TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A STUDY GROUP

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ABSTRACT

This research was emphasized on teachers' study group as a tool for professional development, and support pedagogical issues related to English language working in team. This is a descriptive and interpretative case study. Information was collected by means of interviews, reflection logs and field notes. The questions that guided this research study are: what does the implementation of a teacher study group tell us about teacher growth? What is the impact of a teacher study group? The project was developed with teachers of a state elementary school. The aim was to guide them to teach English in a more efficient way. This teachers' study group (TSG) was a space where teachers could share opinions and concepts about teaching issues based on their practices. In addition, teachers benefited from TSG, as they had an opportunity to improve their professional performance.

1. Introduction

In regards to the new perspectives of education, there are some institutions developing an important issue such as professional development in which teachers are guided or encouraged to improve their performance through strategies that include language development, pedagogical updating and research in their own classrooms. It is due to the fact that as Moreno and Palencia (2001) argue, teachers should be aware of the fact that the future of our students is related to the quality of education.

Professional development is defined as a permanent and voluntary process of growth centered on teachers and based on their needs. This process promotes reflection on teaching practices and seeks to improve educational and learning conditions.

The process may be assumed by the teachers or by schools and governments through professional development opportunities. The degree of participation of teachers in the process of planning, developing and evaluating their professional development determines its efficiency and sustainability.

Moreover, educational reform related to National program of Bilingualism requires teachers not only to update their skills information but also to totally transform their role as a teacher. Educational reform establishes new expectations for students, teachers, and school communities. Professional development (PD) is a key tool that keeps teachers abreast of current issues in education, helps them implement innovations, and refines their practice.

One form of PD is the Teacher Study Group (TSG). In TSG teachers can grow through collaboration between colleagues with whom they exchange ideas and knowledge about their experiences in order to improve their own teaching.

Teacher Study Group (TSG) provides successful strategies where members can integrate different components, and elicit an active participation; joining efforts with other teachers in order to increase the motivation, stimulation and pleasure for professional growth. Therefore, TSG is seen as a medium to reflect on their professional performance, particularly when it goes especially well or especially badly.

On the other hand, with this research we wanted to inquiry about teacher growth implementing a Teacher Study Group taking into account that the purpose was to create a space to develop a teachers' study group that could provide professional development in a safe and pleasant environment for teachers to share their opinions in the school, because they could work with colleagues speaking about their concerns and contribute to solve them. As Birchak et al (1998, 1) say, teachers study groups are conceived as a form of professional development in which teachers reflect and dialogue about their concerns. Participants of the study group can enhance their performance through their professional development because they project in their practices what they have learned.

In this document, the reader is going to find the statement of the problem that explains how study group helps teacher's growth, the project also includes research questions, the literature review as a way of understanding how the project was supported by the theory, and focusing on teachers study groups,

Professional development and reflection processes which have been conducted in different contexts.

Additionally, there is a description of each session that the group had, in order to know what topics were developed and how the process of each group session was. The process of data analysis will be developed explaining the method used to analyze and the results that were found based on the information collected. Findings allow us to know about the teachers' perceptions, concerns and opinions about the study group and what teachers have found while participating in it. Teachers reflected on their practices, and they discovered several things related to teaching thanks to the study group. Based on those findings the research reports the conclusions that came out from the information collected. Finally, we stated the suggestions for further research in the field of study groups.

2. Statement of the problem & Rationale

A recent study carried out by the British Council (PGD 2004-2019) demonstrated that many English teachers in Colombia have a low level of English proficiency. Among the samples of 4,265 teachers, 1,583 were certified English teachers. Even those who were certified showed a basic and pre-intermediate English proficiency level equivalent to levels (A2-B1) according to the Common European Framework (CEF). A lot of concerns appeared with this study from the "Ministerio de Educacion Nacional," consequently it created the "Bilingualism National Program". The goal of the bilingualism program is to improve the quality of English teaching in Colombian schools by the year 2019.

However, many educational settings are not prepared to face the new challenge of a proposal like this. Some public schools are making the necessary adjustments to accommodate the Bilingualism National Program. One of these institutions called, "The Little School", has concerns about this program because its teachers are not certified to teach English. They have a basic level of English. This school now wants to update their English pedagogical activities to raise the proficiency level of the students to level B1. This will increase the capacity of the students enabling them to communicate their own ideas, opinions and experiences more clearly. The students will be presented the challenge of holding a brief conversation with native English speaker.

It is evident that the teachers must fine tune their teaching strategies. The implementation of a Teachers Study Group may be an important tool for their professional development. Because through such professional activity teachers

have the "opportunity to think through their own beliefs, share ideas, challenge current instructional practices, blend theory and practice, identify professional needs as well as develop literacy innovation for their classrooms" (Matlin and Short, 1991; as cited by Dash & Jung, 2005).

A TSG (Teachers' Study Group), is an educational support for an institution and its staff. It has several benefits including teacher's professional development in which they can find solutions in an informal way because they have the possibility to share experiences with their colleagues for effective teacher pedagogy.

Many researchers are paying attention to teacher study group because these groups have proved to be effective tools for professional development at all education levels. "They provide ways of autonomy and ownership over their learning." (Dash & Jung, 2005).

Additionally, TSG helped teachers to share confrontations, confusions and frustrations in the process of professional development. Through collective reflection teachers can discuss suggestions, solutions, and support each other in the process of growing to become EFL teachers.

Organizing a TSG may provide teachers unique opportunities to pose questions, reflect on how they had learned and taught English, help each other and overcome the obstacles that they face as EFL teachers. In the same way we believed that an inquiry group based on active participation and critical reflection can develop a relevant awareness of language teaching.

According to these conceptions about Teacher Study Group emerged the idea to implement a study group in the institution called "The Little School" because most of the teachers in this institution are concerned about English class, because they realize that they lack knowledge on instructional issues.

The previous study group is conducted as a strategy for helping teachers to work on the things in which they wanted to improve. The purpose of the group is to raise the standard on issues such as, the structure of the lesson plan, materials, new technologies and learning skills.

Teacher Study Group allows teachers a chance to meet and discuss their professional problems, and exposure to stimulating new ideas on their own instructional improvement. Murphy (1999) agrees saying, "A study group also helps personalize professional development. It gives a voice to each member of the group and helps the group internalize the message and topic. The study group is an excellent practice for discussions, and problem solving".

3. Research Questions

The research questions are:

- What does the implementation of a Teacher Study Group tell us about teacher growth?

- What is the impact of the Teacher Study Group?

4. Objectives

Effectively, the study emphasizes on the following objectives:

> ➢ To report the process of a Teacher Study Group designed for teachers.

> ➢ To achieve a professional development for teachers into classroom.

> ➢ To develop teacher`s knowledge of current teaching methodologies.

5. Literature review

In the educational field, teachers are called to promote change to get new goals, for this reason educators should create opportunities for the students to be competent and to face daily situations. In that sense, Colombian education has increased changes including conventional procedures are being modified by current methodologies that reply to the new needs in the educational system. One example is the implementation of new programs with the purpose to enhance bilingual education in the country. According to the ministry of education (2006), Colombian people need to develop the capacity to use at least one foreign language; as a result, the government created the National Program of Bilingualism (2004-2019). This program is designed in different stages; one of them is the creation of strategies to develop teachers professionally.

Consequently, National Program of Bilingualism is a challenge because teachers have to face new tendencies in teaching, thus institutions want to implement programs in which educators can be developed professionally. What can institutions do in order to achieve a better language teaching? Educational setting should adopt alternatives with the aim of being applied according to their needs, thus it is necessary to identify which aspects should be improved or changed.

Therefore, a study in which teachers work in their own improvement may be witnessed at, "The Little School". A teachers' professional development program was conducted in this institution, where educators had the opportunity

to share teaching experiences, ideas and strategies, furthermore they could reflect on their practice and apply their new knowledge.

This group was created with different purposes. 1) To create a co-operation between colleagues; 2) to develop teacher's knowledge of current instructional English; 3) Teachers could support their practices with a Teacher Study Group. These purposes were the origin of this research, because as the main question states the idea is to tell us about teacher growth through study group. Therefore, we will start by clarifying what a study group is. We will show the different types of study groups including the teachers study group and our study group as well. We will explain why the different study groups are used. Finally, reflection and collaboration development will be presented as two important issues of professional development process.

5.1 What are teacher study groups?

In the educational field, teacher study groups. (also know as collaborative groups) are commonly sustained by four to ten teachers who share similar interests, and reach individual goals through the interaction and collaboration with other colleagues. Many researches have documented that a teacher study group can be an effective manner to support modern teachers who need to reinforce their professional development. In this way they can have a great effect on teaching. (Cited by Dash & Jung, 2005). Other concept is developed by Carlene Murphy, Director of Staff Development at Richmond County Public Schools. She defines a teachers' study group as "a small number of individuals

joining together to increase their capacities through new learning for the benefit of the students" (Cited by Cayuso, 2004. p. 12).

In fact, study groups contribute to teacher growth. Furthermore, Short says about the teachers, "the study group is an opportunity to think through their own beliefs, share ideas, challenge current instructional practices, blend theory and practice, identify professional needs-as well as develop literacy innovation for their classrooms" (Cited by Dash & Jung, 2005). The purpose of the Teacher study group is to collaborate to achieve their aims and share goals, where they can cooperate and take part in activities including searching solutions, alternatives and methods for new professional development program. In the discussion on professional development for teachers, Fullan states: "professional development is not as a course, it is about developing more powerful ways of learning that occur in their classroom practice" (Cited by Sierra, 2007). Thus, teachers need to learn more on the job where they can continuously assess; refine, and get feedback on their improvement. Moreover, they need to be in contact with their colleagues in order to learn from them. Keep in mind that teachers need to reflect on their process. Kemmis defines critical reflection as "the most effective teacher interaction in a professional setting; by encouraging teachers to take a stand in questioning and challenging others" (Cited by Dash & Jung, 2005). It means that the teacher needs to explore his/her professional practice through reflection and changes in his/her daily teaching practice.

According to the discussion above we conclude that a teachers' study group is an organized process, where educators constantly analyze, discuss,

participate and ask questions about their professional development. Therefore for an effective teaching it is necessary a deeper understanding of teaching style; including challenges and teacher's ideals with respect in applying theory to classroom practice. We firmly believe that work in teacher's group allow individual improvement as well as professional development, in which participants can discuss problems that they face, share their points of views and experiences about education and teaching through collaborative dialogue among them. Likewise, Birchak points out: "A study group is a democratic organization where teachers participate voluntarily, work collaboratively and share responsibilities and roles (Cited by Sierra, 2007).

5.2 Types of Teachers' Study Groups

Cayuso et al. (2004) suggest four different study groups: topic study groups, practices study groups, online study groups and TIP study group.

5.2.1 Topic Study Group

In a Topic Study Group, the members choose an area of concern according to their needs and do research on available information of the topic. Topic Study Group can use texts, articles, or video series. In other words, staff members can suggest several choices in order to select the most appealing source to them.

Allington (2001) refers to this type of study group as a TAPER (Teachers as Professional Education Readers) study group. The goal of a TAPER Study Group "…is to develop individual expertise and foster the development of shared knowledge among members of the group" (Allington, 2001. p 113). In fact, members have the opportunity to share their insights, seek clarifications on ideas from the text, and make connections between the reading and their classrooms.

5.2.2 Practices Study Group

This study group focuses on teachers' reflections in an introspective manner about their own performance in teaching and how to improve it. Cayuso, et al (2004) affirm that Practices Study Group is designed to be a metacognitive learning tool since members focus on a strategy that they learn and experiment with through active participation. In this study group, teachers have different activities, such as watching video tapes of themselves or others teaching, observing in other classrooms, or having discussions within the group about possible ways to improve lessons presentation, classroom management, instructional implementation, questioning practices and student learning styles.

Similar to a Topic Study Group. The Practices Study Group also might involve the study of texts, articles or videos, but it proposes an additional aspect:, "homework". Teachers will try out the lesson ideas, the implementations, or strategies in their own classrooms. Then the teachers can reconvene and make decisions on what to do, like:

- Share how the lesson or strategy worked in class.

- Show work samples and/or products from the lesson.

- Share a videotape of themselves teaching in order to receive some feedback.

5.2.3 Online Study Group

According to Cayuso (2004), this type of group is the most impersonal because it is managed through internet. Teachers mail and share their experiences with other colleagues in different contexts. This study group has a particular advantage: knowing others' experiences in different parts of the world. Thanks to this variety of opinions, teachers can compare and contrast their teaching by using this way of online interaction. This study also can be done in a school in situations when teachers do not have enough time to gather and discuss their doubts in the meetings, so they use an online connection to share their knowledge or to ask about situations that they are facing.

5.2.4 TIP study group

Participants do their own research. The main focus of a TIP group is for the participants to gather as many resources and data as possible about a particular topic. For example, if a group is wondering how to provide more effective ways of making conferencing a powerful teaching tool during writer's workshop, the group can research that topic. Possible resources include books, articles in professional journals, and conversations with experts in the field.

5.3 Why a Teachers' Study Group (TSG)?

A teacher study group supports teachers to endure and be successful as they manage the many activities and troubles they face in their educational context. In our research we found that the problems teachers had are related to the fact that most of them do not use the English language well enough to renew the methodology they use to teach English.

According to White (2004) teacher study groups are used as a program for helping teachers to improve their practices. She says "This kind of program provides a safe and collegial study group environment into the campus and provides a confidential forum for discussions on teacher professionalism and problem solving, teachers are knowledgeable, caring, and willing to help and they need to network with other teachers."(White, 2004. p. 5). Furthermore TSG allows teachers to develop personally and professionally, as a result teachers can benefit and bring to them meaningful changes on their practice. They also can become more flexible and more open to new ideas from TSG meetings.

Short, (1991) thinks that "teacher study group is an opportunity to think through their own beliefs, share ideas, challenge current instructional practices, identify professional needs as well as develop literacy innovation for their classrooms." (cited by Dash & Jung 2005).

Thus, it is important to create a teacher study group because it promotes professional support which means teachers need help from other professionals in order to grow in their practices. Related to this Crookes (2003) says that the purpose of creating a teachers network is based on enhancing professional and

personal growth and support, which can be seen depending on the needs of the group.

A teacher study group is a collaborative group organized by teachers to help them strengthen their professional development. Roberts & Pruitt (2003) indicate that "study groups as a professional development strategy have the potential to help to build communities of professional practice which are a job embedded approach for teacher's professional growth." (Cited by Sierra, 2007). Based on this it is important that teachers make an effort to improve on a daily basis as professionals in their schools, creating a change in their teaching practice. In response to the trend of teacher self-improvement, they should propose innovations and solutions about English needs and concerns.

5.4 Self reflection

It is an important feature that provides teachers with a break in their routine, a chance to meet new colleagues and discuss their professional problems, and exposure to stimulating new ideas. Kemmis, 1983 comments reflection fosters the most effective teacher interaction in a professional setting; by encouraging teachers to take a stand in questioning and challenging others' underlying assumptions, teaching practices can be improved and conditions of schooling can be made more just (cited by Dash & Jung, 2005). Furthermore Meyer, (1998) points out reflection is both a capacity and a process to challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions of teaching and schooling practices and to imagine alternatives for the purposes of changing conditions (cited by Dash & Jung, 2005 P. 7).

One study of this subject is proposed by Schön (1983, 1987). His idea about reflection is the most appropriate for the study group because he argues that reflection consists of two types: reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action.

Reflection-on-action takes place when teachers recall one's teaching after the class. "Teachers give reasons for their actions/behaviours in class." (Farrell, 2003. p 15). On the other hand, reflection-in-action happens when teachers deal with "on-the spot professional problems as they occur" (Farrell, T. 2003. p 15). This means that this reflection can be recalled and shared. Reflection-in-action is seen in teachers' study groups in the sense that participants of the group bring to mind what they are doing in their classes in order to be able to apply in the classroom what they are learning in each meeting.

5.5 Cooperative development

Cooperative development is a type of working among colleagues in this case teachers can get better results working together than they can being alone. This allows them to express themselves, share ideas and clarify doubts by means of helping one another. Murphy, 1992 states "teachers who work together are more likely to have the opportunity to discuss concepts, problems, etc., that emerge during their professional development activities." (cited by Sierra,2007).

This type of collaborative work helps teachers feel empowered and to promote the concept of teacher collaboration as a key manner for improvement.

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6. Methodology

6.1 Instructional design

We presented the project to the head teacher of the little School in August, 2009. The idea was to get the permission by the administrator with the purpose to carry out the project. Once the administrator approved the project, teachers and coordinator set meeting dates, we proposed some topics related to English subject; then teachers agreed. The study group followed this scheme:

Choosing a topic: all the teachers agreed to carry out the following topics standards, material design, technology, language skills and lesson plan.

Appointing a Facilitator: during each session was assigned a facilitator from researchers. One of them prepared and presented the study group meeting while the other researcher took notes about what she observed during the session. In the same way the meetings were developed changing the researcher's role among observer and participant.

Presenting the topic: the facilitator presented the topic she used the more appropriate technique including presentation with slides, teaching activities and group discussion. In that sense, whole-group discussion allowed teachers to reflect on current practices and created a learning community.

In addition, we will describe the focus that was given to each group meeting in order to make connections between the contents of the meetings and the teaching practices.

Standards: this session was based on the booklet of "Formar en Lenguas Extranjeras: Ingles" (2006). She made a power point presentation through which she explained the most relevant aspects of the standards, in order to provide and get information about those. We sent by email a copy of the presentation to all the teachers. The presentation was based on material that I received from the bilingualism Program it is a topic that teachers have to know because new perspectives in education are based on these elements. The presentation clarified some concepts which were not yet clear.

The second developed issue was lesson plan. One of the researcher presented this topic using posters and video related to how to plan an English class. It produced a group discussion among teachers because the topic was interesting for them. Hence; they talked about the video in several occasions and shared the situations they had faced in their practices. In the end, teachers suggested ideas and practiced in front of their partners each stage of the lesson plan telling that they found the presentation interesting and useful for their practices.

Material design: Teachers work in pairs in order to design new material for their own classes because of the teachers do not create materials and they just use resources provided from institution. In the sessions participants created

materials such as: flashcards and big books; consequently teachers saw this as an innovating tool to apply with their students. Therefore, they considered that the session made them understand what they need to make materials for their classes and that it is important to use them in their practices.

Technology: one of the researchers did the presentation of the topic in the informatics' lab and each teacher worked with a computer. She explained and developed the topic in one hour. Then, teachers posed some questions about the topic. She provided some answers, and others were answered by the group according to experiences, thoughts and knowledge about the topic; all of them helped each other This session was developed with the purpose to implement a new strategy using the computer as a ludic tool to teach English.

Language skills: This session was developed by all teachers carried out listening, speaking, reading and writing activities, teachers participated and commented about these, furthermore most of them liked listening and writing activities because they thought that it was a dynamic way to learn a foreign language. The aim was to embrace the four skills to get a better teaching development.

6.2 Context

We will present next the context in which this research was carried out.

Setting

Our motivation for exploring a TSG began from our own beliefs about how cooperative work might help to enhance teacher's professional development. For this reason we chose a group of teachers in a public school in an urban area called "little school". The little school is an elementary school with 431 students average 36-40 per classroom, 12 teachers and 1 coordinator. Indeed, the idea of the school is to promote an environmental education. Teachers teach many subjects including math, science, Spanish language, and English two times a week.

The public school has different resources including three tape recorders, two TV, one DVD and computers room with connection to internet just one. All those resources are used for all the subjects.

"The Little School" only has 7 classrooms, 4 bathrooms, 1 lunch room and 1 administration room.

Participants.

Teachers study group was composed of 6 teachers from morning time. The average age is from 30 to 35. There were 2 men and 4 women; most of them are graduated from Licenciatura Basica primaria and only one teacher is undergraduated. They have between 10-15 years of teaching experiences. The coordinator did not want to participate in the research but she observed some of

the sessions and the other teachers accepted to be part of the group by means of a consent form (see annex 1). One teacher is an English speaker; and other teachers learned the language at the university and institutes.

The research was conducted having the total participation of the six teachers that we already mentioned. The idea was to examine if the study group could benefit teachers development. Additionally, the investigation aimed at enhancing the understanding of professional development and at knowing what impact had the group in a school context.

6.3 Data collection

Before we explain the process of data collection, I would like to mention a relevant statement proposed by Merriam (1998) in relation with data collection. She states that in a qualitative research the primary instrument for data collection is the researchers. Indeed, the role of the researcher is vital since he have important information to supply to the investigation based on their knowledge and the interaction they have established with the other participants within a natural context; for this reason, we consider important to be a participant observer.

Instruments

The instruments used in this project were:

a. Reflection logs

Reflective logs are used to encourage a successful learning and to solve problems encountered during the day of work. These logs do not only summarize what have happened in the classroom, but they make teachers to reflect on those experiences and report what they have learned. (Freeman, 1998. p. 201-216. Wallace, M. 1998. p. 54-76)

According to Moreno and Palencia (2001), a log helps to compare how teachers' perceptions change through a teachers' study group. We gave a folder to each teacher in which the reflective logs were kept. So, the participants could see what they had written through the process of the study group. Besides, the folders had the name of the participant and the consent form.

Additionally, each log showed the process of reflection of each member of the group. It is important to clarify with respect to this reflection process that logs were not the only source we used when giving the perceptions of our teaching practices, but it was based on these logs that we were able to have some evidence on teachers´ reflections and we could track their processes. At the end of the research, we realized that those logs were represented by teachers as an instrument through which they could express what they thought about TSG sessions.

b. Field notes

Field notes is a well-detailed description of the group and the setting, with non-verbal or verbal descriptions, which helps to understand people's perceptions or thoughts. Moreno and Palencia (2001) argue that field notes

serve to keep track of the comments given in the meetings. Additionally, Merriam (1998) adds that every written report done in a mechanically way from a period of observation constitutes field notes.

In order to be organized in the data collection process, our field notes were based on observations made inside the Study Group meetings. This method allowed us to get information easily such as: time, place, numbers and comments of the participants.

c. Interviews

This method of data collection provides a deep understanding of the experience of other people and the meaning they obtain from that experience. It is a powerful way to gain insight about educational issues through the understanding of the experience of the individuals whose lives constitute education. Additionally, it helps people to symbolize their experience through language (Seidman, 1991; as cited by Arias, 2008). We applied a semi-structure interview, in which we stated some questions based on teachers comments from reflective logs. Furthermore, this research tool allowed us to understand and analyze the information collected from reflective logs and field notes.

7. Findings

7.1. Teachers' attitudes impact the program of professional development

The attitude of the participants impacted their process of professional growth, because teachers' disposition towards the study group affected the development of each session positively or negatively. Sessions were seen positively because participants felt that they were in a learning environment for teaching English.

> *RL-JJF: Si. Nos permite aprender la forma de interactuar con nuestros estudiantes de una manera más didáctica y productiva en el desarrollo de una clase.*

They considered that belonging to the TSG helped them to discover methodologies and strategies to apply in English classes and in other subjects as well. We see this as a positive aspect because the participants had opportunities of revising alternatives for teaching English depending on their needs.

> *SMR-INT: más conocimiento del inglés nuevas estrategias para dar el inglés, los últimos temas o talleres estuvieron muy prácticos me gustó mucho*
> *RL- ALV" sí, porque lo aprendido puede ser puesto en práctica en futuras actividades de grupo."*

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From our perspective, we observed that the participants needed to implement the use of the technology frequently in the classroom practice because they do not use the computer for pedagogical purposes;, as this excerpt shows.

RL-JJF: "si. Nos permitió aprender a utilizar las herramientas

tecnológicas en nuestro trabajo pedagógico"

In a general view, a negative aspect was that teacher's didn't have sufficient time which influenced the development of the sessions. At the beginning of these sessions, the schedule was modified in order to conduct the TSG meetings. Many participants could not come to a specific hour due to their job and personal obligations. At the end of the TSG, the participants expressed that each session was too short in terms of time; hence they proposed that the sessions should be two hours;

ALV- INT: el tiempo fue muy limitado y la verdad es que acá un grupo

grande de docentes y el grupo fue muy reducido para ese trabajo.

As a result, it is important to see in depth each one of teachers' views towards the study group in order to understand which of the views we considered as positive or negative attitudes.

7.1.1 Positive teachers' attitudes

In our point of view, positive attitude is a response that reveals an individual's degree of like or dislike for activities, topics, materials etc. Gratitude represents a positive attitude because through a verbal intention a preference toward TSG sessions and facilitators was indicated. Additionally, there were verbal expressions that represented they were satisfied and agreed during each session.

(J1) Teachers were kind using words such as: "bienvenidas, qué bueno tenerlas aquí"

(J-1) One participant followed up to the facilitator through physical movements such as: head movements, touch their face and say words aloud yeah…

These samples showed the positive views of teachers who were ready to work inside group's session acting gladly and eagerly.

Hence, we could interpret by seeing certain kinesthetic movements and pleasant comments that they were interested in what was being presented in the group.

Another positive attitude was expressed through the topics seen in each session that helped to be in contact with new trends of language teaching in

Colombia. For instance, standards, lesson plan, and material design, which are meaningful to the English class; because they gave participants ideas to implement into the classroom.

> *ALV: los temas nuevos se pudieron adquirir de acuerdo a algo lúdico que lleva a los niños a esa práctica como son canciones rondas era práctico pero metido como aprender un vocabulario mas que todo yo lo asimilé de esa forma mucho vocabulario y eso fue práctico para los niños de la edad que tenemos.*

The participants considered some topics useful for them because these were focused on teaching English for primary students through didactic alternatives; flashcards, technology tools, illustrated books etc; which gave them new ideas to update their English class.

> *INT-APA: Como la didáctica, la manera de enseñar inglés a los niños; que muchas veces eso es lo que le da duro, por ejemplo antes llegaba y lo que hacia era niños esto se pronuncia de esta manera; escriban esto, busque mas vocabulario; y no era la manera adecuada yo pienso que uno tiene que ser con una metodología buena para que ellos se motiven.*

In addition this teacher added that one of the topics seen in a session allowed her to get in touch with her students. This evidences that the participant put into practice what was learnt in the TSG sessions.

INT-APA: y de pronto en esto si se aprendió mucho no solo los materiales que ustedes nos enseñaron hacer sino lo de la página que me ha parecido muy importante (blog) porque yo a ellos también los puse a que le dí la pagina y ellos se comunican conmigo algunos no todos porque son poquitos los que tienen Internet.

In fact, participants were aware about advantages to belong to this study group because they could grow professionally on teaching of English including vocabulary, blog, material design etc.

JJF-INT: Yo creo que todo proceso académico que uno emprende siempre deja algo como enseñanza y yo creo que este proceso claro siempre deja expectativas motivaciones nos pone a pensar en ciertas cosas claro aporta cosas importantes.

Also, we observed positive attitudes when the facilitator of the session provided more examples and models of English classes. It helped to clarify what was presented in each topic, because they could see the applicability. In the following excerpt we van analyze different elements about possitive view towards the group and the applicability to certain topics.

INT-APA: por ejemplo lo de las descripciones por ejemplo me gusto mucho el primer trabajo que hicimos que fue de la casita describiendo

todo me pareció muy bueno para ponerlo en práctica en las dos en

español y en el inglés…

In the same sample, the participant shows that she modified her methodology of teaching with new visions obtained from one of the TSG meetings. In this way, the participant could see the applicability of the vocabulary in simple phrases.

INT-APA… muy bueno eso me pareció fabuloso describir y formar oraciones porque uno generalmente con ellos lo que hace es como vocabulario cómo se dice casa cómo se dice mirador como se dice ventana pero uno piensa que porque están en primaria apenas, no los pone a crear párrafos y a construir oraciones pero entonces eso si me sirvió para que ellos como que ampliaran haciendo oraciones sencillas construyendo párrafos.

Hence, teachers showed more dedication on the work session when facilitators supplied them with materials and ideas about how to conduct English classes. For example, in material design' session, participants worked extensively preparing their big books and flash cards, because of the applicability these materials had in their teaching practices.

(*J3) pero en el momento en que nosotras les dimos el tema y pautas para trabajar; ellos inmediatamente se motivaron a participar y a*

Proponer ideas de cómo llevar una clase de ingles con el tema que les dimos (partes del cuerpo)

> *(J-5) Durante la sesión uno de los participantes que trabajó con vocabulario de alimentos se mostró motivado ansioso por aprender inglés, esto se observó porque él expreso en voz alta ohhhhh, ahhh, yeah good, fat, the sandwich is delicious, go out, los babies, there are the children.*

This sample showed that one of the participants was interested in the activity so the participant tried to make English sentences in order to learn and to share with his partners. Consequently, the negative perspectives teachers had will now be examined.

7.1.2. Negative attitudes

We considered negative attitude as a reaction of lacking interest toward TSG sessions; for instance teachers just followed up instructions and topics of each session prepared by researchers, it means they adapted to our conditions without proposing any thing new including topics or ideas for future sessions.

> *RL-HT: "Lo dejo al criterio de las practicantes y ellas continúen con su agenda de trabajo."*

At the beginning they did not see the group as an opportunity to work on their needs, but participants thought that we had to prepare the whole program to conduct in each session with them. For this reason, when we asked them to propose some topics to develop in the TSG meetings, they said nothing.

> INT-ALV: *"la verdad es que nosotros teníamos a nivel de grupo otras perspectivas a nosotros nos dijeron que era un taller de ingles llegamos con unas expectativas mas no propusimos porque estábamos esperando que nos traían ustedes."*

> INT-JJF: *"la idea como la planteaba ahorita la compañera es que nosotros suponíamos que ya se traía por parte de ustedes como un esquema montado y que todo el curso iba mas o menos hacer desarrollado un sistema que se traía por eso nos limito para nosotros proponer otras cosas cierto, nosotros creíamos que de acuerdo a los esquemas que ustedes ya traían esos se tenían que seguir."*

This confirms that teachers did not participate to suggest themes for TSG meetings, they only limited to the topics given by us because they considered that we as pre-service teachers have new strategies and methodologies to share with them from a positive view; it means members of the TSG had a negative attitude in relation to the topics that became a positive perspective in the following sessions.

According to our observations, teachers had low participation and disposition when they did not have visual aids, then it produced unpleasant condition to the session. Furthermore, another factor that affect sessions was their educational duties this generated low participation and motivation on their part.

(J-1) Teachers showed unpleasant gestures like lazy, tired, they stood up, one of them went out of the classroom because we were not able to use the video been.

In relation with the time we noticed that it was not favorable because some teachers were distracted when they took time to complete their planned formats during the teacher study group session. Teacher participants were in the TSG meeting but there were not an active participation.

(J-2)Teachers were concerned about making other activities such as taking Care of students, cleaning the classroom; student's eating lunch and talking among themselves. One of them was filling sheets during this session.

The last negative aspect was teachers did not agree with some ground rules proposed by researchers due to the fact they had other obligations and they needed to carry them out so that they would not have to leave their other responsibilities as is the case with emergency phone calls.

(J-2)Teachers did not like to establish ground rules such as: punctuality and not answer cell phone's calls.

7.2. Applicability of the learned knowledge in the teaching practice

We define applicability as the process of implementation of the topics dealt with in the group in teachers' practice. This means educators said that they intended to apply the information received in the group in their classes. We considered that applicability is carrying out the information, strategies and activities acquired from Teacher Study Group into their own teaching practice.

(RF-3) Teachers comment that new knowledge can be applied in their Classes.

Teacher commented that it is important to apply the information of the sessions in their context. In general, teachers agreed on the fact that this theory was applicable to their teaching practice and they considered the theory useful for situations presented in the classroom.

ALV: por la metodología nos pareció práctico llevarlo al salón de clase con los estudiantes.

Furthermore the theory seen in each session allowed teachers to change their perspectives about English teaching because they argued that before the

STG their English class development was based on vocabulary and pronunciation.

APA: *"antes llegaba y lo que hacía era niños esto se pronuncia de esta manera escriban esto busque más vocabulario y no era la manera adecuada."*

The same teacher stated that sessions were constructive because these were a support for their pedagogical work. Apart from this, participants thought that information and activities from sessions could be used with their students.

APA: *yo pienso que uno tiene que ser con una metodología buena para que ellos se motiven y de pronto en esto si se aprendió mucho no solo los materiales que ustedes nos enseñaron hacer sino lo de la pagina que me ha parecido muy importante (blog) porque yo a ellos también los puse a que le di la página y ellos se comunican conmigo algunos no todos porque son poquitos los que tienen Internet*

Nevertheless, one of the participants pointed out two skills including writing and listening to apply them in the classroom.

RL6-HT: *Si. Lo que aprendí se lo enseñare a los alumnos más que todo la actividad de oír y escribir.*

Participants also commented that materials and activities seen from TSG can be integrated with other subjects including math and science.

JJF: por la forma como de pronto una clase no solo la puede direccionar en inglés sino que puede integrar una clase con otras áreas. Una clase de inglés se puede integrar con una clase de ciencias naturales por ejemplo cuando hablábamos de animales eso también se podría mirar en la clasificación de los animales, se podría esa clase no solo con ciencias naturales sino con matemáticas con un proceso de agrupar, contar. Ó sea uno veía que el desarrollo daba para poder apuntar con esos temas no solo a ingles sino a otras asignaturas como un proceso de integración.

They believed that to apply the activities and strategies made in the TSG could improve their English classes.

RL-2 SMR: las actividades se pueden aplicar para un mejor desarrollo de la clase.

For this teacher it is relevant to put into practice what was learned in the sessions to have more effective students' learning. It means that they were thinking about how to use the received theory in their classes for the learning students.

INT- ALV: " lo que el grupo nos trajo como taller fue algo muy práctico y creo que en cualquier momento uno lo puede aplicar en el momento en que nosotros nos toque dar un taller de ingles a niños de corta edad digamos de básica primaria estamos en condiciones de trabajar con ellos."

One of the activities session was based on designing new materials into the TSG meeting it creating an environment where teachers could share their ideas about how they can use these materials in their practice. It promoted enrichment of the learning between colleagues for meaningful usage of these materials (flash cards and big books); making innovations in their English classes as well as their materials.

(J-4) "Ellos dijeron que los materiales eran muy útiles para usarlos en sus clases, ya que estos les pueden servir para dar una clase de ingles de forma didáctica y para que los estudiantes tengan una mejor comprensión en el tema."

INT-APA: "Si claro de manera positiva porque lo que se les enseñó ellos como que adquirieron el conocimiento me lo demostraron en las evaluaciones y en las practicas que se hicieron en el salón de clase. Además yo trabajé con el

material que hicimos lo del álbum (big book) trabajamos

con eso y las fotocopias."

This sample shows that materials made by members of the teacher study group were applied in their classes; besides she said that she put into practice one of the materials (big book) to know the result on her students. It was evidenced through an evaluation conducted by the teacher. On the other hand, the following activity developed in one of the sessions showed that the educator enjoyed performing the theme (parts of the house).

INT-APA: "por ejemplo lo de las descripciones por ejemplo me gustó mucho el primer trabajo que hicimos que fue de la casita describiendo todo me pareció muy bueno para ponerlo en práctica."

In the same way she added that the activity made in this session helped her to realize that she can develop in a dynamic way the use of the vocabulary in depth. In fact, she thought that students could make sentences and descriptions with some vocabulary for teaching children.

INT-APA……. describir y formar oraciones porque uno generalmente con ellos lo que hace es como vocabulario cómo se dice casa cómo se dice mirador como se dice ventana pero uno piensa que porque están en primaria apenas, no los pone a crear párrafos y a construir oraciones pero entonces eso si me sirvió para que ellos como que ampliaran haciendo oraciones sencillas construyendo párrafos." 38

The next finding shows the way teachers interacted among them creating an atmosphere of collaborative work.

7.3. Teachers' beliefs about the study group

This finding refers to teachers' opportunities to share with their colleagues their concerns about English. This situation allowed to create a learning environment from peers' teaching experiences on English learning, which generate close relation between colleagues in each TSG sessions because they could dialogue about different topics of their interest and promoting friendly environment which helped to grow professionally from each other.

> *JJF: En lo profesional pude mirar otras perspectivas de mis compañeros lo que ellos aplican fue algo muy interesante porque cada clase se desarrollaba algunos trabajos que teníamos que salir al frente escuchar los compañeros verlos a ellos hacer exposición de pronto si una gran parte fue enriquecedor.*

This finding was focused on three aspects including: TSG: a space for sharing, TSG for collaborative learning, and teachers' improvement through collaboration.

7.3.1 TSG: a space for sharing

TSG offers a space to expose ideas and comments in groups for consulting between colleagues new alternatives.   39

J3-SLM: "a un lado del papel escribimos la parte del cuerpo y por el otro lado ellos deben de dibujar esta"

In this sample teachers expressed an idea about how to teach English vocabulary for primary school which was conducive to learning English words. Teachers also discussed computer management, where they had the opportunity to share their opinions about pedagogical tools that could be used in teaching English. This means teachers could discuss computers in order to use them as aids to implement in teaching English.

J4-HT: "en el aula se están usando mucho, son más didácticos"; "hay muchos traductores que se pueden comparar y usar, aun mas los computadores están desplazando las academias".

J4-APA: "que es muy difícil usar computadores en el aula"

Teacher Study Group was not only a learning space but it had also a collaborative learning among participants. It was evidenced during each session because they learned from each other.

7.3.2 TSG for collaborative learning

This implies that teachers could reflect, change and improve more in the group than individually. In addition, collaboration between teachers was

adopted by themselves help them, in order to have a better performance in their practice.

(J-4) Durante esta actividad los profesores se ponían de acuerdo para trabajar, ellos preguntaban que significaba cierta palabras tales como hungry, angry, thirsty, cold. Cada pareja se dividió el trabajo, uno cortaba el otro pegaba.

Also, participants reminded vocabulary related to English language from Teacher study meetings because they have forgotten some words in English.

RL-4-APA: "En lo personal ampliando mi vocabulario".

In fact, the teacher argued that TSG offers a new learning to teach English keeping in mind didactic materials. Here, he mentioned that he learned how to make her materials for the class.

RL-3SLM: Aprendí hacer material para hacer más agradable las Clases de Ingles.

The following comment affirms that group work is very productive because their colleagues and researchers contributed on their learning how to teach English. Consequently, teachers were involved in new strategies, information and methodologies about English teaching like to prepare an English class, how to develop the four skills and their materials such as flash cards.

INT-HT: "que trabajar en grupo es muy productivo lo que yo no se me baso en el compañero los vacíos que tengo el compañero me ayuda y desde luego la ayuda de ustedes."

For this participant each session contributed on his learning from partners' activities because he could appreciate another perspective different to his own teaching.

INT-JJF:". En lo profesional pude mirar otras perspectivas de mis compañeros lo que ellos aplican fue algo muy interesante porque cada clase se desarrollaba algunos trabajos que teníamos que salir al frente escuchar los compañeros verlos a ellos hacer exposición de pronto si una gran parte fue enriquecedor."

7.3.3 Teachers' improvement through collaboration.

Teachers said that through each session of the study group, they could improve their teaching practice because they learnt new methodology and strategies for their English classes clarifying some doubts and questions in relation to how to apply and to teach a topic of English.

INT-SMR: "si me ayudo bastante con nuevas metodologías o nuevas estrategias que nos ayuden que los niños entiendan mas fácil una temática."

7.4. Internalizing the knowledge discussed in the TSG

It means that teachers analyzed about their English teaching in order to compare their practices with the information that they were receiving. Thus, teachers could identify some aspects that could help them to improve their classes like methodology.

> *SMR: claro que si es para mi practica obviamente como le venia diciendo las metodologías y didácticas deben ser siempre porque hoy en día la educación expositora no funciona los niños se cansan uno tiene que ser mas recursivo en las cuales ellos participan y jugando como dicen jugando también se aprenden y así hicimos nosotros con ustedes jugamos hicimos loterías y dibujos y también aprendimos.*

Here the teacher commented about methodology, "what was learned in the TSG" with the purpose to apply it in their teaching practice. She said that through TSG she could get ideas to renew his methodology in English.

Teachers made connection using her teaching experience and the themes discussed in the TSG session. One of the topics that generated discussion was about how to start an English class by means of a video. The following is a comment one of the participants about the video.

> *J3-M "no siempre se puede hacer lo que se ve en el video porque eso depende con la actitud con la que se llega a clase"*

43

This sample shows that the participant compared her teaching practice with the video seen in the teacher study group session. She said that in reality it is difficult to carry out what the teacher did in the video because everything depended on the teachers and students attitudes.

7.5. Professional reflection was fostered during TSG Sessions.

This is a reflection process in which each one of the teachers regularly examines what they have obtained and what they have not during TSG meetings.

RL- 2 HT: "Si. Me ayuda a reforzar mi trabajo en el aula y me sirve de autorreflexión y análisis que me esta haciendo falta"

These samples show that TSG provides an opportunity where participants can rethink about their professional development in relation to English; because he could find new ideas to enhance his performance in teaching English. And it promoted reflection on his own classroom experience.

RL-4HT: Si. Me enriqueció más y vi la importancia de utilizar nuevos Métodos.

RL5- JJF: Si. Me aporto nuevos conocimientos que llevándolos a la práctica pueden ser muy productivos.

Moreover, another member of the TSG mentioned the importance to share with her partners because they got strategies to interact and learn from each one of them.

INT-APA: "Es un espacio de reflexión porque uno con los compañeros aprende a compartir ellos tienen unas ideas nosotros tenemos otras y entonces uno llega a una socialización y uno aprende demasiado para ponerlo en práctica."

The following member thought that materials and information obtained from TSG could be extended in order to implement what was learned from his teaching.

INT-HT: "Ampliar el conocimiento que ustedes nos dieron ampliar el material que ustedes nos dieron hacer un trabajo mas practico llevar mas a los niños a la sala de informática porque que se ve que con el computador ellos aprenden mas y con que entiendan mas las cosas.

The teacher pointed that the use of materials in the classroom is important to complement the topic and for the benefit of the students.

RL-3LMP: La necesidad de elaborar material didáctico para mayor Comprension del tema.

Teachers reflected on the importance of the implementation of new methodologies in the classroom. They need to renew the traditional teaching to achieve a higher level of apprehension from the students.

> *INT-SMR: "las metodologías y didácticas deben ser siempre, porque hoy en día la educación expositora no funciona los niños se cansan uno tiene que ser mas recursivo en las cuales ellos participan y jugando como dicen jugando también se aprenden y así hicimos nosotros con ustedes jugamos hicimos loterías y dibujos y también aprendimos."*

8. DISSCUSSION

Our study was guided by the following research questions:

What does the implementation of a Teacher Study Group tell us about teacher growth?

What is the impact of the Teacher Study Group?

Based on the first finding about the role of attitude in the professional growth, we found that the participants assumed negative and positive attitudes towards the Study Group as we could observe from the data. In negative way, most of the members just followed up the topics of each session thus they only conformed to study issues of the sessions prepared by us. As Guskey (1985) suggests this occurs because of the lack of teacher's insight and motivation in both the individual and environmental factors in the process of improvement. On the other hand we also observed positive attitudes like data showed that one of the participants was interested in the activity, the teacher tried to make English sentences in order to share with his partners; likewise Katz (1993), states the most important disposition was the disposition to go on learning. Keep in mind the teacher's attitudes they reacted depending on their disposition toward teacher study group sessions. Attitudes have to do with the "disposition to behave favourably or unfavourably toward some object, person, event or idea"

(The cyclopedic Education Dictionary, 1998, p. 325). In this sense; Katz (1988) defined dispositions as "a very different type of learning from skills and knowledge. They can be thought of as habits of mind, tendencies to respond to situations in certain ways."

Teachers can apply the theory learned from the study group session to their teaching experience. In that sense we could note through the interview that teachers attempted to use the new knowledge in their classes.

One of the teachers put into practice different issues that were discussed in the group. Some of the topics were very useful for her practice. This can be connected to what was found by Cardenas (2004) who argues that changing is an opportunity for improving based on the possibility of transformation and growth. Besides, she states that teachers are interested in "breaking old habits and trying out alternatives" (Cárdenas.2004 p. 3).

With respect to teacher`s learning when working in groups they were able to analyze the contributions from their colleagues and to implement suggestions and strategies used by others; who had the opportunity to discuss concepts, problems, etc., that emerged during their professional development meetings. We also found teachers believed that the sessions helped them to reinforce their pedagogical knowledge, besides the group allowed them to be updated. Pineda and Clavijo (2003) explained that a professional development environment helps teachers to reflect on their own practices, to identify problematic areas and to share concerns and experiences through non-traditional professional spaces. The group provided teachers the opportunity to talk about their concerns in teaching and to think about their strengths and

weaknesses in order to improve in their performance as educators. In contrast Fullan (2001) states that professional development is not about workshops and courses; instead, it is about developing more powerful ways of learning that occur day by day.

Based on the process that teachers followed in order to compare and contrast their practices with the theory that they received in the sessions of the group, for instance we found that one of the participants remarked in the interview that he was interested in using the theory, by analyzing and assimilating what he learned in the sessions.

Teachers compared what they were doing in their practices with the theory presented in the group. Wallace (1998) sees this process of comparison as professional development process through reflective teaching, because according to him, reflection includes two different types of knowledge in which teachers compared their experiential knowledge to their received knowledge in order to apply this contrast in their practices by reflecting which would develop a professional competence. Therefore teachers agreed on the fact that the theory studied in the TSG could be helpful for their teaching practices, and they manifested the importance to apply it in the classroom. The development of this practice is based on self-reflective process, in which teachers reflect on their own practice. As Pennington (1992) describes the reflection process in which teachers think of their classroom processes in order to improve their teaching practices. Through Reflective log a teacher declared that TSG helped him to reinforce his teaching practice in the classroom and permit him make a self-reflexion. Here he mentioned that he needs to improve on his English teaching skills because it is difficult for him to prepare an English class.   49

Through the process of reflection, teachers continued asking questions about the creation of a competitive community where educators reflect on the issues that need to be changed or improved. Through the adaptation of those changes, the students, the school and the whole community would benefit from the development of the teachers. (Cárdenas. 2002) In the same sense, Cayuso et al. (2004) state that this process of reflection served as a means to reshape their practices.

With respect to collaborative work the teacher stated the importance of sharing. This means socialization of knowledge which is one of the most important issues in a process of professional development and the improvement of the institutions. (Imbernón, 1997: 41. in Cardenas and Malagón. 2007).

Based on teacher collaboration and group work they were more likely to create and improve the relationship of teachers inside as well as outside the school.

Indeed, teachers thought that the study group helped them in the different steps: Firstly, teachers updated their pedagogical knowledge. Secondly, they innovated their classes by implementing new strategies in their practices, and correcting possible issues that teachers considered should be changed. Study groups are needed because they help teachers carry out curricular and teaching innovations (Murphy, 1992; as cited by Piedrahita, 2007).

By answering the question if the Study Group was helpful for them, these teachers considered that the study group could encourage them to share their experiences which could support them in the process of reflection.

As we seen above a study group also promotes teachers´reflection making their practice a reflective process that leads to curriculum improvement (Birchak, 1998; as cited by Piedrahita, 2007). Finally Teacher Study Group was essential for them to carry out acceptable practice as teachers and professionals.

9. Pedagogical Implications

Based on the results we observed and analyzed in the collecting data as well as taking into account the research questions of this investigation, we concluded that study groups are certainly a means to support professional development. Indeed, through the participation in the TSG, teachers learned about different pedagogical issues which they endeavored to apply in their teaching practices.

Students and teachers benefited from the TSG because teachers developed and improved their teaching performance, and students could witness a remarkable change in the content of their classes. (Arias. 2008) In relation to this research project, this investigation contributed to studies done in education. Teachers study group have been developed in our context. Actually, in Colombia several teachers' development programs have been carried out. (Cárdenas, 2004; as cited by Arias, 2008). Each one of them has been developed with different purposes. These programs are called PFPDs (in Spanish Programas de Formación Permanente de Docentes) and the teacher community is exposed to issues related to the learning of new pedagogical practices. For instance, to teach teachers to do research for the benefit of the students.

However, our Study Group was created with the purpose of providing teachers an environment in which they could mention on the current teaching methodologies or decisions taken into meetings in order to propose possible solutions and improve their professional performance into the classroom.

As a final point, this study is a constructive support to the educational field, due to the fact that teachers can see the importance of sharing with other colleagues and to reflect on their teaching practices by means of a TSG, they can explore other ways to improve their practices. Moreover teachers can reflect on their needs and look for solutions for them. One quotation of the reflective process was cited by Donald Schon (1996) who argued, "Reflective practice involves thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice while being coached by professionals in the discipline."

This definition reinforces the importance of the inclusion of reflection in teacher professional programs. Reflection helps teachers because they can observe different scenarios from their own context. Nevertheless, it is important to take into account teachers' situations together and reflect on the circumstances, relevant educational theory, etc., if teachers do so; better decisions about curriculum and instruction are made.

10. Further Research

This research study was focused on the creation of a Study Group and how it was developed. One of the issues that could be explored is the impact of the TSG. That is, new studies could inquiry about issues teachers apply after Teacher Study Group sessions. It is certainly worth to observe if teachers implement what was learned in the Study Group.

Another possible study could be the consolidation of a group, in which involves school staff; because it will be crucial in the improvement of group relations and pedagogical processes at school and, consequently, in the improvement of education in the country.

Also, it would be worth conducting research about the implementation of new practices in the classroom that involve teachers and learners.

11. CONCLUSION

In this study we found that TSG offered a model of Professional development to guide the teachers into a reflective approach by means of reflective logs; in which they analyzed and wrote how could improve their teaching practice. Besides, teachers expressed through their reflections that they pondered over their practices before and after each one of the sessions. Before, teachers had different concerns based on their classes. After, teachers compared and contrasted their performance with the knowledge that they received in the group sessions.

TSG allowed teachers express and discuss about the needs they faced into their teaching classroom finding possible solutions, recommendations and suggestions from other colleagues. It means TSG involved a collaborative discourse around problems that arise in their practice and to be exposing to instructional ideas during each meeting.

In addition, TSG provided a space where participants could consolidate better group relations between them because they could share their teaching experiences helping each other. In other words, they can do more beyond their regular classes in group work.

Teachers made connection with he information learnt in the TSG and other subjects. Most of TSG members commented that activities and strategies implemented in an English class could be applied in others subjects for instance, math and science.

Through reflection on their own teaching teachers could observe the need that was adopted the study group. They began to gain access to new ideas that could be useful to them. Teachers increasingly grew professionally because they stated that they had learnt about different issues, and they had the opportunity to share their opinions and thoughts about those issues which allowed them to reinforce what they had seen in each one of the sessions. Teachers did not hesitate to ask for more information and for more help for their concerns; according to McIntyre (Cited by Calderhead and Gates, 1993) this initiative is based on reflection, because reflection assists teachers to reflect on their problems and needs, second, it guides their practice in the long run when they become more experienced educators.

Finally, the process of reflection promotes the will of teachers to apply the theory they had learned in the sessions during their teaching practices. Although the main goal of this research was not to know if teachers apply the theory or not, we could witness the interest of teachers in putting into practice the information presented in the TSG. This determination was the result of the desire to be better teachers and to reshape some practices they considered that could be changed

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13. ANNEXES

Universidad Tecnologica de Pereira
Licenciatura de la Enseñanza de lengua Inglesa
Facultad de Bellas artes & Humanidades
Teacher Study Group

Objetivo: con esta encuesta se pretende conocer el perfil profesional de los participantes del grupo de estudio para profesores.

Encuesta Nº 1

Señale con una x

1. Grado de escolaridad
   A. Normalista   B. Licenciado   C. Maestria   D. doctorado

2. Cuanto tiempo ha ejercido la docencia

   ------------------- años

3. Cuanto tiempo lleva en la institución

   ------------------- años

4. Donde aprendió ingles

   a. Instituto   b. Universidad

5. Que grados enseña.

6. Que asignaturas enseña

   a. matemáticas   b. Ciencias naturales c. Sociales   d. Religión
   e. Ética   F. Ingles   g. Todas

7. ¿Cuántas veces da clase de ingles a la semana?

   a. 1 vez   b. 2 veces   c. 3 veces o mas   d. ninguna

8. Que materiales o herramientas usa para dar una clase de ingles?

    a. libros   b. copias   c. computador   d. tablero   e. otros

9. Considera que necesita mejorar la enseñanza del ingles?

    a. si   b. no   c. ¿Por qué?

10. Señale como crece profesionalmente.

    a. talleres   b. capacitación del gobierno   c. autónoma

11. Que desafíos ha tenido que asumir al dar la clase de ingles.

    a. el ingles   b. las actividades   c. el aprendizaje de los estudiantes
    d. Los materiales   e. otros   cuales?

REFLECTIVE LOG
PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACION
STUDY GROUP- GRUPO DE ESTUDIO

LOG Nº 1

Objetivo: Describir el proceso llevado a cabo dentro del grupo de estudio en la Escuela de Guayacanes con profesores.

Estimado Docente: El siguiente cuestionario tiene como motivo conocer sus percepciones acerca del trabajo en esta sesión del grupo de estudio. Sus opiniones son importantes para la investigación.

Nombre: _____ Fecha: _____

¿Qué le aporto la sesión?

¿Este taller le sirvió para su desarrollo profesional y/o personal? Si_ No _
¿Por qué?

¿La teoría vista tiene relevancia en su práctica docente? Si_ No _
Explique su respuesta

Recomendaciones (El grupo de Estudio es guiado por usted mismo; sus aportes son importantes)
¿Qué considera debería tenerse en cuenta en futuras sesiones?

INTERVIEW

El propósito de esta entrevista es con el fin de recopilar información acerca perspectivas y experiencias de los profesores participantes del grupo de estudio de la Escuelita. Este es un instrumento de recopilación de información para el trabajo de investigación que nos ayuda a consolidar los datos recolectados. Apreciamos su colaboración en este ejercicio. Si en cualquier momento usted siente que tiene alguna duda acerca de las preguntas, por favor no se abstenga de preguntar. Estaremos dispuestos aclarar cualquier duda que usted pueda tener.

Basado en los reflective logs

1. SESION DE LOS ESTANDARES

a) ¿Cómo le pareció la sesión de los estándares?

b) por que no sugirió otros temas? No tiene mas inquietudes-dificultades?

VAMOS HABLAR DEL GRUPO EN SI

2) Que le aporto el ser miembro del grupo de estudio (TSG)?

3) ¿En el log escribió que le servia no solo para el ingles sino otras áreas, como y cuales?

- ¿La teoría recibida en las sesiones es aplicable a su práctica docente?

4) ¿Qué temas nuevos pudo adquirir en el TSG?

- ¿Por qué considera que los tópicos expuestos fueron escogidos?

- ¿En que medida las sesiones realizadas le despejaron dudas sobre temas planteados?

5) ¿Usted cree que el TSG contribuyo no solo en la enseñanza del ingles sino en su aprendizaje del ingles?

6) ¿Es importante en estos espacios de trabajo establecer reglas de desarrollo??

7) ¿Cómo le aporto el grupo de estudio a sus relaciones personal y profesional con sus colegas?

8) ¿Con que frecuencia usted intercambia ideas y experiencias con sus colegas? A diario, cada hora, cuando ocurre

9) ¿Como crece usted profesionalmente? ¿Creció a partir del grupo?

- ¿La teoría recibida en las sesiones es aplicable a su práctica docente?
- ¿Lo considera un espacio de reflexión? ¿Por qué?
- ¿Ha pensado en aplicar o ha aplicado la información obtenida en su práctica docente? Como?

10) ¿En que forma usted considera que el TSG fue efectivo? Sugerencias a aquellos que estén interesados en ser parte de un grupo de estudio en el futuro.