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**Private Elementary School Teachers' perceptions about using Project Based
Learning
Methodology in their EFL class**

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“Private Elementary School Teachers’ perceptions about using Project Based Learning methodology in their EFL class”

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DEDICATORY

To my beloved parents that are in heaven.

Thank God for giving me the best parents in the world. I am sure that they would be proud of me because I finally decided to take this step. I am deeply thankful to my parents for all you gave me, for your support, advice, and love. You taught me many things, and showed me to be a good person full of values. I love you so much and all your memories and words will be with me until we see each other again.

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ABSTRACT

Teaching English has changed in many ways during the last century and new methods and approaches have been adopted and implemented by bilingual schools. For instance, Project Based Learning (PBL) is a methodology that offers a broad range of alternatives for both teachers and students. Teachers who have implemented PBL in their English teaching have better organization planning, time management, and attractive classes for students (Newell, 2003). Also, students who have worked with PBL help to enhance abilities, skills and strategies allowing developing their own knowledge, also they become more conscious about their surroundings, and drawing conclusions of real problems (Blumenfeld et al, 1991). For those reasons, this qualitative research intends to analyze eight teachers' perspectives about the implementation of PBL in their English as a Foreign Language teaching practice in a private elementary school in Puebla. The results of this study provide several advantages and challenges that EFL teachers face in their teaching practice. This research not only identifies advantages and disadvantages of PBL teachers' implementation, it also recognizes broad advantages and disadvantages for students as well as its impact in their students' learning.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

In the last century a great number of private schools in Mexico have adopted a bilingual system. They believed that bilingual education programs provide students opportunities to learn two or more foreign languages. Baker (2011) defines bilingual education as a place where a person learns or acquires knowledge in both languages, English and Spanish. In Puebla, some bilingual schools introduce science, geography, math, and history content in English. This content is taught many times through projects. “Project Based learning (PBL) is an active student-centred [*sic*] form of instruction which is characterized by students’ autonomy, constructive investigations, goal-setting, collaboration, communication, and reflection within real-world practices” (Kokotsaki, Menzies, & Wiggins, 2016, p.1). Moreover, this type of teaching methodology has been used by teachers as a part of their English programs to adapt, create, support, and provide a new way of learning. Aksela and Haatainen (2019) state the teachers’ performance and skills are vital for the implementation and effectiveness of this methodology because it impacts students’ learning and development of abilities. For those reasons, this research intends to understand the teachers’ perspectives and experiences from bilingual elementary schools developing Project Based Learning in their subject contents as well as advantages and challenges that teachers face working with it. The nature of this research will be qualitative. Data will be collected through questionnaires to eight teachers. The participants work in an elementary school with a bilingual program and use Project Based Learning as part of their teaching method.

This chapter presents and describes the seven sections that show how this study is structured. Firstly, the rationale section explains the main reasons for the importance for conducting and achieving this study. Secondly, the significance of the study which describes the reason why it is important to know the teachers' perspectives using project based learning as a part of their teaching method and why it would be relevant for somebody else. Thirdly, the context of the research describes the setting where this study will be conducted, and the participants' features. Then, the purpose of the study intends to state, discuss, investigate, analyze, and assess the importance of this study. Next, the objectives describe the steps to follow for achieving the aim. Afterward, the research questions help to find out relevant details about this study and it might focus on the main problems of it. Finally, the conclusions are a brief summary of this chapter.

1.1 Rationale for the Topic Selection

Project Based Learning (PBL) is a methodology that gives many alternatives for learning a language, facing problems, and obtaining more experience for real life. Some teachers who have started teaching EFL through Project Based Learning, have discovered that projects are excellent for students because they give them more opportunities to search, develop, and apply what they have learned. For instance, Aksela & Haatainen (2019), carried out a study to understand the teachers' implementation as well as its advantages and challenges of Project Based Learning (PBL). In the article called *Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Practise: active teachers' views of its advantages and challenges*. They focused on teachers from early education to upper secondary who work as volunteers on the international StarT program from 2016 to 2017. StarT is an international program that is organized by LUMA Center Finland, which promotes project based learning and active collaboration and

allows science, mathematics, and technology to be naturally incorporated with any subject. This program incorporates projects from daily routines to society issues. This study reported teachers' experiences regarding the advantages and challenges of PBL. This study concluded that teachers consider that PBL brings great benefits to learners' learning; for example, it fosters the students' skills, promotes the use of technology (devices and programs), and it promotes students' motivation, collaboration and interest in researching. Moreover, Grant (2011) is focused on understanding projects in PBL through the students' perspective. He supported his case study adapted from Merriam in 1998 in order to find a "holistic description and explanation" (p.40). The setting was an eighth grade Geography class, private day school in the southeastern United States. The participants developed a project based on a museum exhibit to the violations of human rights. The objective of the project was to impact the participants' lives and how these experiences can apply in their real life. The conclusions of this case study were that PBL achieved the communication abilities for understanding and developing the project. Besides, participants thought that working through PBL is a huge individual challenge because "they burnt out" (p.62).

Based on the previous studies, the researcher of this paper believes that it is important to identify the advantages and challenges that Mexican EFL teachers face when they develop, manage, and organize projects in a classroom. It means when they apply the PBL methodology in a bilingual program. It is believed that this methodology not only impacts teachers but students' performance in class as well.

1.2 Significance of the Study

Applying different methodologies in a classroom allows students and teachers to explore other ways of learning and teaching. According to Aksela and Haatainen (2019), Project Based Learning (PBL) benefits teachers' performance in class. For instance, they identified in their study the agreements between teachers for planning, sharing, and executing projects. Particularly, this study will be important to other teachers who are interested in implementing PBL as part of their teaching methodologies. Also, novice teachers who have started working and want to adopt it can improve its implementation by reading this study's results. In addition, Aksela and Haatainen (2019) express that the motivation's role is relevant for the students' attitude. Working with PBL is more attractive for students because students like working in teams and teachers consider students' interests when they are planning a project. Therefore, this study intends to identify the advantages and challenges that teachers can face when they are teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) through Project Based Learning (PBL).

1.3 Context of the Research

This study is conducted in a private bilingual program in an elementary school at Centro Educativo Camino Real. This study considers 8 teachers who have had experience working through PBL at Centro Educativo Camino Real in Cholula, Puebla. It was founded in 1997 by BA Miguel Bagatella Corte and it started working with 7 students in the elementary section. Then, it opened other sections such as nursery, preschool, junior high, and finally high school in 2005. It is a religious school inspired by Saint John Bosco's ideas and has a humanist-constructivism philosophy in which students develop their knowledge by

cognitive, communicative, social, emotional, and affective skills based on its main values are responsibility, respect and honesty (Mozo, 2011, p. 37 & 38; Centro Educativo Camino Real A.C., 2019). Moreover, the school has technology such as computers, projectors, Ipad for teachers, and internet in all the rooms. Every section of the school has computer rooms, a dance room, a music room, a taekwondo room, a science laboratory, and a multimedia room. The elementary section has 18 groups that are divided by a, b, and c, and each group has among 18 and 22 students. Also, the elementary section has 22 classrooms, a computer classroom, a science laboratory, a playground, a garden, and a nurse's office. Some extracurricular subjects are folkloric and modern dance, soccer, basketball, volleyball, taekwon do, and music. The classes start at 7:55 and end at 2:00 where students work three hours and a half in Spanish and then in English.

In fact, in 2012 the school adopted the AMCO method to teach English. This method allows English teachers not only focus on teaching the four skills, but they also give classes about language, global citizen, math, steam, geography, and think tank. Moreover, the AMCO program allows teachers to develop and create projects so that students can be more critical and develop independence of their knowledge. AMCO develops resources and methodologies that adapt naturally and efficiently to the requirements of the new generations so they can have a great experience of happiness, friendship, learning, trust, affection, and respect in school Centro. AMCO makes teaching easy through state-of-the- art technologies and methodologies that support meaningful learning for students and teachers (AMCO, 2021).

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study attempts to analyze the teachers' opinions concerning the implementation of PBL in their classes. Consequently, there will be identified the advantages and challenges that participants face during all the stages that developing a project requires: from planning until executing the project.

1.5 Objectives

The following objectives will be taken into account for achieving this study:

- To design a research instrument that allows the researcher to explore participants' perspectives about teaching EFL through PBL.
- To identify advantages of PBL in participants' context
- To identify problems that participants faced when they work through PBL.
- To analyze, compare, and make conclusions out of the data collection.

1.6 Research Questions

This paper intends to answer the following research questions:

- 1. What are the identified disadvantages or advantages that participants faced when teaching through In Project Based Learning in their context?*
- 2. To what extent, can participants ensure that PBL impacts their students' learning?*

1.7 Conclusions

This chapter has provided a summary of this study. PBL is a methodology that provides many creative alternatives for both teachers and students. Teachers create an

attractive atmosphere for teaching, share ideas with other teacher mates for improving their projects, and allow improving their teaching strategies. Therefore, students improve communication skills; they gain interest in searching, and they become conscious about life. This research is important to investigate because it will let teachers know about the advantages and challenges of teaching EFL through PBL from teachers who have applied PBL in their teaching. In addition, there will be ten participants collecting the data for this study. The following chapter discusses the theoretical framework used in this study.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the most relevant concepts which are related to this research. It tries to explain the theoretical framework which is covering two main topics: bilingualism and Project Based Learning (PBL). PBL has 3 subsections that concern its advantages and disadvantages, the teacher's role and the student's role.

2.1 Bilingualism

Bilingualism is a concept that has been discussed by many authors in different fields such as linguistics, sociology, and psychology. Bloomfield (1933) defines bilingualism as a person's proficiency in the "native-like control of two languages" (p.56). It means that people are able to learn a foreign language perfectly as well as their native language; in other words, people have developed the language skills to communicate perfectly. However, Grosjean (2010) states that bilinguals are those people who are able to communicate in more than one language in their daily routine. It means that if people are able to use a foreign language to interact with others in different contexts and even dialects, they must be considered bilinguals. These two definitions have different perspectives. Bloomfield as linguistic expert tags bilingualism on people's proficiency and the perfection for learning a second language, but how people can grade or evaluate the degree of perfection of the new language. Nevertheless, Grosjean emphasizes the use of language in context including the dialects because if members of a group speak a dialect and are able to communicate with other groups, they will be considered bilinguals too.

Another author who has contributed to the definition of this concept is Weinreich. According to him, bilingualism is “the practice of alternatively using two languages and the persons involved bilingual” (Weinreich, 1953, p.1). Weinreich refers to bilingualism as the induction of the language contact and the arrangement of patterns for learning a foreign language and the structure of the language. Furthermore, Mackey (2000) states bilingualism as “alternate use of two or more languages”. Both Weinreich and Mackey emphasize on the language use and how structure of language has a strong development in the process of bilingualism. They concentrate on the phonemic system, morphology and syntax, and vocabulary.

2.1.1 Bilingualism in Mexico

Globalization has spread around the world and the importance of learning a foreign language has increased strongly. For instance, in Mexico, the English language education has evolved in the past two centuries. Mexican schools introduced English to schools as an optional subject in 1840. Then, in 1868 the National High School in Distrito Federal, Mexico opened its doors and included the foreign languages as a subject in its curriculum. In 1896 English and French Languages were mandatory for elementary schools. Narvaez remarks Mexico is one of four Latin America Countries that has presented a low proficiency in EPI (Educational Partners International) in comparison to Argentina, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Brazil, and Peru. Education First cited in Narvaez (2016) points out that in 2015 Mexico had the forty place of seventy countries of the world in English level which means it is below the Latin America average and the rest of the world. In 2021, Education First placed Mexico in the eighty-two place of one hundred countries of English level which means it presented a very low proficiency level of English. The Instituto Mexicano de Competitividad mentions

that in Mexico only 5% of the population speak the English language and 86% of public elementary schools do not have an English teacher. Although Mexico policies have implemented English programs in the last two centuries, the truth is that the program advances are significant.

On the other hand, Sayer (2015) remarks that teaching English as a foreign language in Mexico has a long history as it is shown in the figure 1.0. It gives a panorama of the language education policy in Mexico and how teaching English has been spreading and changing through the centuries. Also, this policy declares that in 2031 all high school students will graduate having a good proficiency level of English. Although these policies exist, the reality is that the proficiency of English is poor according to the Mexican government.

A GENERAL TIMELINE OF LANGUAGE POLICY IN MEXICO

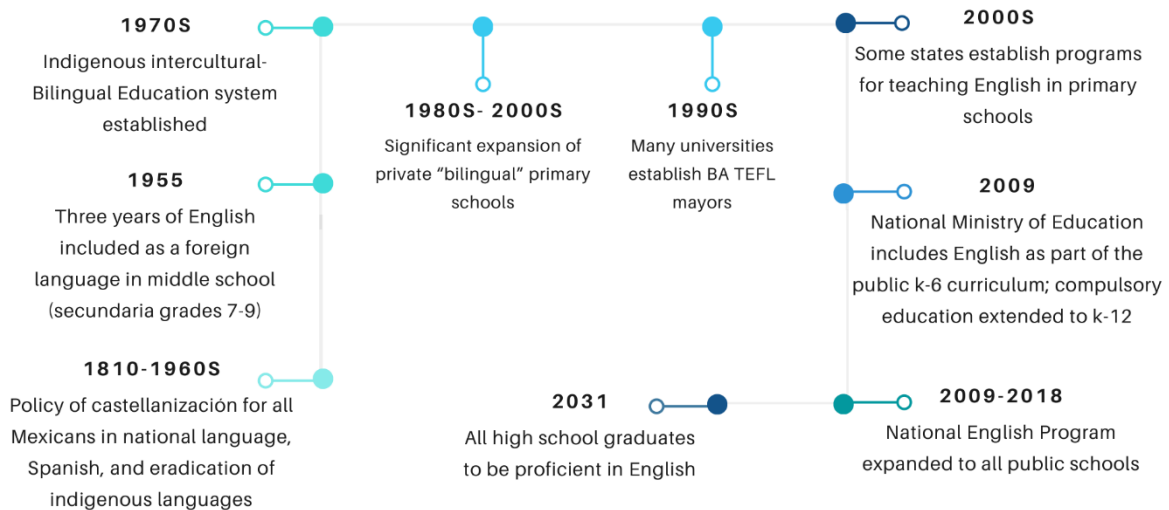


Figure 1. A general timeline of language policy in Mexico (Taken from Sayer, 2015, p.262)

Sayer (2015) also highlights that Mexico has created policies to reinforce the English language teaching and they demand that this process starts from kindergarten. However, in

the real Mexican context not all public kindergartens provide English language lessons to their students and only private schools offer a bilingual system or instruction. In Mexico only 10% of the population can access a private education and the Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática (INEGI) in 2021 reports 11% of the population can access a private education. Moreover, Sayer (2015) points out the Mexican government and the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) implemented a program called Programa Nacional de Inglés para Educación Básica (PNIEB) in 2009. The main goal of this program was to offer students who attend public schools opportunities to learn the English language. The PNIEB program focuses on developing an overall of social practices and communicative strategies, enhancing competences of the language through the interaction among students allowing to know about other cultures and languages, having a positive attitude towards the language, developing communication skills, exploring literature and giving information about themselves and real situations.

The PNIEB program was developed for students who are studying from kindergarten to secondary school. It has a specific framework which is divided into four cycles (see Table 1).

Organización en ciclos de PNIEB

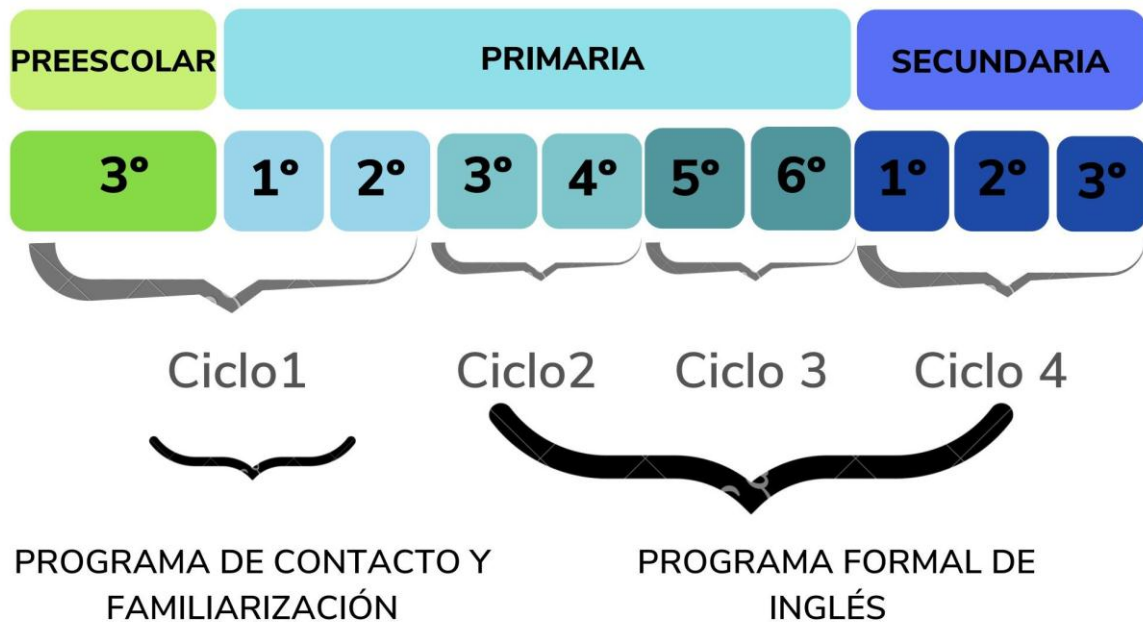


Table 1. PNIEB Framework Cycles (adapted from Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011)

The first cycle comes from third grade of kindergarten to second grade of elementary school which covers 1,300 hours of English instruction. The second cycle encloses third and fourth grade from elementary school which cover 2,200 hours of English. The third cycle encloses from fifth and sixth grade of elementary school which covers 3,260 hours of English instruction. The last cycle encloses from first to third grade from secondary school which covers 4,300 hours of English instruction. Also this program was implemented in 21 of 32 states and from 2011 to 2012 the program has been implemented in over 20,000 schools in the 32 states in Mexico. Moreover, the students' proficiency would be an equivalent of A1 or A2 level (CEFR scale). This program involves students in the English language enhancing their skills or abilities through real situations.

2.2 Project Based Learning, PBL

Project Based Learning (PBL) is a methodology that allows teachers to enhance their teaching and students to develop overall strategies through real situations. Teachers teach topics based on projects and students learn by themselves by searching for information and gaining knowledge. Blumenfeld et al. (1991) define PBL as a “comprehensive approach”; that is focused on teaching for leading the students’ interest in research and finding solutions. (p.369). Blumenfeld et al., 1991 and Bell, 2010 agree PBL works for both teaching and learning. PBL helps teachers to develop a handful of strategies for their teaching and it engages the students to drive their own knowledge by pursuing solutions to real problems through asking or refining questions, making predictions, discussing ideas, gathering and analyzing data, drawing solutions, sharing their findings, and creating a final product by the teacher’s guide. PBL embodies one or more tasks on an assignment until to obtain the product, model, or results. The project’s conclusion can be written or oral reports (Prince & Felder, 2006).

Supporting, Newell (2003) compares Project Based Learning with traditional instructions. Newell explains that PBL encloses a deep understanding of concepts and principles, drives problem solving, enhances interest, develops interdisciplinary focus, discipline-based focus, attractive materials, and products are developed by the students. Moreover, Thomas (2000) refers to PBL as a model in which learning is acquired by projects. Moreover, he adds that the projects are complex tasks because they engage the students in designing, planning, making decisions, solving, and producing the questions or problems products. As a result of this process students become independent. Furthermore, Thomas

identifies five criteria or features for being considered into PBL. These criteria are: *centrality*, *driving questions*, *constructive investigations*, *autonomy*, and *realistic*.

The first feature is that projects need to be *central*, not peripheral to the curriculum. Thomas (2000) classifies it into two corollaries: projects are the curriculum and the centrality criterion. The first corollary refers to the project as the central teaching strategies in which students are expected to learn the main concepts through project procedure. The second corollary, the centrality criterion refers to the projects in which students gain knowledge beyond the curriculum. *Driving questions* are the second feature. Slough and Milam (2013) refer to driving questions as making content accessible. Thomas (2000), Blumenfeld et al. (1991), and Slough and Milam (2013) agree that driving questions provide guidance and also allow students to engage into the task, problem, or situation. Moreover, driving questions organize and drive activities in a context that provide opportunities in which students link ideas, ask questions and refine them through the process. Furthermore, Krajcik & Blumenfeld (2005) identify five criteria to consider on driving questions: They need to be feasible because students make plans and search information for solving the questions. They are worthwhile because it adjusts to national or district standards. They are contextualized because they are focused in real situations. They are meaningful because they are attractive for the students. Finally, they are ethical because they avoid affecting people or the context where the project takes place (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2005).

The third feature is *constructive investigation*. “An investigation is a goal directed process that involves inquiry, knowledge building, and resolution” (Thomas, 2000, p.3). It means that the project involves the process and development of the student’s learning or knowledge. In addition, Krajcik & Blumenfeld (2005) call this feature active construction

and it refers to when students build their knowledge based on the relationship with the previous and new knowledge as well as express or discuss those ideas with others and emphasize guided explorations, reflections, and evaluation. The fourth feature is that projects are *student-driven* to some significant degree. Thomas (2000) explains that the most relevant in PBL is not the teacher's guide, plans, or adjustment; it is how PBL promotes the student's autonomy. It is relevant since students make their own decisions, manage time and responsibility. As Slough and Milam (2013) point out, promoting autonomy and lifelong learning is based on metacognition which means the individual's ability to plan, monitor, evaluate and make changes to their own learning. Anderson (1982) cited in Slough and Milam (2013) mentions that teachers must provide a balance of monitoring and feedback so that students are encouraged to organize, understand, and argue ideas, interpret comments and make adjustments. On the other hand, teachers are encouraged to design ways in which students explore, process, reflect, and build knowledge in an inquiry context. The last feature is that projects are *realistic*, not school-like. Thomas (2000) says projects are realistic and give authenticity to students. Thomas distinguishes several features such as the problem or a situation, the activities, the student's role, context, team members, products, the products' audience, and how the products will be judged. In summary, PBL considers five criteria or features in order to guide teachers for implementing them in their everyday teaching methodology. The centrality is the projects as the central teaching strategy, driving questions is the questions' construction, constructive investigations concerns students as creators if their knowledge, autonomy involves the student's independence, and realistic gives the feeling of authenticity.

PBL is an acronym that can be used by both Project Based Learning and Problem Based Learning but as their main goal is to develop projects, they have short differences. PBL is known as Project Based Learning or Problem Based Learning “is a method to organize the learning process in such a manner that the students are actively in finding answers by themselves” (Graaff and Kolmos, 2007, p.1). Prince and Felder (2006) and Graaff and Kolmos (2007) state Problem Based Learning is defined as “open-ended and ill-structured problems” that allow students to identify their needs and make conclusions related to a problem context. Furthermore, “Problem Based Learning is both curriculum and process” (Donnelly and Fitzmaurice, 2005, p.88). The curriculum selects and designs problems for acquiring and enhancing students’ critical knowledge, problem-solving, learning strategies and collaborative work skills. In contrast, Project Based Learning is an individual or group activity, assignment, or task that students have to develop over a period of time for obtaining a product, presentation or performance (Graaff and Kolmos 2007, p.5; Donnelly and Fitzmaurice, 2005, p.88). They add that the problem does not decide the learning process, it is how the task or assignment is presented to the students and the context.

Kolmos, Du, Holgaard, and Jensen (2008) explain the three principles of PBL based on Graaff and Kolmos (2003). These principles are the learning approach or cognitive learning, the contents approach, and the social approach or collaborative learning and are presented in the following figure.

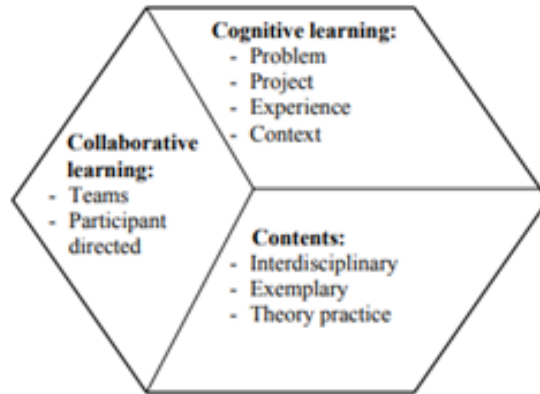


Figure 2. The PBL learning principles based on Graeff and Kolmos (2003) (taken from Kolmos et al, 2008, p.16)

As it is presented in Figure 2, according to Kolmos et al (2008), the learning approach or cognitive learning is organized by problems. The problem or project supports the students' learning processes, context and the experience. The contents approach enclosed the interdisciplinary learning, exemplary and theory. Interdisciplinary learning refers to the length and the limitations and methods. Exemplary practice relates how the learning outcome is modeling to the overall objectives between theory and practice. The social or collaborative approach is team-based learning. The team learning supports the learning process as a social act in order to promote the dialogue and communication between students. This social act allows students to share ideas and knowledge.

2.2.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of PBL

As any teaching methodology PBL has advantages and disadvantages either for teachers or students. Bell (2010) expresses that PBL offers to students social learning, independence, improved communication skills, promotes collaboration and enhances twenty-first century skills. Mihic and Zavrski (2017) summarize a broad of advantages of PBL from

different authors and presented in the following table. Those advantages are oriented to the students.

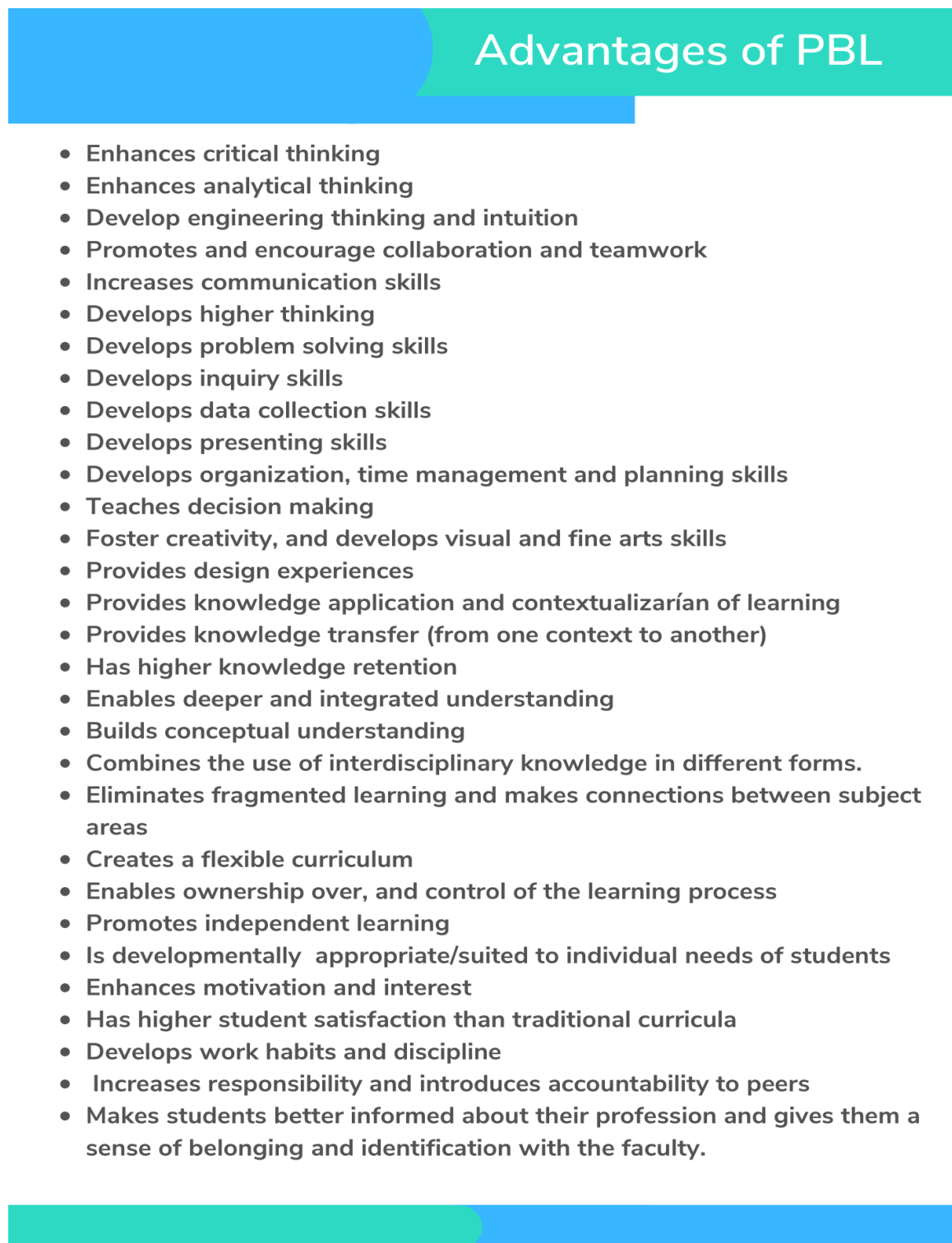


Figure 3. Advantages of PBL (Adapted from Mihic & Zavrski, 2017, p.4)

Moreover, Table 2 identifies several advantages focused on teachers. Those advantages are the teachers find the projects more enjoyable, interesting and motivating, allow having new ideas from projects background, and classroom management promotes students' interest and involve them in the project (Mihic and Zavrski, 2017). In contrast, PBL presents different teachers' challenges. For instance, Marx et al. (1997) recognizes in a case study three challenges or problems that teachers face when they implement the projects. The first problem is the time for completing the project because some teachers require additional time for working on projects. In addition, Thomas (2000) points out teachers' experience affects the time for incorporating extensive projects. The second problem is the incorporation of projects into the curriculum guidelines. The third problem is maintaining order and there are three issues that teachers focus on maintaining order: social order, control, and teachers' personal needs. In social order, teachers try to avoid the chaos in class. Marx et al. (1997), Aksela and Haatainen (2019), and Thomas (2000) agreed that teachers resist student-driven learning and focus on controlling the flow of information as model processes and train students through hard assignments before giving the control. The teachers' personal needs can affect the development of the project because the teachers do not have teaching strategies and approaches for guiding the students.

Although Thomas (2000) addresses some relevant results regarding the students' challenges from several studies about the implementation research. For instance, there is a case study from Krajcik, et al. (1998) cited in Thomas (2000). They identify several students' challenges that students face through PBL implementation. The results show the students' proficiency at generating plans and carrying out procedures, also students present troubles for generating scientific questions, managing the time, transforming data and expressing

arguments and failing for drawing conclusions. Also Thomas describes another case study from Edelson, Gordon, and Pea (1999) in which they find out several challenges from students' abilities. Those challenges are students barely use technology for researching, lack of background, and handle broad inquiry activities. Finally, Boaler (1997) cited in Thomas (2000) identifies differences about genre in PBL implementation. The study finds contrasting between girls and boys. The results explain that girls present a high proficiency level working with Project Based Learning instead of the traditional instruction and girls prefer stress understanding instead of memorization and learning procedure even though all the students engage and achieve the projects, girls have better performances.

2.2.2 Teacher's Role in PBL

Teachers have demanding roles more than other professions. They not only organize, plan, or adapt projects; they also focus on student's scaffolding instructions, motivation, and provide guidance and feedback. Blumenfeld et al. (1991) explain that the teacher's role on both Project Based Learning and in traditional instruction builds opportunities, provides accessible information and instructional scaffolding, uses metacognitive processes, assess progress, identifies problems, gives feedback, and evaluates results. However, in PBL Blumenfeld et al. add that teachers in PBL must feel competent and valued in order to determine and engage how the guidance and motivation can help the students be successful through the project. In addition, Puspitasari (2020) describes a teacher from the 21st century and works with PLB to provide students' input in their learning. Also, he points out that the teacher is a facilitator in which engage students with scaffolding instructions in order to motivate and enhance students' learning through overall tasks or problems to be solved. Teachers provide feedback and assess them during the whole process. Furthermore Hertzog

(2007) adds that teachers on PBL have developed strategies and improved their teaching practice to lead students and create students' interest and allow them to build their own questions and enhance abilities.

“PBL changes the role of the teacher from lecturer and director of instruction to that of resource provider and participant in the learning activities and from expert to advisor or facilitator” (Newell, 2003, p.5). Newell explains that the role is not about giving information, but it is about providing guidance, developing mind-set, and instructional methodologies as well as allowing students to acquire and build their own learning through observations, understanding, and assessment during the project, and asking questions for finding answers and results. Also he denotes teachers who work with PBL must be prepared and identifies five Cs for being a good teacher which are centeredness, caring, competence, confidence, and creating. Centeredness refers to the teacher's balance of spirituality and emotionally. Caring is about caring for themselves or others and also showing kindness, loving, honesty and respect. Competence shows the pleasure for planning and enjoyment for developing tasks for the students. “Confidence is to believe in yourself and in what you are doing” (Newell, 2003, p.37). The last is creating refers to appreciating and enjoying the discovery of new things and bringing what they know to the educational environment. Therefore, in PBL the teacher's role is not just to be a facilitator or an advisor, it also requires being mindful, feeling pleasure for teaching, and revealing strategies. Some roles of a teacher who works with PBL are to motivate students during the project, build situations, tasks or problems where students enhance, construct and apply knowledge, create scaffolding instructions in order to introduce students into the tasks or problems to be solved.

2.2.3 Student's Role in PBL

Students develop and learn several abilities themselves during their process of working with PBL. Some roles that they learn, develop, and apply depends of their abilities or the teachers' achievements; for instances, Hattie (2012) states the student's role on PBL is not just to complete a task, it is the understanding and managing of their learning, they become more responsible for gaining knowledge and become more critical in their learning progress. While Komos, Du, Holgaard, & Jensen (2008) emphasize, students on PBL are encouraged to analyze, interpret and figure out information in order to build new knowledge based on previous experiences. In addition, students develop oral skills that allow interaction and understanding with both teachers and other students. In addition, Newell (2003) claims the role of the students as autonomous learning rather than leading the teacher's activities. Puspitasari (2020) adds that PBL improves the student's role in the 21st century. The student's role plays an active role and how it helps them to enhance their learning. This role allows students gaining more confidence to express and discuss ideas, communicate and collaborate in a team, become responsible, become analytical and critical, and foster investigation strategies. In sum, PBL changes the student's role and provides situations where they can develop different abilities and skills. The role of a student on PBL is to immerse and encourage students to become autonomous of their learning, drive investigation in order to become analytical and critical.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology used for this study. It provides information concerning the methodology that was used in this inquiry. To start, the approach of this study is qualitative. Moreover, this study is developed through a descriptive methodology, they are described in the methodology section. Also, this chapter presents a brief description of the context, the participants' profiles and the research instrument that was used to gather information. Finally, it provides details of the overall research design and the data analysis.

3.1 Methodology

This study follows the steps of qualitative research. According to Stake (2010) qualitative research is based on the person's experiences, perceptions and understanding in a given situation in order to improve how things work. Its characteristics can be interpretive, experiential, situational, and personalized. It is interpretive because it can recognize, find, and report from different points of views. It can be experiential because the researcher observes and reports the experiences of the situation. It is situational because it is focused on objects or activities in a specific context, and it is personalized because it intends to interpret the people's perception (Stake, 2010). Besides, Creswell (2014) defines qualitative research as an approach that explores and understands the individual or groups' ideas in a social or human issue. The development of this approach contains questions and procedures,

collecting data from the participants' setting; data analysis is focused from the particular to general themes, and the data's interpretation. Particularly, this study focuses on the teachers' perceptions and opinions about PBL; it also intends to understand the teachers' experiences implementing PBL in their teaching practice. For those reasons, this study has characteristics of qualitative approach and a descriptive research methodology.

Nassaji (2015) refers to descriptive research like a description of a phenomenon and its features. Also, Koh and Owen (2000) refer to descriptive research as a study focused on several areas and intends to solve problems through observation, analysis, and description and uses different tools for collecting the data for example the survey which encloses the questionnaires, personal interviews, phone surveys, and normative surveys. Therefore, in this study it is necessary to adopt the descriptive research because it provides information about the teachers' perceptions, opinions, and feelings that they have from PBL and the benefits or challenges they face during its application. Moreover it analyzes, and interprets the data collected from the application of the instrument in this inquiry which is a questionnaire.

3.2 Context

This study is conducted in a private elementary school, Centro Educativo Camino Real A.C. It is located at Camino Real to Cholula number 4009 in Momoxpan; San Pedro Cholula, Puebla. It was founded in 1997 by Miguel Batella Corte. Before becoming a school, the place used to be a farm, however, it did not work and Miguel Botella decided to build a school where people could have a place for learning to read and write. Later, a congregation called Virgo Fidelis asked for accommodation in the school for studying their apostleship for that reason the school became catholic and it is focused on Saint John Bosco's ideas (Mozo,

2011, p. 37 &38). It has a humanist-constructivism philosophy and students acquire knowledge by enriching experiences based on the 21st century. Its main purpose is that students develop cognitive, communicative, social, emotional, and affective skills with equal opportunities for everyone. Its mission is to provide an integral, cognitive, physical, social, affective, and quality education with an active participation on tasks that concern as part of a community. Its vision is to continue being a solid and competitive institution with a high status founded in a humanist, administrative, and technical pedagogy building by the experience, unity, and recognition by the society. The school offers education from preschool until high school where it is mainly characterized by the use of technology, students develop and work with generating voice theory, multiple intelligences, Project Based Learning, solving problems, critical, creative, and analytical thinking (Centro Educativo Camino Real A.C., 2019).

The school offers good facilities. It has a big playground for elementary students and a small one for preschool students, two basketball courts, two soccer fields, a cafeteria, a library, three computer classrooms, a music classroom, a dance classroom, a taekwondo classroom, and extra classrooms for taking classes or public classes. The elementary section has a population of around 270 students, with three groups A, B, and C per each grade so there are 18 groups in total. There are 20 teachers altogether in the elementary section and they are arranged by 8 English teachers and 8 Spanish teachers, a technology teacher, a music teacher, a sport teacher, and a dance teacher. The school adopted a bilingual system therefore students take subjects in Spanish and English. The classes start at 7:55 a.m. and end at 2:00 a.m.

The English section has been working with a program called AMCO since 2012. Teachers work with AMCO Ascend which allows teachers to create, adapt, and develop projects in order to develop independence in students and become independent of their knowledge, and teamwork. In addition, teachers not only teach grammar or any of the four skills, they also teach Language, English Skills, Global Citizen, Steam, Geography, and Think Tank. AMCO is a learning system that makes the most out of tools and technology, both in the classroom and in the student's homes, while complying with the international content and methodologies. This system is also oriented to participatory classes where "how to teach" is far more important than "what to teach". Thus, we overcome the barriers of space and time by breaking the paradigm of the classroom as the only learning space. Now, the students are able to relate to others, be informed, study, work, and communicate in different physical and virtual spaces (AMCO Education, S.A.P.I. de C.V. 2021.)

3.3 Participants

In this research project eight English language teachers participate. All of them work at Centro Educativo Camino Real in Cholula, Puebla. They are eight females whose ages range from 28 to 42 years old. Besides, the criteria used to determine the participants were: balances of gender, the work center, work with a bilingual system, and experience working with PBL. The eight participants for this study were the following:

First, Rocio is Mexican and she is 37 years old. She studied at the Faculty of Language at Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla (BUAP). Moreover, she has taught both first and second grades in the Elementary section at Centro Educativo Camino Real. Second, Lysset is Mexican and she is 30 years old. She studied at the Faculty of

Languages at Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla (BUAP). She has been teaching English for 9 years. In addition, she has taught both first and second grades in the Elementary section at Centro Educativo Camino Real. Third, Claudia is Mexican. She is 42 years old. She studied foreign languages at Universidad Autonoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca (UBAJO). Moreover, she is taking a master course in Education. She has been teaching English for 16 years. In addition, she has taught from third grade until sixth grade in the Elementary section at Centro Educativo Camino Real. Fourth, Fanny is Mexican and she is 30 years old. She studied English Teaching at Universidad Autonoma de Chiapas (UNACH) campus IV in Tapachula Chiapas. She has a master degree related to teaching at Universidad Interamericana para el Desarrollo in Tapachula, Chiapas. She has been teaching English for 12 years. Moreover, she has taught third grade in the Elementary section at Centro Educativo Camino Real. Fifth, Maricela is from Tehuizingo, Puebla and she is 37 years old. She studied at the Languages Faculty at Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla (BUAP). She has a master degree related to cognitive development she has been teaching for 13 years. In addition, she has worked with both preschool and elementary students at Centro Educativo Camino Real. Sixth, Norma is Mexican and she is 37 years old. She studied at the Languages Faculty at Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla (BUAP). She has been teaching English for 13 years. In addition, she has taught in the sixth grade in the Elementary section at Centro Educativo Camino Real. Seventh, Brenda is Mexican and she is 28 years old. She studied at the Languages Faculty at Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla (BUAP). She has been teaching English for 5 years. In addition, she has taught from first to third grade in the Elementary section at Centro Educativo Camino Real. And eight, Erika is Mexican and she is 37 years old. She studied at the Languages Faculty at Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla (BUAP). She has been teaching English for 13 years. In addition, she

has taught both first and second grades in the Elementary section at Centro Educativo Camino Real.

3.4 Instrument

In order to select the appropriate research instrument for collecting the data, it is important to highlight details for the selection. Kothari (2004) states that before deciding the proper method for the data collection, it is important to consider two types of data: they are the primary and secondary. According to Kothari (2004), “the primary data are those which are collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happen to be original in character” (p.95). The secondary type of data refers to the analysis of a study that already exists. The researcher takes and uses the existing research from different sources for obtaining information. The data can be published or unpublished. The published data is found in several publications such as local, foreign, or international governments of organizations, technical and trade journals, books, magazines and newspapers and so on. On the other hand, the unpublished data is found in diaries, letters, unpublished biographies and autobiographies (Kothari, 2004). Considering the two types of data, and as this study uses merely descriptive, the researcher of this study decides that the primary data is the best alternative for the data collection of this study. Moreover, the primary data suggested using some methods like observation, interview, questionnaires, and schedules (Kothari, 2004). Particularly, for this study the research instrument is a questionnaire.

A questionnaire method was selected by the researcher in order to collect data for this study. As Burns (2010) states, the questionnaires are tools for a researcher which it helps. Additionally, “questionnaires offer benefits of standardized and open responses to a range of

topics from a large sample of population. They can be cheap, reliable, valid, quick and easy to complete” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 471). Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2018) add that the questionnaire is an effective structured instrument for collecting survey data which can be administered without the researcher and offers a comparative analysis sometimes with numerical data. Besides Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) identify several types of questionnaires such as closed and open questions, rank scales, multiple choice questions, rank ordering, open-ended questions and so on. For instance, the open-ended questions are made up as open-ended questions which have a space or sometimes draw lines where participants write a personal response. Some advantages of the open-ended questions are that “they catch the authenticity, richness, offer depth of response, honesty, and candour” (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007, p.330). Basically, open-ended questions require the responses to express their own opinions orally or in writing (Züll 2016, p.1). As a result, the researcher of this study applied an open-ended questionnaire through the use of a platform where participants read questions and type their responses. Another reason to consider this type of questions is because it provides a depth of responses and allows to express personal opinions from the participants (See Appendix A).

The questionnaire was designed to gather information about teachers’ perceptions of teaching EFL by using PBL as well as its advantages and challenges. Furthermore, the questionnaire was applied to 8 English teachers who have worked and implemented PBL as part of their teaching at Centro Educativo Camino Real A.C. The questionnaire contained 12 open-ended questions and it arranged general information from the participants’ background and three main sections more (See Appendix A).

The first section of the questionnaire contained five open-ended questions which were set in order to be answered according to the English teachers' knowledge, feelings, role, and experience about teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) through Project Based Learning (PBL). In this part of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) the most relevant question is to identify their opinions about whether PBL promotes EFL or teachers need to complement it with another teaching methodology. Burns (2010) distinguishes different types of questions like the open ended items which provide personal responses for communicating something from different perspectives. For those reasons, an open-ended question was suitable and important to use because it allows participants to explain and give deep reasons and opinions for answering this section. The second section of the questionnaire consisted of four open-ended questions. They addressed questions for collecting information about advantages and challenges of PBL. Those questions asked about what kind of advantages or challenges English teachers face when they are working with PBL (see Appendix A). In the last section of the questionnaire there are three open-ended questions which were asked to know how students respond to PBL and its impact on their learning. Additionally, Koh & Owen (2000) claim that the open-ended questions can obtain diversity and broad ideas and feelings from the participants, thus it allows to understand and identify participants' perceptions; later, they can be compared to find differences of how PBL impacts students' learning and how students respond when working with this teaching methodology (see Appendix A).

3.5 Overall research design

The overall research design of this study began with the design of the research instruments. First of all, the researcher wanted to interview the participants, but the thesis

director suggested applying the questionnaire because it was difficult to contact the participants and arrange a meeting during those days. Also for COVID-19 pandemic, it was hard to find a space for developing the interview because teachers were working extra time. Therefore, in order to gather deep personal points of view from the participants, the researcher decided to include twelve open-ended questions that could allow participants to express themselves freely. The questionnaire was created in Microsoft Office in which all the questions were written in a table with two columns. The first column addressed the questions and the second one was for participants' responses. The questionnaire's last modifications were done on September 04, 2021: after, the instrument was ready for the application. In order to send the instrument and apply it easily, the Google Form was used. Also, all responses were saved automatically. It took an hour to write all the questions and start to send the link to the participants.

The bilingual school, where this study is developed, works with an English program called AMCO that implements Project Based Learning. Thus, the process of participants' selection considered their experience adopting PBL as a part of their teaching practice. The researcher contacted EFL teachers from August 14, 2021 to September 10, 2021 in order to inform and give details about this study. However, not all the teachers were available, so some of them replied to written messages after several weeks or never replied back to the researcher's e-mail or message. In the end, the researcher got eight teachers to participate in the study. Then, they were contacted again via WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger and they were informed formally about this study; also, they were informed that all provided information was confidential and used for the specific purpose of this study. These 8 participants accepted and agreed to participate in this study. Before they answered the

questionnaire, the researcher gathered personal and professional information that is found in the section 3.3 *Participants* of this chapter. They took between 30 to 45 minutes to answer the instrument on average but they took a week to deliver it; some of them spent fifteen days answering back. For example, the first participant answered the questionnaire on September 4th, 2021 and the last one was on September 23rd, 2021. As the English teachers were answering the questions, the collection of the data started and saved automatically in Google Form.

3.6 Data Analysis

Google Forms platform allows to apply different types of questions including the open-ended, thus this platform is able to collect data automatically and analyze responses in an easy way. Here, there are three ways to observe the participants' responses by summary, question, or individual as it is shown on the figure 3.5.1

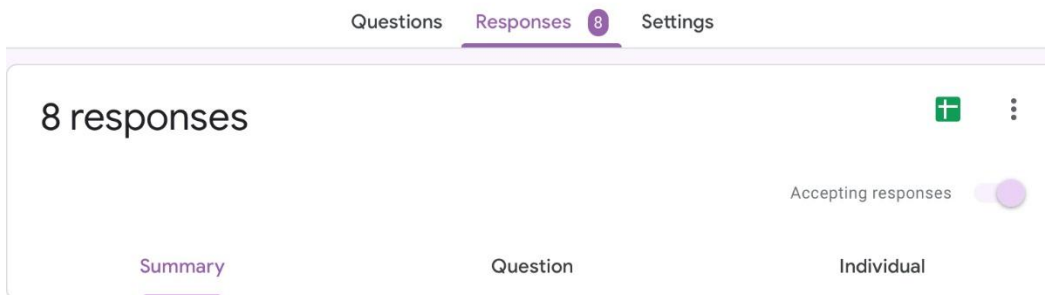


Figure 4. Google Forms: General Responses' View

Also, Google Forms allows to observe information like what day the participant answered the questions, the time, participants' name and their email; moreover, it labels each participant's responses like *response 1*, *response 2*, *response 3* ... so the data is well organized. Before describing the process of this study's analysis, it is important to address

some reflective claims from Burns (2010). Burns defines that researchers must squash information when analyzing. Accordingly, Kothari (2004) defines analysis as the estimation of measures which pretends to look for, find out, discuss, compare, and relate patterns such as differences or relationships in the data. This is to draw conclusions to answer the research questions. Additionally, Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2007) state the data analysis and interpretation is through numerical data that allow the responses to code and categorize data for the analysis; and then the quality data will analyze the content, report the findings, and draw conclusions. Moreover, they identify different techniques to analyze the data for example graphs, bar charts, histograms, line graphs, multiple line graphs. Pie charts, box plots, and scatter plots. Particularly, the data analysis of this study is shown by using graphs, comparison tables, and tables which are presented in Chapter IV.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter outlined how the research methodology was conducted. Besides, it addressed the context and participants as well as it provided details of the instrument. Additionally, this chapter described the procedures of the overall research design, and how data was collected and analyzed so in the following chapter it is presented. Specifically, the next chapter provides the study's results and describes the findings based on the data.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results from the data analysis. It shows and discusses the results in the obtained results section; thus, it shows what was found from the questionnaire applied to the participants whose answers are presented in tables and graphs. Besides, in this section the answers to the research questions are described. Then, there is a discussion section to point out the most relevant findings in the study. Finally, a conclusion is stated.

4.1 Obtained Results

In the following subsections, the obtained results from all questions in the instrument are displayed. All results are divided into twelve sections that display all the research instrument questions. Graphs, comparative tables and tables are used in order to provide a clear interpretation of the answers given by the participants to demonstrate the results of this study.

4.1.1 English language teachers' PBL definition

This section describes the results gathered from the first question in the research instrument: *What do you know about the Project Based Learning (PBL) method?* As you can see, the actual answers are presented in the following Table 2 which is showing the different PBL definitions from participants.

What do you know about Project Based Learning?	
Subjects	Participant's Response
P1	Students learn by doing.
P2	Applying different strategies in order to make students discover what is happening in their surroundings and propose solutions to solve them.
P3	It's a teaching method in which real problems are used to promote student learning. Also this method helps students to develop their critical thinking, solving problems and communication skills.
P4	It's based on investigation.
P5	It is a methodology based on projects to learn English.
P6	I know that it is a method to teach students through experiences and use of knowledge giving them the opportunity to apply what they know and express it.
P7	It is a method which encourages students to solve a real world problem using their creativity, critical thinking and also this method allows them to develop cooperative learning when they work in teams, so they can improve their strengths as individuals.
P8	A method in which students need to get to a goal following instructions, practice, experiment and apply what they know and use the language meaningfully at the same time with a certain content.

Table 2. English Language Teachers' PBL Definition

These results provided eight concepts concerning PBL. According to the participants' answers, the results found similarities in several responses. For instance, three participants said that PBL is that students learn through experience. In addition, there were three participants who thought that PBL is about solving real problems. Two participants expressed PBL develop critical thinking. Three participants said that PBL develops communication skills. In contrast, a participant mentioned that PBL is a *cooperative learning in which students enhance their strengths and promote teamwork*. One participant said PBL set goals

through instructions; meanwhile, one participant pointed out PBL is a methodology based on projects to learn English (see Table2).

Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2006) state that PBL is a vast approach which develops a learning environment where students ask questions, create questions and explanations, promote discussing ideas and refining new ones; which can be considered as building knowledge. As it can be observed, all participants have different definitions about PBL. The participants 1, 6 and 8 said they were closer to the definition because they mention PBL provides a place where students build their learning through experience and practice. Although participant 5 stated that PBL is a methodology through projects, she referred to PBL as an alternative to learn English, but PBL provides strategies and develops skills for building knowledge in different subjects since it is interdisciplinary (Kolmos et al., 2008).

4.1.2 PBL method effects in ELT teachers’ practice

The second question of the research instruments is: *How do you feel about teaching EFL through the Project Based Learning (PBL) method?* Table 3 presents information related to the English language teachers’ feelings about the PBL method.

PBL method effects in English language teachers’ practice	
Positive	Negative
P1: It's ok when students have language proficiency.	P3: I think that it works with teenagers and adults more than kids.
P2: Enthusiastic but at the same time with a big responsibility.	
P4: I think it's a good way to gain knowledge and a good method for high school or older.	

<p>P5: I enjoy using PBL because as a teacher you can observe all the processes and how the goals are achieved.</p>	<p>P8: I like it though sometimes it's difficult because of the time and lack of teamwork skills plus the students' language knowledge.</p>
<p>P6: I really like to use PBL because it makes a different class reaction.</p>	
<p>P7: I feel that I can allow my students to make their own decisions promoting a freedom environment for the class, and at the same time they can be the protagonist, but I always stay close to them to play a guide role.</p>	

Table 3. English Language Teachers' Feelings about PBL Method

Table 3 contrasts participants' responses regarding their feelings towards PBL. Six participants expressed positive effects about the PBL method in their teaching practice. Those positive effects expressed feelings such as joy, enthusiasm, satisfaction, pleasure and even pride when participants taught EFL through PBL. Also, their responses showed the pleasure to develop, apply, and work with PBL as well as their commitment towards the students' learning. On the other hand, two participants expressed that *'it works with teenagers and adults more than with kids'* or *'for high school or older'*. Even though those participants expressed positive thoughts towards PBL, they expressed that it is a method that does not work for everyone; for instance kids. As this study was focused on elementary school, their answers can be interpreted as having negative effects because they considered that this method is not appropriate for kids. Zumbach, Kumpf, and Koch (2004) carried out a study about evaluating the use of multimedia to enhance Problem- Based Learning in a Germany Elementary School, they compared both experimental and traditional class. The results were children who applied PBL showed a higher intrinsic motivation and gained knowledge than in the traditional class. So it was proved that implementing PBL as a part of their teaching obtains positive outcomes as well as positive teaching effects. Similarly, the participant P8

considered that PBL is difficult to develop for the time and students are not able to work collaboratively and the poor language skills. As a sum of these answers, most teachers' perceptions towards PBL method effects in their teaching are positive, they just differ a little in their appropriate use regarding students' age.

4.1.3 English Language Teachers' Role in PBL

<i>English Language Teachers' Role in PBL</i>	
<i>Subjects</i>	<i>Participant's Response</i>
P1.	<i>assign roles and monitor them.</i>
P2.	<i>A guidance</i>
P3.	<i>The teacher's role is just a guide.</i>
P4.	<i>A guide</i>
P5.	<i>As monitor</i>
P6.	<i>I am the monitor and guide, I help them solve differences when they can find a smooth solution to their problems.</i>
P7.	<i>I am an instructor/guide explaining to them the specific real life problem they have to solve and letting them know the rules of the class as well as the materials they are allowed to use.</i>
P8.	<i>Model, guide, assist</i>

Table 4. English Language Teachers' Role in PBL

Table 4 displays the answer to the following question: *What is your role when students work through PBL in class?* It shows the different teachers' perceptions about the role that they play when teaching through the PBL method. Half of the participants did not only include only one role, some of them identified more. The eight participants agreed on

the fact that the teachers' roles are a guide or a monitor. Meanwhile, two participants believe that PBL professors are assigning roles and rules in the class and a couple more claim that they need to solve problems or differences. P8 gave two more answers which are that PBL teachers are models or assistants.

According to Newell (2003), “PBL changes the role of the teacher from lectured and director of instruction to that of resource provider and participant in the learning activities and from expert to advisor or facilitator” (p.5). Therefore, we can conclude that P7 is the closest in a correct definition of what PBL requires in a teacher. ‘Explaining and letting students know’ is what makes us believe that he feels as a provider and a facilitator, not someone to follow or aspire (guide/model). Also, P8 mentions ‘assist’, which might be interpreted as a participant of students’ learning experience.

4.1.4 The PBL method affects EFL teachers’ practice

This section shows the results of the following question: *How does PBL help or affect your teaching?* Table 5 shows the different ways that PBL can help or affect English language performance in the participants of this study.

The PBL method helps or affects English language teachers’ practice
<i>P1: The project needs to be organized taking into account time and it helps them learn because they are involved in the activities.</i>
<i>P2: it helps my teaching to plan a more effective class. As a teacher I feel able to explore new topics that provide me more ideas for my classes. PBL enriches my students knowledge about the world where they live even if they become more conscious and responsible citizens. Students really enjoy PBL because they not only develop different skills in the English language but they develop socio-emotional abilities.</i>

<i>P3: I think that if the students have not confidence or enough vocabulary they will not produce.</i>
<i>P4: It helps students to understand. Also, it helps teachers to understand.</i>
<i>P5: It helps because students learn from their classmates.</i>
<i>P6: I think it helps a lot. My students can use the knowledge they acquire and express their ideas, also it helps the students with their independence and take the lead in their own work.</i>
<i>P7: When the project is super interesting, sometimes I feel I do not have enough time to explore the phenomenon they are learning about and to satisfy all my students' curiosity. Sometimes they feel they need more because they are fascinated about the project we do. I think PBL helps a lot because they get more ambitious about knowledge related to science, engineering, and some other subjects.</i>
<i>P8: Time, making decisions, and class management.</i>

Table 5. How PBL method helps or affects English language teaching

As it was observed the teachers' perspectives offer overall similarities. Although the question is focused on the teachers' teaching, they talked mostly about students' performance. Particularly, the actual answers related to the question show that three participants consider that PBL lets them be organized and manage their class. Moreover, a participant expressed that time is affected as well as making decisions. Finally, three of them claimed that PBL helps them to understand/explore the topic developed in the class. Mihic and Zarvski (2017) recognize some advantages for teachers such as: PBL has higher student satisfaction than traditional curricula, it develops organization, time management and planning skills, it teaches decision making.

4.1.5 Advantages of using PBL according to participants

Some advantages of PBL that teachers' responses provided are summarized in the following Table 6.

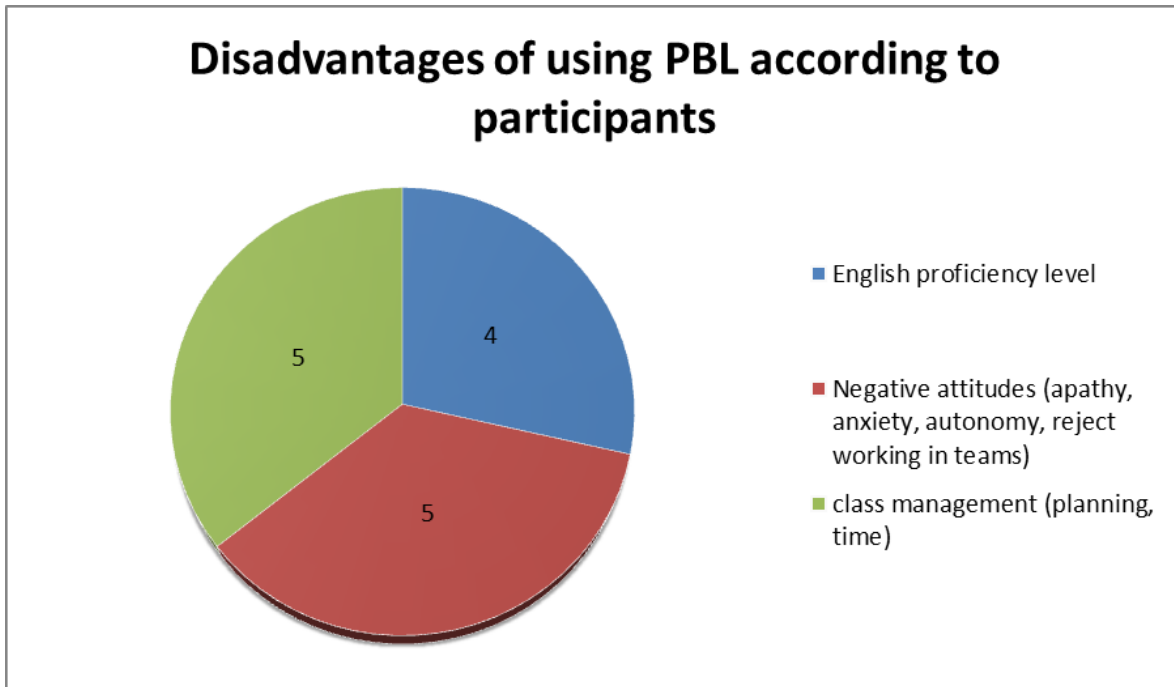
Advantages of using PBL according to participants	# of Ps
Develop leadership skills.	1
Meaningful learning (solving problems/expressing thoughts/critical).	3
Collaborative learning or teamwork.	2
Enhance socio-emotional skills (independent/enjoy the process).	2
Improves language/learning skills.	3
Aware and involved in their knowledge.	2
Promotes creativity.	1

Table 6. Advantages of using PBL according to participants

On the right side, it is mentioned the amount of participants that mentioned the same advantage. We can conclude that these participants believe mostly that PBL lets their students develop meaningful learning that lets them *solve problems, express their thoughts and have critical thinking*; also, they mentioned that this methodology lets participants improve their *language proficiency*. Kolmos, Du, Holgaard, and Jensen (2008) mentioned that one of the principles when learning through PBL is developing cognitive learning. Therefore, we can conclude that is the reason most participants mentioned those elements as part of PBL advantages in their students' learning practice.

4.1.6 Disadvantages of using PBL according to participants

This section provides several disadvantages of teaching through PBL, according to the participants' perspectives (See Graph 1).



Graph 1 Disadvantages of using PBL

Teachers identified several disadvantages of working with the PBL method. Those disadvantages were classified into three relevant categories. For instance, English level proficiency refers to the poor English level and grammar skills that students have and it is hard to teach through PBL. Second, the negative attitudes that students have towards working with PBL is a disadvantage when teaching through this method. Those negative attitudes are the apathy for the project, students do not want to develop autonomy, and they prefer to work individually rather than in teams, and anxiety because they do not feel confidence. And third, the class management is another disadvantage because the teacher cannot ensure the achievement of the goals for the project. Thomas (2000) supports the previous result

regarding teachers practice by identifying some challenges that teachers face on PBL implementation. One challenge refers to the teachers who face when they start planning, managing, or assessing the students through PBL methodology. This is because teachers present limited experiences at teaching through it.

4.1.7 Overweighting PBL advantages and disadvantages

Table 7 explains what overweighs more: the advantages or disadvantages of PBL implementation in the teaching practice for participants.

P1: <u>The advantages</u> because this is a different learning process and the learning is more meaningful when students are involved more actively.
P2: I consider <u>the advantages</u> . You as a teacher know the moment your students will be ready to work with PBL.
P3: I think <u>it has more advantages</u> ; for example, it promotes important skills, autonomous learning, oral and written expressions skills.
P4: The students' autonomy because it's something Mexico's education needs to improve.
P5: <u>Advantages</u>
P6: I think <u>it has more advantages</u> than disadvantages because it helps much more to the students than the little moments of less control.
P7: The interest that students feel about the topic/subject the project is related to. Children nowadays are harder to surprise since they are super connected with technology, we as teachers have always to innovate.
P8: <u>The advantages</u> due to all the skills you work during the process.

Table 7 Advantages overweight in PBL teaching

Generally, teachers' points of view considered that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages when teaching through PBL. In fact, participants identify more advantages focused on students than teachers.

4.1.8 Facing challenges in PBL

This section aims to show the results of the following question: *What has been the most challenging experience you've faced working with PBL?* For that reason, Table 8 displays participants' answers about challenging experiences that teachers have faced while teaching through PBL.

P1: When the students have followed the process of reading, analyzing and finally they communicate in a real context.
P2: When students don't speak enough English. They waste the interest to collaborate with their teams.
P3: It did not work with kids between 7 to 9 years old, they got frustrated and so did I.
P4: Students' autonomy and classroom management.
P5: that some students don't participate actively.
P6: The most challenging experience is always helping students without invading their own decisions.
P7: At the beginning, it was the organization of the roles each student had to take in each team, all of them wanted to do the same thing while working in teams.
P8: Don't reach the project's goals, have problems among team members and end up doing the project without following the process it takes.

Table 8. English teachers' challenges in PBL

Teacher's challenges	Students' challenges
Do not have enough experience working with kids from 7 to 9 years.	Followed communicative processes/skills
Frustration	Frustration
Classroom management	Lack of interest and autonomy.
Respecting students' decisions.	Agreements/problems among the participants.
Organization (roles)	Do not reach the project's goals.

Table 9 EFL teachers' vs students' challenges in PBL

The most challenging experiences that teachers have faced in PBL were divided into two columns. The first column refers to teachers' challenges in their teaching practice which express different points of view concerning *teaching to kids from 7 to 9 years old, frustration, classroom management, allowing students to make their own decisions, and organizing roles*. In contrast, teachers highlighted challenges that their students face such as *following processes related to communicative skills, frustration, lack of autonomy/interest, agreements or problems among the students because everyone wants to do the same tasks or things, and sometimes students do not accomplish the project's goals as it was stated before*. "PBL requires considerable knowledge, effort, persistence, and self-regulation on the part of students" (Blumenfeld et al. 1991, p. 393) that is probably why teachers consider students as part of their challenging experiences when teaching through PBL (See Table 9).

4.1.9 Enhancing students' abilities with PBL

Students can enhance their abilities with the implementation of PBL in the classroom. According to the teachers' perceptions, Table 10 shows the results about how PBL enhances students' abilities.

Enhancing students' abilities with PBL			
Participants	Yes	Not	Why?
P1	X		Yes, because they learn by doing research so they learn to read, classify, describe and communicate besides learning language they learn content as well.
P2	X		As I mentioned before, working with PBL requires a good English language because students need to communicate with each other, to apply strategies for investigation and to be critical . Of course it helps.
P3	X		Yes, they become more autonomous and they develop their speaking and writing abilities .
P4	X		Yes, because with PBL students are able to know themselves and improve their skills , they enhance their best way to learn .
P5	X		Yes, because if they are motivated and engage with the project they get evolved completely and develop all their abilities .
P6	X		Sure! a lot! Because they mostly solve their own problems and share their ideas , and apply in English.
P7	X		Yes, when we allow students to take a role that they know they are able to develop, they feel motivated .
P8	X		Someway through themselves or by looking at what others did (feedback) .

Table 10 Enhancing Students' Abilities with PBL

All teachers agree that PBL helps to enhance students' abilities. EFL teachers refer to abilities that students can improve, develop and build during the project's procedure. For instance, three participants found that students can develop such communicative skills in order to communicate with others and share and express their ideas, it was mentioned by six participants. Four participants mentioned socio-emotional factors such as being critical, motivated and knowing themselves. Four participants mentioned autonomy regarding knowing their role, their learning style and solving their own issues. Meanwhile, two mentioned researching and two more mentioned learning content and what others did. Rosefeld and Rosenfeld (1998 cited in Thomas, 2000) analyzed the role of PBL in the learning styles. They conclude that students, who have poor development in a traditional classroom, are having a mismatch in their learning styles and their context. Therefore, EFL professors who teach through PBL must consider that students feel involved in the projects.

4.1.10 Students' response to the implementation of PBL in their classes

Table 11 shows the responses of the question: *How do the students respond to PBL in the classroom?* Here, participants provided features or descriptions that allowed us to realize how PBL affects students' performance in their EFL class.

P1: <u>it depends on how they are used to work.</u> If they do it frequently they know what to do and how to do it, but if they are not used to doing it, then it will take time for them to work on a project.	+ / -
P2: Most of them enjoy it.	+
P3: They show interest in the class, they enjoy it, and they keep their attention on searching for more information about the topic or situation the teacher asks for.	+
P4: If they have no experience, they might have some trouble adapting to PBL. On the other hand, they respond positively because they can create and	+/-

think.	
P5: Most of the time they are motivated because it is a challenging activity.	+
P6: At the beginning it is a little bit frightening for them, But once they understand the system and start working independently, they love it.	+/-
P7: They love projects, they like to feel they are part of something where they can succeed.	+
P8: Usually it depends on their team members and the lesson to work, the way you introduce them to topics so you create interest.	+/-

Table 11 Students respond to PBL in the classroom

50 % of the participants mentioned that their students respond positively to the use of PBL in their EFL classes. The other 50% of participants think that their students can respond either negatively or positively; it depends on different factors such as motivation, the joy of investigating a specific topic or members of a team. Positive response is shown when students are interested or curious about working. We can claim that the way that students respond towards PBL depends on how the teacher provides the strategies, procedures, and guidance when it is needed. Newell (2003) supports this idea by claiming that a facilitator must work and provide students with the processes, routines and procedures of the class.

4.1.11 PBL and the students' learning impact

The question: *How does PBL impact students' learning?* is addressed in this section in order to show its results (see Table 12).

P1. It helps them learn in a more meaningful way	+
P2. They learn new things about their world, they become more responsible citizens.	+
P3. They are capable of solving daily life problems and also they are more	+

autonomous in their learning process.	
P4. In their language and knowledge.	+
P5. They have significant learning	+
P6. I think mostly in their use of knowledge	+
P7. They learn about different topics and they feel they are prepared to solve a similar real life problem when they have to face them and something they can share with others.	+
P8. Positively or negatively depending on what they could do together.	+/-

Table 12 PBL Impacts Students' learning

All participants believe that PBL's impact on students is positive; some examples are that students' learning and knowledge is improved. They agreed that PBL provides significant and meaningful learning which students apply in life situations in order to face challenges. In fact, “the purpose of PBL is to foster students’ abilities for lifelong learning through contextualization learning by presenting them with problems to solve or artifacts to create” (Lam, 2011, p. 141).

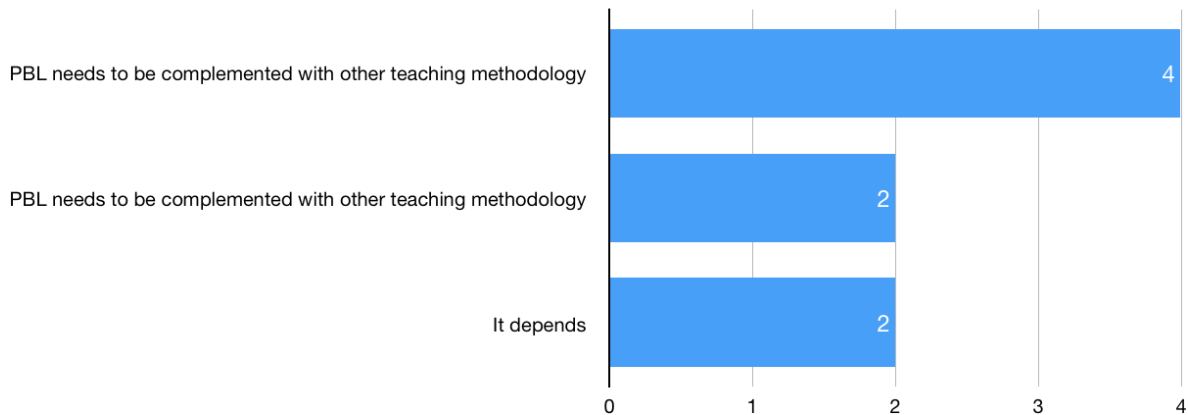
4.1.12 PBL a way to promote EFL

The last question that will be discussed in this results section is: *according to your experience, PBL is a method that promotes EFL learning or do you need to complement it with another method? Why?*

P1. I think we need to complement with another method since learning a language requires learning culture, grammar structure and more.
P2. Of course it promotes the EFL. They have the opportunity to develop all the skills in the language.
P3. In my point of view, we need to complement it because the method focuses more on

writing and speaking skills and we need as teachers to help students to develop the four skills and also we need to consider the students age.
P4. Yes, It promotes EFL learning where students can find knowledge through research
P5. It depends on the type of learning, sometimes for students that are intrapersonal maybe is going to be needed for another type of activities.
P6. I think if it is well planned it can be used without any complements.
P7. I think that if you always follow the PBL promoting the foreign language, even when they think they are not efficient enough according to their proficiency level, is our labor to encourage them to use it as much as they can.
P8. You can mix it up with another one that can be the most appropriate for your context.

Table. 13. Does PBL need another teaching methodology or is it enough to teach EFL?



Graph 2. PBL a Way to Promote EFL learning

Graph 2 displays teachers' perceptions about PBL as a way to promote learning EFL. The results show that 50% of the total of teachers thought that PBL is enough to learn EFL. Those participants explained that PBL contributes to learning EFL and students develop their language skills, build knowledge through research, and are encouraged to do projects. 25% of teachers thought that PBL needs to be complemented with another teaching methodology

because it does not provide learning culture or grammar structures as well as it focuses on writing and speaking mostly. The last 25% of teachers thought that PBL's need for complementing depends on the student's learning style, the adaptation of their activities or students' context. Supporting PBL sufficiency, Stoller (2006 cited in Lam, 2011) claims that PBL integrates the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) naturally. In Particular, Lam suggests to use PBL to develop projects related to English speech contests, panel discussions, debates, class discussions, TV or radio news in American/British, book reports, reading reviews of a movie, story, or novel, journal entries, book, letters to pen-pals, e-mail correspondence, and so on. Thus, PBL offers broad advantages for learning EFL that allow students to develop English skills without being affected for their age.

4.2 Research Questions' Answers

This section aims to display the answer of the two main research questions which were established since Chapter 1. The first addressed question is:

- 1. What are the identified disadvantages or advantages that participants faced when teaching through Project Based Learning in their context?*

According to the results of this study, questions from the research instruments were intentionally written to know the teachers' perception of disadvantages and advantages when applying PBL in their EFL classes. The selected questions for answering this research question were five, six, seven, and eight from the research instrument. Results were classified into two tables; the first table arranges the teachers' and students' advantages in PBL. The second table is organized by two columns and provides relevant information about teachers and students disadvantages when using PBL in EFL classes. All results were synthesized and

written on the table and the researcher used a mark to identify either teachers' or the students' advantages and disadvantages.

English Teacher Perspective about PBL Advantages		
Advantages	Teachers' Advantages	Students' Advantages
Meaningful learning and involved in class		X
Collaborative work, socio-emotional skills development.		X
Development of leadership skills.		X
Critical thinking		X
Learning how to solve real problems.		X
Learning an extensive vocabulary.		X
PBL promotes autonomous learning.		X
Becoming aware of their own learning.		X
PBL promotes independence, creativity		X
Enjoyment of developing the project		X
Identifying the moment to start a project.	X	
PBL develops communicative/language skills.		X
PBL helps to plan an effective class	X	
It explores new topics that provide ideas for the class	X	

Table 14 Teachers' perceptions about PBL Advantages

Those identified advantages in Table 14 are not only oriented to teachers, but mostly to students. This means these EFL teachers are interested in their students' learning. Fried-Booth (2002, cited in Lam, 2011) claims that PBL arranges and provides opportunities for students such as developing independence and confidence, increasing self-esteem and

positive attitudes towards the learning. Also Lam adds that “autonomous learning is promoted when students become more responsible for their own learning” (p.141). Some advantages according to the teachers' perceptions were that students developed meaningful learning, collaborative work, socio-emotional skills, leadership skill, acquisitions of vocabulary, development of EFL skills, joy for learning, solving real problems and becoming more critical. Only few advantages EFL teachers identify for themselves are that PBL helps teachers to plan an effective class, to identify when to start a project and explore new topics that provide ideas for the class.

English Teachers' Perspective about PBL Disadvantages		
Disadvantages	Teachers' Disadvantages	Students' Disadvantages
it requires a proficiency level of the language.		X
It does not allow developing grammatical bases.		X
Negative attitudes (apathy, anxiety, autonomy, rejection to work in teams).		X
Frustration	X	X
No time to plan projects previously.	X	
Limit of time to develop and complete the projects.	X	
Class management.	X	
Do not like working collaboratively.		X
Respecting students' decisions	X	
Problems among the participants		X
Do not reach the project's goals		X

Table 15 Teachers' perceptions about PBL Disadvantages

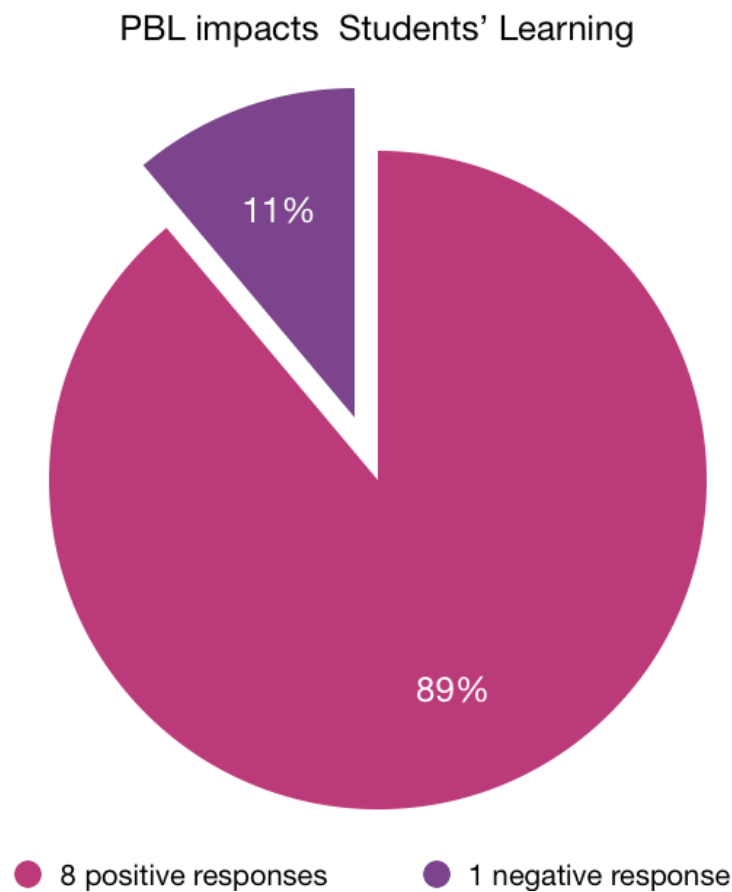
On the other hand, this study's participants identify several disadvantages when implementing PBL in their teaching. Those disadvantages are oriented for both teachers and students. Table 15 presents a summary from the results of analyzing questions four, five, seven, and eight in the research instrument. In particular, participants recognize several disadvantages where students are considered as well. Students show negative attitudes such as apathy, anxiety and frustration, rejection to autonomy and to work in teams, problems among team members and low language proficiency of EFL. Additionally, teachers show frustration, not being prepared for projects or lesson plans, limited time, class management issues and difficulty allowing students to make their own decisions. Hertzog (2007, cited in Revelle, 2019) claims that another disadvantage of using PBL in classes is that teachers cannot cover the curriculum because they spend time working on projects. Meanwhile, Thomas (2000) supports with his several studies that the proficiency of the students affects the development of their abilities when creating questions and solving them. To sum up, participants' responses highlight more advantages than disadvantages towards the students than the teachers. Participants only identify a few advantages that can help to enhance their teaching. The second addressed research question is:

2. *To what extent, can participants ensure that PBL impacts their students' learning?*

In order to know to what extent teachers can ensure that PBL impacts their students' learning, it is aimed to recall the result obtained from the analysis of the following question in the research instrument: *How does PBL impact students' learning?* Graph 3 helps to identify the positive and negative impacts that PBL has on students' learning. Those positive impacts mentioned by the participants are that:

- *PBL helps EFL students to enhance their learning and knowledge significantly.*

- *PBL provides strategies which can be developed, improved, and applied in different contexts in real life.*
- *Students are encouraged to build their knowledge through establishing problems which require them to make their own decisions, developing communicative skills, sharing ideas, fostering critical thinking, and solving problems.*



Graph 3. PBL impacts on Students' learning

As Graph 3 states, eight out of eight participants claimed that PBL is having positive impacts in students' learning (89%). In fact, Astawa, Artini, and Nitiasih (2017) made a study on the effect of PBL on students' English Productive Skills and how the activities influences teaching and learning. Those impacts in their study enhanced not only students' language

skills but also enthusiasm, confidence, creativity, self-directed, and collaborative learning. This is similar to the positive effects that were already described above. Additionally, PBL had a significant effect on English productive skills in Astawa, Artini, and Nitiasih's (2017) study as well. On the other hand, Thomas (2000) identifies several features concerning the teacher's performance for the success of the student's learning. Some of these features were negative and some of them are that teachers are not well prepared for working with PBL, they do not keep order, or they do not have time management. Those are similar to the claims that the only negative effect vote was having in this result (11%). In sum, the PBL method is an alternative for promoting, ensuring and increasing knowledge. This method can have positive effects on students as well as negative. This is why professors, of any area who would like to use it, need to prepare themselves to ensure the success in the students' learning.

4.3 Discussion

Through the development of this research, several outcomes arrived. First, although teachers have adopted PBL as a part of their EFL teaching practice, most of them are not able to recognize what PBL implies. AMCO program provides to the English teachers constant training, as teachers are responsible to enrich their knowledge and know theory related to PBL such as definitions, characteristics, principles, advantages, disadvantages, implications, roles, and assessment; therefore, misconceptions can be found in their perceptions about it. Secondly, some participants avoided answering honestly to some questions; for example, *How do you feel about teaching EFL through Project Based Learning?* and *How does PBL affect your teaching?* Instead of claiming what they know, these participants preferred to focus their answers on their students. This was definitely a way to avoid expressing their teaching strengths and flaws. Third, even though these participants emerged in this PBL

practice, they did not have a clear idea of what their role is in their classes. In conclusion, these participants were mostly focused to target students in their answers rather than showing their perceptions about their teaching practice through PBL; this implies that they either did not want to share their thoughts or did not understand the explanation about this study's purpose.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the results obtained from the research instrument. The results were presented on graphs and tables for their interpretation and analysis. Then, the answers of the two research questions of this study were justified and explained based on the participants' answers. Finally, there were discussions about the most relevant findings when performing this data analysis. The following Chapter V will provide the conclusions of this study.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions of this study. Then, it provides the research contributions based on the findings of the last chapter. Next, it describes the limitations of the study as well as suggestions for further research. Later, it expresses personal and professional experiences in the reflection section in order to conclude this thesis.

5.1 Research contributions

This study contributes to identifying the advantages and disadvantages that teachers have faced when they implement PBL as part of the teaching in EFL classes. Moreover, this study is also providing PBL advantages and disadvantages on EFL students' learning according to their professors' beliefs. So this study is helpful for teachers who are interested in implementing PBL as a part of their English teaching practice. Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2015) state that not only in science lessons can PBL be applied but it is also used in other disciplines including English classes; in fact, it improves the educational outstanding results. Besides, Aksela and Haatainen (2019) claimed that fostering PBL provides benefits to understand the challenges that teachers face in their teaching practice. This study helps teachers to identify, understand, and take into consideration the advantages and disadvantages of PBL in order to support them.

5.2 Limitations of the study

This study presented some limitations throughout the development of the research process which affected this study's results. The first limitation was these participants do not have clear concepts about what Project Based Learning is. They do have the practice but in reality they do not know the literature background to apply it correctly. That is why most of the questions in the research instrument were answered as shown in Chapter 4. Another limitation is that most of the participants answered shortly, it made it difficult to know what they wanted to express, there was a lack of details; it was difficult to interpret data.

Besides, participants needed to provide responses from their teaching practice about implementing PBL in their EFL classes; however, participants avoided answering the questions and preferred focusing on students' development. Thus, even though this study's results are mentioning important information, they do not provide so many advantages and disadvantages from teachers teaching practice working with PBL. Finally, even when this study is exploring some participants' perception about using PBL in their EFL classes, we cannot make generalizations due to the small number of participants in this inquiry.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

This research addresses some suggestions for future research in order to enrich or contrast these results. Firstly, it is suggested to apply for interviews to both teachers and students. This is in order to know the advantages and disadvantages of PBL in both points of view so there can be a triangulation of data. Secondly, it is proposed to observe the development of projects in different levels of education such as preschool, elementary school, and secondary school and compare what strategies, abilities, and skills students develop

according to their age when learning EFL through PBL. Thirdly, it would be interesting to know what type of implications are found when teaching and learning EFL through PBL in virtual mode. And the last suggestion would be to compare traditional instruction vs PBL use during COVID-19 pandemic.

5.4 Reflection

Although this year has been hard for me for all the things that I have faced, I have overcome many obstacles. I have encouraged myself to give the best of myself as much as I can. Also, it was a motivation for me to continue with my life and start this project. Personally, I was waiting for this seminar course because I wanted to get my diploma degree. I was excited to retake my thesis, but at the same time I was anxious for the seminar and nervous about taking classes again. This experience made me feel excited, enthusiastic, hopeful, worried, anxious, scared and supported. Besides, I decided to choose this topic because I adopted the PBL method as part of my teaching. However, I realized that PBL implies not a way of teaching, it is a method which encloses many connotations for helping students to develop and enhance their abilities, strategies, knowledge, projects or problems. This research reminded me how to write academically, to learn to do research, and use the correct way to cite according to APA style. To conclude, this research allowed me to enhance my abilities, strategies, and knowledge in the academic area.

5.5 Conclusion

This research purpose was to analyze the teachers' opinions concerning the PBL implementation in their teaching practice as well as identify advantages and challenges that they face when teaching through PBL. In order to do so, this chapter addressed the contribution, limitation of the study, further research suggestions, and reflection to conclude a demanding research project for me.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

The purpose of this research is to identify the advantages and challenges of the PBL method through the teachers' point of view as well as its impacts on the students' learning. The questionnaire will take approximately 40 minutes. Your responses will be confidential, collected, and used for research purposes. Please, write your answers on the table.

Name: Age: Gender: Years of experience as English Language teacher	
1. What do you know about the Project Based Learning (PBL) method?	
2. How do you feel about teaching EFL through the Project Based Learning (PBL) method?	
3. What is your role when students work PBL in class?	
4. How does PBL help or affect your teaching?	
5. What are some advantages when working with PBL?	
6. What are some disadvantages when working with PBL?	

7. What do you think outweighs the advantages or disadvantages? Why?	
8. What has been the most challenging experience you've faced working with PBL?	
9. Does PBL help students enhance their abilities? Why? Or Why not?	
10. How do the students respond to PBL in the classroom?	
11. How does PBL impact the students' learning?	
12. According to your experience PBL is a method that promotes EFL learning or do you need to complement it with another method?	