueblo no. En mi pueblo la iglesia mira es para allá, entonces está atravesada…somos famosos por eso.
Además del bocadillo veleño. ¿Quién ha comido bocadillo veleño? (children raised their hands) ¿Se acuerdan qué fue antier el postre?

-Estudiantes: bocadillo

- José Quiroga (chef): Sí, bocadillo. Pero ese no era veleño porque el veleño viene envuelto en plástico, que es como de dos colores o viene envuelto en una hojita que se llama hoja de bijao, se llama hoja de bijao…por si alguien les pregunta…ayyy papito yo quiero un bocadillo pero que venga en hojita de bijao. Entonces les preguntan, uyy ¿dónde aprendiste tanto? jajajajaajaaja

Field notes (class as a whole interview to the chef) – September 30, 2015

- Juan E.: I have a question.
- Adela Cruz (principal): Yes?
- Juan E.: What do you have in that…
- Adela Cruz (principal): There?
- Juan E.: Yes, there.
- Adela Cruz (principal): In these folders?
- Juan E.: What type of…
- Juanita: Important papers I think
- Adela Cruz (principal): On my desk what I have is the folders that contain all the legal papers of the school, from this year and some years ago. I want to show you one of the folders…. This folder contains all the papers and the documents of Gestión Directiva which is what I normally do and Gobierno Escolar from the last year… and I have to keep this because here I have legal documents that I have to show when somebody comes to audit us or when secretaría de Educación Nacional comes to visit us in order to check out if we are doing what we have to.

Field notes (inquiry group interview to the principal) – October 13, 2015

Figure 8. Student artifact. This figure illustrates a student artifact (survey) – April 15, 2015
As illustrated through the samples above, the inquiry activities demanded use of both languages on the part of students. In the process of becoming inquirers, they used Spanish and English for authentic communication and thinking. Moreover, and as argued by Pineda (2001), “[students were led through a process in which] content, inquiry, and language processes interact[ed] and benefit[ed] one another” (p. 16).

In addition to community people, printed and visual sources of information as well as community places served as powerful resources for students to inquire into their worlds. After having used photo albums in their inquiries about family issues, other visual and printed sources served as powerful community resources for students to read their communities when they started inquiring into their neighborhoods and city. Sources such as fliers, brochures, local newspapers, graffiti, signs, menus, pieces of art, and pamphlets were essential in the data gathering process students carried out when inquiring in their lives outside of the school. Such resources supported students’ understandings, generated questions, and issues that they wanted to explore further. It resulted of great interest to see how students independently organized a community museum with all the artifacts they had gathered in their neighborhood and city explorations, as shown in this excerpt from the field notes about the interaction among the students:

Andres displayed an image explaining that Bogota Humana was “the image of the city major”, in his own words. He also presented some newspapers: El Tiempo, El Espectador, ADN, Q’hubo; and said they were the most important newspapers in the city. He continued then showing us pictures of some pieces of art from Fernando Botero and told us he had seen them in Museo Botero. Sarita said, “He make figures and pictures of fat people.” When Josse saw the photo that followed in the presentation (a graffiti), he asked, “What is this picture of that person?” Andres saw what Josse meant and said “Jaime Garzón”; Andres was not sure about who he was. Then Josse and Andres chorally read the message on the graffiti: “Hasta aquí las sonrisas, país de m…o.k.” The boys did not finish to read the graffiti aloud and I did not realize what had happened (there was a word they are not supposed to say). Andres added, “In Bogota graffiti is very important as it show the (inaudible)” David interrupted him, “it is one of the most important graffiti.”

Field notes (community museum) – August 6, 2015
As depicted in the notes above, Andres’ inquiry was about graffiti. In class, he displayed a photo of a graffiti that powerfully caught students’ attention and which later became the theme for further exploration. What could be read on the graffiti: “…hasta aquí las Sonrisas País de Mierda…” triggered students’ natural state of curiosity about the surrounding world. This is precisely what Short, Harste, and Burke (1996) assert when describing the inquiry process in children, “through their active explorations of the world, tensions arise and they ask questions about aspects of the world that puzzle them. Then, they systematically investigate those questions or tensions and create new understandings, new questions, and issues that they want to explore further” (p. 257). As the community artifacts gathered and the KWL show, students came up with new questions and expressed the necessity to create meaning on subjects that had caught their attention through their individual engagements:

Figure 9. Community printed and visual artifacts. This figure illustrates samples of the printed and visual artifacts students gathered when observing and exploring their close surroundings.
Community places also appeared as sources students approached to gain meaning on the inquiries they pursued. Places in the different neighborhoods children inhabit as well as the city were mapped as a result of the need for students to make connections with what they already know and is part of their lives. Building from the known is, according to the authoring cycle curricular framework by Burke and Short (1991), pivotal in the inquiry cycle since “the knowledge and understanding that students already have about life come from the social and cultural communities in which they live and learn both inside and outside of school” (p. 35). For instance, the manner David mapped his close community was the point of departure for him to be engaged in new themes and to pursue new interests for his future piece of writing: an ABC book on his neighborhood, as depicted in the way he presents his findings to his classmates:

David started introducing what he had found on his neighborhood; he said it was Santa Barbara Occidental and started showing a number of pictures he had taken while walking around it. He said, “you can see the hospital Reina Sofia, I born here”. I asked him if it was located in calle 127 and he confirmed it. Then he pointed at another photo and said it was Unicentro shopping mall and also a photo which he called Mercado de las Pulgas. I asked him if it was close to Santa Barbara mall and David was going to answer when he was interrupted by Juan E., who added, “Yes, and is up in a hill and that part is so beautiful

Figure 10. Student’s artifact. This figure illustrates students’ artifact (KWL chart) – August 11, 2015
because you can see cultures that persons do…” he added, “and the persons who do things with cans and other things”

Field notes (community museum) – August 6, 2015

Figure 11. Student artifact. This figure illustrates a student’s artifact (neighborhood photos) – August 6, 2015

The community-oriented learning activities students went through permitted them to actively explore their surroundings to gather data instead of memorizing them as traditionally occurred in the EFL classroom. Meaning making through uninterrupted interaction with community sources such as family members, community helpers, classmates, community places, and visual and printed sources found in the city and neighborhood was essential in the development of learners as inquirers. In this sense, it was possible to demystify the belief that teachers, textbooks, or internet sources are the only holders of knowledge and learning became more experiential and relational. Students became active researchers in their community, they generated knowledge for themselves and constructed their own meanings; As Schecter et al.
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(2003) argue, “children develop[ed] valuable inquiry skills and gain[ed] confidence in their own abilities as researchers, incorporating terms such as data, example, and evidence into their academic registers” (p. 88).

This category, labelled as using community sources to construct meaning through inquiry, illustrates the conditions under which writing through inquiries on community issues developed among third graders. It explains the how, where, when, and the why of student initiated pursuits and directly connects to the second category which deals with the manner students interact with and respond to community issues.

**Developing a sense of membership in the community.** The second category is defined as the promotion of students’ connections, appreciation, respect, and involvement in the communities they inhabit. The community approach adopted in this study not only developed inquiry and literacy skills in third graders but raised a sense of belonging and membership among them. Students started valuing what their close communities possess and respect toward community people and places was generated. During their inquiries with their relatives, neighbors, and school helpers students developed appreciation for them, they enjoyed bringing community life into the classroom and sharing with peers and teacher what they lived beyond the boundaries of the school. Students manifested that they wanted to keep in contact with some of the community people that interacted with them. Even a pregnant mom who visited the class to respond to questions on family life had to visit the class some months later with the new born baby since the students made her promise to come back, bring the baby with her, and share experiences on what it was like to have a new born baby in the family.

Linkages between students and their communities were fostered in various manners. Students developed understanding on how their communities are organized and how they
function to provide them with what they need. The interaction among the school, students’ communities, and families produced positive social outcomes since students became socially sensitive and more responsible toward community issues. They started to consider themselves as part of community problems and became aware of the necessity to generate changes. This second category, developing a sense of membership in the community, has to do with the assets students found in their communities and with the critical stance they assumed with regards to community issues. Therefore, it is presented more broadly through the two subcategories explained below.

*Valuing assets in the community.* The community-based orientation adopted in this research work and defined by Sharkey and Clavijo (2012) as “an asset-based approach that does not ignore the realities of curriculum standards but emphasizes local knowledge and resources as starting points for teaching and learning” (p. 41), permitted students to identify four types of assets in their families, neighborhoods, school, and city: human, cultural, historical, and communitarian assets (Medina, 2013) which are explained in detail as follows.

*Human assets.* The first legitimate sources of knowledge students identified throughout their community inquiries were the people around them. Students developed a sense and image of what their communities are from their close contact with moms, dads, siblings, neighbors, and community helpers in their school and neighborhoods. In tune with what Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) argue about individuals as assets of a community, meaningful opportunities were provided for children to acknowledge the “giftedness of every individual [as] particularly important [in their community] and [even people who were not valued became acknowledged] as full contributors to the community-building process” (The Assets of a Community section, para. 1).
The recognition of community people as possessors of valuable local knowledge that fosters community development was portrayed in students’ writings. A powerful catchy in vivo code arose from Sara’s writing when she defined the maintenance helper of the school as a super hero, as illustrated in her biography:

*Figure 12. Student artifact. This figure illustrates a student artifact (biography) – November 6, 2015*
As depicted in Paula’s excerpt of her ABC book, respect and appreciation for people were fostered through the acknowledgement of their academic and professional qualities and personal values that foster community progress. This student, as an inhabitant of a rural community, recognizes the relevance of knitters in the preservation of traditions in her town and how they are internationally acknowledged. Direct interactions among students and community people also illustrate the manner in which the history of their communities is reconstructed through human assets, as shown below:

Samuel: ¿Y cuántos años llevas acá en el colegio?
Aura Menjura (nurse): llevo 31.
Miss: ¿Se lo pueden imaginar? ¡31 años trabajando Aurita acá en el colegio! Sí, yo desde que llegue aquí, hace once años la encontré.
Juan Diego: ¿Qué te llevó a trabajar en enfermería?
Aura Menjura (nurse): Pues yo quería una carrera que pudiera ayudar a la gente. A mí me gusta ayudar a las personas, entonces era la profesión que como más enfocaba, además en ese tiempo no había enfermería, fui yo la que vine a fundar la enfermería aquí en el colegio.

Josse: ¿Cómo así? ¿No había enfermería en el colegio en el año 84?

Aura Menjura (nurse): No. Las profesoras tenían su botiquín en el salón; pero era una cosa chiquitica… pues había varias cositas pero pues no era igual; y pues no era lo necesario, yo inicié en administración y entonces después el doctor dijo que necesitaba alguien que atendiera los niños… entonces yo me comencé a preparar en la Cruz Roja. Hice todos los cursos de enfermería allá y después me fui para el Sena y en el Sena estudié enfermería también y finalmente me fui a la Fundación Hospitalaria Funca. Desde ahí he manejado la enfermería aquí en el colegio Nueva York.

Field notes (class as a whole interview to the nurse) – October 2, 2015

*Cultural assets.* Another type of resource that emerged from students’ inquiries into their communities were cultural assets defined by Delgado (2007) as “the beliefs, traditions, principles, knowledge, and skills [which] are not fixed in time [but] are subject to change as the context changes” (p. 20). Mapping their community raised students’ awareness of the cultural resources available to them as inhabitants of their neighborhood and city. Therefore, a sense of belonging was fostered since students identified community places as possessing opportunities for citizens to gain knowledge, enjoy learning, and strengthen traditions.
Through situated inquiries, students’ awareness of community-rooted traditions, knowledge, and beliefs was raised. Cultural assets were recognized through community institutions which, as asserted by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), “make up the sinew of the neighborhood [and should be] moviliz[ed] for community development and progress (An Alternative Community Development Path, para. 1). As illustrated by the examples above, Jorge Eliecer Gaitán theater was acknowledged as a provider of human knowledge in the field of art; Monserrate is depicted through people’s religious beliefs and traditional food by Juan E. as “People go there to tanks god for favors like miracles […] it is cold so that you can eat tamal and chocolate”; Planetario de Bogota was portrayed as a holder of knowledge in the scientific realm since it, in Samuel’s words, “[offers] all the possibilities to explore the universe”; and Biblioteca Julio Mario Santo Domingo was recognized as a community builder through the graffiti Maria
Paula chose to present her ABC book. Such cultural assets are also evidenced through student participation regarding discussions on their community explorations, as follows:

Maria Paula displayed pictures of cultural events and added; “Bogota has culture, dance, and music”. The last set of pictures the girl showed the children was entitled: Bogota is: ajiaco, Maloka, Transmilenio, Carrera Séptima, and Monserrate […] I asked Maria Paula about one of the pictures and she said it was Maloka. When I asked where it was located, Sarita yelled, “I know, I know…in the sixty eight, like in the…how do you say frontera?…in the border with Salitre and…” I asked Maria Paula what she knew about Maloka and she said that it was a nice place and we could take beautiful photos there. Then, Juan David said, “you can investigate of the topics of science…” Gabriela interrupted the boy and said (she was holding a brochure again, I could read the word Biblored on it), “Miss, for example, this is a group of libraries that his name is Biblored and has libraries where children… mmm” A child behind me said, “Julio Mario Santo Domingo” but Gabriela continued to read the brochure and explained to us what Biblored was about: “children and teenagers and people use it…” Sara then introduced the planetarium. She said: “if you want to go to the planetarium, you can only go from Friday to Sunday… and the holydays is a… how do you say descuento?…a discount …in the holidays the ticket of kids is like 2.000 and of the adults is of 3.000.” I asked children what they could learn if they went to the planetarium and Juan E. said we could learn about the space but a child (unidentified) interrupted him and said we could learn about other planets. Josse didn’t let Juan E. to continue to respond and added: “the stars”, but Juan E. added, “constellations”. Juan E. went ahead: “and the activity of the sun makes, eruptions, sometimes.” As the children and I moved to the right, Sofia, holding a bunch of pictures, started presenting her neighborhood…

Field notes (community museum) – August 6, 2015

*Historical assets.* Community situated inquiries allowed students to orient themselves in time and place. Explorations on personal histories from community members, homes, and local places allowed students to gain knowledge on their local history; that constitutes the historical assets of their community. Students came to understand family histories and the manner they have shaped their personal lives. They became aware of crucial times in their collective histories, which had brought consequences to their current family structure and dynamics. Through the remember when story Juan D. gathered, there is evidence of the moment in which his youngest cousin leaves the family because of his academic pursuits and how such an unforgettable experience has relevance in his family’s history.
Figure 15. Student artifact. This figure illustrates a student artifact (remember when story) – April 7, 2015

Students unveiled the significance of historical assets from their families and homes, and from the community landmarks they accessed. Mapping the city undoubtedly provided children with knowledge on the local history which went beyond what they had found in history class or books. Students viewed the city from a different perspective and found it as the source for gaining knowledge on relevant events and people that have shaped what they and their communities are in the present. Historical assets strengthened children’s connections with their city as they saw themselves as part and as a result of their community’s history. The “sense of place” Knapp (2014, p. 5) refers to when citing Gussow’s words was portrayed in each of the following students’ explorations on historical assets:
Figure 16. Students’ artifacts. This figure illustrates student artifacts (ABC book) – August 20, 2015

The samples above display how local places were approached and acknowledged as historically valuable. Pasaje Rivas, for instance, was described not only as a place to get handicrafts, as it is commonly known, but acknowledged by the history depicted in it; Casa del Florero, was directly related to the independence of the country; Casa de la Moneda, as the holder of the processes local currency has gone through; and Museo de Oro, as the possessor of historically important artifacts representing the Colombian Pre Hispanic period. Such a
recognition of historical assets had already been posited by Juan M. when he told his classmates and teacher what he had encountered interesting in his personal inquiry during the community museum group work the children had organized independently:

Juan M. said he and his classmates were going to explain to the class and teacher about some pictures of the Gold Museum they had pasted on the window. He said “the Museum of Gold have so many history because have the … many things that we record in so many time… there we can see objects that our indians made many years ago and are made of gold … mmm now you can see other presentations…”

Field notes (community museum) – August 6, 2015

Communitarian assets. Students’ neighborhoods were acknowledged as the places local residents access in order to meet their needs, solve their problems, or share common interests and activities. Private businesses and public institutions, recognized by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) as institutional assets, “make up the most visible and formal part of a community’s fabric [and are essential] in the process of community development” (The Assets of a Community, para. 3). Exploration on communitarian assets such as fire stations, parks, libraries, banks, theaters, bakeries, among others, emerged from students’ community-based investigations. The field notes on the explanation Sofia gave to her classmates on her neighborhood mapping as well as some samples of written production illustrate children’s findings on such community asset types:

As the children and I moved to the right, Sofia, holding a bunch of pictures, started presenting her neighborhood, “This is my neighborhood, the name is La Española…This is a candy shop”. She started sharing the photos she had taken while walking around her neighborhood with her mom; we could see pictures of her neighborhood’s candy shop, veterinarian’s office, hairdresser’s shop. Sofia said she used to buy lots of candy in the candy shop, she took her dog for a bath in the veterinarian’s office, and she said her aunt worked in the hairdresser’s shop; the girl was explaining to us that her aunt cut people’s hair and nails when Juan E. interrupted her, “All the things that a woman needs!” I found the boy’s comment funny and asked him why he thought that, I told the children that also men used to visit the hairdresser, but Juan E. said “the woman all the time are making things… a pedicure all the time.” An unidentified child said, “My mother is the same.” Sofia continued to present her neighborhood, she added “this is a shop, is in front of my house, in this place we buy many things like fruits…milk…” “Groceries, in general”, I added. A child said she/he had a question but I asked them to let Sofia present her
neighborhood and then they could ask questions. The girl then introduced her neighborhood’s florist; she said she bought flowers there to decorate her house. I added that sometimes people visited the florist to give flowers as presents. Sofia showed us some pictures of what she found in the florist and said “sometimes people decorate the birthdays like that.” David asked Sofia, “your neighborhood is in Usaquen, in Suba, or in what part?” I took advantage of David’s question to tell children that Bogota was divided into twenty localities: a child behind me gave some examples, “Kennedy, Suba, Usaquen…”

Field notes (community museum) – August 6, 2015

Figure 17. Students’ artifacts. This figure illustrates student artifacts (ABC book) – August 20, 2015
Thinking the community critically. The process of becoming “active and informed community agents” (Johnston & Davis, 2008 p. 352) students went through brought new understandings, questions, and issues they wished to explore further. Such personal engagements became the point of departure for thinking more critically about community issues. Inquiries on family themes, for instance, were significant opportunities for students to think of what they had experienced with the arrival of a new sibling or cousin in the family. Some of the children who had experienced such a change reflected upon how the dynamics of their families had become different and the manner their roles within their families had been altered, getting new responsibilities, and feeling worried about the presence of newborn babies in their families. Students then acknowledged conflict as a central issue in their realities and how they, as social beings, are required to assume new roles as members of their community, in this case, their family circle. Such relevant reflections students came up with are illustrated through the literature circle on a non-fiction story on brothers and sisters:

David then seemed to be willing to say something but couldn’t express what he thought accurately, so I helped him organize his thinking and he came up with his idea, “When my mother was going to have my sister, I think it was a boy”. I asked, “And was it a boy or a girl?” “It’s a girl”, David replied and the whole class whispered as if they wanted David to have had a baby brother. “Do you love your sister even though she is not the boy you wanted?” “So so”, the boy said. Then, Gabriela added that when her mother was expecting her sibling, she wanted a girl but it was a boy. She narrated what happened the day the boy was born: “When my mom …how do you say tuvo a mi hermano [when mom gave birth to my brother] I was in the house with my brother and my grandmother and my father call my grandmother and said that my brother was born and I cried”. “Why did you cry?” I asked, and she explained that she was jealous and she felt she was not going to be in the first place anymore. Juanita immediately raised her hand and told the class how jealous she felt when she knew her aunt was expecting a baby and it was a boy. She said she thought her family was not going to love her anymore and we compared her feelings with Gabriela’s feelings about having a new baby in their families, both of them considered it a difficult experience. I then asked the children to continue our walk through the photographs; Taleb was asked to describe the photograph on the following page. “What do you see?” I asked.

Field notes (literature circle) – April 16, 2015
Students’ became aware of their ability to establish new relationships with others within their realities. Therefore, a critical spirit and an active role towards the demands of society’s arouse, as expressed by Juan S.:

Figure 18. Student artifact. This figure illustrates a student artifact (opinion paragraph) – June 9, 2015

Students’ inquiries with community people not only provoked appreciation for the individual talents and productive skills represented by human assets, but helped them gain awareness of the issues that affect personal and community life. Students got acquainted with the manner their personal well-being, health, and security depended on the well-being, health, and security of everyone and everything in their school community. Such understanding of connectedness among community forces directly informed them of the consequences their actions have on others, as the field notes illustrate:
Fabian: Señor Lancheros, ¿Y qué es lo que menos le gusta de su trabajo aquí en el colegio?
Antonio Lancheros (maintenance helper): Bueno, primero les cuento lo que más me gusta…..es trabajar para ustedes los estudiantes y profesores, tener todo al día para su bienestar….pero sí hay cositas que quisiera que mejoraran….mmmmm
Juanita: ¿Cómo cuáles?
Antonio Lancheros (maintenance helper): Como la falta de cuidado que algunos niños tienen con la planta física del colegio…..por ejemplo han dañado las mallas de los campos de deporte y eso ha causado que otros se corten al estar pasando por ahí mmmmm o como cuando dejan botellas de vidrio que luego se rompen y pasa otro y se cae ahí encima y luego derechito pa’ la enfermería. También pasa con el uso de los baños, no se deberían dejar desaseados o rayar las puertas…..eso es más trabajo para todos los del aseo y mantenimiento…. Y no sólo eso sino que esas malas acciones afectan su propio bienestar y salud.
Josse: Ayyyyy sí…. Y yo sé algo más que pasa mmmmmm que los niños no reciclamos y revolvemos toda la basura, Miss Zigli siempre nos dice….

Field notes (class as a whole interview to the maintenance helper) – October 16, 2015

Chantal: ¿Qué te gusta cocinar?
Jose Quiroga (chef): Buena pregunta y va un jaloncito de orejas para ustedes. Me encanta todo lo que son alimentos, desde un tinto hasta un pavo, pasando por una pizza, por una bandeja paisa, por unas lentejas, por una hamburguesa, por un perro caliente, etc. Pero a veces me da una tristeza que es tan importante para ustedes comerse una lechuga. Ahoritica a ustedes les molesta comerse una lechuga, pero cuando tengan mi edad o, con todo respeto, la edad de Miss Ziglinde, cuánto anhelarían que les dieran toda la lechuga del mundo, toda la papaya del mundo porque eso nos mantiene sanos y vivos. Ustedes los hombres llegarán a ser como un James Rodríguez y las niñas como una Mariana Pajón o una Paulina Vega...

Field notes (class as a whole interview to the chef) – September 30, 2015

Apart from having understood their community as a site for learning, students started thinking of local issues from a critical perspective and initiated new inquiries on problematic situations that could be affecting their school community. Investigations into nutrition problems, waste of food, garbage management, and lack of responsibility towards the conservation of the school’s resources were the entry points for new engagements, as depicted through these student-collected evidence of such issues:
Third graders as community inquirers

Figure 19. Students’ artifacts. This figure illustrates students’ artifacts (photos on school community issues) – November 4, 2015

After having expanded on the conditions under which writing through community inquiries developed (category one) and the participants’ responses to the local issues investigated (category two), the outcomes of participants’ interactions with such issues are presented through the third category throughout the subsequent lines.

Writing developed through explicit literacy instruction and socially situated multimodal literacy practices. The third category, defined as an attempt to bridge literacy school practices and learners’ communities to foster an enriched authentic student centered EFL learning environment, became the point of departure to make writing for children a rewarding meaningful experience. Students’ close communities such as their families, neighborhoods, school, and city were the sites students investigated in order to come up with relevant generated
topics to write about instead of the commonly teacher generated writing practices imposed on them.

Having inquired into the local community made it possible to identify valuable resources that were linked with writing instruction, broadening opportunities for meaningful learning. In so doing, exploring siblings’ relationships in close settings was a powerful input for opinion paragraph production; mapping and photographing the neighborhood and city was the entry point for the writing of an ABC book; and interviewing and acknowledging the community workers of the school was the motivation for biography writing.

Community-oriented literacy practices brought a more socially situated dimension of writing through which classroom learning was permeated by the social circles students are embedded in. This is manifested by Samuel’s opinion paragraph, who brings others’ visions of the world into his writing to support his.

*Figure 20. Student artifact. This figure illustrates a student artifact (opinion paragraph) – June 9, 2015*
Personal and social experiences were revealed through writing and students went beyond traditional school writing practices by expressing their viewpoints towards the social issues portrayed in their own experiences. Student-generated writing showed a connection among their life experiences, emotions, and reflections. This led them to learn about themselves, evaluate their reality, and develop a social sensitivity.

Intertextuality was evidenced in most of community-oriented writing production precisely because of the socially situated dimension given to it. As shown below, Andres Juan and Sofia invoked the voices of others in their own writing. These students, as community writers in Rosenblatt’s (2004) words, “are transacting with a personal, social, and cultural environment. [Their] writing process embod[ies] both personal and social […] factors” (p. 1072).
Community inquiries not only nurtured students’ writing and provided them with self-generated and meaningful reasons to write about but promoted multimodality in the writing development of students, who were enabled to recognize the multiple literacy practices their communities offer. In this sense, community-based writing allowed students to provide accounts of their local knowledge from a diversity of sign systems different from language. School traditional practices on writing were therefore surpassed; students left the classroom to do research on community material that could inform their writings, as illustrated through the screen shots of the videos they recorded during their group inquiries:
Multimodality was essential in students’ meaning making of their communities and expanded what counted as literacy in New York School. Students’ interest towards writing tasks was raised since they had never been active constructors of their writing pursuits. Photography was also a powerful resource students used in order to illustrate their inquiries through written production; a number of community themes were portrayed through student-made photos. Neighborhood places and people, city landmarks, pieces of art, and the life of the school
community were caught by the students’ curious lenses and then used as a tool for supporting writing production, as shown below:

*Figure 23. Students’ artifacts. This figure illustrates Student artifacts (photos) – April – November, 2015*

Short et al. (1996), claim that “[i]n schools, language has been overemphasized as the way of constructing meaning and the other systems are treated as frills or talents of only a few” (p.
259). In this same sense, multimodality provided students with a diversity of tools to research their communities, to share their insights with others, and to nurture their pieces of written work. Children were invited to browse through photos, videos, posters, menus, leaflets, newspapers, art prints, and participated in class read-alouds and talks with community members to explore their questions and get meaningful input for their writing. This was evidenced throughout students’ work as shown in the notes below:

To get started with the second part of the literature circle, I showed students a photo of the story’s author, Ellen B. Senisi, and told them that she is also the photographer who illustrated it. I let students know the story behind the author-illustrator’s work; I told them how Senisi was given a camera but didn’t know how to use it, so she started going out and, without being seen, taking photos of siblings in real situations, she even took pictures of her three children as they grew up. She collected the photos for years and started interviewing siblings on their real relationships. I showed students how Senisi played the role of a researcher because she was investigating family issues through photos and interviews and I told them they were going to be researchers, too. Afterwards, I had students go through a picture walk on Senisi’s photographs without paying attention to text. The class as a whole started looking at the photographs that illustrate the story very carefully and, as they went through the photographs, I had them share their impressions on the photos. Sofia not only described what she saw on the first photograph but also talked about the situation depicted, she said: “the girl is see that the mother is going to have a other baby and she is thi

Field notes (literature circle) – April 13, 2015

I continued to walk towards a group of three students, all of them standing on the same table; while observing the brochures, leaflets, flyers, and photographs pasted on the window I asked, “and what is this about?” David was about to answer when Juan E. interrupted him, “the planetarium of Bogota that is…” […] He pointed at Gabriela who, holding a brochure, said: “Miss, this is a restaurant… how do you say folleto? … A brochure of a restaurant”. I asked her what the name of the restaurant was and she said, “La Monapiza”. I pointed out that it was not la Monaliza but La Monapiza. Then I asked where it was located and David tried to help her find the address on the brochure but she quickly responded, “In Chapinero” […] Then it was Juanita’s turn to present what she had found out on her community. She had pasted brochures and photographs on the window. She said she was going to tell us about different touristic places in the city. She started by describing a photograph of Divercity, she said “Divercity is not exactly a park…”

Field notes (community museum) – August 6, 2015
Multimodality was a feature of the individual writings students presented. The use of visual literacy through photos, brochures, and print enriched children’s texts about their close communities. During their inquiries, third graders built meaning through reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and representing, among others.

As broadly described above, writing was permeated by students’ social experience and multimodality; but such components could have not worked successfully if literacy instruction on different writing genres had not been part of the entire process. Community based learning integrated with literacy instruction helped improve text features of writing through a genre approach. Students were instructed on basic paragraph structure and on the knowledge and skills needed to handle three different genres of writing: opinion paragraph, ABC book, and biography. Literacy instruction was aimed in this work at enhancing comprehension of the writing process based on the fact that, as noted by Goodman (1994), “the text is not “simply a set of well-formed sentences composed of words or morphemes. A text must have a unity; it must represent comprehensively a cohesive and coherent message” (p. 1105).

Writing practices structured around local issues successfully linked to literacy instruction permitted students to raise awareness on community issues and helped them understand how different structures of thinking can be expressed through text choices. Samuel (first sample), for instance, shows the manner he organized his thinking within an opinion paragraph, he explicitly identifies the opinion, reasons, and examples as components of his writing. Isabella (second sample), does not show such a clear text structure but she makes a significant attempt to organize her thinking through writing even though she is not the most proficient writer in the classroom:
Figure 24. Students’ artifacts. This figure illustrates student artifacts (opinion paragraphs) – June 9, 2015
Explicit literacy instruction integration in writing practices played a relevant role throughout the pedagogical implementation since students gained awareness of the linguistic features of the different text types through the close analysis of the structure and patterns of texts and the ways in which such structures comply with social functions (Rogers, 2014). Although writing production depended on the particular interests of each student according to their personal community inquiries, student-generated writing was expected to comply with the conventional structure of the different text types. The following samples illustrate how students, despite having chosen different community issues to write about, understood the structure of an informational text such as an ABC book and portrayed gained local knowledge through a cover appropriate to the chosen theme, an introduction or dedication page and the A to Z findings on their community:
Examining the features of text that make up the genre of biography enabled children to structure their thinking and provided them with a logical guide to conduct their interviews with school community members. Having known that the type of biography they were to write should account for the person’s childhood, accomplishments, and importance in the school community functioning, guided students to coherently organize their thought and hence their writing. As the following samples of biography writing illustrate, there are different accomplishment levels in regards to the structuring of such text genre. The biography samples below clearly show an attempt to structure each of the three paragraphs proposed on a single topic regarding the life of the community helper chosen as well as a coherent text organization given by a main idea at the beginning of each paragraph and a set of supporting details that broadly explain the main theme of each paragraph:

**Figure 25.** Students’ artifacts. This figure illustrates student artifacts (ABC book) – August 20, 2015
Figure 26. Students’ artifacts. This figure illustrates students’ artifacts (biography) – November 6, 2015.
Other two instances of biography writing, in the other hand, do not show such a clear text organization but illustrate how these two children, although not being the most accomplished writers, start to organize their ideas into coherent units of thought:

Figure 27. Students’ artifacts. This figure illustrates students’ artifacts (biography) – November 6, 2015.
In general terms, students accomplished the text structure inherent to each of the text types (see appendix M for students’ performances concerning the three text types studied: opinion paragraph, ABC book, and biography); extending, in this way, their comprehension of how written language works. Such results, apart from having been given because of explicit literacy instruction were given because of the community-oriented learning adopted throughout the pedagogical intervention, which is acknowledged by Clavijo (2015) as follows:

When teachers inquire in the local community to identify valuable resources to establish connections with the curriculum, it is possible to broaden the opportunities for meaningful learning and to recognize multiple literacy practices used by learners that account for their local knowledge surpassing the traditional practices promoted by schools. (p. 33).

This chapter has broadly presented the manner in which the data gathered throughout the pedagogical platform implemented responded to the research questions which emerged from the problematic writing panorama in New York School. It provided an overview on how students’ community-based inquiries became the entry points for meaning making and writing development, fostered a sense of belonging towards local communities, and promoted socially situated multimodal literacy practices in the EFL classroom. The findings explained throughout this chapter are closely linked to the conclusions, pedagogical implications, and further research presented in chapter six.
Chapter 6

Conclusions and Implications

The intention of this study was to portray the literacy development of a group of third graders based on two pillars, Community Based Pedagogies and inquiry based learning. Such a goal was addressed on the basis of three research questions: 1) How do community situated tasks develop EFL writers as inquirers?; 2) How do third graders develop a sense of community when inquiring into their surroundings?; and 3) What developments in the formal aspects of text are evidenced in writing as meaning construction on community issues? This chapter presents the conclusions of the research in connection with the data analysis process and findings, its implications, limitations, and possibilities for future research.

The first conclusion that is worth mentioning has to do with the process through which EFL writers become inquirers and the category that emerged as a response to such an issue, “using community sources to construct meaning through inquiry”. In this regard, I can say that students went through learning experiences they had never lived before. The opportunity to act as researchers by interviewing people, making videos, taking photographs, registering and sharing data, and comparing their findings with others allowed them to construct their own meanings and made them believe in their own capacities as autonomous learners. In this sense, students became aware of the fact that they can get information from sources different from the textbook and the teacher, and broadened their perspective in regards to their role in the classroom. They started to believe in themselves as constructors and active participants since each of them could make independent decisions on what they wanted to learn and actively pursued their personal agendas. As they moved through the inquiry cycle by investigating their families, neighborhoods, school, and city, they were empowered as knowledge creators.
In this same sense, I adopted a different perspective with respect to what my students and I can do in the classroom. For more than 18 years as a teacher, I never thought of the potential students and teachers have as creators of knowledge through inquiry processes and the power of investigating their families, neighbors, and school helpers. The inquiry experiences they gained helped shape meaning that enhanced literacy practices, which used to be meaningless and assumed by students as a punishment rather than as rewarding experience.

Leading my students through inquiry brought a transformation in the writing instruction I used to provide my students. The community based inquiries students carried out nurtured their thought and became the entry points for writing development. In this sense, the artificial teacher that imposed writing practices in the classroom disappeared and space was left for student generated authentic pieces as the result of each of their community personal learning interests.

I can conclude then that, pedagogical practices like this, that empower learners and teachers as co-creators of meaning, promote what Freire and Macedo (1987) called an “emancipatory literacy” (p.156) in which we, students and educators, become subjects rather than mere objects and actively start transforming the top down structure of our society.

Regarding the second research interest, the manner in which third graders develop a sense of community, the category that responded to it was “developing a sense of membership in the community”, two subcategories emerged: “valuing assets in the community” and “thinking the community critically”. What I can conclude with respect to such category and subcategories is that students envisioned their realities, started valuing their communities, and improved as social beings. Before the innovation was implemented, children’s connections with their surroundings were inexistent; they were isolated from community realities and mere passive spectators of what
was going on around them. But as the pedagogical innovation progressed and they were engaged in community pursuits, students started to acknowledge and value their community assets.

Students’ linkages with their communities were fostered as they recognized human, cultural, historical, and communitarian assets. Much like in the community study by Medina, Ramírez, and Clavijo (2015), when interviewing family members, friends, neighbors, school community members, and community helpers, students came to understand the individual talents and productive skills of the people around them. This experience awakened their social sensitivity and led them towards an appreciation for people that seemed to be invisible to them. Students discovered that community people are also possessors of knowledge that they cannot find anywhere else. Such community knowledge implicitly generated a sense of belonging, made students take pride in their origin, and helped them understand what community people represent in their own lives and how they help construct a better world. This is fostering strong links with the past and present of our society.

When exploring city and neighborhood, students uncovered historical, and communitarian assets that, although they had always been there, they did not seem to be important to their lives. Through the discovery of such assets, students saw themselves as part of one great community of ancestors who constructed, shaped and transformed their close surroundings. Witnessing how my students became more sensible social beings led me to conclude that engaging our children in community explorations is something that we, educators, can and need to reinforce: the idea that our city and barrio belong to all the citizens and that history ties us together as part of one same community we have the responsibility to preserve.

As a result of thinking their communities from a critical stance, students became active and informed community agents who broadened their perspectives about the implications of being
part of a community. It was surprising to see how they started to identify community issues and thought of possible solutions to overcome the problematic situations encountered. My students adopted a critical view of their school community and their own potential to change things. Their constant dialogue with school workers not only awakened appreciation for human sources of the community but raised awareness of issues such as nutrition problems when they interviewed the nurse, waste of food through their dialogue with the chef, garbage management and lack of responsibility towards the conservation of the school’s resources when talking to the maintenance helper, among others. Such gained awareness of community issues provoked a need for actively initiating other engagements and actions that were not attained as exposed in the limitations section of this chapter. Community explorations then enabled students to read their worlds with growing social sensitivity and commitment.

In order to establish links between international and local aims within the scope of this study, I present the aim of all IB programs as “develop[ing] internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world” (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2009, IB learner profile section, para. 1). Thus, I came to the conclusion that studying the local realities of school, barrio, and city such an international mindedness can be attained since only developing social sensitiveness through appreciation and commitment toward local issues students can understand what being part of the world means. Using Freire and Macedo’s words (1987), I can conclude that “students have to become literate about their histories, experiences, and the culture of their immediate surroundings [in order to] appropriate those codes and cultures of the dominant spheres so they can transcend their own environments” (p. 47). In this sense, teachers should
reflect on the fact that the global age our educational practices are embedded in can only be understood from the perspective of local diversity.

Considering the third concern of this research work, writing development in terms of formal aspects of text, and the category that explained it, “writing development through explicit literacy instruction and socially situated multimodal literacy practices”, it is worth mentioning that, in concordance with the sociocultural perspective of writing, when students wrote for themselves, their writing only needed to be functional. But as they started to go public with their writing pieces, sharing knowledge and interests with others, there was a growing necessity to consider conventional aspects of text that supported potential readers. Therefore, a component that involved explicit literacy instruction helped attain the goals in terms of writing development.

I could conclude that, when my writing instruction was limited to the teaching conventional aspects of language (spelling, capitalization, spacing, grammar, sentence and paragraph structure, etc.) and I provided students with topics to write about, writing was disconnected from reality and English classes turned boring and fruitless. Now, that writing is not seen as a simple imposed school practice anymore and has become nurtured by students’ investigations on their communities, they are eager to clearly and effectively communicate their meanings to others through texts that follow conventional rules of written communication. As students have improved their literacy performances as writers, the study contributed to the demands of the school in terms of bilingualism and the requirements of international education.

Limitations

One of the first drawbacks I faced was the fact that, although the international curriculum of New York School is inquiry based, such a vision of curriculum is only in institutional documents; in our educational praxis we can still see teacher fronted classrooms in which students are mere
receivers of knowledge imparted by us. Such a situation has perpetuated students’ beliefs on their passiveness as their normal state in the classroom. At the beginning of the implementation; I found it difficult to see that students’ attitudes did not fulfil what was expected from them in terms of independence and self-management. As students were used to receive information and knowledge only from the teacher, they did not consider the perspectives of peers as important contributions and, when it happened, goals were only partially reached. Fortunately, as the innovation progressed, I could evidence a change in students’ learning. My students started to consider the relevance of others’ perspectives in their own learning process and started showing attitudes of respect and independence.

Another limitation had to do with the existence of a fixed English program and a textbook which somehow prevented me from following all the students’ initiated inquiries as the point of departure for curricular activities. Although what I did was to meet the requirements of the program through inquiry on local communities, I had also to cover the 100% of a thick grammar based textbook. I had to divide class time between filling pages of the textbook and opening possibilities for pursuing personal learning interests. Although it was stressful and demanded a lot of effort and creativity, the goals were attained and students progressed as inquirers and accomplished writers.

Time was one of the main drawbacks. Due to the nature of the project, uninterrupted personal and group engagements took place in each of the lessons but, as we have a tight class schedule, students pursuits had to be sometimes interrupted because in the school a period of time is devoted to each of the subject areas. Sometimes, when the bell rang, students were forced to abandon their engagements and shift their attention towards other issues. This situation somehow
affected the continuity of the process which had to be re-initiated in subsequent sessions of the English class.

As the pedagogical implementation finished by the end of the school year and the inquiry cycle never ends and potentiates students to continue to learn along their lives, by the beginning of November students were already planning new inquiries on community issues they had found out during their engagements with school community workers. I was already planning how to link such interests with writing development but time was not enough and the school year ended without having had the possibility to culminate such a process. This new school year has started and I have been assigned a new group of pupils. As the participants are no longer my group, their inquiry process did not have continuity since their new teacher is not informed on the benefits that community and inquiry based learning can bring to his teaching practices. Such a limitation has implications that are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

**Implications**

As my vision about learning and teaching was enlightened throughout this research work, I became aware of the contradiction between the “banking theory of education” (Freire, 2011) that underlies the pedagogical practices in New York School not only in the English classroom but in the other subject areas and what an international curriculum demands. Such a mismatch implies that every teacher in the school be aware of the significance of inquiry processes as the means to potentiate our students as lifelong learners.

In this line of thought, it is an imperative that the school, as a member of the IBO, opens the possibilities for new pedagogical practices that help educate learners as thinkers, readers, writers, and inquirers. It is time to leave behind the belief that students’ role is to receive pre-
constructed packets of knowledge and activities that have already been written in study plans or
textbooks which have nothing to do with the realities and interests of our children.

Another implication I have considered is the fact that a pedagogical innovation like the
one described in this manuscript requires a more committed work on the part of educators. In
most of the cases, we take for granted that our job as teachers is limited to put into practice what
has been designed by outsiders and fill our students’ minds with pre-constructed chunks of
information. It is a must for us to go beyond that conception of education and leave behind a zone
of comfort that demands nothing from us. I invite other educators to stop thinking that everything
has to be given to us and start working on the design and implementation of learning experiences
that empower our students and ourselves as agents of change who successfully face the
challenges of today’s world.

In tune with the implication aforementioned, I want to mention that the implementation of
the innovation convinced me that we, teachers, must meet our students’ necessities, interests, and
ways of learning. There are many things that my students taught me throughout their community
investigations, their smart use and comprehension of the diverse modes of communicating
meaning. This made me think that we must be aware that the 21st century children are facing
many different ways in which information is displayed to them and they, as active learners, are
aware of them and know how to use the different modes in which they also can display the
knowledge they construct. In this sense, we, teachers should understand that literacy development
goes beyond the mere reading and writing of printed text and stop overemphasizing language as
the only means to construct and share meaning with others. Therefore, we must allow music, art,
movement, mathematics, dance, photography, among other means of human expression, to enter
our classrooms.
In line with the need for the integration of diverse sign systems (Burke & Short, 1991 and Short et al., 1996) into our pedagogical practices, the inquiry based learning proposed through this study has another implication for the school. It has to do with the necessity of curricular integration through cross curricular connections that abandon the belief that human knowledge is fragmented. A transdisciplinary view to education should be a reality in New York School and not just a word written in the IB documents that support our curriculum. Understanding human culture as a whole and not as a fragmented reality would lead us and students toward a better comprehension of the world that surrounds us.

**Further Research**

Taking into consideration the results of this study, further research could be based on the following questions:

- In what manners can community-based pedagogies integrate the language classroom with the different areas of the curriculum through inquiry based projects?
- How can we, teachers, engage parents in community inquiries beyond the boundaries of the school?
- What social issues are portrayed through writing on community themes?
References


*Journal of Writing Research, 1*(1), 1-26.


THIRD GRADERS AS COMMUNITY INQUIRERS


THIRD GRADERS AS COMMUNITY INQUIRERS

Revista de lenguaje y cultura, 16(28), 79-89.


“Third Graders as Community Inquirers Writing Their Worlds”

Papás y mamás de tercer grado,

Teniendo como punto de partida el carácter bilingüe e internacional que subyace la filosofía del Colegio Nueva York, se hace imperativo que nuestros estudiantes demuestren alta proficiencia en el manejo del idioma extranjero como instrumento para integrarse en el mundo globalizado. Los desempeños de nuestros estudiantes en inglés evidencian altos niveles con respecto a las habilidades orales, de escucha, e incluso de lectura. Sin embargo, la situación en cuanto a sus habilidades escriturales es diferente. Se hace necesario, por ende, repensar las prácticas pedagógicas tendientes a desarrollar este tipo de competencias en nuestros niños y niñas.

Asumiendo la circunstancia mencionada y teniendo en cuenta que actualmente adelanto estudios de maestría cuyo compone central es la investigación educativa, estoy planteando un estudio en torno al desarrollo de las competencias escriturales en la lengua extranjera teniendo como base las comunidades que nuestros estudiantes habitan. Dicho estudio tiene como propósitos centrales, de una parte, mejorar los desempeños en el área de escritura y, de otra, fomentar el aprecio por la cultura local de las comunidades que rodean a nuestros niños y niñas.

Cabe anotar que la implementación de este trabajo de investigación beneficiará, de una parte, a la institución con una contribución directa al fortalecimiento del bilingüismo y la educación internacional y, de otra, a sus niñas y niños como escritores motivados, estructurados, proficientes en el idioma extranjero y con aprecio por su cultura local.

La investigación será implementada con los estudiantes de grado tercero en su clase de inglés. Razón por la cual solicito de manera respetuosa su aprobación y apoyo para desarrollar la investigación con sus niñas y niños, lo cual implica que: 1) ustedes devuelvan este consentimiento firmado; 2) acompañen el proceso de indagación en las comunidades cercanas como insumo para cada producción escrita; 3) la producción académica de sus hijas o hijos pueda ser usada como fuente para la interpretación datos; y 4) sea necesario audio grabar, video grabar, o fotografiar algunas sesiones de clase.

En la fase de socialización de resultados de la investigación se garantiza: 1) la protección de la identidad de las niñas y niños por medio de nombres ficticios, si ustedes así lo desean; 2) estricta confidencialidad con su información personal; y 3) la socialización, de ser requerido por ustedes, de los resultados; y 4) la respuesta a sus inquietudes con respecto al proceso.

Agradezco su colaboración en el sentido de contar con su niña o niño como participante en este trabajo de investigación.

Atentamente,

____________________________________________
Ziglinde Hernández Gómez - Docente-Investigadora Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
DECLARACIÓN DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Declaramos que hemos leído y comprendido este consentimiento informado. Tenemos claridad en cuanto al tópico y objetivo del trabajo investigativo, así como del papel que nosotros y nuestro(a) hijo(a) desempeñaremos durante su implementación. Estamos de acuerdo con su implementación, por lo tanto autorizamos la participación de nuestro (a) hijo (a) en el mismo.

Estudiante: ____________________________________________ Curso: ______________

Papá: ____________________________________________ Mamá: ____________________________________________

Firma: ____________________________________________ Firma: ____________________________________________
Teniendo como punto de partida el carácter bilingüe e internacional que subyace la filosofía del Colegio Nueva York, se hace imperativo que nuestros estudiantes demuestren alta proficiencia en el manejo del idioma extranjero como instrumento para integrarse en el mundo globalizado. Los desempeños de nuestros estudiantes en inglés evidencian altos niveles con respecto a las habilidades orales, de escucha, e incluso de lectura. Sin embargo, la situación en cuanto a sus habilidades escriturales es diferente. Se hace necesario, por ende, repensar las prácticas pedagógicas tendientes a desarrollar este tipo de competencias en nuestros niños y niñas.

Asumiendo la circunstancia mencionada y teniendo en cuenta que actualmente adelanto estudios de maestría cuyo componente central es la investigación educativa, estoy planteando un estudio en torno al desarrollo de las competencias escriturales en la lengua extranjera teniendo como base las comunidades que nuestros estudiantes habitan. Dicho estudio tiene como propósitos centrales, de una parte, mejorar los desempeños en el área de escritura y, de otra, fomentar el aprecio por la cultura local de las comunidades que rodean a nuestros niños y niñas.

Cabe anotar que la implementación de este trabajo de investigación beneficiará, de una parte, a la institución con una contribución directa al fortalecimiento del bilingüismo y la educación internacional y, de otra, a las niñas y los niños como escritores motivados, estructurados, proficientes en el idioma extranjero y con aprecio por su cultura local.

El plan es, entonces, implementar la investigación con los estudiantes del curso tercero B en su clase de inglés. Razón por la cual solicito de manera respetuosa su aprobación y apoyo para su desarrollo. A lo largo de todas las fases de la investigación se garantiza: 1) la posibilidad de que las familias tengan la potestad de participar o no en el estudio; 2) la protección de la identidad de las niñas y niños por medio de nombres ficticios, si las familias así lo desean; 2) estricta confidencialidad con la información personal de los estudiantes y familias; 3) confidencialidad en cuanto al uso de los documentos institucionales; 4) la socialización, de ser requerido por ustedes, de los resultados del estudio; y 4) la respuesta a sus inquietudes con respecto al proceso.

Agradezco su colaboración en el sentido de contar con su apoyo para desarrollar la investigación en mención en el contexto educativo del Colegio Nueva York, con los niños y niñas de tercero B y sus familias.

Atentamente,

Ziglinde Hernández Gómez - Docente-Investigadora Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
Appendix C

Field Note Layout

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<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Unit:</td>
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<td>Stage:</td>
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<td>1. How do community situated tasks develop EFL writers as inquirers?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. How do third graders develop a sense of community when inquiring into their surroundings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What developments in the formal aspects of text are evidenced in writing as meaning construction on community issues?</td>
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<th>Research Objectives</th>
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<td>1. To portray the development of EFL writers as inquirers</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. To determine how do third graders develop a sense of community when inquiring into their surroundings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To identify the developments in the formal aspects of text that are evidenced in writing as meaning construction on community issues</td>
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</tbody>
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Notes

Comments
Appendix D

KWL Chart Sample
Appendix E

Survey Sample

Brothers & Sisters Survey

1. Your sibling is: (Mark as many options as necessary)
   - A baby sister or brother
   - A twin sister or brother
   - A younger sister or brother
   - An older sister or brother
   - Your mom is pregnant, you are about to have a new sister or brother
   - An adopted sister or brother

2. What is it like to have a sibling?
   - Why do you feel like that?

3. How do you feel about sharing mom and dad with your sibling?
   - Why do you feel like that?

4. Do you like sharing games and activities with your sibling?
   - Why?

5. Which is more difficult?
   - Being a younger sibling
   - Being an older sibling
   - Why?
Appendix F

Graphic Organizer

---

**Generalization:** a statement about a group of people that is true most of the time.

---

**BROTHERS & SISTERS**

My generalization to investigate:

- Sometimes siblings are best friends, but sometimes they are worst enemies.
- Twin siblings are similar but also different.
- It is difficult to be an older sibling.
- Alwaysborn, baby changes the life of a family.
Appendix G

Planning Stage Sample

Opinion: Why is difficult to be an older sibling.

Reason 1: The older sibling have to share all attention younger.

Reason 2: Older sibling have to put attention to younger.

Detail or Example 1: Example of aunt N-1

Detail or Example 2: Example of aunt N-2

Detail or Example 1: Example of grandmother

Detail or Example 2: Example of my mother
Appendix H

Drafting Stage Sample

Brothers and sisters.

In my opinion, it is difficult to be an older sibling. Older siblings have to share all with the younger siblings. I have to share toys, the ipad, and all with my siblings. Days my aunt Lisa says, "I have to share games and activities with my siblings." Days my aunt Maria says, "Older siblings have to pay attention to younger siblings." "I have to pay attention to my baby," says my grandmother Consuelo. "I have to pay attention to baby because the baby hit with a window and cut their skin," says my mother. "I have to pay attention to baby," says my father Rafael. "This are the reasons why I think it is difficult to be an older sibling."
Appendix I

Power Point Presentation on “Remember When Stories”

MISS ZIGLI

FABIAN GRIMALDO
### Appendix J

**Working Plan Unit One: Brothers & Sisters**

#### WORKING PLAN UNIT ONE: BROTHERS & SISTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>Bringing our brothers and sisters into the classroom (LIFE EXPERIENCES)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION</td>
<td>1 to 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>Brothers &amp; Sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To describe people and events from surrounding communities by using different parts of speech, present and past tenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To share our human relationships beyond the classroom with peers and teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ACTIVITIES                 | 1. **Literature Circle:** Teacher launches the theme through a literature circle in which the whole class reads aloud and comments on the story “Brothers and Sisters” by Ellen B. Senisi. Learners are asked to relate what the story tells with their own family lives and share their experiences with the class as a whole.  
2. **Family stories:** Previously to class, students are asked to send photographs of siblings in their families to their teacher’s e-mail. Students are also requested to collect “remember when” stories through interviews with the siblings from the photographs and bring their notes to class. Teacher designs a power point presentation with the photographs, as students see their families on screen; they share their stories orally with the class.  
3. **Oral Testimonies:** Siblings are invited to come to the class and share their family experiences with students and teacher: twin siblings, older and younger siblings, adopted siblings, children with baby siblings, children with pregnant mothers, etc. |
| COLLECTED DATA             | Students’ photographs, spontaneous comments on their family lives, and collected “remember when” stories will provide insights on their worlds beyond the classroom. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>Brothers and sisters around us (UNINTERRUPTED PERSONAL ENGAGEMENTS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION</td>
<td>5 to 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>Brothers &amp; Sisters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Third Graders as Community Inquirers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>To ask focused questions on personal experiences and take notes on heard information by using the simple present tense and parts of speech such as nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SOCIAL OBJECTIVE    | - To integrate community life into the classroom’s life  
                        - To broaden learners’ perceptions on what being a sibling means  
                        - To invite learners to understand their family communities in a different way  
                        - To use the close contact surrounding communities in the construction of personal meanings, views, and opinions on family issues |
| ACTIVITIES          | 1. **KWL Chart:** after having explored life experiences about family issues, students record what they know on brothers and sisters lives and also what they want to learn, they pose the questions they will be working on later.  
                        2. **Author Folder:** On the basis of what they already know and what they want to know, students start collecting data for their future pieces of writing. Having their questions as a point of departure, the class as a whole designs a mixed data collection tool (survey/questionnaire) on brothers and sisters experiences. Each student administers the instrument to five members of their close communities: friends, classmates, relatives, teachers, etc. At this point students use different sign systems, they use pictures, conversation, and note taking when collecting data and bar graphs, pictographs, line graphs, or tally marks when registering their findings.  
                        3. **Community Inquiry groups:** Students bring their findings to class. They share findings on how different members of the community feel and think about having siblings (small groups). With the class as a whole, teacher asks the small groups to share common findings and lists them on the board. Teacher gives a mini strategy lesson on how to make generalizations on the listed findings (generalization: a statement about a group of people that is true most of the time). The class as a whole makes five generalizations on the basis of the common findings listed on the board and individual students record them on their Top Five Generalization Graphic Organizer (author folder). Such generalizations become five inquiry groups and students sign up for the group that most interests them.  
                        4. **Time for Reflecting on Personal Interests:** Students are asked to start pursuing their personal agendas according to the inquiry group they signed up for. They are asked to approach community members again, this time with more focused questions on their personal inquiries (author folder). When students bring new findings to class, teacher gives a strategy lesson on how to organize ideas within an opinion paragraph and provide students with a graphic organizer in which they individually organize their findings in regards to the personal choice they have previously made. Independently, students start drafting their opinion paragraphs on their personal inquiries. |
| COLLECTED DATA      | Listening carefully to students’ findings and generalizations on family issues will make it possible to find their themes for possible inquiries on their communities.  
                        Students’ collected data will bring knowledge on how brothers and sisters relationships are conceived by children and their broader social network.  
                        Students’ personal engagements will provide data on the manner in which community based tasks motivate them to become better writers. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>Sharing our constructed meanings on brothers and sisters (EXPLORING MEANING CONSTRUCTS WITH COLLABORATIVE OTHERS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION</td>
<td>9 &amp; 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>Brothers &amp; Sisters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE | - To express opinions through appropriate language choices: I think… I believe… In my opinion  
                        - To support an opinion by giving reasons and examples |
THIRD GRADERS AS COMMUNITY INQUIRERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-To proofread and correct pieces of</td>
<td>1. <strong>Authors' Circle:</strong> After students have had personal time for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing in terms of punctuation,</td>
<td>uninterrupted individual writing on the topic of their interest previously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capitalization, and grammar as well</td>
<td>chosen and investigated (author folder), they work in small groups of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as in terms of text structure</td>
<td>authors in order to share their pieces of writing. Each author reads their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>drafts aloud to the group and the others comment on the heard piece of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>writing by asking questions, making suggestions and giving personal opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on the text to make it better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-To raise awareness of the way</td>
<td>2. <strong>Editors Table:</strong> Small groups sit together to make revisions on their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language functions in written texts</td>
<td>Brothers &amp; Sisters opinion paragraph. Students exchange texts and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>collaboratively proofread them by using a list of proofreading marks which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>they are used to employ through process writing (author folder). Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gets involved in these collaborative groups by constantly moving from one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group to another and sharing views on students' pieces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLECTED DATA</td>
<td>Students' pieces of writing will provide insights on how personal learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agendas on community issues help shape their written expression. Students'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>personal texts will show also the specific aspects of writing as a self-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>expression means that are enhanced though community based tasks, for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>example, the way in which students organize their constructed meaning by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>supporting what they say with opinions, reasons, and examples in coherent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>units.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STAGE**

**How effectively do I express my meanings on Brothers & Sisters issues? (REFLECTION AND REVISION)**

**SESSION** 11

**TOPIC** Brothers & Sisters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>SOCIAL OBJECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-To foster self-reflection on language choices made through text construction</td>
<td>-To make others’ voices part of my own voice by reflecting on collaborative groups insights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quiet Reflective Time:</strong> After having listened to others’ perspectives on their meaning constructs through personal pieces of writing, students are asked to quietly reflect on peers contributions to their written work. They now make decisions on the basis of peers’ comments and suggestions; they modify their pieces of writing according to the insights got in the authors’ circle. Written texts may be modified in terms of form, text structure, and communicative function.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLECTED DATA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected opinion paragraphs will be sources of information in terms of meaning constructs achieved through the written word.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STAGE**

Celebrating our new understandings on Brothers & Sisters (PRESENTING AND SHARING MEANING WITH OTHERS)

**SESSION** 12 & 13

**TOPIC** Brothers & Sisters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To effectively communicate achieved goals and the processes involved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL OBJECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-To assume personal positions in regards to social issues in close communities: relationships among siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-To collaboratively explore and help construct personal meanings more deeply and intensely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SOCIAL OBJECTIVE
To celebrate new understandings with the broad school community

### ACTIVITIES
1. **Informal sharing:** Students go public with their meaning constructs. Each of the five inquiry groups publicly presents the outcomes of their investigation to the class as a whole; they will share their edited opinion paragraphs on family issues. Some of them may choose to give a presentation, others may create a poem, role play family issues, or even write and sing a song showing their findings. Students may employ a variety of sign systems throughout their sharing with others: family photographs that are relevant to their personal inquiries, interviews conducted throughout the data collection process, student-drawn pictures of their own families, timelines on important events in their family lives, poems dedicated to siblings, songs on family issues, family trees, remember when stories on their families, and family collages and mobiles, among others.

### COLLECTED DATA
Students’ artifacts will provide information on the extent to which they got meaningfully engaged in their inquiries on community issues.

### STAGE
What can we improve in our next community inquiries? *(EXAMINING THE OPERATION OF SIGN SYSTEM PROCESSES)*

### SESSION
14

### TOPIC
Brothers & Sisters

### LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE
To examine difficulties with language functioning (if any) that underlie the inquiry process

### SOCIAL OBJECTIVE
To cooperatively reflect on the inquiry process and create possibilities for improvement

### ACTIVITIES
**Class Reflective Moment:** The class as a whole carefully examines the inquiry process and the drawbacks they had to face throughout it. In this manner students create a new need for gaining knowledge on the issues of the process that they have not managed very successfully. Such new needs may involve deeper understanding on instruments to gather data in their communities, process writing, or ways to organize and register data. After such new needs are socialized, the teacher or a student conducts a strategy lesson on the issue(s) of interest.

### COLLECTED DATA
Students’ group reflections will inform on the manner they become active participants of their own process as community inquirers and writers.

### STAGE
What new inquiries are we going to pursue? *(INVITATIONS TO FURTHER ENGAGEMENTS)*

### SESSION
15

### TOPIC
Brothers & Sisters

### LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE
To create opportunities for self-expression on issues of personal interest

### SOCIAL OBJECTIVE
To pose students’ broader communities as a source for new inquiries

### ACTIVITIES
**KWL Chart:** The class as a whole goes back to their KWL chart. Students remember the point of departure which involved their personal
experiences and the “what we know” section of the chart, their prior knowledge on siblings’ issues. They move through the “what we want to learn” column and remember the questions on which their inquiries were based, and end in the “what we learned” section and complete it by writing the meanings they were able to construct through the inquiry process.

**Planning New Inquiries**: Having as a basis their meaning constructs on brothers and sisters issues, students are invited to think of a possibility for transferring immediate experiences on family issues to a broader field of their community life. Teacher proposes “community” as an umbrella term for future engagements and students brainstorm on new interests arisen from their community inquiry. Ideas are written on the board in the form of a word web with the word community as the concept to be explored in a broader sense next time.

| **COLLECTED DATA** | Students’ socialized possibilities for new engagements will inform on the way the social dimension of learning influences their motivation as learners. |
**WORKING PLAN UNIT TWO: GETTING TO KNOW OUR BARRIO AND CITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>Bringing our neighborhood and city into the classroom (LIFE EXPERIENCES)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION</td>
<td>1 – 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>People, Events, and Places in our Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To appropriately use parts of speech such as nouns, adjectives, and verbs in the description of people, places and events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To structure a counting or alphabet book through the exploration of close communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To skim and scan print and online sources on local communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To continue the process of self-discovery by exploring physical and social settings beyond families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To explore the idea of community through inquiries on close surroundings and cooperative work with families and peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITIES</td>
<td><strong>1. Community Museum:</strong> Previous to class, students are asked to search for information on the place they and their families inhabit. They can freely choose to gather data either on their neighborhood or on their city and are instructed to browse artifacts that account for people, places, and events in their community. The sources of information they can browse and bring to class are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- books published on the local community (neighborhood or city), if available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- art prints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- posters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- models or photographs of important places or people in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- bookmarked websites from local communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- brochures, booklets, pamphlets, fliers, and newspapers from the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- television commercials or videos on the local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Once students have brought community artifacts to the classroom, they locate them around it and organize a community museum. They walk round the museum, observe the different artifacts, and talk about what they find in it; sharing what they know on their communities and asking for information to complement their own. Individual students are asked to share the experiences behind each of the artifacts they brought to class and also personal connections with each other. Teacher just listens to students’ voices and finds out the connections they might make.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2. Constructing Meaning as a Team:</strong> After having shared ideas about the community museum, students talk about what they have found out through the following questions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Where is our community located?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Who is part of our community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What buildings or places are here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What makes our community special or unique?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THIRD GRADERS AS COMMUNITY INQUIRERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Getting to know our physical and social surroundings: our community (UNINTERRUPTED PERSONAL ENGAGEMENTS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session</td>
<td>3 to 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>People, Events, and Places in our Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic Objective</td>
<td>To explore and discuss books that use the alphabet or a counting structure to present content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To identify the genre of ABC books in terms of layout and communicative function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To become aware of how written language works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Objective</td>
<td>To explore the idea of community through inquiries on close surroundings and cooperative work with families and peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>1. KWL Chart: After having explored physical and social surroundings through the artifacts in their community museum, students individually and in groups brainstorm on what they know and want to know about their community. The questions derived at this stage become the basis for their personal inquiries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Community Inquiry Groups: What students want to know about their communities has already been recorded on the KWL chart. Such questions are then grouped in different themes of interest which become the community inquiry groups students sign up for according to their personal interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Literature Circle: Students review several alphabet books, so they are well acquainted with the genre and structure of such text type. The alphabet books available for students’ exploration of the genre are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- A Book of Human Rights from A to Z by Tommy E. Brewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Abecedario de Puerto Rico by Carmen A. Vazquez-Tell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- A is for Actor, A Theatrical ABC by Tracy Heffernan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How do you feel? An ABC Book of Emotions by Cheryl McElvain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- En mi Barrio by Valerie Andriola Balderas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Frutos del Valle by Rosie Arenas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- My School ABC by Carol Robledo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Me Gusta Mejico by Ricardo Keis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- On Becoming Your Mom, the ABC’s of Bringing You Into My Life by Deborah Ramirez Lango</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The ABC’s of San Francisco by Erlinda A. Antonio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The World is Made Up of All Beautiful Countries and Some Great Alphabets, too!! by Ryan James</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- When I Was Growing Up... Bits and Pieces from A to Z by Cattryn Sommers

Once students have come up with ideas on how alphabet books convey information in terms of form and function in a number of themes, they are asked to start thinking on the way they will write their own ABC book to teach others what they are about to inquire on their communities.

4. Time for Reflecting on Personal Interests: Students are asked to start investigating their personal interests on their community according to the inquiry group they signed up for. They are asked to research their social and physical surroundings with the help of their family members in order to find possible responses to their questions and think of the manner their findings can be revealed through their ABC books. In such a personal engagement in community issues, students approach community members, gather information from them, and collect community artifacts that account for their personal interests. New findings on communities are brought to class (author folder).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>Sharing our constructed meanings on our community (EXPLORING MEANING CONSTRUCTS WITH COLLABORATIVE OTHERS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>People, Events, and Places in our Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To structure a counting or alphabet book through the exploration of close communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To evaluate peers’ alphabet books in terms of layout and content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To proofread and correct pieces of writing in terms of punctuation, capitalization, and grammar as well as in terms of text structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To raise awareness of the way language functions in written texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To share personal findings on the way local communities are organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To develop appreciation for close communities through inquiries on social and physical surroundings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>1. Authors’ Circle: Small groups of authors grouped according to their inquiry interests sit together in order to share their pieces of writing in progress (author folder). Students exchange their writing and discuss the manner in which the inquiry theme is been approached through the drafts of the alphabet books. Individual students present their drafts and explain their thinking in regards to their personal inquiry. Through listening to others, students begin to consider other perspectives and reflect on what they understand about their own inquiry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Editors Table: Students bring their revised alphabet books to class. In small groups, they proofread and correct the pieces of writing in a collaborative manner (author folder). Students contribute ideas, collaboratively compose, and work as a team to publish the final copy of their alphabet books.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| COLLECTED DATA | Students’ ABC books will provide data on how their local knowledge becomes a powerful source for writing development. Students’ personal engagements on community issues regarding their neighborhood and city will provide insights on how appreciation for their own social and physical surroundings is developed through community based tasks. Students’ writing process will serve as evidence to account for the manner they become aware of specific features of the alphabet book genre in terms of layout and communicative purpose. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>Reflecting on our own production  <strong>(REFLECTION AND REVISION)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>People, Events, and Places in our Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>-To promote self-reflection on the way writing is developed and organized independently and with the support of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>-To become aware of how well local communities are worth to be investigated and appreciated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ACTIVITIES | **Self-Assessment and Reflective time:** Students are given time to self-assess their learning and skills. They reflect on their work and behavior throughout the project. Learning targets are clear to students through a self-assessment form which they are asked to respond. Students individually think of the following questions and then share personal observations:  
  What did you learn about your community?  
  What did you learn by making the ABC book?  
  What went well as you worked on the book?  
  What didn't work well or needed more work?  
  What would you do differently next time?  
  How do you think your audience liked your book? Explain why you think so.  
  Was there any part of the book that you didn't understand? If so, how could you make that part better?  
  Would you change anything that you did in the book? Explain.  
  Was this a good project?  
  Would you like to make another alphabet book at a different time on another topic?  
  How did your alphabet book help you explore your community? |
| COLLECTED DATA | Students’ self-assessment and reflection on their own work will provide information on the way writing as a self-expression vehicle is shaped through community based tasks. |
Students’ sharing on their own writing process regarding their community will be a source of information on how they develop a sense of community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>Celebrating our meaning constructs on community issues ([PRESENTING AND SHARING MEANING WITH OTHERS])</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION</td>
<td>8 and 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>People, Events, and Places in our Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To become aware of the way having written an alphabet book has helped us be better writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To celebrate new understandings on local communities with others than our own collaborators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>Informal Sharing: The inquiry groups publicly present the outcomes of their investigation materialized in their alphabet books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLECTED DATA</td>
<td>Students’ artifacts will provide information on the manner they start constructing new meanings about surrounding communities. Students’ shared reflections will provide insights on how they gain awareness of their writing process evolution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>What can we improve in our next inquiries? ([EXAMINING THE OPERATION OF SIGN SYSTEM PROCESSES])</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>People, Events, and Places in our Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To examine difficulties with language functioning as well as with the inquiry process throughout the construction of the alphabet books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To cooperatively reflect on the inquiry process and create possibilities for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>Class Reflective Moment: The class as a whole carefully examines the inquiry process and the drawbacks they had to face throughout it. In this manner students create a new need for gaining knowledge on the issues of the process that they have not managed very successfully. Such new needs may involve deeper understanding on instruments to gather data in their communities, process writing, or ways to organize and register data. After such new needs are socialized, the teacher or a student conducts a strategy lesson on the issue(s) of interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLECTED DATA</td>
<td>Students’ group reflections will inform on the manner they become active participants of their own process as community inquirers and writers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>What new inquiries are we going to pursue? ([INVITATIONS TO FURTHER ENGAGEMENTS])</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>People, Events, and Places in our Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To create opportunities for self-expression on issues of personal interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL</td>
<td>To pose students’ broader communities as a source for new inquiries</td>
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<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>ACTIVITIES</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **KWL Chart**: The class as a whole goes back to their KWL chart. Students remember the point of departure which involved their personal experiences and the “what we know” section of the chart, their prior knowledge on their neighborhood and city. They move through the “what we want to learn” column and remember the questions on which their inquiries were based, end in the “what we learned” section and complete it by writing the meanings they were able to construct through the inquiry process.  
**Planning New Inquiries**: After having explored their broader communities, students are invited to think of a new possibility to explore them. Teacher brings the definition they previously crafted on the concept “community” and asks students to brainstorm on new interests regarding their local communities. Ideas are written on the board in the form of a word web with the word community as the concept to be explored from a different perspective. | Students’ socialized possibilities for new engagements will inform on the way community based tasks serve as sources for writing development. |
WORKING PLAN UNIT THREE: THE PEOPLE WHO HELP MY EDUCATION AT SCHOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>Getting to know our community helpers (LIFE EXPERIENCES)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION</td>
<td>1 to 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>The People Who Help my Education at School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To ask for information about specific events in a person’s life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To get to know the people behind all the services the school provides us with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>Oral Testimonies: Various community helpers are invited to come to the class and share their life with students. Guest speakers such as the librarian, the chef, the secretary, the principal, the food server, the nurse, the systems engineer, the chef, the psychologist, the media professional, and the maintenance helper, among others, visit the class and share personal histories with students. Students are provided with opportunities to better know the people behind all the services they receive at school. Students bring their own questions according to their personal interests and share personal connections with the community helpers of the school. Author’s Folder: As students listen to the oral testimonies offered by the school’s community helpers, they start collecting ideas according to personal connections they can make, what interests them from the workers’ lives, and general data about the functioning of the school life which will serve as relevant data for their future inquiries and written production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLECTED DATA</td>
<td>Students’ interviews to school community helpers will provide insights on their perceptions towards the people who help their education.</td>
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<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>Rediscovering my school community in new ways (UNINTERRUPTED PERSONAL ENGAGEMENTS)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION</td>
<td>5 to 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>The People Who Help my Education at School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To ask focused questions on personal experiences and take notes on heard information by using the simple present tense and parts of speech such as nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>-To integrate community’s lives into learners’ lives -To broaden learners’ perceptions on the manner their school community works</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THIRD GRADERS AS COMMUNITY INQUIRERS

- To invite learners to develop appreciation for the people who help their education
- To use the school community as a source to construct personal meanings, views, and opinions on social issues

**ACTIVITIES**

1. **KWL Chart:** After having explored personal interests and connections with the community helpers of the school, students are given time to point out what they found throughout the oral testimonies. Students record what they know on the manner the school functions according to the information obtained from the community workers. They are invited to pose questions about the people who work for their education and the internal organization of the school that makes it a community.

2. **Community Inquiry groups:** On the basis of their author’s folders, students work together to share gathered data and find out their common interests with respect to the information provided through the oral testimonies sessions. With the class as a whole, teacher asks the small groups to share common interests found and lists them on the board. The different personal interests encountered become the input for the inquiry groups and students sign up for the group that most interests them.

3. **Time for Reflecting on Personal Interests:** Students are asked to start pursuing their personal agendas according to the inquiry group they signed up for. They are asked to plan more focused questions according to their personal pursuits and to what they want to furtherly inquire about (author folder) by interviewing the community worker that most interests them.

4. **Getting to Know You:** The different inquiry groups revise their questions and plan how to interview their chosen community helpers on their personal and professional lives (author folder) to better know them and the work they perform in the school. They are provided with laptops in order to video record the interviews and the groups are allowed to leave the classroom and visit their chosen helper in their place of work (nurse’s office, kitchen, principal’s office, parking lot, library, etc.) in order to get to know them.

**COLLECTED DATA**

Listening carefully to students’ personal engagements will make it possible to find their themes for possible inquiries on their communities. Students’ interviews will bring knowledge on how they start creating linkages with the people who support their education in the school. Students’ personal engagements will provide data on the manner in which community based tasks motivate them to become better writers. Students’ work on their personal inquiries will provide data on the process they go through in order to become inquirers.

**STAGE**

Sharing our constructed meanings on our school community (EXPLORING MEANING CONSTRUCTS WITH COLLABORATIVE OTHERS)

**SESSION**

9 & 10

**TOPIC**

The People Who Help my Education at School

**LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE**

- To revise present simple and past simple tenses
- To identify text features of biography
- To proofread and correct pieces of writing in terms of punctuation, capitalization, and grammar as well as in terms of text structure
- To raise awareness of the way language functions in written texts

**SOCIAL OBJECTIVE**

- To value the people who help our education at school
- To collaboratively explore and help construct personal meanings more deeply and intensely

**ACTIVITIES**

1. **Mini Strategy Lesson:** When students bring and share their new findings on the community worker of their preference to class, teacher gives a strategy lesson on how to organize ideas within an biography and provides students with a graphic organizer in which they individually organize their findings in regards to the community helper they have previously made. Independently, students start drafting their opinion paragraphs on their personal inquiries.

**Authors’ Circle:** After students have had personal time for uninterrupted individual writing on the community helpers previously chosen and
investigated (author folder), they work in small groups of authors in order to share their pieces of writing. Each author reads their drafts aloud to the group and the others comment on the heard piece of writing by asking questions, making suggestions and giving personal opinions on the text to make it better.

2. **Editors Table**: Small groups sit together to make revisions on their biographies. Students exchange texts and collaboratively proofread them by using a list of proofreading marks which they are used to employ through process writing (author folder). Teacher gets involved in these collaborative groups by constantly moving from one group to another and sharing views on students’ pieces.

| COLLECTED DATA | Students’ pieces of writing will provide insights on how personal learning agendas on community issues help shape their written expression. Students’ personal texts will show also the specific aspects of writing that are enhanced though community based tasks. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>How effectively do I express my meanings on my school community? (REFLECTION AND REVISION)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>The People Who Help my Education at School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>-To foster self-reflection on language choices made through text construction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>-To make others’ voices part of own voices by reflecting on collaborative groups insights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITIES</td>
<td><strong>Quiet Reflective Time</strong>: After having listened to others’ perspectives on their meaning constructs through personal pieces of writing, students are asked to quietly reflect on peers contributions to their written work. They now make decisions on the basis of peers’ comments and suggestions; they modify their pieces of writing according to the insights got in the authors’ circle. Written texts may be modified in terms of form, text structure, and communicative function.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLECTED DATA</td>
<td>Corrected biographies will be sources of information in terms of meaning constructs on local knowledge. Students’ biographies will provide data on the manner writing in terms of text features has evolved so far.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>Celebrating our new understandings on my school community (PRESENTING AND SHARING MEANING WITH OTHERS)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION</td>
<td>12 &amp; 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>The People Who Help my Education at School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To raise awareness among students on the way language varies according to specific purposes and audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To celebrate new understandings with the broad school community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITIES</td>
<td><strong>1. Mural on Community Helpers</strong>: Students go public with their meaning constructs in the form of a mural containing their edited biographies and the photographs that raise awareness of people as valuable possessors of knowledge in the school. The mural is displayed on a place where it is easily viewed by members of the school others than the ones involved in the inquiry.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>2. School Newspaper</strong>: The biographies constructed throughout the inquiry process are presented to the editors of the school newspaper “Puertas Adentro” in order to get some of them published and known by the broader school community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Informal Sharing: Each of the inquiry groups publicly presents the outcomes of their investigation to the class as a whole.

| COLLECTED DATA | Students’ artifacts will provide information on the extent in which they got meaningfully engaged in their inquiries on community issues. |

#### STAGE
What can we improve in our next inquiries? *(EXAMINING THE OPERATION OF SIGN SYSTEM PROCESSES)*

#### SESSION 14

#### TOPIC
The People Who Help my Education at School

#### LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE
To examine difficulties with language functioning (if any) that underlie the inquiry process

#### SOCIAL OBJECTIVE
To cooperatively reflect on the inquiry process and create possibilities for improvement

#### ACTIVITIES
**Class Reflective Moment:** The class as a whole carefully examines the inquiry process and the drawbacks they had to face throughout it. In this manner students create a new need for gaining knowledge on the issues of the process that they have not managed very successfully. Such new needs may involve deeper understanding on instruments to gather data in their communities, process writing, or ways to organize and register data. After such new needs are socialized, the teacher or a student conducts a strategy lesson on the issue(s) of interest.

| COLLECTED DATA | Students’ group reflections will inform on the manner they become active participants of their own process as community inquirers and writers. |

#### STAGE
What new inquiries are we going to pursue? *(INVITATIONS TO FURTHER ENGAGEMENTS)*

#### SESSION 15

#### TOPIC
The People Who Help my Education at School

#### LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE
To create opportunities for the expression on issues of personal interest

#### SOCIAL OBJECTIVE
To pose students’ broader communities as a source for new inquiries

#### ACTIVITIES
**KWL Chart:** The class as a whole goes back to their KWL chart. Students remember the point of departure which involved their personal experiences and the “what we know” section of the chart, their prior knowledge on their school community. They move through the “what we want to learn” column and remember the questions on which their inquiries were based, and end in the “what we learned” section and complete it by writing the meanings they were able to construct through the inquiry process.

**Planning New Inquiries:** Having as a basis their meaning constructs on their school community, students are invited to think of a possibility for transferring immediate experiences on their school community issues that can become the point of departure for new inquiries.

| COLLECTED DATA | Students’ socialized possibilities for new engagements will inform on the way the social dimension of learning influences their motivation as learners |
Appendix M

Students’ performances in regards to the three text types studied: opinion paragraph, ABC book, and biography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>OPINION PARAGRAPH ON FAMILY ISSUES</th>
<th>ABC BOOK ON MY BARRIO OR CITY</th>
<th>BIOGRAPHY ON THE COMMUNITY HELPERS OF MY SCHOOL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opinion Justification Evidence Closing</td>
<td>Cover Introduction / Dedication Page A to Z Gathering Information on Community</td>
<td>Paragraph 1: Childhood Paragraph 2: Accomplishments Paragraph 3: Importance in the Community</td>
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<td>Ma. Paula</td>
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