



Learning by Teaching: Training EFL Pre-service Teachers through Inquiry-based Learning

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Abstract

This research study examined how a group of EFL pre-service teachers were engaged in inquiry-based learning to do literary research in order to teach lessons on short story analysis in an EFL literature class. Inquiry-based learning was articulated with the theory on Learning by Teaching so that pre-service teachers were aware of the importance of subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge in their professional development to teach English. Teacher candidates' opinions about their experience and their decision-making in the inquiry process to teach a class served as the main data collected through field notes of their teaching and a questionnaire. Findings show that pre-service teachers constructed literary knowledge supported by research, generated critical analysis on short story content, and implemented pedagogical strategies when teaching classes on short stories in the target language.

1 Introduction

This article presents the results of a research study that examined how a group of pre-service teachers implemented inquiry-based learning (IBL) in an EFL literature class as a means to improve their learning and teaching practices. They were seventh semester students of a Foreign Language Teacher Education Program at a public University in Bogotá, Colombia. During a needs analysis phase based on class observations for two years (2013–2015) in an EFL literature course, it was detected that pre-service teachers had poor oral presentation skills, inadequate classroom management, and high levels of insecurity to address an audience when giving presentations on literary short stories. They were unable to keep eye contact with their classmates, assumed an introverted attitude, did not involve the others in class discussion, and had problems to explain topics. Thus, they found it difficult to assume a teacher's role.

When the certified teacher gave these student teachers feedback on their presentations in tutorial sessions, they recognized that their teaching beliefs were very traditional, because they were used to giving formal presentations to “transmit the knowledge” to their classmates in such a way that the audience did not participate much. They reported that this teaching methodology was “safe” and “easy” for them, because their classmates would not “ruin” their presentation with their “sudden” or “unexpected comments” in case there were dissimilar interpretations of the short stories. Thus, the audience often stayed passive, receiving the information provided by the presenters.

Moreover, when pre-service teachers were engaging in the literary analysis of the short stories, they explained the contents superficially without sufficient arguments, explanations, or support. This situation happened because of their poor preparation with the subject matter knowledge, since they

did poor literary research on the short stories and were conformist with study guides and literary commentaries they easily found on free web pages in the Internet.

It was determined that these teacher candidates needed more opportunities to see themselves as language teachers before their teaching practicum in the ninth semester, when they were expected to teach English at different schools while being observed by other certified teachers. They still needed to reflect more about their teaching beliefs to empower themselves as English teachers in the classroom. LaBosky (1993) claims that “pre-service teachers need to be encouraged to reflect on as many domains as possible during the program and beyond, in ways that embrace both practical and theoretical content” (p. 35). In this direction, these pre-service teachers needed more exposure to actual teaching, since in three semesters they were going to receive a Bachelor of Arts Degree to start working as certified English teachers in many Colombian schools.

To overcome the limitations, this research study requested a group of EFL student teachers in the second semester of 2015 to switch their roles: to go from seeing themselves as students giving formal presentations to becoming teachers giving a lesson in English. To tackle this task, they were involved in IBL so that they could do literary research on the short stories (content knowledge), and could design and teach a class (pedagogical knowledge) to present the content didactically and involve their classmates in a more active learning process. That is, pre-service teachers had to learn by teaching as they taught a class on short story analysis, a project that ultimately led them to start positioning themselves as EFL educators. In doing so, these pre-service teachers first became inquirers who did literary research on several short stories. Literary research or research in literary studies, as in any other area of research, implies more than just talking about or giving an opinion about a literary work. It is a systematic approach which demands research skills such as seeking appropriate literary theory, choosing a literary approach (historical, socio-cultural, identity studies, or thematic studies, etc.), finding published criticism or literary authority, and analyzing and interpreting the work (Halsdorf, 2015). From the perspective of learning by teaching, EFL learners prepared and taught classes to engage their classmates in short story literary analysis based on previous literary research. By assuming a teaching role, they led critical discussions on themes, conflicts, characters, and the author’s intentions, meaning, and thought.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Inquiry-based learning

IBL is a pedagogical method that aims at helping students develop problem-solving tasks of any subject to face real-life situations, including academic, professional, and personal experiences. It opposes teaching traditional methods, naming memorization and the accumulation of concepts, when the teacher transfers content in the form of lectures. IBL requires the active engagement of learners as inquirers who are able to discover knowledge by engaging in complex challenges, extended activities, and real-life problems that they have to analyze and solve (Edelson, Gordin, & Pea, 1999; Prince & Felder, 2007). As a socio-constructivist method, IBL involves information processing, because students work together on exploring a problem and seeking a solution (Oliver, 2008). Thus, learning is student-centered, because it not only requires interaction among inquirers who use language as an instrument to make meaning and construct knowledge, but encourages learners to use different types of resources such as the library, the Internet, and the media. Learning about the world, including the learning of a foreign language, is possible by a socially mediated practice among learners “dependent on face-to-face interaction and shared processes, such as joint problems solving and discussion” (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 195).

One main characteristic of IBL is to give students investigative work based on questions to solve a problem (Marx et. al., 2004; Savery, 2015). Questions are a means to trigger students’ interest and curiosity and stimulate rigorous and scientific approaches towards the topic under investigation (Aditomo, Goodyear, Bliuc, & Ellis, 2013; Callison & Baker, 2014; Dostál, 2015; Zion & Sadeh, 2010). Gellis (2002) claims that inquiry-based learning is appropriate for students having limited background in short story analysis and literary criticism, because questions allow novice readers to deal

with literature, to think about possible meanings, and to address a more objective analysis of the material, without necessarily being experts in literature. For instance, Gellis (2002) proposes asking open-ended questions about themes, power relations, social implications, and the community or context that the short stories represent. However, IBL is not limited to asking questions. It is a teaching method that “espouses” investigation and exploration (Kuhlthau, Maniotes, & Caspari, 2007) through a set of investigative steps, namely questioning, exploring, assimilating, and reflecting about a given topic supported by questions to solve a problem or a task (Callison & Baker, 2014; Kuhlthau et al., 2012).

Although IBL has mainly been implemented in science and math courses and with different domains, EFL scholarship has also researched the use of this method in language teaching. Escalante Araus (2013) states that this method encourages students to use the target language more often, because “they feel a sense of control in a more appropriate language level and encourages more communication in oral and written forms” (p. 484), since EFL students are called to discuss the inquiry matter with members of their groups. Likewise, IBL is suitable to enhance language competence and the negotiation of meaning through activities that require discovery, interaction, and reflection, heading EFL students to become active and dynamic users of the foreign language, as they are exposed to exchange information more naturally and meaningfully (Lee, 2014).

Accordingly, this study argues that IBL can influence EFL pre-service teachers’ subject matter knowledge, when they have to do research on the contents to prepare their classes. Similarly, IBL can influence candidate teachers’ pedagogical knowledge through questioning, assimilating, and reflecting on how contents can be taught. These steps of inquiry design will be later discussed in Table 2.

2.2 Learning by teaching in EFL education

Learning by teaching is a learning and teaching approach that sees students as being able to assume the role of a teacher, enhancing their own learning and knowledge of any subject matter while being encouraged to teach the knowledge they have just acquired to other students (Stollhands, 2016). Karimi (2011), and Roscoe and Chi (2007) indicate that when students teach or tutor other students, the students achieve more solid learning goals. Similarly, Nestojko (2014) affirms that students recall material, organize content, and manipulate information more correctly, when they plan to teach other students than when they prepare to take exams. Learning by teaching “involves an increasing awareness” and “reflection and feedback from others and from ourselves” on how to teach in the language classroom “toward becoming better teachers” (Scrivener, 1994, p. 379). Scrivener (1994) clarifies that learning by teaching is not just for teachers in initial training courses or when one is a new teacher. This practice should be followed throughout the teaching career to achieve day by day a better professional growth.

Moreover, Seleim and Mahmoud (2013) indicate that EFL teacher education should train student teachers in both subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. The former covers the information or data related to the content or topics/themes that teachers have to investigate, review, update, and prepare to teach (Shulman, 1987). The latter embodies the knowledge about the instructional strategies and procedures for teaching those contents in the classroom (Mullock, 2006; Seleim & Mahmoud, 2013; Valencia, 2009). EFL pre-service teachers need to understand that the pedagogical knowledge entails theories about teaching and learning, including the ability to plan and prepare class activities, materials, classroom management, teaching strategies, and questioning techniques (Lenhart, 2010)

EFL teacher education programs in Colombia should facilitate student teachers’ professional development and reflection by giving them more teaching practices in most of the courses they take, instead of asking them to complete a practicum or an internship in the last semester of the career program. By then, opportunities to do actual teaching may be few. Creating awareness through learning by teaching in earlier courses of education programs can foster their pedagogical skills and professional abilities from an early stage. Therefore, EFL student teachers should develop capacities to learn the contents well and be responsible for the way they teach them to others.

Since the EFL pre-service teachers involved in this research study were not only learners of the foreign language, but were also getting professionally prepared to become English teachers in the near future, this study claimed that they could improve their language competence more successfully, learn language contents better, and acquire stronger pedagogical strategies, when they realized they soon needed to teach the material to someone else.

2.3 Short stories in English language teaching

Short stories are brief narratives containing one single plot, a few characters, and one main conflict (Pardede, 2011). They are a motivating means to learn about the foreign language and the world. As a result, they are useful to design interesting English classes based on content. In fact, Brumfit and Ronald (1986), and McRae (1991) affirm that short stories are adequate to language learners' own readability, and can stimulate language acquisition, because literature "provides meaningful and memorable contexts for processing and interpreting new language" (Lazar, 1993, p. 17). Short stories can help EFL learners extend language use, enlarge the four language skills, and build a great range of grammar forms and vocabulary (Maley, 2001; McKay, 2001). In this sense, short stories can enhance learners' communicative competence, because they contain authentic language in use and lead students to reinforce critical thinking skills, as they analyze, make judgments, evaluate, and draw conclusions from the topics those stories contain (Murdoch, 2002; Young, 1996). Hill (2007) explains that short stories provide more than just the enhancement of grammar and language. They also allow learners to construct knowledge of the world through the discovery of literary contents. That is to say, literature offers the means to create an EFL environment based on content in which literary movements, the social, historical, and cultural context of the text, the author's biography, characters, and conflicts can be discussed (Lazar, 2007).

Furthermore, this research study proposes that authentic short stories are meaningful sources to involve EFL pre-service teachers in learning by teaching, and facilitate IBL in the language classroom through questions. Questions not only engage students in initial critical responses about the characters, themes, and conflicts in the literary works, but constitute a starting point to do literary research by collecting data about the stories from other resources, namely literary articles in specialized journals, literary criticism/theory, authors' biographies, and websites. When learners are given insightful questions, and are encouraged to answer those questions critically not only based on their own personal opinions, but on documented research, they are involved in IBL in order to do a well thought-out literary analysis of these reading materials.

It is worth mentioning that the presence and use of short stories in the Colombian EFL curriculum is scarce, because many teachers are used to using communicative textbooks. Therefore, using authentic short stories in this research project counted as a different approach to help pre-service teachers see the possibility of using instructional materials other than textbooks. The short stories that learners read and analyzed in their classes during this experience appear in Table 1.

3 Research methodology

3.1 Research type

Based on the statement of the problem, this was essentially a case study that entailed systematic observations and data collection of a phenomenon over a period of time in a particular context. Thus, this experience took place in an EFL classroom at an education program, and it envisioned detailed understanding of how EFL student teachers became more aware of their learning and teaching practices through short stories and inquiry.

3.2 Research question

This study aimed at answering this research question: How can inquiry-based learning influence EFL pre-service teachers' subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge when teaching a lesson on short stories?

3.3 Setting and participants

18 pre-service teachers participated in this research. They were advanced English learners, taking an EFL American literature course in the seventh semester of a language teacher education program at a public university in Bogotá, Colombia. There were 12 females and six males, whose ages ranged from 19 to 25 years old. During their class preparation, they thought of and implemented solid teaching skills and techniques to lead the literary analysis in an EFL classroom. This time the certified teacher asked them to adopt a teaching role in order to solve a problem related to their professional career, instead of requesting them to give formal presentations. Thus, IBL was the main methodology that engaged participants in learning by teaching. Although this EFL literature class was not strictly a pedagogy seminar, it was the setting in which they were asked to articulate the pedagogical theories they had learned in other seminars to the teaching of a lesson on short story analysis.

3.4 Data collection instruments

This research was supported by a pedagogical intervention in which two data collection instruments were implemented to answer the research question.

First, field notes were used as an “invaluable way of collecting data” (Yin, 2011, p. 143) for the researcher to take note of the characteristics of people’s actions and interactions in the setting where the study is conducted. In this case, field notes were used in two scenarios. The first scenario was in 20-minute tutorial sessions, in which notes were taken about students’ oral reports on their step-by-step preparation of the class on short stories, including the literary research and the analysis, the questions they had answered in study guides (see Appendix 2), the resources they had found to enrich their literary analysis (subject matter knowledge), and the activities and materials they were planning to teach the class (pedagogical knowledge). Field notes were taken during and right after the tutorials. The second scenario was in the classroom when pre-service teachers were actually teaching the lesson on short story analysis. These field notes focused on how the pre-service teachers managed to deal with literary knowledge, how they addressed the analysis of the short stories while involving the whole class in the discussion, and which techniques and procedures they implemented to teach that literary knowledge. Field notes were taken during the whole pedagogical intervention that lasted two months.

Second, as suggested by Dornyei and Taguchi (2010), a questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument that presented participants with a list of five open-ended questions to be answered freely based on their teaching experience (see Appendix 1). The questionnaire was administered right after each group of teacher candidates had taught the lesson. It requested participants to write their personal opinions about the experience of having been inquirers of knowledge and teachers preparing and teaching a class on short stories. Participants answered this questionnaire in groups, and these data were later analyzed.

3.5 Pedagogical intervention

This research study was supported by a pedagogical intervention, which was designed according to the principles of IBL to mainly engage students in investigative work led by questions. The 18 members of the class were divided into small groups of four students for assisting each other in preparation for teaching the whole group. Each group was assigned a short story (see Table 1) and a study guide, having questions to be answered (see Appendix 2) based on their reading and on

literary research from other sources (literary journals, literary theory, biographies, and free websites). For the purpose of this article, the experience will be analyzed with three American short stories described in Table 1.

Table 1. Literary texts read in the inquiry design

Groups	Short stories	Plot	Researched topics through IBL
Group 1 (four pre-service teachers)	“Dry September” William Faulkner A Southern writer	Will Mayes, a black man who is falsely accused of having raped Miss Cooper, a respectable white woman, is unjustly murdered by a group of racist white men in the period of racial segregation in the US	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Racism and segregation in the deep south in the 50s and 60s - The legal doctrine “separate but equal” - Physical violence against African-American citizens - The southern belle myth
Group 2 (four pre-service teachers)	“Never Marry a Mexican” Sandra Cisneros A Chicana writer	A Latino woman, Clemencia, faces a tormenting love-sex affair with an American married man. She deals with issues of cultural identity, love, and social class.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural identity - Chicana identity - Views of marriage and unfaithfulness - Patriarchal power
Group 3 (four pre-service teachers)	“A Matter of Principle” Charles W. Chesnutt An African-American writer	Cicero Clayton, an African-American businessman, attempts to improve his family’s social position by having his daughter Alice marry a light-skinned congressman. Because of several misunderstandings, Alice cannot marry that prospect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-racial bigotry between dark-skinned and light-skinned black people in the US - The Blue Veins society - Socio-economic prejudice

With these multicultural short stories, pre-service teachers were asked to teach a lesson that included the historical context in which the literary work was produced, the author’s biography, and the literary analysis led by a thesis statement, which served as one central argument that incited others to participate in class discussion. Pre-service teachers prepared the class by following five steps involved in inquiry-based learning, an information search process proposed by Callinson and Baker’s (2014), and Kuhlthau et al. (2012; see Table 2).

Once the inquiry was completed, each group of pre-service teachers taught the class to the whole group. By assuming a teacher role, they used creative PowerPoint presentations and designed handouts with quotes taken from the short stories to be analyzed in groups. As teachers, they promoted debate, group work, and discussion in such a way that the rest of the students had the opportunity to express their opinions about the stories and enrich the teachers’ view or thesis statement. This methodology allowed the whole class to get involved in the short story analysis by actively talking about the characters, the conflicts, and the events in the stories from a literary and a critical standpoint.

Table 2. Pedagogical intervention based on inquiry design

Inquiry-based learning steps	Description of the step	What pre-service teachers (PT) did
Questioning	To invite learners to inquiry by stimulating curiosity, building background knowledge, and discovering interesting ideas for initial research	PT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - were introduced to inquiry community by forming groups - were given a plan with the steps to prepare the short story analysis project in the form of a lesson - became familiar with the reading material and the authors as described in the syllabus - considered the questions: What to read? How to read? Which topics should be discussed? How to teach a class on content (literary analysis) in the target language?
Exploring	To involve reading the material, considering interesting ideas, and identifying inquiry questions to decide direction of the topic	PT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - read a study guides (see example in Appendix 2) with key questions to focus on the reading process - read the short stories - decided which questions they liked to answer (not all of them) based on their own choice and interest. They provided initial reactions to the short stories by answering the questions in the study guides - started to create a draft of a thesis statement to be explained based on the previous steps
Assimilation	To request learners to gather important data by “locating, evaluating, and using information that leads to deep learning” (Callison & Baker, 2014, p. 23) “Deep learning requires interpreting facts, creating connections, and “organizing ideas” (Kuhlthau, 2004)	PT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - researched open web pages in which they found literary criticism/commentaries about the stories to prepare the literary analysis based on the literary research topics in Table 1 - found 2/3 published articles in academic literary/scientific journals (databases), dealing with the literary topics (see Table 1) that pre-service teachers wanted to include in the lesson - found printed materials in the library (literary books, biographies, literary theory to prepare the short story analysis) - read the documents to enrich their subject matter knowledge - reviewed the questions they had chosen in order to complement their personal views/answers with the support of theory and research
Inference	To imply going beyond simple facts to make “extent meaning” and give an interpretation, “articulated with well-documented” research that learners “have learned in the inquiry process” (Callison & Baker, 2014, p. 23)	PT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reflected on what they had learned and constructed their own understanding by creating a definite thesis statement (main argument) to be discussed in the lesson plan (subject matter knowledge). Worked on arguments and chose interesting passages/evidence from the story to support the thesis - articulated their personal interpretation of the stories with the documents found - planned the way they were going to discuss and analyze the short stories by teaching a lesson to their partners. Created activities to engage the class in literary discussion
Reflection	To evaluate the process, and learning goals, reflect on content and process, and make sure everything is ready	PT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reflected on the inquiry process - verified in the class preparation was ready in terms of content and pedagogical procedure (materials and activities to do in class) - reviewed content and procedure to give the lesson

3.6 *Data analysis*

The data collected during the pedagogical intervention were analyzed through the grounded approach (Charmaz, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 2015), an inductive analysis that involved reading the data line-by-line several times in the field notes and the questionnaires to identify patterns (repetitive information) that could answer the research question. In this way, the teacher-researcher's notes on how students dealt with content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, and pre-service teachers' opinions about how they handled both types of knowledge were analyzed, until similar patterns about their teaching experience with short stories emerged. Those patterns were initially given short names (pre-categories) and were finally written in the form of statements, representing the main findings during the experience.

4 Findings

4.1 *EFL learners' value of the construction of subject matter knowledge supported by research*

One of the main findings that answered the research question was that the inquiry-based model enabled student teachers to build a more formal and rigorous subject matter knowledge (on American literature) in the foreign language founded on research, in comparison to their previous learning process before this experience. They recognized the importance of investigating deeply about the literary work they were assigned as a priority to provide a more specialized literary analysis during class development. They believed that since they were going to be seen as teachers, they had to be knowledgeable of the literary topics to be discussed and, in consequence, they needed to do investigative work in order to manage the class and lead discussion of the materials in a more professional and responsible way (Field notes, September 22, tutorial session). Evidence of their construction of literary knowledge supported by research are:

The first step we did was reading "Dry September" more than once to understand and find hidden information in it. The second step was looking for information about the historical context in which the short story was written. We researched some articles about Faulkner's stories and about the southern white belle myth to direct the analysis [...] and that research increased our knowledge to be better teachers (Questionnaire, October 6).

We read the story "A Matter of Principle" more than once; we talked about our first impressions concerning the content and the characters, we looked for data like the author's biography, the historical context, and the topics treated in the story [...] This research complemented our understanding of the story to teach the class (Questionnaire, October 23).

These data suggest that pre-service teachers appreciated doing literary research as a crucial step to generate literary criticism of the events and the contents of the story. Thus, their construction of subject matter knowledge involved inquiry, since they were not satisfied with the initial reading and the first impressions of the material. In fact, during the tutorial sessions, students reported that they had read commentaries about the stories on free web pages and had looked for literary criticism in academic articles available in the University databases. For instance, the group in charge of the story "Dry September" reported having read the article "Seeing the Old South: The Roots of Racial Violence in Faulkner's Dry September" by Alice Robertson (2011; Field notes, September 22, tutorial session). Similarly, the group preparing class discussion on "A Matter of Principle" reported that the reading of the article "Blue Veins and Black Bigotry: Colorism as Moral Evil in Charles Chesnut's A Matter of principle" by Earle Bryant (2011) had enriched and complemented their learning and critical analysis of the material (Field notes, August 25, tutorial session). Learners commented that they had selected important ideas from those articles, because they were useful to prepare the content for the class. For example, with the inquiry on "Dry September," students learned about the racial segregation policies in the southern states of the US, the meaning of the legal doctrine "separate but equal," and the violence inflicted on African-Americans by the Ku Klux Klan at the beginning of the 20th century (Field notes, August 22, tutorial session).

Similarly, the group that did research on the short story “A Matter of Principle,” acquired important knowledge about the Blue Vein Society, an exclusive African-American upper class group that considered themselves superior to other blacks, because they were light-skinned. Pre-service teachers stated that they would have never known about the social interracial conflict the author had portrayed in the story, if they had not investigated the Blue Vein society, an unknown cultural topic for them then (Field notes, September 15, tutorial session). These answers evidenced that learners recognized their role as inquirers of subject matter. They said that they were motivated to seeking out literary material through research work, and put considerable effort to succeed with problem-solving tasks, instead of waiting for the teacher to give them the information. One of the main achievements of this project was that the construction of literary knowledge supported by research was produced in the target language through a process of meaning negotiation. Learners were more participatory and cooperated with each other to build new knowledge and cope with their learning process. With IBL, these pre-service teachers explored and assimilated the material by locating, collecting, and discussing data/information in English (see Table 1) that not only helped them to be conversant with the literary work, but developed their communicative competence:

This process was so meaningful for us. At the beginning, it was a little difficult because we did not know what to do with all the information we had collected. Then, it was so enjoyable to do the analysis of the short story because we could connect the information with the short story (Questionnaire, October 23).

With this project, we learned how to go deep in an investigation work like this, because we could share and put together many aspects about the historical context and the theme of the story [...] Moreover, we did all the investigation and the discussion in English so we improved our English level (Questionnaire, October 6).

These comments show that, although the experience was demanding, pre-service teachers enjoyed the fact that they figured out the solution of a problem: to provide a literary analysis by putting together their personal opinions/interpretations and published literary criticism in the foreign language. This construction of knowledge supported by research implied information processing and decision-making, as participants became problem solvers. Consequently, subject matter knowledge on literary analysis was not only based on students’ initial opinions on the stories, but on their investigative work by using the foreign language.

4.2 Pre-service teachers’ more critical analysis of literary meaning (subject matter)

Data revealed that all the pre-service teachers acknowledged the usefulness of key questions in the study guides (see Appendix 2) to conduct their inquiry process and to address their literary analysis more critically, that is, dealing with the subject matter content more professionally. This finding matches Gellis’ (2002) idea that questions in inquiry processes are suitable for students having limited experience with literary criticism. In this case, pre-service teachers mentioned that they had become better critical readers of the short stories, because the questions in the study guides had activated their capacity to focus on events and topics they had not considered at first sight:

We read the questions about “Never Marry a Mexican” and we could understand better as we saw beyond the words and be more critical about the short story. They also helped us to do appropriate research (Questionnaire, November 10).

The questions helped us to direct our reading to be more analytical. They helped us to pay attention to important aspects that we did not notice in the first reading and helped us to give our personal opinions in a critical way, and prepare the lesson (Questionnaire, October 23).

Data indicated that questions motivated inquirers to reach a more solid critical level of literary analysis of the stories, and to focus on key content that they initially overlooked, since they were unfamiliar with the stories, and this was the first time in their lives that they were reading this literary material in the foreign language. One clear example was that the group preparing the lesson on “Dry September” answered all the questions in the study guide, some of which were discussed in the

tutorial sessions with the teacher. Later, these pre-service teachers informed the certified teacher that after doing literary research and having completed the assimilation and inference steps of the inquiry (see Table 2), they had decided to teach a lesson by having in mind one of the questions that strongly captured their attention: Investigate the ideals of the Southern belle/white goddess myth. To what extent does Minnie Cooper represent the Southern Belle myth in “Dry September”? Student teachers informed that based on this question and their research, they started to discuss critically with the whole class why the white mob of men in the story, presumably members of the Ku Klux Klan, used the ideals of the southern Belle Myth (chastity, aristocracy, morality) as an excuse to murder a black man without confirming if he had raped Minnie Cooper. Students said that more than defending Miss Cooper’s virtue for being a respectable, white southern belle, those white men wanted to kill the black man because of their racist prejudice (Field notes, September 28, tutorial session). Consequently, it was a great achievement that pre-service teachers produced critical knowledge from the questions and made more logical inferences, once they had understood the meaning of the southern belle myth, a subject matter they had never heard about. Similarly, questions in the inquiry design (Table 2) guided pre-service teachers to generate critical literary commentaries on other relevant issues related to white power, inequality, race, and social injustice through the characters and the conflicts discussed in the short story “Dry September.”

In a similar fashion, the inquiry design and the questions in the study guides led pre-service teachers to design class activities that elicited critical opinions from their classmates when teaching the lessons. This was observed in the lesson on “Never Marry a Mexican.” At the beginning of the class, student teachers presented the following thesis statement to their classmates, which they had previously created and reviewed in the tutorial sessions:

Clemencia mistakenly believes that she is a transgressor of the submissive role imposed on women in Latino patriarchal societies, as she prefers being a mistress than a wife cheated by her husband (Field notes, October 20, class session).

This thesis statement was the result of student teachers’ whole inquiry process and of having answered one of the questions in the study guide: In which way does Clemencia try to confront her cultural Mexican values? How does she represent/misrepresent Latino and Mexican women’s identity? Once these teachers introduced the thesis statement already mentioned above, they requested other members of the class to give critical opinions about the story as these examples suggest:

Clemencia had distorted the meaning of her mother’s advice about getting married.

Clemencia was emotionally frustrated because she was actually in love with the American married man and wished to occupy his wife’s place.

Her repulsion of marriage was due to the idea that married men always betrayed their wives.

(Field notes, October 20, class session)

Thus, controversial themes about Clemencia’s emotional volatility in regard to love deception, the conception of marriage in Latino and the US cultures, faithfulness vs. betrayal, and the advantages and disadvantages of being married constituted subject matter knowledge that learners discussed more critically in the target language when reading “Never Marry a Mexican.” Critical opinions implied that pre-service teachers became more analytical of the literary material, as they interpreted and inferred meaning drawn from the question posted.

4.3 EFL pre-serviced teachers’ consideration of pedagogical strategies to create more participatory literature classes

This finding relates how pre-service teachers constructed pedagogical knowledge when being asked to teach a class on short stories, as this was the first time they worked with authentic short stories instead of textbooks. They also started to figure out how they would teach a lesson rather than just giving a formal presentation:

We were nervous of having to teach a story, because we did not know how to do it. First, we thought that teaching was to say or explain, but then we realized that we could teach English by offering students chances to participate and express their ideas about the story (Questionnaire, October 23).

We changed our view of teaching English and literature, we discovered that teaching a foreign language is not only to teach grammar and do reading comprehension exercises, we understood that we could teach based on content and have critical discussions, not just teaching language use (Questionnaire, October 23).

These data show that pre-service teachers, as reported in the questionnaire, became more aware of teaching methodologies dealing with “classes based on content” rather than traditional methodologies to teach grammar structures. Likewise, they wanted to involve their partners in “participatory classes” for meaning negotiation and “using the foreign language to express critical opinions” (Questionnaire, October 23). As they undertook their role as teachers, rather than as students, they said “we don’t want to give the same boring presentations that we give in other classes” and “we want everybody to participate and speak in a reflective manner” (Field notes, August 22, tutorial session). Hence, these teacher candidates proposed critical approaches, which are forms of pedagogical knowledge, to teach literature through participatory classes. They believed that the best methodology to elicit literary analysis was through debates, discussions, and workshops, and this new view of teaching opposed their previous belief of giving formal presentations without involving the audience, a limitation addressed in the statement of the problem. For instance, the student teachers who worked on the story “A Matter of Principle” designed a worksheet with thoughtful questions to elicit answers from students. The questions were directed to discuss inter-racial discrimination among black people in the US. The student teachers set the class in a round table and asked students to report their answers in such a way that all the class contributed critically with the analysis of the story. Members of the class actually commented, for instance, how Mr. Cicero Clayton, the main character of the story, “was classist and racist against his own African race” just because he belonged to the Blue Vein Society, an “exclusive group for skinned-light African-American” (Field notes, October 20, class session).

Similarly, the teacher candidates in charge of teaching the class on “Never Marry a Mexican” implemented interesting teaching techniques to discuss the story. One of the techniques was to generate curiosity and call learners’ attention by first presenting the thesis statement about Clemencia transgressing the established submissive roles imposed on women in the Latino patriarchal system. Then, instead of presenting the arguments right away, they requested students to defend or refute the thesis by discussing some evidence in the story. They listened to the different opinions generated in this debate and then provided their own analysis (Field notes, October 20, class session). Each group of student teachers thought carefully of using teaching strategies and activities that ultimately engendered critical literacy based on subject matter as they could address conflicts of racism, power, and cultural identity in the stories from the critical approaches to teaching literature in the EFL classroom. Therefore, they implemented literary approaches in their teaching such as historical, cultural, social, and identity studies.

Equally, teacher candidates complemented their critical teaching views with visual and didactic material, including PowerPoint presentations, handouts, brochures, short videos, and questions for their students, aiming at involving the whole class in dialogue about the stories. That is, they assumed a more professional teaching attitude by requesting other students to read aloud and analyze key passages from the stories, to refer to the historical background and the author’s life presented in the handouts, and to clarify the meaning of unknown vocabulary and concepts they came across with during the lesson (Field notes, September 24, class session). In this way, they used didactically and methodically the instructional materials they had designed to discuss the stories from a critical literary standpoint, instead of just giving a presentation in the form of a lecture. Once assuming a teacher role, they started to plan student-centered classes, because they wanted to count on the voices and opinions of the other members for class development. This project also made them feel more confident and safer, when they spoke in front of the class, because they knew the subject matter more accurately. This experience positioned them as English teachers giving content-based classes, and

their classes were interesting, well-organized, and participatory. This new teaching attitude towards short story analysis represented a significant change, because participants were more critical and more prepared to assume a teaching role, as they followed the suggested steps in the literary inquiry design (see Table 2). In particular, these pre-service teachers valued the step Reflection, because it helped them to learn about and arrange the subject matter, and to create awareness about how to organize and handle the contents more effectively to be taught. Learning by teaching strengthened their academic performance and responsibility for being good teachers:

It was very important to have a clear organization of the information and materials for the class. Teaching gave us the opportunity to learn in a significant way. We were not nervous (Questionnaire, November 10).

We are worried about the materials, the activities, and the organization because we want our students to enjoy the story and participate in class (Field notes, 22 August 22, tutorial session).

Also, teacher candidates' opinions such as "The story was interesting to learn language," "Stories have interesting topics for discussion," and "We learn better with authentic short stories," indicate that, although the inquiry process was challenging, they actually found the short stories useful authentic materials to work on content and not only on language forms in the language classroom.

5 Conclusions

This research project concludes that, although IBL was a challenging method to be used in an EFL setting in Colombia, it motivated learners to become inquirers of subject matter knowledge through a careful investigative process, demanding them to do in-depth and extensive work, eliciting their capacity to solve problems, and creating solutions related to their field of expertise: teaching a class on content in the foreign language.

This research study indicates that pre-service teachers became aware of the need to improve their teaching skills, when they invested in their pedagogical knowledge and assumed a responsible teacher role in order to be well-prepared with the contents and methodologies to teach a class on short stories in the EFL classroom. They realized that careful preparation, planning, and research is needed, before a teacher actually teaches a class on content and leads a student-centered environment.

This study equally suggests that short stories are a salient resource that supports the principles of IBL in EFL education because of two main reasons. First, it was observed that pre-service teachers felt the need to construct literary knowledge and meaning in the foreign language based on research to complement their first appreciations of the texts. Second, short stories analysis supported by questions facilitated critical thinking, as learners produced and reached deep levels of analysis and understanding of the literary topics in the reading materials, including issues of discrimination, gender, power, social and historical conflicts, and cultural differences.

6 Implications

This study points out that implementing IBL in EFL environments is a time-consuming task that requires careful steps. Certified English teachers should not have the misconception that IBL just means giving students (or pre-service teachers) questions for them to solve a problem autonomously without any teachers' additional help. IBL needs to be supported by vigilant steps, questioning, exploring, assimilation, inference, and reflection (see Table 2), embedded in an inquiry design as suggested by Kuhlthau et al. (2012), and Callinson and Baker (2014). A certified teacher must make learners aware of these steps as crucial to complete the whole inquiry successfully. He/she must not leave students alone in the attempt, but supervise each step by asking for inquirers' reports and gradual progress of the ways they address the task.

Finally, inquiry can serve as a method to involve EFL pre-service teachers in learning by teaching, because it comprises responsibility for constructing subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. It creates awareness of the fact that teaching implies finding, constructing, and using

those two types of knowledge simultaneously. Equally, the study suggests that pre-service teachers should be encouraged to prepare and teach classes under the views of learning by teaching in earlier semesters of any EFL teacher education program. Learning by teaching, supported by inquiry processes, can prepare them to be more responsible for their own learning and teaching practices during the whole career, instead of just having them teach in one practicum almost at the end of the career program.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Questionnaire

Please, answer the following questions based on your experience with all the steps involved in the preparation for the short story analysis project. Please, be sincere and objective.

1. What was your experience with the reading of the short story? Explain your answer.

2. What actions did you do/ what steps did you follow to engage in the literary analysis of the short story? Please, be as detailed as possible with each step/action.

3. What kind of information did you research to get knowledgeable about the short story and be able to analyze/discuss it in class?

4. How was your experience with the preparation and the teaching of a lesson on short story analysis?

5. Did you/didn't you learn as a student and as a teacher with this kind of project? If so, what contents did you exactly learn? If not, why so?

Appendix 2**Sample of the study guide on “A Matter of Principle”**

1. The Story “A Matter of Principle” takes place at the end of the nineteenth century. Contextualize the story by doing research about the situation of African-American people in the US after the Civil War.
2. Rather than focusing on the slavery period and the working-class blacks, Chesnutt focuses on upper-class African-American people in the turn of the century. Which ideology and social norms characterized this group of people?
3. Investigate about the Blue Vein Society in the US and discuss its principles and theories about race and identity. What attitudes did the members of this society have towards the people of their own race? Why?
4. Analyze Mr. Cicero Clayton as a leader of the Blue Vein Society. What are his thoughts and behavior due to the theories of race adopted by that Society?
5. Analyze Mr. Cicero Clayton’s racial and social theories at the beginning of the story. Is he faithful to his principles throughout the story? Does he have to sacrifice or jeopardize something or someone in order to follow his principles? What is your reaction?
6. Investigate about the theory of colorism, a term coined by Alice Walker in 1982, and explain in which way the story “A Matter of Principle” depicts this social phenomenon.