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Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing Project-Based Learning in Ecuadorian schools

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I dedicate this project with all my heart to all those people who have supported me throughout this remarkable journey. First and foremost, I extend my deepest thanks to God, whose guidance and unique blessings have been instrumental in my life and this project.

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Ana Marcatoma

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Resumen:

Este estudio cualitativo tuvo como objetivo identificar las percepciones de los docentes sobre los desafíos y oportunidades de implementar el Aprendizaje Basado en Proyectos (ABP) en las escuelas ecuatorianas. Utilizando un diseño de investigación Cualitativa Descriptiva Exploratoria (CDE), este estudio exploró las experiencias de una muestra de cuatro profesores de escuelas públicas y privadas a través de ocho entrevistas realizadas en dos fases. La primera fase de las entrevistas se centró en la información demográfica, los desafíos y las oportunidades, mientras que la segunda fase investigó el apoyo y los recursos por parte de los padres y las escuelas, así como sus reflexiones y recomendaciones. Los resultados destacaron desafíos como la falta de cooperación de los padres y los recursos limitados. Los beneficios de utilizar ABP incluyeron una mayor colaboración, una comprensión más profunda y una mejora en las habilidades de inglés. Además, los docentes recomendaron estrategias para ejecutar ABP, como el uso de plataformas digitales, la integración de metodologías atractivas y el aumento de la participación de los padres.

Palabras claves: Aprendizaje Basado en Proyectos (ABP), escuelas ecuatorianas, percepciones de los maestros.

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Abstract:

This qualitative study aimed to identify teachers' perceptions of the challenges and opportunities of implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Ecuadorian schools. Utilizing an Exploratory Descriptive Qualitative (EDQ) research design, this study explored the experiences of a sample of four teachers from public and private schools through eight interviews delivered in two phases. The first phase of interviews focused on demographic information, challenges, and opportunities, while the second phase investigated support and resources from parents and schools, as well as their reflections and recommendations. The findings underscored challenges such as lack of parental cooperation and limited resources. The benefits of using PBL were found to be enhanced collaboration, deeper understanding, and improved English skills. Additionally, teachers recommended strategies for executing PBL, including using digital platforms, integrating engaging methodologies, and increasing parental involvement.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning (PBL), Ecuadorian schools, teacher perceptions.

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1.   Introduction

1.1 Context

English instruction as a foreign language has become increasingly fundamental in Ecuador since its introduction in schools. Therefore, according to Cortez et al. (2015), teachers have had to seek innovative teaching approaches to answer students' needs in this 21st century. As per the Ministry of Education (2016), pedagogical methodologies in Ecuador should reflect and respond to student's strengths and challenges to motivate and involve them in their learning process. In other words, Ecuadorian educators need to use appropriate methods and approaches to provide meaningful instruction to guide students in learning a foreign language such as English. One approach that can be addressed for this purpose is Project-based learning (PBL).

According to Panasan and Nuangchalerm (2010), PBL is a learner-centered approach in which students' learning is focused on developing a project based on something real with the development of a final product. By focusing on students, teachers become guides and facilitators for them throughout the implementation of this approach. However, recent research has pointed out diverse difficulties (Saldaña & Bermeo, 2023) but also a range of opportunities (Tsiplakides & Fragoulis, 2009; Devkota et al., 2017) when using PBL in English classrooms, which identifying the challenges and opportunities of using PBL seems to be of importance.

Therefore, the focus of this research is to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by PBL with its implementation in Ecuadorian schools in English classes. It is important to mention that the challenges and opportunities derived from PBL may depend on the context and

environment in which it is applied. Although PBL has been applied in Ecuador, most has been

implemented in other subjects and educational contexts, such as Orellana and Chacón (2023)

with their approach to the use of PBL in Mathematics, and Echeverria and Perez (2024) in the

teaching of chemistry, which led to the literature review carried out for this study to reveal the

lack of research in English language teaching in Ecuadorian schools.

1.2 Diagnosis of the Situation

Promoting student-centeredness is emphasized within the Ecuadorian English curriculum

as one of the main bases in teaching English (Ministry of Education, 2016). Educators may seek

methodologies worthy of the interests and needs of the students of this current century. To this

end, Project-based learning has emerged as a way for teachers to transform education. However,

according to Villafuerte et al. (2018), the use of innovative didactic methodologies in teaching

English as a foreign language in the Ecuadorian educational context is scarce. As Paragae (2023)

states, PBL is considered an innovative pedagogical approach; therefore, it could serve as an

alternative approach to promote innovation and student-centeredness. Furthermore, what is

known about the application of PBL and its different obstacles and possibilities is limited.

Taking the aforementioned point into consideration, this is consistent with the lack of

PBL application that the researchers observed during their pre-professional practicum, which

revealed a noticeable gap in the actual application of PBL in English classes. To be more precise,

English teachers only apply small end-of-unit activities and do not apply PBL. Due to this fact, it

was considered to seek English teachers who had applied PBL and to have informal

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conversations about the use of this pedagogical approach within their school environments. However, the researchers found different personal trajectories of those teachers about the use of that approach during these conversations. Therefore, there was a need to gain a depth understanding of the views of teachers on the application of PBL within Ecuadorian schools.

Given the background of the study, the researchers decided to research more about the challenges and opportunities that may come when using the PBL approach within English classes, where the importance of teachers' perspectives and experiences is crucial to explore.

1.3 Importance of the Study

Teaching English as a foreign language has become fundamental in schools in Ecuador (Kuhlman & Serrano, 2017). Therefore, teachers must consider the type of pedagogical approach they use and be aware of the challenges involved in their use, as well as the opportunities they bring to the classroom. Among these approaches is Project Based Learning (PBL).

Recognizing what is involved in implementing PBL within English language teaching is of utmost importance, as it leads us to understand what teachers can gain from the experience and what they are likely to face. According to Lam (2011), although many studies have covered the benefits and weaknesses of the application of PBL in English language teaching, Quinapallo and Baldeón (2024) mention that there is a lack of literature related to the functionality of Project Based Learning and real experiences within the Ecuadorian context. Therefore, this research intends to give teachers and future teachers a better understanding of the importance of having a solid knowledge of the challenges involved in using PBL and how future applicators of this

approach can enhance its use according to the needs of their students. In addition, it serves as a guide for other researchers and instructors working in the field of English language teaching, as it informs them of what is involved in the application of PBL in Ecuador.

As Lawrence and Butler (2010) establish, it is essential to be aware of teachers' different challenges and opportunities when teaching. Similarly, Sartika et al. (2022) state that this also occurs in teaching the English language when teachers have to be able to manage the approaches that are taken into account, such as in the case of Project-based learning. In addition, with this awareness of the different strengths and limitations that PBL implies, teachers can reflect on their teaching style and adapt and cope with them professionally and positively. In light of this, with this research, teachers can be more secure in using PBL because this approach enables teachers to constantly improve and guide the students to feel engaged with the PBL process. Likewise, this research is viable as the researchers can investigate this educational situation with people who have applied the PBL approach. Consequently, this research facilitates the acquisition of enough data to analyze the different experiences and viewpoints of teachers, which supports the fulfillment of the purpose of this study. The following research question and objectives were proposed in light of the situation mentioned above.

1.4 Research Question

What challenges and opportunities do teachers perceive when implementing project-based learning in Ecuadorian schools?

1.5 General Objective:

To identify teachers' perceptions of the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Ecuadorian schools.

1.6 Specific Objectives:

-To examine teachers' main challenges when planning and implementing project-based learning in an Ecuadorian classroom.

-To explore the opportunities associated with implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Ecuadorian schools, as perceived by teachers.

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2. Literature Review

2.1 Previous Research Studies

In this study, researchers examined previous national and international studies to compare the findings of research articles that investigated the challenges and opportunities in implementing project-based learning (PBL). These studies highlight the potential benefits of PBL, such as improved student engagement and learning outcomes, as well as practical difficulties, including the need for more training and resources. This analysis was instrumental in selecting the appropriate methodology for the study.

The first study conducted by Rodríguez and Sinche (2021) was a graduate thesis that examined how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers perceived the use of Project-Based Learning (PBL) to construct listening comprehension tasks. This qualitative descriptive case research study included five instructors from the Ecuadorian High School in Loja. Data collecting methods included interviews, planning reviews, and classroom observations. The findings revealed that teachers were enthusiastic about implementing PBL as a student-centered approach and understood the importance of listening comprehension in language acquisition. Nonetheless, judging listening abilities was the most challenging assignment for teachers.

This study provides important insights into overcoming the barriers to implementing project-based learning (PBL) in Ecuadorian schools. While teachers are eager to adopt PBL, significant challenges exist, notably in assessing listening skills and obtaining additional technical tools. This study reinforced the decision to use an exploratory descriptive qualitative

(EDQ) research method, as the challenges of the PBL approach are examined from the instructors' perspective. As a result, four English instructors who have used project-based learning in Ecuador's public and private schools were selected.

The following research study, conducted by Yang et al. (2021) conducted a supporting research study titled 'Exploring teachers' experiences with project-based learning,' which investigated how teachers learned to use project-based learning (PBL) and its impact on student motivation by using a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis. Sixteen teachers participated in this study, completing pre- and post-surveys. The findings demonstrated that teachers felt more competent in planning and implementing PBL after training. However, they also stated they need more supervision, planning time, and PBL implementation expertise. The report offered school help, practice opportunities, and teacher collaboration to address these concerns.

This research is directly relevant to the study because it focuses on teachers' experiences with PBL and reveals comparable challenges. While the training in Yang et al.'s study improved instructors' confidence, substantial problems such as a lack of supervision, planning time, and implementation expertise were faced. These findings highlight the necessity of organized assistance and ongoing professional growth, which are likely to be critical in the Ecuadorian setting. Understanding these issues allows the specific needs of teachers in Ecuadorian schools to be better addressed, improving the successful implementation of PBL.

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The third study by Haddad (2022) was a qualitative investigation into teachers' opinions of PBL, including problems, benefits, training, and support for school administration. The study interviewed twelve public school instructors in Texas, United States. The findings indicate that some teachers find PBL difficult since it involves a significant amount of planning time and becomes more complicated when they require assistance from the administration. All participants mentioned that additional practical training is needed to help teachers feel more confident and empowered in the classroom. Despite the hurdles, all the teachers interviewed agreed that PBL offers more advantages than disadvantages and is a practical teaching approach for today's learners.

Haddad's research indicates the need for these difficulties to be managed and for teachers to be supported in implementing project-based learning. Furthermore, this approach aims to improve students' learning experiences and better prepare them for the needs of this changing world. The decision to use a qualitative method and interviews to gather detailed and context-specific information from Ecuadorian teachers is justified by the study, thereby enhancing understanding of the local education system. The importance of organized support and ongoing professional development is also emphasized for the successful implementation of project-based learning in Ecuadorian classrooms.

The fourth research was a bachelor's thesis by Figueroa and Vera (2023). This research examined project-based learning as a potential technique for increasing speaking abilities among Santa Elena ninth-graders. Also, they applied a phenomenological investigation, gathering

information via interviews and focus groups. The project-based learning strategy motivated pupils to improve their speaking abilities and academic performance. However, the researchers recommended that teachers use digital technologies to create a more dynamic classroom and remember that the student is the center of the class, with the teacher serving as a guide.

This study's analysis contributes to our understanding of the dual impact of PBL on student learning outcomes and the practical issues that teachers confront. It emphasizes the importance of targeted professional development and resource allocation to help instructors effectively implement PBL. Furthermore, data were collected through interviews, prompting researchers to consider conducting semi-structured interviews to extensively study the experiences and attitudes of English teachers in Ecuador regarding adopting PBL.

The last study was conducted by Jara et al. (2023) and focused on analyzing compliance with the high school graduation requirements before and after implementing the Project Based Learning (PBL) method and gathering feedback from students and teachers at the Educational Unit of the Millennium Manuel J. Calle of the city of Cuenca. The research involved 92 students from the 2nd year of the Unified General Baccalaureate (BGU) and utilized quantitative and qualitative methods. The study aimed to strengthen the profile of Ecuadorian high school graduates by promoting direct interaction, coexistence, and leadership skills among high school adolescents through the Emoj-Innova proposal. The findings indicated that implementing the proposal led to an increased positive evaluation of the student's training by the individuals involved.

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The study provides information about PBL's accomplishments and potential areas for development. Furthermore, it provides a valuable case study for identifying frequent obstacles and effective responses. This is consistent with the objectives of this thesis, which are to determine teachers' perspectives on the challenges and opportunities connected with adopting Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Ecuadorian schools.

Considering the above, it is of paramount importance to mention that there is a lack of literature review on PBL, which highlights the need for more research in this field. While each study provides valuable insights into the obstacles and opportunities of implementing project-based learning (PBL), there is a need for a more in-depth investigation of the Ecuadorian setting through the eyes of English teachers in both public and private schools. This gap is connected with this current research investigating the obstacles and opportunities of PBL in Ecuadorian schools.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Constructivism Theory in Language Learning

According to Jumaat et al. (2017), "Project-Based Learning (PBL) is built on constructivist educational theories emphasizing active and experiential learning" (p.2). Constructivism, developed by Jean Piaget, posits that students construct their understanding through personal experiences (Tsulaia, 2023). This theory is further elaborated by Vygotsky, who distinguishes between cognitive constructivism, focusing on mental processes, and social

constructivism, which highlights the role of social interactions and environmental influences in learning (Mitry, 2021).

In proposing PBL as an approach to English language teaching, teacher researchers must base the process on a learning theory to implement it effectively. Szabó and Csépes (2022) in their study titled 'Constructivism in Language Pedagogy,' mention that the constructivist perspective is evident in the innovation of language pedagogy, shifting the emphasis from the dominant role of the teacher to that of the learner. This study teaches us that constructivist teaching theory can adapt to the modern era's ever-changing teaching and learning practices.

Likewise, Ghosheh et al. (2021) and Mangesa et al. (2023) argue that PBL outperforms traditional learning approaches. This effectiveness stems from PBL's emphasis on fostering students' creativity and active engagement. Moreover, PBL improves students' cognitive skills as a constructivist approach, especially by promoting high-quality activity and creativity. It also encourages individual differentiation, increases student engagement and motivation, and supports collaborative learning. Furthermore, PBL enables teachers to assist with goal clarity, facilitation, and guidance.

After evaluating many viewpoints, researchers believe constructivism provides a sound theoretical foundation for language learning. It focuses on learning knowledge through personal experiences, cognitive processes, and social interactions. Project-Based Learning (PBL) is naturally constructivist and reinforces these ideas by encouraging creativity, critical thinking, and student cooperation.

2.2.2 Teaching English in Ecuador

Teaching English in Ecuador is an important step towards a better future since it opens the doors to job opportunities, cultural exchange, and socioeconomic development. That is why, in 1950, Ecuador embarked on an important initiative by introducing English language teaching (Cevallos et al., 2023). Subsequently, Ecuador has continued to implement some educational policies that are expected to improve the quality of teaching (Barre & Villafuerte, 2021). Therefore, it is essential to continue evaluating and adjusting these policies to ensure that English teaching in Ecuador remains relevant and practical in today's educational scene.

Nonetheless, educators in Ecuador play a critical role in helping students to acquire English language competency. In addition, they are responsible for constructing dynamic and engaging learning environments that accommodate a variety of learning styles and requirements through the integration of creative teaching approaches like project-based learning. Hence, they support students develop the skills they need to succeed in an increasingly international society.

According to some researchers such as Jaramillo (2019) and Urgilez (2022), project-based learning has been proven effective in improving oral skills, which are often underdeveloped in English proficiency in Ecuador. They both prepared lesson plans that covered various topics, and at the end of each class, the students had to make a presentation using the vocabulary and grammar taught by the teacher. They also recommended that increasing the time of exposure to the language through these activities can improve oral skills and communication.

Imbaquingo and Cárdenas (2023) applied PBL to improve reading and comprehension, and they found that the most important thing is to base it on the students' interests. They used short pieces, stories, and legends from their area as instructive, narrative, and informational texts to increase motivation for reading and learning English. Finally, the study found that introducing PBL improved students' English reading skills. They suggested using PBL in English language learning environments to assist students in improving their reading competence.

For researchers, including research-supported approaches such as PBL provides a link to increased linguistic and cultural competence among their students. Additionally, as previously said, the ability to communicate in English is viewed as a competitive advantage abroad. For that reason, PBL is an approach that allows students to tackle real-world problems, fostering critical thinking and open-mindedness.

2.2.3 Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning (PBL) can be traced back to 1897 in a work called My Pedagogical Creed by John Dewey, in which he emphasizes the significance of "learning by doing" (Du & Han, 2016). This author emphasizes that learning is practical, where the learner is the center, which is focused on solving real-world problems. According to Baysura et al. (2016), "PBL is a learning and teaching approach through which students gain new knowledge and skills while researching complex and realistic problems, designing and planning their studies and performances, and producing authentic products" (p.17). Therefore, by using this approach, learners can master essential 21st-century skills such as collaboration work and problem-solving

and; at the same time, an increase in their motivation during the PBL process. Following the Buck Institute for Education (2019), PBL emphasizes a comprehensive and in-depth research procedure, culminating in an outcome or presentation. This implies that students have to plan what they must do to solve the real-world problem or issue and show it in a final product, which leads them to be involved in the whole process of executing the project.

According to Cintang et al. (2017), the PBL project should prioritize providing students with hands-on experiences for remarkable knowledge and skill development. That is, it has to be leveraged as a dynamic environment providing students with hands-on and experiential learning opportunities directly linked to real-world applications. As per Brundiers and Wiek (2013), in agreement with Krajcik and Shin (2014), PBL is characterized by the realization of meaningful projects and the creation of tangible real-world products, which are achieved through active participation and inquiry on the part of students.

Given that, Project-based learning can be defined as a pedagogical approach that makes learners the center of their learning process. This approach leads the students to perform a research task based on an autonomous question that culminates in the creation of an authentic project as an outcome, which allows them to address real-world challenges, exercise critical decision-making skills, and, most importantly, enhance communication and interaction in an innovative and meaningful way. For this reason, PBL is seen as an approach that enables active knowledge development and fosters essential skills that lead to effective performance in complex real-world scenarios.

2.2.4 Characteristics of Project-based Learning

During the implementation of Project-Based Learning, it is essential to have a careful and structured organization, including continuous monitoring of learners' progress (Smith, 2016, as cited in Felipe et al., 2016). Thus, this approach must meet specific characteristics to be deemed suitable for educational contexts. Within project-based learning, fundamental characteristics, also referred to as "design principles" by Condliffe (2017), play a crucial role in guiding successful learning experiences and facilitating the learning process for learners. According to Thomas (2000), the characteristics or design principles can be divided into five: (1) centrality, (2) driving question, (3) constructive investigations, (4) autonomy, and (5) realism.

Centrality: Thomas (2000) states that PBL projects are the main focus of the curriculum rather than being secondary or optional. The projects are at the center of teaching and the pivot around which learning activities revolve. According to Tierney et al. (2022), "The projects are integral to learning by framing the entire process of and purpose for learning" (p.12). Thus, the project is the driving force for student engagement, inquiry, and exploration of content and skills, which emphasizes that projects in PBL are authentic, real-world tasks that challenge students to investigate complex problems, think critically, collaborate with peers, and communicate their findings and solutions meaningfully.

Driving Question: Thomas (2000) and Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) affirm that PBL projects are designed around a question or a problem that prompts students to engage with a discipline's fundamental concepts and principles. In other words, it is an open-ended question

that captures the central challenge or problem students will investigate, analyze, and address through their project work. As Hasni et al. (2016) state, this question is genuinely connected to students' real-world experiences, considering their interests and relevance, where it leads students to engage in intellectually stimulating tasks appropriate for their age and ability level. In addition, it inspires students to explore and understand the fundamental concepts associated with the subject studied. Hence, it lays the foundation for students to embark on their project journey, guiding their inquiry, collaboration, and problem-solving efforts as they create meaningful solutions or products.

Constructive investigations: Vasiliene et al. (2020) affirm that projects engage students in investigation. It means the process through which students actively explore, inquire, and investigate a topic or problem as part of their project work. It is affirmed by Bereiter and Scardamalia (2000), who state that within PBL projects, "learners have to exploit the potentialities of new knowledge revising one's beliefs and practices in light of it, building more powerful conceptual frameworks, and coming up with new ideas" (pp.185-195). This indicates that this type of investigation should involve learners' hands-on, experiential learning activities that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and inquiry skills. Rather than passively receiving information, students actively engage with the content, collaborate with peers, conduct research, gather data, and analyze findings to construct new knowledge and understanding (Handrianto & Rahman, 2019).

Autonomy: Students play a significant role in driving the projects. Within PBL, as stated by Sukerti and Yuliantini (2018), autonomy has a crucial role in allowing students to take ownership of their learning, make decisions, set goals, and manage their project work independently. By promoting autonomy in PBL, teachers aim to foster students' self-efficacy, motivation, and authority in their learning process. Similarly, autonomy enables students to develop essential skills such as self-regulation, initiative, and responsibility, which allows them to succeed academically and professionally. It is correlated to Green and Plessis (2023); in PBL, students take charge of their learning and decide what to do in their projects. This helps them become more independent and learn how to direct themselves.

Realism: Grant (2011) mentions that projects are authentic, unlike regular school work**.** The applied projects must be genuine, focusing on real-life scenarios. As Marnewick (2023) states, students are guided to build their understanding of the key concepts in a subject area. Realistic projects connect students to the world beyond the classroom, fostering connections with professionals, experts, and community members. They provide opportunities for students to apply their learning in authentic settings and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

Considering the points mentioned above, it is crucial to underline that the characteristics outlined above serve as an essential basis for understanding the various challenges involved in employing project-based learning. These characteristics guide researchers toward a

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comprehensive understanding of the approach and clarify the goals to be achieved and the implications of using this approach in learning a foreign language in public education.

2.2.5 Benefits and Challenges of Project-based Learning

Given the complexity of using this approach, it is essential to point out its main benefits and challenges in an educational context.

Principal Benefits

1.- Enhanced Engagement: "PBL fosters a sense of responsibility and autonomy, motivating the learners to become active participants in their educational journey" (Evenddy et al., 2023, p. 460). Thus, Project-Based Learning boosts student engagement by empowering them to take full ownership of their learning process, thereby assuming complete responsibility for the outcomes of their efforts. In addition, Shin (2018) mentions that this approach allows students to be more interested and enthusiastic, increasing their motivation.

2.- Deeper understanding: Amin and Shahnaz (2023) believe that students find understanding course material easier when participating in project-based learning. Thus, this approach's key features automatically benefit students, as it emphasizes interdisciplinary connections, forcing students to draw on knowledge from diverse fields to carry out their projects. As a result, students inevitably broaden their understanding and perception of different disciplines.

3.- Critical thinking and problem solving: As Ertmer and Simons (2005) state, PBL cultivates students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. To do this, students analyze information, make decisions, and develop solutions during the project. This means that students learn to approach problems systematically, break them down into manageable components, and identify effective solutions.

4.- Teamwork and collaboration: According to the Buck Institute for Education (2019), PBL fosters teamwork and cooperation, essential skills to develop in the 21st century. As a result, students learn to work effectively in groups, share ideas, and solve problems collectively, making interaction a fundamental requirement for developing their learning.

5.- Building creativity: Yu (2024) argues that PBL promotes learners' creativity by combining their knowledge and skills to develop unique and original ideas. This is due to the fact that this approach entails students offering different insights and thoughts to develop a project where they can manipulate the content according to their way of thinking, interests, and abilities.

Main challenges

On the other hand, even though it is essential to recognize the type of assets that PBL provides, it is also important to consider the different challenges that can emerge in implementing this approach. Regarding Sumarni (2015), the following are presented as some of the main weaknesses of this project-based learning:

1.   **Time management:** According to Cintang et al. (2018) and Tain et al. (2023), educators and students who implement PBL should be able to manage time correctly so that every aspect of the project can be completed properly. This is because the whole process of inquiry and learning requires a lot of time to solve the problem or question.

2.   **Traditional classroom:** It involves the teacher as the central role of the classroom. It is sustained by Hu (2024), who states that the transitions involved in the teacher now being a participant in student learning makes it difficult for teachers to cope with such a total change from being a total implementer of teaching plans to just a quick evaluator and manager. Given that, it becomes difficult to take the whole control of the students' behavior when employing this approach, so teachers prefer to have complete control and avoid these types of situations.

3.   **Lack of teachers' experience:** In Aldabbus's (2018) research, participants lacked confidence in applying PBL. According to the researcher, this could be due to a lack of experience. For clarification, without prior knowledge, teachers may have difficulty creating and facilitating meaningful projects that align with learning objectives and engage students effectively.

4.   **Learners' lack of interest:** Sadat and Maghsoudi (2022) state that "Some students may lack enough interest in their project topic, and this can distract their attention from the project" (p.100). Thus, lack of interest on the part of students may hinder their motivation, participation, and overall learning outcomes. According to Trivedi and Mohanty (2019), lower

engagement, unwillingness to take responsibility for learning, poor behavior, and pessimism become obstacles to the development of PBL. Without genuine interest in the project, students may have difficulty seeing the relevance or value of the learning experience, leading to decreased effort and investment in the project.

5.   **Group work:** "Collaborative work necessitates the active use of communication, organization, and negotiation skills, which all learners may not favor" (Moussaoui & Erguig, 2024, p. 12). As those authors stated, not all students prefer to work collaboratively and are willing to open themselves to interact with their classmates, which leads to unsuitable development in their projects. It is highlighted by Turcotte et al. (2022), who state that learning extended beyond mere content; it was intricately linked to the community.

2.2.6 The Use of Project-Based Learning in EFL Classroom

Project-Based Learning (PBL), an offshoot of inquiry-based learning, places students in the driver's seat of their learning by providing real-world settings. According to Yustinus (2016), "PBL offers many opportunities to promote language use and acquisition in real-life contexts" (p. 115). Therefore, this approach plays a key role in language teaching and learning in a classroom. In this instance, in the context of the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom, the "project" was introduced by Fried-Booth (1986), as cited in Thuan (2018), who suggested that language activities emerge naturally from the project, progressing intensively in response to the objective, which is the project itself.

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From this point, the PBL encourages the development of English skills and the use of it authentically, where their learning progresses while doing the project. It is supported by Latifaj (2022), who states that PBL is a practical approach that expands students' general knowledge in English language learning. Thus, this approach provides student-centered learning that resonates with the fundamentals of English language teaching by prioritizing active participation and genuine language application. It implies that PBL fosters active learning, where students collaborate, research, and solve problems while using English. According to Dharmayanti and Joni (2022), those students' interactions happen when they work together in groups to examine, design and create the project.

Furthermore, PBL can be utilized for different purposes within an EFL classroom, such as working on student collaboration development, research-based tasks, and problem-solving. For instance, Siminto et al. (2024) research asserts the use of PBL for developing English skills, emphasizing collaboration work and critical thinking as the prime purpose of the study. Therefore, by highlighting the authentic integration of English language tasks within PBL projects, this approach fosters a more immersive learning experience.

Finally, project-based learning makes the students' learning process successful and meaningful, making the students not passive listeners but relatively active within EFL classrooms. Thus, this framework of insights shapes the use of PBL in an English as a Foreign Language classroom. Besides, it can contribute significantly to the understanding of introducing new approaches to language learning and teaching, such as the PBL approach.

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3. Methodology

This section presents the study's methodology. It includes the type of research, the research design, techniques and instruments used for data collection, participants in the investigation, and research procedures. These elements are critical in guiding the study to achieve its objective: to explore the challenges and opportunities of implementing Project-Based Learning in Ecuadorian schools.

3.1 Type of Research

To start, a qualitative approach has been chosen based on the nature of the problem to guide the research. As stated by Creswell and Creswell (2017), "qualitative research seeks to apprehend the meanings individuals or groups attribute to social or human cases" (p.43). As a result, this technique is considered beneficial to this study since it aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how PBL might be effectively integrated into the Ecuadorian education system, focusing on teachers' experiences and perceptions. Consequently, the challenges English teachers face, and the potential rewards that can be reaped are emphasized, providing an exhaustive overview of the realities of implementing PBL in educational contexts.

3.2 Research Design

Due to the nature of this research, an Exploratory Descriptive Qualitative (EDQ) research design was used to provide a more in-depth knowledge of the problems and opportunities associated with adopting the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach in Ecuadorian schools. Furthermore, this strategy is suitable for researching issues with little prior research attention,

such as the one in this study. It provides flexibility and depth in exploring phenomena from the participants' perspectives (Hunter et al., 2019). That is, the researchers are led to investigate the personal insights and experiences of the chosen sample in an enriching and meaningful way.

As a result, this research design aims to gain valuable insights into how teachers perceive PBL. The research focuses on the integration of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Ecuadorian schools, primarily English classes. It also anticipates discovering and characterization of the habits and characteristics that influence the use of PBL in teaching English as a foreign language.

3.3 Techniques and Instruments for Data Collection

To collect data for this study, the researchers conducted a semi-structured interview. Naz et al. (2022) define semi-structured interviews as "in-depth questioning in which participants respond to open-ended questions" (p. 45). In other words, interviews enable dynamic and engaging interactions that lead to a better knowledge of the nuances of a topic, such as Project-Based Learning. As a result, this technique directs the researchers in this study to gather various perspectives and experiences directly, examining unexpected themes or discoveries as they develop during the encounter. Therefore, a guide was designed to conduct the interview in both English and Spanish, taking into account the preferences of the participants. The participants decided to conduct the interview in Spanish due to their comfort and ease of speaking, which allowed us to obtain more detailed and meaningful data from them. Similarly, participants were

given the opportunity to choose the modality of the meetings, either virtual or face-to-face, due to their availability and willingness for a good development of each interview.

3.4 Sampling

Purposive sampling was chosen, a non-random technique in which individuals with certain characteristics or knowledge were sought according to the purpose of the study. Those who were able and willing to provide information based on their knowledge or experience were selected (Etikan et al., 2016)

Our participants were chosen based on our prior experience and under the supervision of a teacher who has worked in a private school. Furthermore, our participants have expertise in incorporating project-based learning into their classrooms. As a result, we are convinced that our participants understand project-based learning, including its obstacles and opportunities.

3.5 Participants

For this study, the participants were carefully chosen, taking into account the nature of the research and the objectives. Through the consent document previously submitted, four English teachers working in different settings were selected, two teachers from the public sector and two from the private sector in Cuenca and Azogues. In addition, all participants are non-English native speakers, and have been working in the subject of English for a long period of time, as well as implementing PBL in their classes.

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3.6 Research Stages

Exploratory-descriptive qualitative research followed structured steps to capture the detailed aspects of the studied phenomenon. This research typically involves Preparation, data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Rendle et al., 2019).

In order to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon, the researchers followed these steps and presented comprehensive and accessible findings. The study focused on the challenges and potential of implementing project-based learning (PBL) in Ecuadorian schools and began by contacting four Ecuadorian teachers from public and private schools to invite them to participate in the research project. After receiving a positive response, each participant received an informed consent letter summarizing the study's objectives, protocols, and expected outcomes. This ensured that the participants understood the purpose of the research and their role in it. Subsequently, they were asked to sign a consent form to confirm their participation.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with teachers in Spanish. Drew (2014) noted, "interviewing participants in their native language can create a more conducive environment for expression and bonding" (pp. 79-80). For this reason, the researchers conducted the interviews in Spanish, obtaining more accurate data.

In addition, Jamshed (2014) states that semi-structured interviews last between 30 minutes and more than an hour, but it is preferable not to tire the interviewee. Thus, eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with four English teachers who have implemented project-

based learning. Each interview lasted 30 minutes, and each participant was interviewed twice because the first section consisted of demographic information, challenges of implementing project-based learning, and opportunities for project-based learning in EFL classrooms, while the second section was support and resources from parents and institutions and reflections and recommendations. The interviews were designed to address the research questions systematically and were structured into the following sections:

1.   **Demographic information:** This section collected general information about the participants, including their age, English proficiency level, class size, teaching experience, and the type of school they worked at. It also explored their prior familiarity and experience with project-based learning in their classrooms. As Lopez and Whitehead (2013) suggested, starting the interview with personal questions, such as demographics, helped create a comfortable environment for both the interviewer and the interviewees.

2.   **Challenges in project-based learning:** In this section, we analyzed the challenges faced by teachers from private and public schools to respond to the objectives of this study.

3.   **Perceived opportunities of project-based learning:** Researchers examined the benefits and opportunities of project-based learning and responded to this study's objectives.

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4. **Support and resources by parents and institutions:** This section was important in understanding the support and resources available to implement project-based learning based on teachers' opinions.

5. **Reflect and recommendations:** In this last section, it was essential to listen to the recommendations and reflections of the teachers who implement PBL in their English classes.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

After each interview, the sessions were transcribed word-for-word to ensure the accuracy of capturing participants' responses. According to Bihu (2024), deductive coding involves applying a pre-established set of categories to qualitative data. These codes, derived from previous research or specific objectives, guide the analysis and are called concept-based coding. In this case, deductive coding was used to categorize the sections as the challenges of implementing PBL in EFL classrooms, opportunities for project-based learning in English classes, and reflections and recommendations on PBL for EFL classrooms. The transcripts were then rigorously coded using MAXQDA software version 24 to identify recurring themes and patterns.

In the final stage, the data were interpreted to create a detailed story about the challenges and opportunities of introducing project-based learning in Ecuadorian schools. This involved combining the coded data to identify common themes and different perspectives in participants'

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responses. The findings were then placed into the existing literature and theoretical framework on project-based learning and educational practices to understand better how teachers viewed and experienced project-based learning in this academic setting.

4. Findings and Results

This section presents the results and discussion of the study, which aimed to answer the research question: "What challenges and opportunities do teachers perceive when implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Ecuadorian schools?". The gathered data addresses this question by exploring the study's specific objectives. The discussion integrates these findings with existing literature, providing insights into educators' practical experiences and viewpoints while highlighting the obstacles and potential benefits of PBL.

4.1 Challenges of PBL in EFL Classroom

As represented in Figure 1 below, teachers expressed various perspectives on the challenges of implementing project-based learning (PBL) in different educational settings, namely public and private schools. The findings revealed that key challenges included lack of cooperation, first language skills, diverse applications of project-based learning, lack of resources, age of students, and English hours. These factors collectively emphasize the complexities educators face when integrating PBL into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.

As the collected data revealed that one of the challenges in implementing PBL relates to involving parents in the process of implementing the project. As commented by TJ:

One of the challenges I would highlight is the lack of collaboration from some parents. For example, some students did not like working in the garden because they sometimes did not like the countryside. Sometimes, everyone has no affinity or preference for plants, the countryside, or gardens, so it was a little complicated to involve all the parents and all the students.

Another teacher mentioned more support from parents in implementing PBL linked to the school garden. In private schools, participant TP mentioned,

The problem is that there are many overprotective parents, so they don't allow us and often question the situations that we do without really considering the idea of the end, whether we have to handle a student in a certain way. So, they are too overprotective and don't let us do certain activities or things with the children.

In contrast, participant TD, a teacher from another private school, commented,

Another challenge is the collaboration of parents. On many occasions, I believe that a parent is a decisive point in children's education, so when there is no necessary support from home, yes, it affects the children, whether it is completing tasks, bringing activities, or bringing materials.

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The second challenge of implementing PBL is students' language skills, as most students tend to make linguistic mistakes in their native language, which is Spanish. This is noticeable in both public and private schools. As mentioned by the participant TA,

The first language, Spanish, is still reinforced, and they are learning it well. Like any third--, fourth--, or fifth-grade child, they still have many spelling mistakes. So we will not expect them to write entire stories in English. Yes, Spanish is still tricky for them, although writing has been reinforced.

Thus, it is reported that it is difficult for children to learn a second language, in this case, English, when they are young. Likewise, participant TD expressed,

I think the most challenging part is writing. That's why they have a hard time with the order of the words, the structure, and the punctuation; they get perplexed because the punctuation they use in Spanish differs from the one they use in English. So, specifically for me, the seventh-grade students have a lot of difficulty with question marks, and they put them on both sides. I told them: no, kids, it's on one side, and of course, we fight; I mean, for them, it's like a fight since a teacher who teaches Spanish tells them it's on both sides, and I said it's only on one side. So yes, it's a more difficult situation for them.

The third challenge is the diverse application forms of project-based learning in public and private schools. As participant TD mentioned,

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Well, I try to implement projects at the end of the unit. For example, we work with Cambridge books and Super Minds, so in the seventh grade, they have time travelers. Each unit is about a historical milestone, so I try to link it to the unit's theme, such as ancient Egypt.

In this case, the private school English teacher applies PBL based on the Cambridge book Super Minds, which is used at the end of each unit. In the same line, participant TP mentioned:

Since they are quarterly this year, one has been done each quarter. For example, once we made a newspaper, which we linked to Language and Literature, the kids learned the structure of the newspaper, how it should be, how to use the computer, columns, images, everything. So, with this, they made everything look like a newspaper page. That is a project. Another project was fossils, where the kids had to learn about paleontology, fossils, and all these types of material. Ultimately, they had to talk about bones and a dinosaur they supposedly found.

On the other hand, in public schools, PBL has been implemented using different resources, as noted by TJ:

In the 2022-2023 school year, we worked on Project Base Learning with the sixth grade thanks to UNAE, which gave me the opportunity to enroll in this PBL course. It was really very productive. The students worked on making a school garden. They learned a lot, and they enjoyed working outside the classroom.

In the public-school sector, PBL has been implemented through the garden, where students learn about plants and their care. Likewise, participant TA said:

It is already a school project managed only by Kichwa. After the teaching technicians' training on project-based learning and the school garden, which was in agreement with UNAE and the United States Embassy, it was decided to also implement the school garden farm project, both for Kichwa and for English, to complement the teaching of these languages through experimental activities in the school garden. So, the name is Chakra, the school garden of project-based learning.

The fourth challenge teachers in public schools face are the students' age when implementing PBL. According to the TA,

Yes, we have seen that it works better with older children, especially those who already know how to learn to read and write well in Spanish. So, starting in third, fourth, and fifth grade, we implement the project since project-based learning already requires a certain level of cognition and reflection. Remember that they have to learn to follow instructions, and they must know how to write. They have to understand how to investigate, so these are delicate subjects that would be difficult to understand with children in kindergarten.

In this case, the teacher works with kindergarten children, which makes it very difficult to implement PBL since they have yet to develop cognitive skills. TJ also commented: *"Elementary*

and middle school students, for example, are slightly more inclined to garden, while young

people do not like it. In addition, young people have other tendencies or preferences."

In public schools, it is preferable to know the ages of the students before implementing PBL since it is difficult to find a project for young children and adolescents that suits their preferences. On the other hand, in private schools, they work with children in sixth and seventh grade; for that reason, TP said:

One of the problems when practicing this method is discipline. When students are

working alone in groups, first of all, it has to be quite individual. Since they are children,

sometimes it is complicated. There are fights and arguments, and we cannot put them only

among groups of friends. Because some friends will not work well, other friends are children

who will be left alone. It is better to work with a homogeneous group.

The fifth challenge is the lack of resources for implementing PBL in public schools; as Participant TJ said,

No, we don't have internet access for educational institutions and students. Inside the

institution are two projectors; only one works, and the other does not. There are no projectors in

the classrooms, nor do we have computers. However, as an English area, at the beginning of this

new school year, we implemented the purchase of our own with self-management. We are three

teachers in the English area in this educational institution, and we acquired a projector. We also

installed the internet service, and we also had a printer. However, by order of the authorities, it

has been requested that the internet be canceled, that the projector and the printer be no longer used, and also the classroom that we had designated to store the teaching materials, and these technological implements have been denied to us. So, unfortunately, now we can no longer use these resources.

The sixth challenge is the hours of English that affect the implementation of PBL in public schools; as the TA mentioned,

Yes, although PBL is structured at the beginning of the year and has a planned schedule, the activities are not always 100% completed. Since the school has a link with the University, research and linkage projects are constantly being implemented, which sometimes means that English or Kichwa classes are missed, and these planned projects or activities do not occur.

The last challenge for teachers is when working with PBL and students with specific learning differences. According to the TA,

Too many students have special educational needs; however, the Ministry prevents us from having a shadow teacher. For example, in cases of autism, it gets out of hand because they are children who need special care and attention, and a single teacher cannot deal with these cases, especially if there are more than two cases per classroom, so that is a rather big challenge and in terms of teaching English.

The public school teacher mentioned that working with students with different learning styles is challenging, especially with 30-35 students per class. In contrast, private schools have 25-27 students per class. Additionally, the teacher TD said, *"...Sometimes, having many children to adapt to can delay the progress we expect; for example, according to the planning, I think that is a challenge."*

Figure 1

Challenges of PBL in EFL classroom

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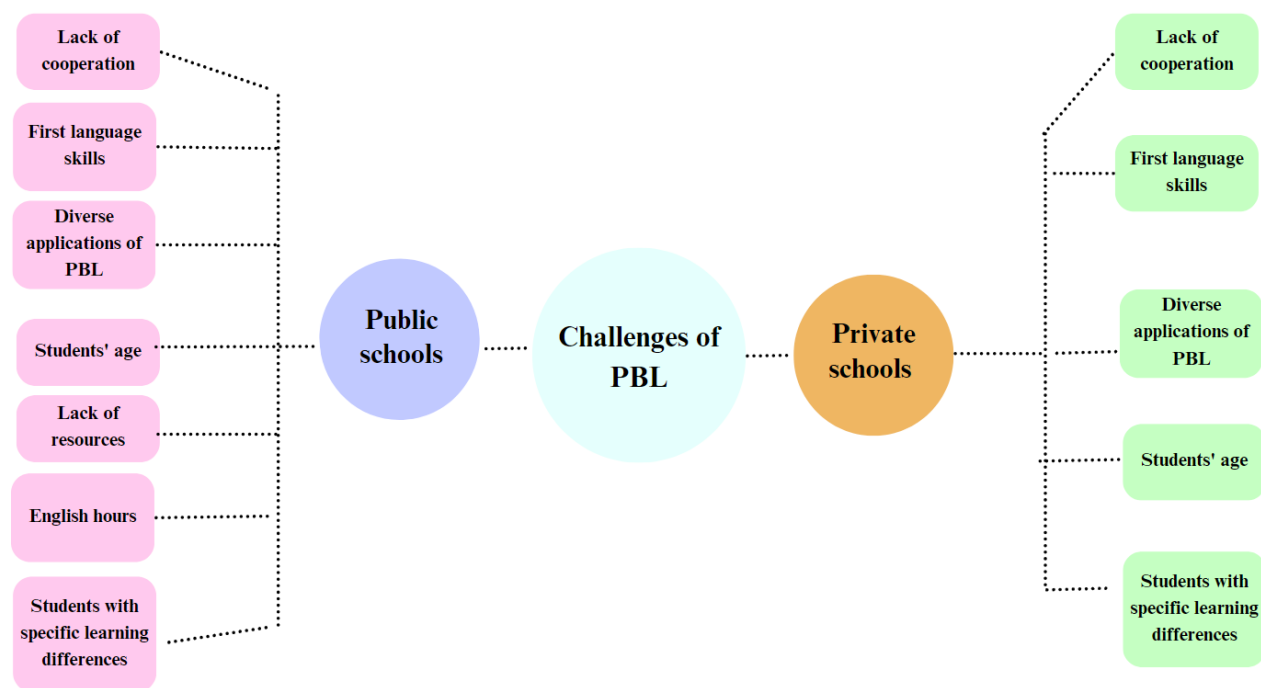
4.2 Opportunities for Project-based Learning in English Classes

As illustrated below in Figure 2, teachers offered different views on opportunities to apply Project-based learning according to their educational settings, which are public and private schools. The results showed that collaborative work development, deeper student understanding, increased motivation, English skills development, efficiency over traditional methods, involvement of Ecuadorian culture, creativity development, fostering the practice of English, and lifelong learning were among the specific opportunities within the application of PBL in English classes.

Firstly, taking into account the public school teachers, one of the potential benefits of PBL is that it positively impacts the development of students' teamwork and their collaborative dynamics to develop a solid project. As the participant TJ detailed about her experience:

The students worked collaboratively most of the time, because when they had, for example, to make the exhibitions before the Fair, they worked here in the preparation of their exhibitions, then they had someone to work, for example, information, someone already helped to make the poster and they went and they were already assigned to work who was going to each topic so here the students work collaboratively, very well, they have nice interpersonal relationships.

It is evident that by working collaboratively, students support each other to achieve a common goal, in this case, the success of the project and the exposure of their final project, as explained by participant TJ.

Another opportunity that the English teachers found during the implementation of PBL is that it fosters a deeper understanding of the content being taught to students, leading them to learn more about what the project itself entails. This is stated by the participants, which participant TJ explains:

The benefit, well, the benefits actually there would be many to describe. However, I could highlight that the students developed the knowledge of how to preserve nature, how to preserve life, to value nature, to value the knowledge of how to make a vegetable garden, how to prepare a vegetable garden.

To be more specific, this participant emphasizes that her students obtained a broadened understanding of the project. Owing to the nature of her project, which was to develop a school garden, the students gained valuable knowledge and comprehension of what implied the content of the project. Likewise, the participant TA expressed a similar thought to participant TJ stating that:

They say that, for example, not all insects are bad, there are some, such as bees that protect and take care of and help pollinate. So, little by little, they are realizing in the project

many, many, many real things that will help them in the future, which is the most important

thing.

This consistency between the two participants indicates that they see PBL as the path for students to significantly expand their understanding of significant topics for everyday and future life.

In addition, participants state that PBL motivates both students and teachers during the project's development, thereby highlighting the increased motivation as an essential opportunity. From the participants' experience, they mention that implementing PBL motivates them to continue developing the project. Participant TJ expressed the following:

As a teacher I felt very proud to have worked on this course and to have been part of this University project because it gave me an opportunity to see other ways to teach, other ways to involve students, to learn English.

This teacher points out that PBL allows her to address their English classes in innovative ways, where there is a true involvement on the students, entailing her to be delighted. Similarly, participant TJ also explained his reasons for his motivation when using PBL:

As a teacher, entering the classroom and seeing the children, expectant of what we are going to give to the class. That is, it has been gratifying, it has been motivating for me, because we always had a goal for the class, so as soon as I entered, the students would ask me, teacher,

what are we going to do? What's next in the project? So that motivation in them also gave me back that desire to give them classes and to continue developing the project. So it has been very gratifying to also receive from the children... expectant and motivated for the new classes.

In the case of this participant, he highlights that the expectations and motivation of the students to carry out the project positively impact his motivation to continue developing the project. Furthermore, as participant TA mentioned, PBL motivates students as well. He states the following:

Yes, there is a collaboration, a motivation of the students. As I mentioned, they are always waiting to see what the next step of the project is. The next goal, even as they already have their own schedule. They already know what some of them do, and they already know what has to be done, so there has always been that motivation from them.

The participant emphasized that the students eagerly waited for every aspect of the project, which stimulated them to pay attention to its development process. This anticipation and enthusiasm for the project on the part of the students was also mentioned by participant TJ, who expressed the following:

So, seeing this progress, the results of the students, and the expectations they had were changing, so they were very restless every time they had to go out to the garden, "Teacher, are we going to the garden, when are we going to the garden? We are going to the garden, we don't want to work on this, for example, we are going to the garden, we are going to take care of the

plants, we are going to, and look you have to apply this insecticide, they already knew, mommy,

look, look, look, you know what my mommy said, she already prepared this insecticide that the

agronomist had taught her". So, the results were really students, they are, they were motivated

students, the students really expected, they expected this class with a lot of joy.

It is noticeable that the students have an affinity for working on the project, in this

context, in a school garden. The students are fascinated and attracted by how the whole project

unfolds, wanting to be more involved and, inevitably, more active in their learning. Moreover, it

is evident that the students intentionally try to contribute to the project and even encourage their

parents to be attentive to what they must do to carry it out. Furthermore, an insight that this

participant TJ shares is that there was a positive attitude on the part of the students with specific

learning differences, who showed excitement about doing the project. The participant TJ

expressed the following:

When I worked on this project with sixth grade there were two students with specific

learning differences. In fact, they were one of the students who had a strong preference and

affinity for working on this project. They loved it very much because they love to touch and feel,

that is, they learn more with their senses, with their motor skills. So they felt very involved from

the beginning, I had no problems with them because they loved it.

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Hence, considering the teachers' experiences in applying PBL in their English classes, this pedagogical approach fosters the motivation of both educators and students, who are enthusiastic and joyful about continuing to work on their projects.

Another opportunity found by the teachers during the use of PBL in their classes was the development of the student's English language skills. It refers to the students' development regarding their English skills, specifically in speaking and writing. This is expressed by participant TA, who mentions the following:

I have tried to include all these skills in the project but the most evident one, obviously, is the oral skill, or the written skill for the readings. Of course, it is up to the teacher to contextualize this learning. For example, small stories have been created for them, super basic, so that they can reflect and develop this skill, but it depends on the teacher as such, on how he/she directs the learning.

It is noteworthy to mention that this participant highlights the intention to incorporate all the English skills, but it was evident that productive skills were developed significantly, which is still valuable for learning the English language. Similarly, participant TJ's insights underline that vocabulary was the most developed aspect of English. As shared by this participant: *"One of the biggest benefits was that the students learned a lot of vocabulary about what the garden is about, and the benefits of eating healthy."*

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As this participant states, she expresses the significant difference in the student's vocabulary learning, emphasizing vocabulary related to the project's topic, which addresses essential valuable content to the students. Considering both teachers' perspectives, it is manifest that PBL supports the growth of students learning English and enhancing their skills. According to these participants, PBL significantly reinforces speaking and writing and enriches students' vocabulary. By participating in the projects meaningfully in an English class, students have relevant changes in their learning of English as a foreign language.

On the other hand, the efficiency of PBL over traditional methods is introduced as another opportunity when applying this approach within English lessons. Participants from public schools mention the success of using PBL in teaching English compared to the conventional methodologies that tend to be used in their context. Participant TJ articulated her viewpoint by referring to the following:

PBL is a very beneficial method for students because it's not like giving, for example, an expository class and having the students just fill in the text, there is no meaningful learning. However, if the students go out to the garden as we had done, they go out to the garden, they learn the names of the plants. They, for example, made their own signs with the names of the vegetables and the plants that they planted, so while they were making their sign, they already knew the name of that vegetable and they already knew where that vegetable was and they could already describe, for example, the shape, they could even describe the color. It is a really good method, different, as I said, from an expository class.

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Her mention of the teaching and learning process is fundamental since it points out that traditional teaching methods must provide significant student learning. However, entailing the learners to be in the project and incorporating them allows students to learn by themselves, where they learn by doing. This is where learning becomes special and meaningful for the students. It is also argued by the participant TA, who stated the following:

Because obviously, it's not the same for a teacher to come and put on the whiteboard, everything the students are going to learn in terms of vocabulary and to copy and make sentences with them. So yes, there is a huge difference, the learning becomes much more experimental and much more meaningful. Yes, I mean, it means for them, it has its reason behind it, it has been a quite big change for them and for us as teachers.

In the same line, this participant affirms that PBL is a more innovative teaching approach in contrast with traditional methods. He states the importance of experiential learning and its impact on the students, whereas in learning where the teacher is the center and his or her methods are traditional, there is no purpose for the students to learn. Considering the perspectives of both participants, it is shown that Project-based learning is a more effective approach to the teaching and learning process.

Finally, the involvement of Ecuadorian culture is considered an essential opportunity when using PBL in English classes in the public sector. According to the participants' experiences, PBL allows engaging specific aspects of a country's culture, in this case,

Ecuadorian culture, such as its festivities related to Raymis and the Kichwa. Participant TA supports this with the following:

The project is carried out throughout the school year and is divided into phases depending on the Raymis or festivities that correspond to the school garden. For example, and just it coincides, such is nature, such are our festivities, our ancestors that in September classes begin, and, on September 21 is starting the first festival that is the killa Raymi, which is the feast of the moon. So from there our project starts and everything that this implies.

Since the project takes place throughout the academic year, it is emphasized that by integrating traditional Raymis festivals within the project, a culturally relevant and meaningful context is created for the students and their learning process, fostering a deep understanding of their country and its ancestral roots. In a similar fashion, the same participant TA underscores the association between English and Kichwa languages when using PBL: "*Priority is given to the use of Kichwa. Yes, because it is an ancestral festival, however, English is also present. As I mentioned before, we have a small theater play to raise awareness about the care of plants*".

As mentioned by the participant, incorporating the Kichwa language in the project is accompanied by participation in the ancestral festivities of Ecuador, leading students to the awareness of their country's heritage. Therefore, it can be concluded that the application of PBL allows the appreciation of Ecuadorian culture, where teachers and students participate in the different traditions of the country, and thus, this part that has gradually been lost is rescued.

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Additionally, this approach has allowed the use of Kichwa with English, enabling students to be immersed in both languages obtaining a personalized and unique learning experience.

Having illustrated the opportunities in the public environment, the opportunities that arise in the context of private schools are mentioned. Thus, the first potential opportunity is creativity development. Participants mentioned that working with projects fosters the growth of creativity of the students, who produce the project based on this aspect. This is stated by the participant TP:

I*t has helped them to improve their creativity. This is something that both teachers and students are hooked on, they like it, and they like to do something different. They like not to be writing in a notebook and not to work in a book. So for them, creativity is a hook for this type of project.*

Considering Participant TP's insight, integrating PBL in English classrooms allows students to harness their creativity and encourage it when carrying out projects, leading them to demonstrate their capacities, abilities, imagination, and, consequently, original outcomes.

Another opportunity presented in this study is that PBL fosters the practice of the English language. This is similar to the one mentioned in the public section, highlighting that PBL reinforces what students already grasp about English, allowing for better interaction with the language. As affirmed by the participant TP:

They write paragraphs, they write questions, they answer and they don't copy and paste, but they write and they produce. So the level of English the children have here helps a lot for the projects. It is not very limiting, on the contrary, it is a strength.

As this participant states, the students have a good level of English, which positions Project-Based Learning as an approach to language practice rather than language development. Instead of focusing on building language skills, PBL in this context is used to perfect and improve the students' existing language abilities. Through doing projects, students can apply their language skills in practical, significant ways, exploiting their current proficiency and encouraging the use of the language in more complex scenarios.

Lastly, it was found that PBL brings practical learning to the students, making it a relevant opportunity. Teachers emphasize that this instructional approach allows for long-lasting learning, where students can use it on a daily basis. This was mentioned by participant TD: *"It makes the language not as something foreign, not as something I'm learning to go on a trip someday, but rather as something I'm learning to apply in everyday life".*

As this teacher alludes, the application of PBL in the students' English learning transcends beyond a single task; it focuses on actively implicating the use of language in the students' lives. Along the same line, participant TP refers to this approach as applicable in real-world contexts. Thus, she expressed the following:

Project-based learning allows us this that the students produce and this is, I think much more important for a whole life. Whether their studies at the university or at a job, the idea is not to fill worksheets just because, but the idea is to learn what we are doing and retain that information.

This participant's perspective is aligned with the other participants, who established the importance of implementing PBL in student learning. To be more precise, they highlight the production that the students do and its impact on their lives. What they do or create using PBL needs to lead to learning that can permanently be useful for them in the different aspects of their lives. Taking into account that, it can be inferred that the PBL approach is beneficial when used within an English lesson since it promotes applicable learning where students are able to use their knowledge and utilize it in actual contexts of their lives continuously, which is the purpose of this approach.

Figure 2

Opportunities in teaching English with Project-Based Learning
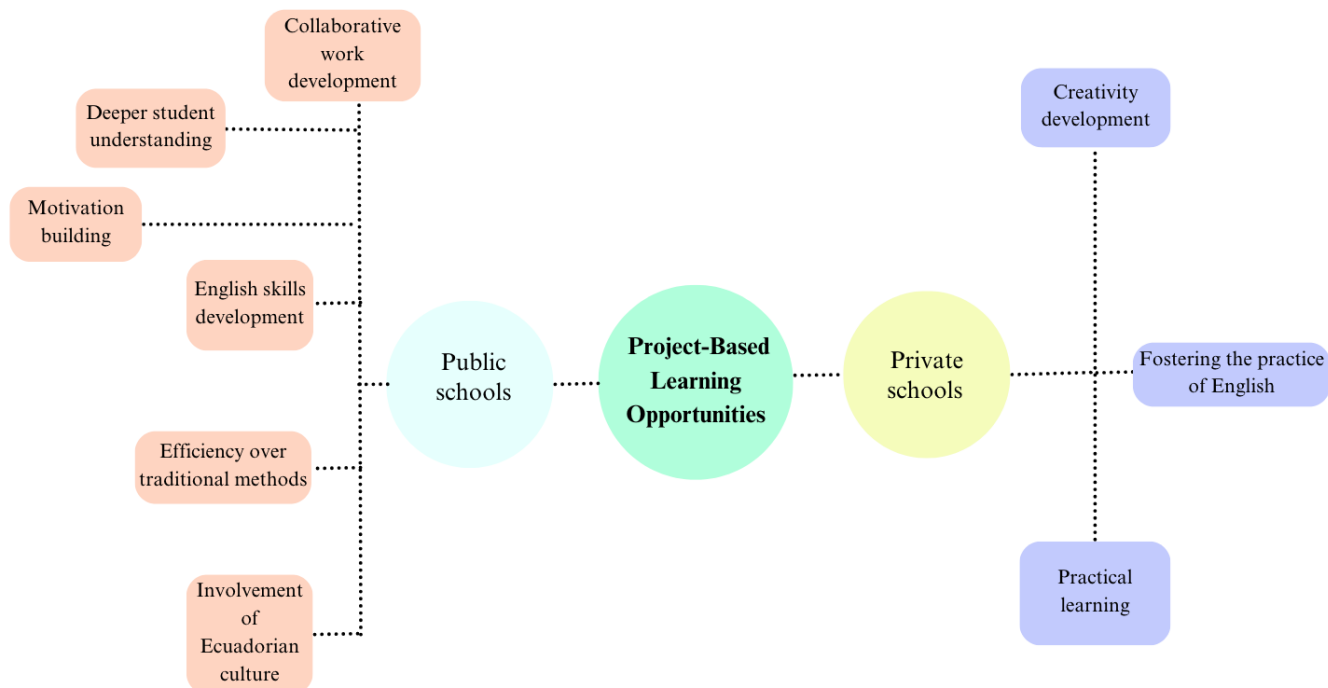
4.3 Reflections and Recommendations about PBL for EFL Classroom

As shown in Figure 3 below, teachers shared reflections and recommendations on topics such as the use of digital platforms, different methodologies, greater parental involvement, in-depth exploration of the proposed project, interdisciplinary work, and future plans, which are essential for teachers who want to implement PBL in the classroom.

In the last interview, participants shared reflections and recommendations on implementing PBL. Starting with the use of digital platforms, TA mentioned: *"... The project is*

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recommended to be hosted on a virtual platform, such as a blog, in the creation [...] of a Google classroom or on some platform where resources can be hosted [...]".

The second recommendation is to use other methodologies to implement PBL, as mentioned by the TA participant:

There was an activity related to the parts of a plant where I used mimics. For example, to represent the roots, they pointed their fingers down and thus formed the different parts of the plant. They said 'roots', 'stems,' 'leaves,' and 'flowers' while making body movements. This helped the students learn this specific vocabulary. The song went like this: 'Roots, stems, leaves, flowers need air and a little rain shower.' This is a song that can be found on YouTube. It describes how a plant grows from a seed to a flower, mentioning all its parts.

The third suggestion for a satisfactory implementation is to improve the participation of parents; according to the TA's suggestion,

Perhaps having commitment letters for the parents to be part of the project could help because they assisted with the project but weren't fully involved. They didn't know it in depth, and when small research tasks were sent home, they would do them at that moment, but beyond that, they were not very involved. So, it might be beneficial to involve them more, especially when we organize group activities.

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The fourth suggestion is that teachers explore the proposed Project-Based Learning in-depth, as TJ mentioned: *"First, consider whether you have time. Implementing PBL takes time; sometimes, I come with the parents and students on Saturdays. Some teachers do not like to give up their Saturdays, which are personal family time."*

In the case of the public school teacher, the participant commented that to apply PBL to the garden, it is necessary to sacrifice the weekend to take care of the plants. Likewise, participant TA noted,

They should become very familiar with the garden and the planting methods because gardening is a complicated practice—at least if they relate PBL to the school garden. They should also become very familiar with the times, the climate, and the types of plants that occur in the context.

The fifth suggestion concerns interdisciplinary subjects; they should work together to better implement PBL. As TP indicated, *"I recommend that students work on projects in all subjects, not just English, because it is the only way to apply directly. Otherwise, they will only dedicate themselves to filling books."*

The sixth recommendation is for public school teachers, as TP suggested:

In the case of public schools, you could say that they should work on mind maps and projects. Given their limitations, they can make posters, cards, and other things. They can do so

many things without many resources, but I don't know what they are not limited to because they don't have the resources.

TP's comments suggest that the suggestions do not pertain to implementing PBL. Because PBL involves students developing their critical thinking skills and attempting to handle real-world problems. Similarly, TD also said,

Project-based Learning is applying from macro to micro in a way that children can have fun and can apply knowledge, not in an abstract way, not just the book or, let's say, the test where they have to complete the verbs, but working, manipulating and generating content or generating products, generating, why it doesn't even have to be something physical, it can even be a speech based on this, then taking the content, applying it in daily life and making it fun, I think those would be like the three most essential parts.

The last suggestion from private school teachers for public schools is training, as indicated by the TP, *"There are currently some excellent TED talks on PBL that will help you a lot. If you could attend the Cambridge training sessions, which will be held at the University of Cuenca, they can also help"*.

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Figure 3

Reflections and recommendations about PBL for EFL classroom
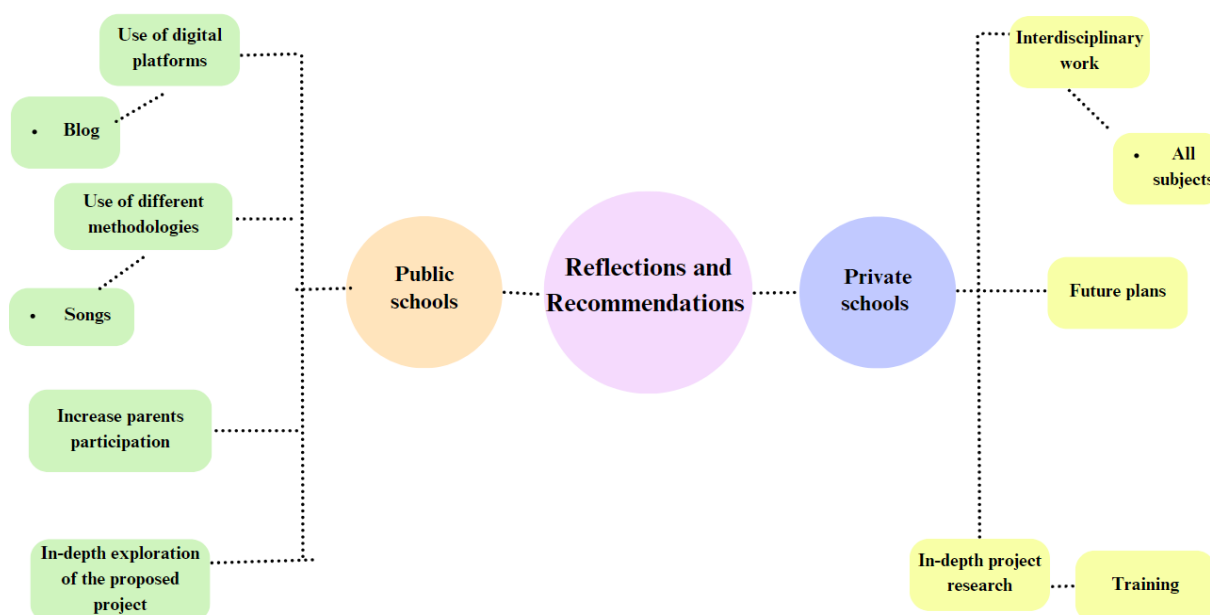
5. Discussion

This section introduces the discussion of the research findings. The results of this study showed that some challenges impact the implementation of PBL in Ecuadorian schools. First, the lack of parental support is a major barrier, as confirmed by Turcotte et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of collaboration between students and parents. With this support, students can complete assignments, participate in projects, and bring in necessary materials, ultimately reducing the effectiveness of PBL initiatives. Furthermore, students' proficiency in both Spanish

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and English presents another obstacle. Due to linguistic errors, punctuation and sentence structure differences between the two languages complicate effective English learning, as native language proficiency greatly influences second language acquisition.

Furthermore, the diverse ways PBL is implemented underscores its adaptability to various educational settings and available resources, as Jaramillo (2019) and Urguilez (2021) noted. However, the lack of essential resources such as internet access, projectors, and functional computers poses significant barriers, in line with the findings of Rodriguez and Sinche (2021). Furthermore, limited time for English classes poses a substantial challenge, in line with the research of Cintang et al. (2018) and Tain et al. (2023), who highlight the need for proper time management. Teachers also face difficulties managing diverse learning styles and behaviors, particularly in inclusive education settings, as noted by Hu (2024). It is almost impossible for teachers to give pupils with exceptional education the required attention without sufficient support.

On the other hand, this research also demonstrated that PBL brings opportunities according to the context in which it is applied. Interestingly, in a public setting, PBL benefits the students by facilitating better collaboration. This aligns with existing research from the Buck Institute for Education (2020) that states that PBL promotes teamwork and student cooperation. Similarly, collaboration also brings healthy and beneficial relationships for students since by carrying out the project, students work collaboratively and build potential and meaningful relationships with each other. Furthermore, this PBL approach allows students to engage directly

with the content, resulting in deeper and more meaningful learning. This is corroborated by Amin and Shahnaz (2023), who mention that PBL leads students to understand the course material more efficiently. Therefore, it is indisputable that PBL helps students understand their projects' content meaningfully, where students can acquire more knowledge and apply it in natural environments. Similarly, it was found that PBL leads to building the motivation for students and teachers. In the case of student motivation, Shin (2018) alludes that learners can be more enthusiastic and delighted with their learning when the PBL approach is used, promoting motivation. In addition, it is worthy of recognition that there was an effective involvement of the students with specific learning differences, leading them to desire to participate more in the project. Nevertheless, as mentioned previously, teachers' motivation also emerged. Their perceptions, which provide valuable information about Ecuadorian teachers' motivation building when using PBL, were unique and have not been addressed in other studies. To be precise, most research has given relevance to fostering motivation in students, such as this study, but has not focused in detail on teachers. However, the participants in this study have highlighted the importance of teacher motivation for the effective implementation of PBL, demonstrating a potential opportunity. Likewise, PBL leads to the positive development of English skills. In the results of this research, through the use of PBL, productive skills and vocabulary are enhanced, allowing students' English language learning to increase significantly. According to the results, the effectiveness of PBL over traditional methods is also seen as an opportunity. As stated by the participants, this approach allows the teaching delivered to be unique and significantly impacts

student learning. While traditional approaches offer passive learning, PBL allows teachers to use this approach as a helpful teaching method to innovate in their classes and, as stated in this study, allow learning to be experiential and experiential. Besides that, something important about PBL is that it involves the Ecuadorian culture within the educational process, which became an opportunity for this research.

In the case of opportunities in a private setting, creativity development is considered a vital opportunity of this study. This aligns with Yu's (2024) research, which emphasizes that PBL enhances the students' creativity as they are interested in providing something different according to their knowledge and skills. Thus, PBL supports creativity among students, nurturing their curiosity and fostering them to delve deeper into their interests and capabilities while developing a project. Similarly, the practice of English is seen positively. Within this context and due to its already obtained level, PBL serves as an approach to guide students to practice and polish their English productively. PBL also guides the students to have practical learning. Instead of being passive users of the language, this approach highlights the importance of involving the pupils in their learning where they are able to understand English and use it in their daily lives.

Finally, the findings also yielded some possible recommendations. Integrating diverse methodologies and increasing parent involvement is essential for enhancing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Per Figueroa and Vera (2023), leveraging digital resources to establish dynamic learning environments is strongly advised. Establishing a central virtual location for resources and project collaboration can greatly

increase the efficiency and accessibility of PBL. Moreover, integrating innovative pedagogical approaches, including role-playing and singing, can enhance student engagement and retention, improve academic results, and cultivate a lively learning atmosphere.

Increasing parent participation is essential to the success of PBL implementation. By involving parents in projects through commitment letters, parents are guaranteed to comprehend and take an active role in their child's education. This method improves communication between the community and the school while facilitating the smoother implementation of PBL activities. Moreover, the significance of interdisciplinary cooperation has been underlined since it fosters a more profound comprehension of practical relationships. Teachers must get training and continual professional development to boost confidence and competence in adopting PBL. They should also attend local training sessions to acquire the requisite skills and information. Free internet resources can also be utilized to support their efforts.

6. Conclusion

The present research explored how English teachers from Ecuadorian schools view the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in private and public settings. Analysis of the data revealed that both groups faced some challenges during the use of this pedagogical approach. Regarding the participants from public schools, they encounter limitations such as the availability of resources and hours of instruction in English in their setting. Additionally, there were some challenges that both public and private schools handle such as lack of parental

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cooperation, students' proficiency in Spanish, and accommodating students with learning differences within existing structures. It is also fundamental to note that participants from both public and private schools require help integrating students with learning differences and accommodating Project-based learning within their existing structures and the different approaches to implementing Project-based learning are considered as challenges.

On the other hand, the findings also showed latent opportunities for using PBL for both public and private schools. Participants from public schools recognized PBL's value in fostering collaborative work development, deeper student understanding, motivation building, English skills development, efficiency over traditional methods, and involvement in Ecuadorian culture. Similarly, participants from private schools emphasize creativity development, fostering the practice of English and practical learning as their most important opportunities.

Likewise, this research addresses some specific recommendations and reflections made by the participants on the use of PBL that can guide professionals interested in the field of English to a better application of PBL. In conclusion, it is of pivotal importance to emphasize that the findings of this research contributed to identifying the diverse challenges and opportunities that PBL entails of its use in Ecuadorian schools, particularly, within English classes. Additionally, this research paves the path for more specific and impactful future studies that can refine and advance the use of PBL, ultimately supporting the overall improvement of the teaching and learning process in Ecuador and beyond.

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7. Implications and Limitations

The study addresses different challenges and potential opportunities of the Project Based Learning (PBL) approach taking into account teachers' perspectives and experiences. Although this research provides a rich contribution, it is worth highlighting the limitations of the study. One of them is based on self-reported perceptions from a small sample of participants which limits more generalizable results. Likewise, the lack of participation of those involved in the use of PBL, which are the students, was not included in this study, and as a last limitation, it emphasizes the single use of a single data collection tool, making a view from different angles difficult.

8. Recommendations

This study provides a series of enriching data on the different challenges and opportunities brought about by the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach during its application in English classes in Ecuador. However, as explained above, some limitations emerged that prevent this study from having a more generalized focus within the selected setting. Therefore, several recommendations are proposed to assist researchers who wish to implement PBL in this country. It is suggested to involve more English teachers who have applied PBL from various regions of Ecuador. Additionally, incorporating students who have participated in PBL as part of the sample is recommended to gain a broader perspective of the challenges and opportunities for its application within the country. Applying more data collection tools is also encouraged to

provide an extended view of the research from multiple angles. Furthermore, direct observation of PBL in action would add further details to the study. Lastly, promoting the use of Project-Based Learning in more Ecuadorian schools would be beneficial.

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10. Appendices

Appendix A

Validation of the instrument

Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración
Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)

Validation of the Instrument by Experts.

Evaluator´s name: Fernanda Elizabeth Sarango Solano

Specialty: Leadership and Management- Curriculum and Instruction.

Academic degree: Doctor in Education (PhD)

- **Authors of the Final Integrated Project:**

  Ana Lucia Marcatoma Chuchuca.

  María Angelica Muzha Vargas.

- **Title of the research:**

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF IMPLEMENTING PROJECT-BASED
LEARNING IN ECUADORIAN SCHOOLS

- **General objective:**

To identify teachers' perceptions of the challenges and opportunities associated with
implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Ecuadorian schools.

- **Specific objectives:**

- To examine teachers' main challenges when planning and implementing project-
  based learning in an Ecuadorian classroom.
- To explore the opportunities associated with implementing Project-Based
  Learning (PBL) in Ecuadorian schools, as perceived by teachers.

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Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)

UNAE | PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

1. INSTRUMENT TO VALIDATE THE RATING SCALE

Instruction: Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement on the statements provided below by encircling the number which corresponds to your best to your judgment.

1 – Strongly Disagree   **2** – Disagree   **3** – Undecided   **4** – Agree   **5** – Strongly Agree

Criteria

The items in the instrument are relevant to answer the objectives of the study.	1	2	3	4	**5**
The items in the instrument can obtain depth to constructs being Measured/studied.	1	2	3	4	**5**
The instrument has an appropriate sample of items for the construct being measured/studied.	1	2	**3**	4	**5**
The items and their alternatives are neither too narrow nor limited in its content.	1	2	3	**4**	**5**
The items in the instrument are stated clearly.	1	2	3	4	**5**
The items on the instrument can elicit responses which are stable, definite, consistent and not conflicting.	1	2	3	4	**5**
The terms adapted in the scale are culturally appropriate.	1	2	3	4	**5**
The layout or format of the instrument is technically sound.	1	2	3	4	**5**
The instrument is not too short or long enough that the participants will be able to answer it within a given time.	1	2	**3**	4	**5**
The instrument is interesting such that participants will be induced to respond to it and accomplish it fully.	1	2	3	4	**5**

2

Última actualización (mayo, 2023) MEMG

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Trabajo de Integración Curricular   Ana Lucia Marcatoma Chuchuca
                                                     Maria Angelica Muzha Vargas

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN

Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)

UNAE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

The instrument as a whole could answer the basic purpose for which it is designed.	1	2	3	4	**5**

2. COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS SECTION

1. Do you consider that the proposed items correspond to categories, unit of analysis or variables of the study?

     Yes_x_   NO_____

2. What items would you add or erase?

Dear students, I feel the questions highlighted in yellow should be eliminated since you have plenty of questions and to my view the ones in yellow can be answered in other questions.

To me, **Section 2: Challenges in Project-Based Learning,** both questions are asking the same. Maybe you can keep one of these questions and add another one that gives you more info in terms of Challenges.

3. What other suggestions would you make to improve this instrument?

I am concerned that one of your interviewees could say he/she does not use PBL in class, not because he/she is not using but because they do not know what PBL is. What if the teacher responds NO to this question: Do you use PBL? If yes, what projects?

Evaluator's Names: Fernanda Sarango Solano
ID: 1104464274
Academic Degree: Doctor in Education

Signature:

FERNANDA ELIZABETH SARANGO SOLANO

Última actualización (mayo, 2023) MEMG

3

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Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración
Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)

UNAE | PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

Semi-Structured Interview Guide: Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing PBL in Ecuadorian Schools

The objective of this interview is to understand the different challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of Project-based learning (PBL) in Ecuadorian schools within English classes. Therefore, your insights will be invaluable for my research on this topic.

Please be informed that this interview is completely confidential and your identity will not be revealed at any time. To improve the accuracy of the information collected, we would like to request your permission to record the interview. Your participation in the recording is completely voluntary and, should you not wish to be recorded, the interview will continue in a conventional manner without the use of recording media. Your privacy and comfort are of utmost importance to us, and any information shared will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Do you agree to these conditions?

Section 1: Demographic Information

First of all, can you please tell us about your teaching background?

- Age:
- Gender:
- Years of Teaching Experience:
- Location:
- What grade level do you primarily teach? (Initial Education, Elementary, Middle School, High School, Baccalaureate)
- What type of school do you teach in? (Public, Private, etc.)
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- What are some challenges (in teaching in general at your school)?

Última actualización (mayo, 2023) MEMG

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Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración
Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)

UNAE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

- Do you use PBL? If yes, what projects?
- Years of implementing PBL:

Section 2: Challenges in Project-Based Learning

- In your context, did you face any challenges during the Project-based learning implementation? If yes, what type of challenges did you face?
- What has been the most challenging thing to cope with when implementing PBL in the EFL teaching context?

Section 3: Perceived Opportunities of Project-Based Learning

- What do you believe are the potential benefits of implementing PBL in Ecuadorian schools?
- Have you observed any benefits of using project-based learning in your classrooms? If yes, what benefits have you observed from using project-based learning in your teaching, particularly in the context of teaching English?
- Have you noticed any improvements in your students' learning when using PBL? If yes, could you tell us what those improvements are?
- Has PBL affected your students' English learning? If yes, in which ways does PBL affect them?

Section 4: Support and Resources

- During the implementation of PBL, did you feel supported by your school administration and parents?

  If yes, in what ways did you feel supported? If no, what kinds of support do you think are lacking?

- What additional support or resources do you need to effectively implement PBL in your classroom?

  Can you describe any specific resources that would help?

Section 5: Reflections and Recommendations

- Reflecting on your experience, what advice would you give to other teachers who are beginning to implement PBL in their EFL classrooms?
- What changes or improvements would you like to see to make PBL more effective?

5

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Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración
Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)

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2

_____

Trabajo de Integración Curricular   Ana Lucia Marcatoma Chuchuca
                                              Maria Angelica Muzha Vargas

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN

Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)

UNAE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

The instrument as a whole could answer the basic purpose for which it is designed.	1	2	3	4	5

2. **COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS SECTION**

1. Do you consider that the proposed items correspond to categories, unit of analysis or variables of the study?

Yes__X__   NO_____

2. What items would you add or erase?

_____
_____
_____

3. **What other suggestions would you make to improve this instrument?**

_____

Evaluator's Names: ___Luis Andrés Peralta Sari___

ID: ___0104553912_____

Academic Degree: ___Master of Science___

Signature:

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN

Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración
Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)

UNAE
PEDAGOGÍA
DE LOS IDIOMAS
NACIONALES
Y EXTRANJEROS

Semi-Structured Interview Guide: Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing PBL in Ecuadorian Schools

The objective of this interview is to understand the different challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of Project-based learning (PBL) in Ecuadorian schools within English classes. Therefore, your insights will be invaluable for my research on this topic.

Please be informed that this interview is completely confidential and your identity will not be revealed at any time. To improve the accuracy of the information collected, we would like to request your permission to record the interview. Your participation in the recording is completely voluntary and, should you not wish to be recorded, the interview will continue in a conventional manner without the use of recording media. Your privacy and comfort are of utmost importance to us, and any information shared will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Do you agree to these conditions?

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- What is teaching at your school like (in general)?
- How many students are typically in your class?
- What are some challenges (in teaching in general at your school)?
- Do you use PBL? If yes, what projects?
- Years of implementing PBL:

Section 2: Challenges in Project-Based Learning

- In your context, did you face any challenges during the Project-based learning implementation? If yes, what type of challenges did you face?
- What has been the most challenging thing to cope with when implementing PBL in the EFL teaching context?

Section 3: Perceived Opportunities of Project-Based Learning

- What do you believe are the potential benefits of implementing PBL in Ecuadorian schools?

4

Última actualización (mayo, 2023) MEMG

Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración
Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)

- Have you observed any benefits of using project-based learning in your classrooms? If yes, what benefits have you observed from using project-based learning in your teaching, particularly in the context of teaching English?
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    Can you describe any specific resources that would help?

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- Reflecting on your experience, what advice would you give to other teachers who are beginning to implement PBL in their EFL classrooms?
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Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración
Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)

UNAE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

Validation of the Instrument by Experts.

Evaluator´s name: Sara Karina Cherres Fajardo

Specialty: English Language Teaching

Academic degree: Master in Teaching Pedagogy as a Foreign Language, PhD (c) in Education.

- **Authors of the Final Integrated Project:**
   Ana Lucia Marcatoma Chuchuca.
   María Angelica Muzha Vargas.
- **Title of the research:**

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF IMPLEMENTING PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN ECUADORIAN SCHOOLS

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To identify teachers' perceptions of the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Ecuadorian schools.

- **Specific objectives:**

- To examine teachers' main challenges when planning and implementing project-based learning in an Ecuadorian classroom.
- To explore the opportunities associated with implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Ecuadorian schools, as perceived by teachers.

_____

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Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración
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Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)

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_____

Trabajo de Integración Curricular   Ana Lucia Marcatoma Chuchuca
                                                        Maria Angelica Muzha Vargas

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Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración
Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)

UNAE | PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

The instrument as a whole could answer the basic purpose for which it is designed.	1	2	3	4	**5**

2. **COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS SECTION**

1. Do you consider that the proposed items correspond to categories, unit of analysis or variables of the study?

    Yes_X_   NO_____

2. What items would you add or erase?

    _If pertinent, I would add what level of English do the teachers consider to have._____

    _____.

3. What other suggestions would you make to improve this instrument?

    _____

Evaluator's Names: Sara Karina Cherres Fajardo

ID: ___0105730337

Academic Degree: Master in Teaching Pedagogy as a Foreign Language

Signature: _____

_____

Trabajo de Integración Curricular   Ana Lucia Marcatoma Chuchuca
                                                      Maria Angelica Muzha Vargas

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN

UNAE | PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

Semi-Structured Interview Guide: Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing PBL in Ecuadorian Schools

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Section 3: Perceived Opportunities of Project-Based Learning

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- Have you observed any benefits of using project-based learning in your classrooms? If yes, what benefits have you observed from using project-based learning in your teaching, particularly in the context of teaching English?
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- What additional support or resources do you need to effectively implement PBL in your classroom?

 Can you describe any specific resources that would help?

Section 5: Reflections and Recommendations

- Reflecting on your experience, what advice would you give to other teachers who are beginning to implement PBL in their EFL classrooms?
- What changes or improvements would you like to see to make PBL more effective?

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Appendix B

Semi-structured interview guide in English and Spanish

Semi-Structured Interview Guide: Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing PBL in Ecuadorian Schools

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● Gender:

● Years of Teaching Experience:

● Location:

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● What type of school do you teach in? (Public, Private, etc.)

● What is teaching at your school like (in general)?

● How many students are typically in your class?

● What are some challenges (in teaching in general at your school)?

● Do you use PBL? If yes, what projects?

● Years of implementing PBL:

Section 2: Challenges in Project-Based Learning

● In your context, did you face any challenges during the Project-based learning implementation? If yes, what type of challenges did you face?

_____

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NACIONAL DE
EDUCACIÓN

● What has been the most challenging thing to cope with when implementing PBL in the EFL teaching context?

Section 3: Perceived Opportunities of Project-Based Learning

● What do you believe are the potential benefits of implementing PBL in Ecuadorian schools?

● Have you observed any benefits of using project-based learning in your classrooms? If yes, what benefits have you observed from using project-based learning in your teaching, particularly in the context of teaching English?

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UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN

If yes, in what ways did you feel supported? If no, what kinds of support do you think are lacking?

● What additional support or resources do you need to effectively implement PBL in your classroom?

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Guía de Entrevista Semiestructurada: Retos y Oportunidades de la Implementación del Aprendizaje basado en proyectos en las escuelas ecuatorianas

El objetivo de esta entrevista es comprender los diferentes desafíos y oportunidades asociados con la implementación del Aprendizaje Basado en Proyectos (ABP) en las escuelas ecuatorianas dentro de las clases de inglés. Por lo tanto, sus puntos de vista serán invaluables para mi investigación sobre este tema.

Le informo que esta entrevista es completamente confidencial y su identidad no será revelada en ningún momento. Para mejorar la exactitud de la información recogida, nos gustaría solicitar su permiso para grabar la entrevista. Su participación en la grabación es completamente voluntaria y, en caso de que no desee ser grabado, la entrevista continuará de manera convencional sin el uso de medios de grabación. Su privacidad y comodidad son de suma importancia para nosotros, y cualquier información compartida será tratada con la máxima confidencialidad. ¿Está de acuerdo con estas condiciones?

Sección 1: Información demográfica

En primer lugar, ¿podría hablarnos de su experiencia docente?

- Edad:
- Sexo:
- Años de experiencia docente:
- Nivel de Ingles (A1-A2-B1-B2-C1-C2):
- Lugar:
- ¿En qué curso enseña principalmente? (Educación Inicial, Primaria, Secundaria, Bachillerato)
- ¿En qué tipo de escuela enseña? (Pública, Privada, etc.)
- ¿Cómo es la enseñanza en su escuela (en general)?
- ¿Cuántos alumnos suele haber en su clase?
- ¿Cuáles son algunos de los retos (de la enseñanza en general en tu colegio)?
- ¿Utiliza PBL? En caso afirmativo, ¿qué proyectos?
- Años de aplicación del PBL:

Sección 2: Desafíos en el aprendizaje basado en proyectos
- En su contexto, ¿se enfrentó a algún reto durante la aplicación del aprendizaje basado en proyectos? En caso de ser asi, ¿a qué tipo de retos se enfrentó?

Sección 3: Oportunidades percibidas del aprendizaje basado en proyectos

- ¿Cuáles cree que son los beneficios potenciales de implementar el ABP en las escuelas ecuatorianas?

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- ¿Ha observado algún beneficio del uso del aprendizaje basado en proyectos en sus aulas? En caso afirmativo, ¿qué beneficios ha observado al utilizar el aprendizaje basado en proyectos en su enseñanza, particularmente en el contexto de la enseñanza del inglés?
- ¿Ha influido el ABP en el aprendizaje del inglés de sus alumnos? En caso afirmativo, ¿de qué manera les afecta el PBL?

Sección 4: Apoyo y recursos

- Durante la implantación del PBL, ¿te sentiste apoyado por la dirección de tu centro y por tus padres?
- En caso afirmativo, ¿de qué manera se sintió apoyado? En caso negativo, ¿qué tipo de apoyo cree que falta?
- ¿Qué apoyo o recursos adicionales necesita para implantar eficazmente el PBL en su aula?
- ¿Puede describir algún recurso específico que le ayudaría?

Sección 5: Reflexiones y recomendaciones

- Reflexionando sobre su experiencia, ¿qué consejos daría a otros profesores que están empezando a implantar el PBL en sus clases de EFL?

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Appendix C

Consents from the participants

Participants 1 and 2 consent

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UNAE, ECUADOR

Carrera Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros (PINE)

Azogues, 12 de junio de 2024.

Asunto: Carta de recomendación

Para:

-
-

De: Mirdelio E. Monzón Gómez

(Dirección de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros (PINE))

Universidad Nacional de Educación (UNAE)

Mediante la presente carta, tenemos el gusto de notificar y comunicar que las estudiantes **ANA LUCIA MARCATOMA CHUCHUCA** con cédula de identidad **0106339393**, y **MARIA ANGELICA MUZHA VARGAS** con cédula de identidad **0107024390**, son estudiantes de nuestra institución (UNAE) matriculadas en el programa o carrera de formación Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros con la finalidad de convertirse en futuras docentes de inglés. Las mencionadas estudiantes han seleccionado como forma de graduación la modalidad de Trabajo de Integración Curricular (TIC), conocido como tesis de grado. En el proceso les acompaña el Docente **OMID SAHRANAVARD KALANTAR**, Docente de la Carrera de PINE.

Para ello, una de las formas de desarrollarlo es a través de los contextos educativos reales donde deben identificar una problemática o situación de aprendizaje donde puedan poner en práctica lo aprendido en las asignaturas relacionas con la investigación educativa y todo el proceso de formación. En este sentido, las estudiantes han seleccionado la Institución Educativa que usted dirige y han identificado el siguiente tema de investigación "Challeges and opportunities of implementing Project Based Learning in Ecuadorian schools".

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Trabajo de Integración Curricular   Ana Lucia Marcatoma Chuchuca
                                                     Maria Angelica Muzha Vargas

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Considerando lo anteriormente planteado, se le solicita de la manera más comedida que se le permita el acceso a la institución con estos fines. Las estudiantes planifican que la entrada y permanencia temporal en la institución educativa serian durante el mes de junio (entre el 12 al 28); para ello han planificado la entrada dos (2) veces a la semana. De necesitar mayor extensión del tiempo, se le comunicaría y solicitaría su permiso y autorización.

Es válido señalar que las estudiantes en mención son muy responsables y excelentes; de ahí que, nunca han presentado algún inconveniente durante sus estudios. Ambas ponen todo su esfuerzo y empeño para hacer realidad su sueño hasta el final. Esto demuestra que siempre ha tenido cualidades muy positivas, como su colaboración, trabajo en equipo, y alianza con otros compañeros en las diferentes clases y actividades donde han estado matriculadas.

De antemano, se le agradece por la atención prestada al misma.

Atentamente,

**CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA
DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES
Y EXTRANJEROS**

Miderlio E. Monzón Gómez

Director de la Carrera de PINE

Universidad Nacional de Educación

Trabajo

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Participant 3 consent

UNAE

UNAE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE EDUCACION

UNAE, ECUADOR

Carrera Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros (PINE)

Azogues, 12 de junio de 2024.

Asunto: Carta de recomendación

Para:

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De: Mirdelio E. Monzón Gómez

(Dirección de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros (PINE))

Universidad Nacional de Educación (UNAE)

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Trabajo de Integración Curricular

Ana Lucia Marcatoma Chuchuca
Maria Angelica Muzha Vargas

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN

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Atentamente,

Miderlio E. Monzón Gómez
Director de la Carrera de PINE
Universidad Nacional de Educación

CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

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Participant 4 consent

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UNAE, ECUADOR

Carrera Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros (PINE)

Azogues, 12 de junio de 2024.

Asunto: Carta de recomendación

Para:

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De: Mirdelio E. Monzón Gómez

(Dirección de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros (PINE))

Universidad Nacional de Educación (UNAE)

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Trabajo de Integración Curricular   Ana Lucia Marcatoma Chuchuca
Maria Angelica Muzha Vargas

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De antemano, se le agradece por la atención prestada al misma.

Atentamente,

UNAE
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CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA
DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES
Y EXTRANJEROS

Miderlio E. Monzón Gómez
Director de la Carrera de PINE
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Appendix D

Interview transcripts

First Part of the transcription:

TA:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RQ1GOGpRhAlX-d6nwHFZPhZJ5FvOPoWj/edit

TP:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_5gQD6cm0wIu6s5A63JGt2wjTNzGNl9z/edit

TD:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pCyrjIPSsaeffSBIHFhiz9SBWRSjct5W/edit

TJ:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AbV0MgXPdJr4kzl6nusoRA0spGn0-UmV/edit

Second Part of the transcription:

TA:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YB4JEk6hCw4fggaiBdJ_BGeWuktmj7T8/edit

TP:https://docs.google.com/document/d/12_tErPl4YJ4FwX_lTf71fjAYOAiNUvEF/edit

TD:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UfIzpJsi7AyNS6Q0ZHiQlBD6KpHQT14T/edit

TS:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1q3m3K29tp7yFwWOECUj9awauS9pFDVcJ/edit

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Link to the coding in Spanish using MAXQDA:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VKLu2dt6Y8qzmL5_VOORqSJUlyIgILAz/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=100588310588569076523&rtpof=true&sd=true

Link to the coding in English using MAXQDA:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WOghLntxWGmKpBUcBN7oEjryfZ33q5M4/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=100588310588569076523&rtpof=true&sd=true

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DECLARATORIA DE PROPIEDAD INTELECTUAL Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS DE PUBLICACIÓN PARA EL TRABAJO DE INTEGRACIÓN CURRICULAR
DIRECCIONES DE CARRERAS DE GRADO PRESENCIALES - DIRECCIÓN DE BIBLIOTECA

Yo, Ana Lucia Marcatoma Chuchuca, portador de la cedula de ciudadanía nro. 010633939-3, estudiante de la carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros en el marco establecido en el artículo 13, literal b) del Reglamento de Titulación de las Carreras de Grado de la Universidad Nacional de Educación, declaro:

Que, todas las ideas, opiniones y contenidos expuestos en el trabajo de Integración curricular denominada Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing Project-Based Learning in Ecuadorian Schools son de exclusiva responsabilidad del suscribiente de la presente declaración, de conformidad con el artículo 114 del Código Orgánico de la Economía Social de los Conocimientos, Creatividad e Innovación, por lo que otorgo y reconozco a favor de la Universidad Nacional de Educación – UNAE una licencia gratuita, intransferible y no exclusiva para el uso no comercial de la obra con fines académicos, además declaro que en el desarrollo de mi Trabajo de Integración Curricular se han realizado citas, referencias, y extractos de otros autores, mismos que no me tribuyo su autoría.

Asimismo, autorizo a la Universidad Nacional de Educación – UNAE, la utilización de los datos e información que forme parte del contenido del Trabajo de Integración Curricular que se encuentren disponibles en base de datos o repositorios y otras formas de almacenamiento, en el marco establecido en el artículo 141 Código Orgánico de la Economía Social de los Conocimientos, Creatividad e Innovación.

De igual manera, concedo a la Universidad Nacional de Educación – UNAE, la autorización para la publicación de Trabajo de Integración Curricular denominado Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing Project-Based Learning in Ecuadorian schools en el repositorio institucional y la entrega de este al Sistema Nacional de Información de la Educación Superior del Ecuador para su difusión pública respetando los derechos de autor, como lo establece el artículo 144 de la Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior.

Ratifico con mi suscripción la presente declaración, en todo su contenido.

Azogues, 19 de agosto de 2024

Ana Lucia Marcatoma Chuchuca
C.I.: 010633939-3

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DECLARATORIA DE PROPIEDAD INTELECTUAL Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS DE PUBLICACIÓN PARA EL TRABAJO DE INTEGRACIÓN CURRICULAR
DIRECCIONES DE CARRERAS DE GRADO PRESENCIALES - DIRECCIÓN DE BIBLIOTECA

Yo, María Angelica Muzha Vargas, portador de la cedula de ciudadanía nro. 0107024390, estudiante de la carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros en el marco establecido en el artículo 13, literal b) del Reglamento de Titulación de las Carreras de Grado de la Universidad Nacional de Educación, declaro:

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Azogues, 19 de agosto de 2024

Angelica Muzha
Maria Angelica Muzha Vargas
C.I.: 0107024390

Trabajo de Integración Curricular   Ana Lucia Marcatoma Chuchuca
                                                     Maria Angelica Muzha Vargas

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CERTIFICACIÓN DEL TUTOR PARA
TRABAJO DE INTEGRACIÓN CURRICULAR
DIRECCIONES DE CARRERAS DE GRADO PRESENCIALES

Carrera de: Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

Yo, Omid Sahranavard Kalantar, tutor del Trabajo de Integración Curricular de Carreras de Grado de Modalidad Presencial denominado "Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing Project-Based Learning in Ecuadorian schools" perteneciente a los estudiantes: Ana Lucia Marcatoma Chuchuca con C.I. 0106339393, María Angelica Muzha Vargas con C.I. 0107024390. Doy fe de haber guiado y aprobado el Trabajo de Integración Curricular. También informo que el trabajo fue revisado con la herramienta de prevención de plagio donde reportó el 4% de coincidencia en fuentes de internet, apegándose a la normativa académica vigente de la Universidad.

Azogues, 16 de agosto 2024

(firma)
Docente tutor
Omid Sahranavard Kalantar

C.I: 0152325585