Wiki as a tool of cooperative english writing production and reading comprehension at la cun university: an action-research study

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BOGOTÁ, D.C, MARCH, 2011
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Bogota, D.C. March 2011

Note of acceptance

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Signature of the president of the jury

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DEDICATION

We, gratefully, dedicate this bachelor’s thesis to our wonderful families, who always supported us during the whole process and to God all mighty.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research project would not have been possible without the support of many people. My deepest gratitude and love to my mother Fabiola who has supported me in order to reach this dream, thank you mom for being the light in my way. To my sisters specially to my youngest sister Angie who always waited until I finished to ask me for help with her homeworks, no matter the time. To my nephews for being so nice and understand that I had not time to play with them. To my colleagues in this research project who worked very hard to achieve our goals and who bore my temperament throughout all the time together. To the teacher Ximena Bonilla for helping us with most of the process. For her encouragement, guidance and support from the initial to the final level enabled me to develop an understanding of the subject.

I offer my regards and blessings to Ivan Amortegui and to all of those who supported me in any respect during the completion of the project. Lastly I would like to thank to God for allowing me to reach this dream.

Cristina Montero

These small words recap everything in my life, although in each one of them I can reflect joys and sorrows. To my encouraged research group who never gave up and provided me with all their help and knowledge in order to reach this goal. I am deeply indebted to my advisor, Teacher Ximena Bonilla, for her constant support. Without her help, this work would not have been possible.
Above all, I cannot express my full gratitude to my classmates who has advice and enriched my knowledge with exceptional insights into our profession. Thanks also to Ivan Amortegui for giving us his invaluable knowledge in our research. Thanks to God for guidance us in all the process I dedicate this thesis to my mother and father the unique

Lida Barrera

This thesis has required lot of dedication and effort from each one of us and I am deeply grateful with the teacher Ximena Bonilla, who guided us in the most difficult situations during the process, I would also like to thank to GOD for making this dream true, to my parents Gilberto and Luz Marina, my boyfriend Eduwin who have been supporting me in every moment, giving me strength and confidence to move forward.

Finally, I thank every one of my colleges, Yaneth for his leadership and patience, Andres for his sincerity and Lida for her kindness.

Ximena Riaño

I thank to God, my mother, my father, relatives and friends for their help to achieve this goal.

J. Mahecha
ABSTRACT

History has showed what human beings have been able to do, but nothing is compared with the technological revolution that has been involving every single human area. The massification of lifestyles, human’s thoughts, economical structures, teaching approaches among others are the neuralgic points in which technology is manifested with all its power. However, the expansion of information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure in schools is expected to promote learning. The technological advancement has affected the educative system generating thus big changes which are specially reflected on syllabus, approaches, topics, goals, etc. Is in this sense where teachers could be defined like bridges of the new information which changes every single day. Then, Technological development in today’s educational system faces the challenge to prepare individuals for the information provided by the society where the most important aim is to handle and to be able to improve it.

Language teaching-learning strategies have been designed to help students develop the fullest potential affording them opportunities to pursue a variety of avenues to success. Within a pedagogical framework the concept of new technologies is given by Margaret J. Cox and Gail Marshall (2007), as the tools or resources which have changed the representation and codifying of knowledge; These tools or resources are designed to fulfill a specific role within the teaching process which is established by the curriculum, that is how the author frames the fact that there are different kinds of technologies that can be applied for the same purpose. The author says:“ICT environments take very many forms and can be situated in different software frameworks which can challenge the learner to investigate the same processes but may have totally different representations” through this statement it is possible to say that part of the perception of
new technologies depends on the measure in which students can be motivated to assume their responsibility in the learning process and if they are able to build up their own knowledge.

This Action Research study had as purpose to identify, analyze and systematize the students’ experiences related to the use of a technological tool such as wiki in the education field. This technological tool was used as a strategy to reinforce the learning-teaching process in a foreign language in the first English level students’ from “La CUN” university. This project was done to observe the students ability to develop and apply the knowledge learned in class in the activities on wiki, in order to improve their reading and writing skills. In our case we decided to do an observation first in order to identify a specific problem. Those observations were reflected in our journals which allowed us to design proposals to find possible solutions to the shortcomings. Online surveys were done after each activity and the wiki log provided us with rich information about how students interacted with the tool and how they felt with the activities and topics designed in the wiki.

The results in this study propose that using a technological tool like wiki can help somehow to improve the educational processes because it allows students to develop the activities in their free time. At the same time we could notice that the use of wiki allowed creating didactic and authentic activities. The results of this study also indicated the need to integrate the entire education community to achieve better results and thus prevent the use of the wiki as an isolated activity.

**KEYWORDS**

Perception about ICT, E-learning, the process of reading and writing in a wiki, beginner students, constructivism, Action Research.
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I. GENERALITIES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research project was done at the branches of the Cun University, located downtown Bogotá, Colombia. This project emerged from the different concerns about the students’ English level and the lack of time they have to practice English by themselves; we took into account the observations of the teaching practices that were done at the Cun University. All our work was based on a constructivism method to build up the instructional design and the use of Wiki. These tools were considered to be the most suitable strategies to improve the English writing production and reading comprehension processes.

After having identified the necessity of the different courses and the problem to solve; the project proposed the use of Wikis from the Constructivism point of view as a pedagogical strategy, through the implementation of a diagnostic test and surveys applied to some students and teachers. Those diagnostic tests showed the difficulties that students had about their English language learning process. From the analysis of the results we decided to make up improvement strategies on the English writing production and reading comprehension which were developed according to the interests and necessities of the group. We developed this project based on the Action Research because this method provided us with qualitative information, as well as helped to analyze the possible solutions.
It is worth mentioning the great willingness of the institution when we formulated and developed the project because without their collaboration would not have been possible to screen the writing and reading process, that is why we express our deeply gratitude.

Finally, this research report is divided in five chapters. The first shows an overview of the project integrating the antecedents of wiki as an educative tool, previous studies, statement of the problem, research questions, methodology of study, significance of the study, and limitation of the study. The second involves the literature review related to theory which supported our project. The third the research methodology that exposes the type of research techniques, data collection, categorization processes, under which we endorse the work. The fourth section makes reference about the findings and results. Finally the fifth chapter is about the conclusions.

1.2 JUSTIFICATION

We consider of great importance to try to apply the use of ICT to educational institutions since it generates a way to access to education with quality and innovation. It constitutes a meaningful contribution to economic, social as well as cultural development of all communities and educative areas.

This study is a commitment for professionals in education to create collaborative processes that contribute to consolidate a new culture around the use of ICT in teaching and learning process, looking for the improvement of the English level.
Education in all levels should support the human being to make them more independent, but above all it ensures the improvement of people’s life quality through cooperative development processes at local as well as regional levels. A qualified education, accessible to all processes through the use of technology, allows greater access to current knowledge which is relevant to an increasing globalized society.

These processes require good infrastructure resources, accurate information and technology staff, but above all “human talent” represented by teachers and administrators who can take advantage of advances in methodological, pedagogical and disciplinary knowledge in order to educate students as good citizens and help them to progress and change the society, as Rosario (2006) states in his article: Based on Rosario (2006) the heterodidactism makes reference about the aspects involved in the technological revolution which mentions the new contexts that students have to face when they get information from other cultures. This aspect promotes a reflective conception about their environment. It also helps to make students aware on the way they perceive the world. For us this statement was relevant in order to make students understand that English is not an isolated subject but it is a whole culture, means that it is necessary to be aware about values, beliefs, costumes and lifestyle from the target culture in a learning context.

This author also mentions the need to use the Information Technology and Communication (ICT) as a strategy to become the Education system stronger. The use of ICT can face the globalization process, taking advantage of the new cultures dimensions. It was an outstanding aspect to justify the importance of our research project which is focused on the implementation of virtual technological platforms with the aim of generating spaces which allow students to learn and to practice following the same topics carried out by the head teacher.
Due to the use of wiki as a teaching-learning tool, it was necessary to focus the activities in reading and writing skills to work with English as a foreign language.

Taking into account the characteristics of the wiki was also necessary to implement cooperative-learning strategies as part of the specific method used in it. This method allowed us to explore most of the functions related to its use the wiki because students could work based on their classmates’ work as well as developing their own productions

1.3 Context

Our practical Research was conducted at the La Cun University, Branch G, in English Introductory. This institution is located between Street 17 N° 4 – 95 and Street 18 N° 4-81 in the Candelaria neighborhood of Bogotá; the institution serves in the following levels: Professional, technician, technological with students between 3 and 4 socio-economical layer. The students of the Branch G, English introductory, are in an average from 18 to 40 years from different compatible careers.

These students are in different social positions and labor, the great majority of them worked in a full time in a morning schedule.
1.4 Statement of the problem

When we were doing the practicum at la CUN University we found out some obstacles which did not allow the students to have chances to put into practice their English. This trouble was basically due to two specific aspects. On the one hand, the University does not provide students enough time to practice the language in regular classes. Another problem identified was the lack of knowledge about internet tools; problem that was revealed through a survey. The instrument showed that most of the students did not know anything about terms such as wiki, blog, social-network and websites. According to the aspects mentioned before, we analyzed that we should determine, more specifically, in which communicative skill we were going to work. Based on the students’ needs we decided to work using reading and writing skills in the wiki.

Based on the information above, and taking into account the time of the regular classes and the fact that most of them were working and studying at the same time, our main concern was: What is first English level students’ from “La CUN” perception about their own experience in reading and writing using a wiki as a tool?

1.5 OBJECTIVES

Using strategies of English teaching-learning procedures in writing and reading skills we want to reach the objectives outlined in this project.
1.5.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

-To apply wikis as English language teaching-learning tool at la CUN University in order to analyze the students’ perception in reading and writing.

1.5.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

-To design communicative language activities on wikis looking forward to improve the Reading and Writing skills on English language.

-To design activities which provide students with authentic contexts and examples through the use of a wiki in order to engage them in their own knowledge constructions.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

“… situated cognition implies that the activities of person and environment are parts of a mutually constructed whole”

(Hung & Der-Thang, 2001, p. 4)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The following lines are about the topics, definitions, authors and main concepts related to the theories regarding the research question stated at the beginning of the Project. In this sense, the topics that are considered are the following; in the first place it is possible to talk about the perceptions of ICT, the mental processes included in this activity, the definition from different points of view. After that, we will connect the concept of Perception to ICT, the way a student can perceive these types of technological tools as well as the positive and negative perception that a tool may cause in a user.

In addition to this, the second topic is related to the possible use that a cyber user gives to a new ICT called Wiki. In this section it is possible to find main ideas as globalization processes, Web life 2.0, virtual spaces, social networks, characteristics of a wiki, and the role of the new ICT in the education process. Besides these ideas we cannot avoid talking about the role that plays the wiki in the E-learning field, the definition of e-learning, the processes, features, advantages and disadvantages and autonomy,
Continuing with the development of the research question we considered very important to talk about the relation between the foreign language and the processes involved in the use of the wiki as reading and writing. About this topic we wanted to mention some key ideas as follows: second language acquisition, teaching methods, culture awareness, reading and writing processes and other aspects regarding these topics like: stages of the reading process and some considerations about applying the steps involved in it.

We divided the literature review in the topics mentioned above because we consider they are supporting the research question as well as they can provide the reader with a wide view, it improves the previous knowledge and explains the necessary understanding about key definitions used during the development of the project.

2.2 BACKGROUND

Many studies have been done related to the implementation of ICT in teaching of a second language like English, focused on improving reading and writing skills in students. For this reason we based our project on a variety of researches regarding to the teaching of English through the wiki as one of the most used technological tools in our society taking into account the massive influence of the ICT in the constant learning of foreign language.

Based on Gimeno, A. and Garcia, J. (2009) Wikis are defined as those “communities of practice” which students can take part and develop a self-learning without teacher or tutor support. Besides, thanks to this technological tool it has been possible to carry out significant methods with the aim of helping students’ learning processes.
2.2.1 Research projects

-Teaching strategies based on a wiki for the development of the written skill in students of English as foreign language

The main focus of this investigation as Piña, Garcia and Govea was the use of strategies in the wiki for developing effective writing in students at the Universidad Nacional Experimental “Francisco de Miranda”. This type of study was carried out of quasi-experimental way, using a scope of fifty students of English. With the aim to obtain the necessary information, test was applied to two groups. First, the experimental group writing activities developed through the wiki and second control group who was isolated from these activities. The results showed the use of wiki in the first group who promoted the participation by students in writing activities improving syntax and spelling of students.


This study was done to determine how contributing to a class wiki affected the learning of pre-service teachers enrolled in a language arts methods class. In this project are analyzed topics such as the impact on students’ learning, students’ perceptions of the Wiki, students’ technology concerns, among others. The information gathered included online observations of the development of the wiki pages, students’ reflections
periodically posted in Web CT, final reflections, e-mail correspondence, interview transcripts, and researcher notes. All the activities were designed based on the syllabus. The results of the date analysis showed that the use of the wiki allowed students to do a deeply process in order to complete and understand all the activities. At the same time students felt comfortable with the use of the wiki and they considered it as a good strategy to assimilate the contents of the subjects.


In this study the technology was seen in a virtual campus at Malaga University. Those resources and tools allowed students to participate in an environment and interactive platform among some investigated students who had been conducted in this research. In fact, the surveys asked students to relate the different tools and to tell the tools were the most used by students. From there, the result showed that the most frequently used tools were social networks, forums and tasks, because based on the teacher and students perception they were the easiest tools to handle with.

For this reason, Web technology, 2.0 is seen from two fields: the first in an educational context, and the second in a social context. This research not only provides a constructivist approach but allows other approaches to critical thinking from students on the platform.

- *The Impact of Technology on Children’s Attainment in English: A Review of the Literature*

ICT research in education it’s been applied by BECTA and the University of Nottingham giving results that provide a general view about the achievements that can
be obtained when using ICT’s for educational purposes. On the following lines there will be a short description about aspects involved like reading and writing through the ICT and a study carried out at the University of Malaga.

Becta and the University of Nottingham did review on the impact of the ICT on children’s attainment in the key curricular areas of Reading, Spelling, Writing, and Speaking and Listening. This research was published in 2004 and considered how technology may be used to support the learning of English in children aged 5-16 years.

This study reports meaningful data about the percentage of English/ Literacy teachers who were confident using various forms of ICT resource. The following chart represents their data collected by BECTA in 2009 from 265 UK teachers. They state that there is a variation in terms of the different forms of ICT that are used during lessons.

(Figure 1: Percentage English/ Literacy taken from http://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/tr_comparison/)
On this table is shown the Percentage English/ Literacy teachers who reported using ICT in lessons more than once a week. It is clear that the use of technologies and internet has the similar frequency weekly. However they say that there is a limited use of learning platforms, and the secondary teachers reported using subject specific software and digital cameras less frequently than primary school teachers. However computers packages were used more frequently by secondary teachers.

The next study is about the use of Web 2.0 reading and writing understanding, cooperative learning and the use of the Wiki as a cooperative tool. The place in which the research was carried out is at the University of Malaga and it reports that the resources and tool allowed students to participate in an environment and interactive platform among some investigated students who had been conducted in this research. In fact, the surveys asked students to relate the different tools and to tell the tools were the most used by students. From there, the result showed that the most frequently used tools were social networks, forums and tasks, because based on the teacher and students perception they were the easiest tools to handle with.

For this reason, Web technology. 2.0 is seen from two fields: the first in an educational context, and the second in a social context. This research not only provides a constructivist approach but allows other approaches to critical thinking from students on the platform.

2.3 Perception about ICT

The human being senses play an important role in many situations of his learning process; thanks to them, it is possible to acquire specific knowledge since it is directly
related to a social environment as it is mentioned by Piaget (1960). However, that knowledge could be influenced by the assimilation process, where the external stimulus is able to capture people’s attention, generating different points of view about some particular information. The information presented in this text describes the concept of perception, its importance in educational processes and how ICTs have taken a determinant place in the learning methods by generating virtual learning environments.

Perception is a concept explained by Massarik and Wechsler (2000) as the action of forming positive or negative impressions which are able to influence our social behavior. They are ways by which people generate concepts and understand something related to their environment. An important part of that perception is closely linked to fashion, lifestyle and culture; because of that, it is possible to mention that perceptions begin their process through sight sense where all the images give us a first impression creating a specific stimulus which purports to make people behave in a certain way.

It is possible to say that this concept is also being applied in the Education field, in which the teaching methods are being focused on trying to catch students’ attention through visual aids. For example in the case of current technologies attention is caught by students throughout electronic images. Saussure (1910) contributes to the idea of visual perception by referring to signs. Signs become words, images, sounds, odors, flavors, acts or objects; this means that we perceive all the things around us and put them into signs. Those signs can have a positive or negative perception to the person who watches them.

Regarding the web technologies, perceptions can be defined as possibilities to find thousands of signs that may provoke an impression according to its objective. All the web pages have to create a perception on the user with the help of the colors, shapes, structures, words; those elements are placed in strategic places on the page. The user is
the person that analyses the information that is presented and finally says whether the information found is good or bad, helpful or not, if that catches his or her attention or if they liked or disliked it. That perception generated by means of a web page can be used in the education field. Students evaluate and analyze all the presented information and give a judgment according to what they perceived when they interacted with the web page (Rieh and Hilligoss, 2008).

Therefore a person that uses a web page can state that it was difficult to deal with the features or that the process of finding information and interacting with the tool was easy in some sense. All these feedback can be analyzed in order to provide useful information about the perception of a tool and then shared to improve the information and design as well.

As we can see there are many different ways to observe perception about the elements around us. Then it is necessary to be aware that all the things that are around provoke us a positive or negative perception and depending on this the human being provides the impressions and conclusions about the way a person perceives and uses the senses in order to understand the actions that happen in the environment. We consider that perception is one of the first skills that a human being uses when it is necessary to provide an impression about a tool, a web, etc. In this sense students can provide their impressions and ideas about what they perceive in relation to the use and management a wiki. This way students can say that the tool is user friendly, provides them with the necessary features, steps, explanation to develop the activities designed for them.
2.4 Using wiki as an educative tool

Changes in the last decades have influenced the way people conceive the world, and the development of social activities. As part of these changes we can mention in a first place the globalization process, new ways of capitalism production and the development of new technologies which have been, in between other uses, applied on the education processes. These new trends have brought a set of innovative tools that allow reducing time and money invested in different processes such as business, communications and others. Nowadays we can talk about a web life 2.0 (Dougherty 2004) which allows us to access an unlimited number of communities and social networks that increase the opportunity to interact with other people no matter our culture or geographical location. Dealing with education, these kinds of tools allow the flexibility in the educative and learning processes; Internet connection is the only requirement to access this world of evolving surprises.

Related to the use of technological tools it is possible to mention some of the well-known virtual spaces such as Facebook, Twitter, Social networks and Wiki among others which based on our experience promote communication on a massive scale and at a speed that no one could have imagined some years ago. We are familiarized with Facebook and Twitter because they are social networking sites characterized by allowing members to be engaged in joint work as making comments, editing information, having access to others members information (Dron and Anderson 2007), as well it is used to keep in touch and interact with friends family, etc. However the purpose of wikis is very different compared with the tools mentioned before. Based on the Journal of Research on Technology in Education, v42 n1 p51-72 Fall 2009, Wikis are collaborative web-based environments that allow multiple users to easily and
quickly contribute content. This characteristic makes a Wiki a suitable tool to work with a specific topic. We have seen that the wiki is a very useful tool that provides the users find out dynamic ways to develop target topics, comparing the improvement of the members of the wiki.

According to Thomas (2008) one of the most common particularities of the wikis is that they are dynamic and constantly changing. The author also says they are web pages where readers become authors and editors. Because of this, it is possible to say that this characteristic makes students interact more with this platform. Furthermore, Wikis work as cooperative learning tools by promoting communication in a web-site (Farabaugh, 2007; Mitchell, 2003) which permits increase the tool flexibility. Besides, it encourages users to access information and becoming aware of the cultural and personal benefits in its use. For example, a wiki is an ideal space to centralize the production of texts during processes of individual or collective writing (Hewitt & Scardamalia, 1998). This process permits to take into account each student’s knowledge.

At this point, it is considered that education should integrate technologies. At the same time, the inclusion of technology brings about the idea of autonomy. Then, these processes could be relevant to face the challenges brought by new trends of nowadays. Due to those new cultural tendencies, a mass movement where the people’s mind is adapted is required. In this sense, education field should be the one in charge of helping students supply social needs.
2.4.1 Characteristics of the wiki in the E-learning field

During the last couple decades E-learning has become an important way of education. In comparison to traditional education where all participants are located in the same place, E-learning represents a radical change in education process, because participants in E-learning supported with a modern information and communication technology (ICT). According to Newman, (2008) as a very simple definition E-learning is also defined as a modern ICT to deliver learning and training programs as well as changes the role of the materials in order to reflect and contribute in the development of new technological in the teaching learning process.

The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), (Jaleel, 2009), defines E-learning as a broad set of applications and processes which include web-based learning, computer-based learning and virtual classrooms. This is closely related to the concept of wiki because E-learning in its broadest sense refers to any learning process through virtual environments. Also many higher educational institutions adopt web-based learning systems for their e-learning courses. These learning processes provide the participants a wide variety of E-learning sets of tools with different features according to the purpose of the course. It is important to be aware that not all of the participants will get the same results at the end of their performances. It means the learning through this tool depends on many factors such as time, Internet speed connection, clarity of the activities among others which unfortunately do not guaranty the results.

Students do need to be reminded of copyright laws that prohibit copying and pasting content from other web sites and the importance of giving credit for others’ work (Belle, 2003). These kinds of behavior do not facilitate the cooperative learning between
technological background and research process because when a student does plagiarism it means the student does not respect the intellectual ownership. It is also relevant to teach them the legal consequences of doing it. We consider the learning-teaching processes are not just as an acquisition of knowledge, but it is also to teach the worth of the ideas and to recognize that is not easy to generate knowledge and other unscrupulous people take that knowledge as their own and take advantage of a profit. This is morally incorrect in the virtual learning process.

The wiki as a tool in E-learning helps students to share in a cooperative way the information that they look for as well as the results that they achieve during their performances. It implies that the members of the wiki develop a level of responsibility and autonomy. Usuki (2002) says that learner autonomy is characterized by learners taking charge of their own learning. Similarly, Little (1995) argues that learner autonomy happens when the student handles all aspects of the learning process from planning to assessing performance. When members are part of a wiki they need to be clear that no one is going to force them to do the activities because it is like virtual education where the teacher is not present and the students need to be active in the learning process.

We think that in order to make a wiki successful it is necessary to be aware about the importance of autonomy as fundamental element to the development of the activities. This concept related to Internet is defined as “a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action” (Little, 1991, p. 2), and it is also “the ability to take charge of one's own learning” (Holec, 1981, p. 3) The characteristics of autonomy are relevant because students must face the fact that the head teacher is not going to be guiding them face to face. The copy right laws should be taught as well as to understand the objective of the activities to be developed. This is due to the virtual learning process which is characterized by these requirements. These characteristics
allow students to develop successful educative programs (khan 2005) in our context the ICT are still unknown by some educators and students. Then, it is important to engage them by showing the facilities and advantages that ICT provides in the learning process.

2.5 Foreign language and ICT: the process of reading and writing in a wiki

The acquisition of a second language is attached to different processes such as migration of people, the contact between different cultures that belong to the same country or neighboring countries; even wars have caused the need to communicate in a language other than their own. At this time, the intense interaction among countries in political, economic and cultural aspects, as well as the circulation of information without borders has generated the need to establish different degrees of bilingualism or multilingualism (Fischer, 2006). This situation required the implementation of strategies that generate the interaction with a common language or in other cases the mother tongue. That is why teaching methods have changed with the purpose of facing the new challenges. These trends should be guided under pedagogical tactics as well as technological tools that help in order to achieve an easy learning process. We think that the teachers’ position can be demanding, because to teach languages is not only translating and doing sentences. It is also about understanding another culture, ways of thinking, beliefs. It means that the activities need to have authenticity and a context where culture has to be reflected in order to help students in the acquisition of a foreign language. This reflection allows and to help them to have a clear knowledge about the target culture, where the expressions and behaviors need to be related between context and language.
All in all, it is important to highlight that the acquisition of a foreign language is directly linked to the multiculturalism caused by the globalization process. The features of the new education system implies a radical change inside its teaching process offering to the education a different view of the conception of traditional education method. At the same time it is also reflected through the different writing compositions. These compositions have helped to understand the main roots or characteristics involved in cultures; however there are some parameters regarding to the reading process which allow students to get the information in an easy way without moving away the writing process. According to the aspects and features that belong to writing it is also necessary to mention the topic about writing having in mind that it plays an important to role as well as it is also a priority in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language. According to this we base our point of view about reading linking it to what Parra says.

2.5.1 Reading process

Based on Parra (1994), there are three concepts that determine the importance of reading in the cognitive processes and the relationships established with the environment. In first place, reading is defined as a complex and multifaceted process in which the cognitive system recognizes letters, related sounds, build phonological representations, remember different meanings and select the one which is more appropriate to the context. It also establishes a meaningfully value and build up the global sense of the text from the information provided.

In a second place, this activity is about seeking the meaning in a text because it is an act of thought than the language. From this conception it is possible to say that reading,
thinking and language are involved in a continuous exchange. This is in this moment that we, as researchers, consider reading as a suitable ability because it is the way in which the reader and the author share information through the text not only interacting with the reading but also showing social and cultural aspects that expose their own knowledge. Reading also generates an option to let the students acquire the proficiency in English taking into account the context.

Reading is one of the ways in which the individual acquires knowledge in order to become aware about cultural, social, economical aspects. This implies an active participation within a context and at the same time it develops the individuals’ creativity. Reading allows the improvement of one’s vocabulary helping to reach a better communicative skill. Pretorious E(1996) argues that there is a strong correlation between the reading skill and the understanding ability. Reading helps student get a wide range of words which allow him or her to comprehend better what is read. Therefore, when a person reads a lot is able to produce text with high quality that shows the close relation between reading and writing skills. For us, this relation brings the base to develop reading and writing activities in the wiki, because it is necessary for the members to understand short or long readings, and then to carry out the exercises related to the reading. The reading also allows students to produce a short passage applying what they learned in the previous activity.

2.5.2 Writing process

In the following lines we will cover the relation among wiki, reading and writing, in second place we will mention the kinds and level of the activities as well as the
definition of wiki, its features and finally the whole construct in terms of a unique definition of wiki.

The first author is Comellas (1984) who says that writing is drawn signs without meaning and that acquiring the learning of writing is paramount in communication; bearing in mind that writing is a process in which the learner interacts and communicates with others. It is important to know how to write in order to communicate via e-mail, a letter, a text message, to make comments in a blog, to complete an activity in a wiki. That is why the writing skill plays an important role in the development of a skill; this means that it is pretty necessary to acquire the vocabulary, the grammar patterns, understand the order of the words in a sentence and to be aware about the use and meaning of the words according to the context and language that will be used.

In this regard, the second author is Cassany (2007) who proposes a new approach to develop writing. The author states that if a person knows how to write then he or she is able to communicate with others properly, so that he or she can handle with any subject with eloquence and effectiveness as well. This can be seen in the case of the new ICT’s specially wiki, nowadays it has become part of the educative process and at the same time, it has been one of the most interesting and innovative tools to young people since it facilitates the learning process regarding reading and writing skills. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize on the relations among wikis and development in student’s writing and reading for foreign language.

It is also essential to identify some weaknesses that students have had along the time regarding the writing process. A sample of this is given by our experience in the use of the wiki where many of us did not find enough support to develop a coherent and complete text. Sometimes the problem is based on vocabulary related to the activity that was not the appropriate. Another problem has to do with activities that are not designed
according to the student’s level. For example Grabe and Kaplan (1996) offer a detailed discussion of teaching approaches at beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency in a foreign language writing. The authors suggest that at lower levels the activities must be short, because they help to build and develop a productive vocabulary. On the other hand, the content of the tasks can be extended for intermediate level students – developing complex topics and building a set of strategies for effective writing.

In the case of advanced level students, they need to develop a greater understanding of genres and the place of writing in particular speech communities. These students also need to establish a voice in the second language. We can understand that it is important to take into account the level of the students for their learning process (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). In others words, it is necessary that learners carry out the development step by step with the objective of learning and at the same time achieving an appropriate development in the writing skill.

Through the information mentioned before, we can conclude that it is relevant to recognize that the design process related to writing activities should consider important aspects such as grammar patterns, vocabulary, and cohesion among others. By the same way, the clear conception of the objectives that want to be reached determine in a wide range the success of the development of the activities. This statement brought us a clear definition about what we wanted to do regarding to the activities posted in the wiki. We considered that through this knowledge, it was possible for us to design meaningful activities.
2.5.3 Other aspects involved in the reading and writing processes

Reading and writing processes are important to extent the development of certain abilities that allow people to acquire a comprehension level. That is why that to understand what texts mean it is possible to use four stages from a cognitive model: The initial stage is related to perception, this is about observing the phonemes that also become words. These words build up sentences at the moment when they are organized. The next stage is decodification, which makes a conceptual configuration about information gathered in sentences and it is hierarchically organized.

The third stage is storage, in which semantic information enters to the short-term memory, managing the information processed in a short time (sounds, words). It organizes them hierarchically like propositions and then the information goes to the long-term memory, which stores the information related to situations, contexts, with other texts, cognitive state factors (beliefs, values, interests) etc. Finally, the evocation stage which recovers and reproduces the information collected in the long-term memory, either by recall or recognition.

In this case the person who writes needs to be aware of certain micro skills or "hubs" that allow him or her to perform a task efficiently. For Cassany (2007), the first axis consists of psychomotor and cognitive skills, the second is about the textual properties (coherence, cohesion, etc...) and the third ones are attitudes, which include at the same time the views and values that the person has about the language.

Therefore, when many elements are written, the subject needs to develop some steps and plans that must be done mentally. In that sense, writing becomes a simultaneous process
to carry out a task. Likewise, the writer faces difficulties related to the subject, knowledge, with information management or the "way" that he/she has chosen to write. According to Anna Camps (1990) writing can have an epistemic function, and it may contribute to the development of thoughts.

As researchers, we consider that the wiki requires members to apply the steps mentioned before, because it is going to help him or her to understand the reading and writing activities. These types of mental processes promote the acquisition of knowledge in a virtual space.

Cunningham who defines “wiki” as a hypertext system for storing and modifying information - a database with each page being easily editable by any user through a standard Web browser, talks about the objective of offering flexibility and authenticity in the development of reading and writing skills which is essential to be aware of the importance of the wiki in the skills development process.

In addition, “the features of a wiki offer the potential to incorporate it into educational contexts. These key features include a user-friendly interface for editing the content, history tracking, defining the size of authoring groups, and a non-linear structure for editing” (Cunningham 2001, page 53), the features of the wiki offer a high impact in the students, as these offer a maximum performance for them when students carry out the collaborative work. The opportunity to collaborate allows an interchange of information or in some cases the acquisition of ideas from other people regarding to a common topic and also letting students to learn from their classmates. Regarding this statement, we as researchers are aware of the importance to promote the collaborative work among students. Thanks to this cooperation it is possible to assess through peer evaluation, self evaluation and co-evaluation a joint work.
As a result, in the relationship between the reading and writing skills through wiki it is important to mention how the tool promotes a high interest for the students, as well as it motivates them to participate actively in the learning process. The wiki promotes collaborative work of reading and writing which can be edited interactively by any number of people using online tools. When the students have the opportunity to interact with other people, they can increase the mastering of the skills applying different tasks in a long term.

As a conclusion, the use of this tool generates a virtual relation between the tool and the members. Therefore, the wiki is the channel by which is possible to promote the reading and writing process taking into account didactic and teaching elements. In this sense, the mental processes are used to generate knowledge and improve the proficiency of the management in a second language.

### 2.6 Constructivism learning theory

There are many approaches and methods that are used in order to teach a language. All of them help teachers depending on the context, the population, the institution and the subject that will be taught.

One of these approaches is the Constructivism which states that "learners construct their own reality or at least interpret it based upon their perceptions of experiences, so an individual's knowledge is a function of one's prior experiences, mental structures, and beliefs that are used to interpret objects and events." "What someone knows is grounded in perception of the physical and social experiences which are comprehended by the mind." (Jonassen:1991).
Jonassen (1991) notes that many educators and cognitive psychologists have applied constructivism to the development of learning environments. From these applications, he has isolated a number of design principles. One of those principles says that “Learning should be internally controlled and mediated by the learner” (ibid). Wilson and Cole (1991) state that teacher need to embed learning in a rich authentic problem-solving environment; provide for authentic versus academic contexts for learning; provide for learner control.

In this sense we as teachers need to understand that the learning in our students according to the Constructivism is done by students. Students are the ones that construct their own knowledge and we the teachers assist them in that process. Honebein (1996: p.11) describes seven goals for the design of constructivist learning environments which are the followings: provide experience with the knowledge construction process; provide experience in and appreciation for multiple perspectives; embed learning in realistic and relevant contexts; encourage ownership and voice in the learning process; embed learning in social experience; encourage the use of multiple modes of representation; encourage self-awareness in the knowledge construction process.

The learning occurs when the students are able to study in an environment which provides them with real world activities, these activities will provide students the ability in order to act according to the social context in which they are in a specific moment.
2.7 Constructivism teaching theory

In addition, the challenging task of teaching that we have got is huge. We need to be aware about the importance of transmitting our knowledge as well as help our students to construct, to analyze, to interpret and to allow them to make their own conclusions about any subject; in other words, we must help them to generate their own reflections and knowledge.

In order to make this experience easier in our teaching process; there is also a Constructivism Teaching Theory that provides us with meaningful information which is available to be used in our daily pedagogical intervention. Jia (2010: pag 1) states that according to the teaching theory: Knowledge is a construction process, our classes need to be student centered, students are the ones who take the initiative, we as teachers ask the questions and students tell the answers. We as teachers do not provide any information to the students neither the conclusions of a process instead of that, students are the ones who make their own conclusions. (ibid: 2010). In this sense students are involved in an atmosphere of own learning and teaching construction. Students are the ones that decide what to learn and the most important feature: they produce knowledge.

Constructivism teaching theory also refers to the fact that teaching should take students’ previous knowledge and experience as the growth point of new knowledge, and introduce students to generate new knowledge from the former(ibid: 2010 page 1). This means that we must encourage students to produce their own ideas, even if they do not know anything about; they are able to assume this challenge with our help. We as teachers also need to be the ones who prepare the teaching environment, make it as
authentic as possible, and recognize students as the center of the process under our
guidance in the whole process.

Constructivism is an excellent method that was born to provide the students with the
tools to become the main character in the learning and teaching process. It is necessary
to be aware that not all of the students develop the process in the same level because
every student has his own life perception and view, they have different experiences that
help them to learn and arrive to the classroom to use all that potential as Jia (2010 page
1) states that students enter the classroom with their rich previous experiences and we as
teachers need to learn how to take advantage of this situation and help them to apply it
and use to acquire a meaningful learning.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

“Teachers at the higher-level of technology integration stages are more likely to utilize the benefits of ICT in their teaching. When teachers realize the potential for improving learning through the effective use of technology, and when their competencies in ICT are improved they become competent technology users. Only then they start to change the way they teach” Altun, 2002.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

At this point of our lives we are truly aware about the importance of research and the benefits it brings to our educational practices. There are many advantages, disadvantages, memorable moments, sad situations that make our role as teachers stronger. Every day that we go to our classrooms we can observe in our students different behaviors, interest, learning styles so our role is to think about those challenges and changes that affect the teaching process.

We decided to use Action reserahto explore about the reading and writing skills taking into account the wiki as a cooperative tool. However it is necessary to be aware that not all of the teachers want to do research. Some of the reasons are the lack of time, money and interest. Locastro (2000) and Fandino (2007) say that most practitioners do not
react enthusiastically when they hear the word research then, the variable of time plays an important role because most of the teachers do not have the time to assume this role.

In this research we were really aware about the importance of this practice and the benefits it brings to our lives and not only about the graduation and certification but about the hard task that we developed during two years. This is based on what Fandiño (2007) say that teachers should use educational research to see their roles as teacher in a certain context and start thinking about the new challenges they will face in the future. Then it is possible to talk about the importance of the ICT nowadays and the role that they play in the modern teaching context.

### 3.2 Classroom research

Nunan (1990) states that ESL or EFL classroom research is carried out in order to answer questions related to the teaching of foreign languages. To him the data is taken from real or artificial context (1990). In this sense it is acceptable to say that this research was though in order to answer a question that wants to give answers to a real setting in this case generated directly from the practicum that we performed at the CUN University.

Nunan (1990) says that classroom research is open to be carried out either on teachers or on learners. Our project was focused on learners of some of the majors given at the CUN University. In that sense we proposed our objectives according to the following Nunan’s (1990) list about the items that are taken into account when developing
classroom research. In first place we find the developmental aspects of learner language, then the learning styles and strategies used by different learners, next we have the type of language prompted by various types of materials and pedagogic task, then comes the classroom interaction that takes place between learners, and last but not least the effect of this interaction on learner language development.

The list above provides a horizon in the development of the project; the process carried out aimed to explore the students perception about the aspects related to the use of the wiki regarding reading comprehension and writing production. In addition to this the learning styles and strategies used by learners were proposed to generate constructivism as well as to promote the use of the ICTs available to be used with educational purposes. The materials and pedagogic task were innovative since students used the e-learning and could practice in order to master the use of the pc and even the knowledge required to explore a wiki or any webpage. The effects produced in the students at the end of each activity, the comments and suggestions given by the learners allowed us to understand that they are open to the new strategies and methods used to learn English.

3.2.1 Learner centered research

The learner centered research focus its attention on the students’ results. At the beginning of the project with the definition of the problem and the research method, we considered as fundamental to observe the conception of “learner-centered” between teachers and learners in a pedagogical field. This study tries to systematize and analysis
the students’ interactions and experiences related to the use of wikis as technological tools. That is why we consider that learner-centered research provides us opportunities to negotiate different facts such as tools, content, time, among others. These kinds of aspects promote a favorable learning environment.

This research gives us the guidelines to establish the relationship between different roles among peers (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) allowing us to make a fit systematization of the date gathered and at the same time it provides effective assistance as learner’s progress in the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978).

3.2.2 Approaches in classroom research

Fandiño (2007 p. 94) says that “the approach one adopts depends on the nature of the research one aims to do. However a wide a variety of approaches are used to obtain and analyze the data, and the choice of the approach depends among many factors: the researcher’s, the issue to be investigated, constrains inherent in the situation and so on”. He explains the difference between Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches and cites E. Babbie (1983) who states that “Qualitative analysis is “the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observation for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships” as opposed to quantitative research, the numerical representation and manipulation of observation for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observations reflect”. Based on what both authors state and cite we adopted the Qualitative Approach in this research that we will explain in detail on the following paragraphs.
3.3 Research approach: Qualitative

In the last decade, the use and acceptance of the qualitative paradigm, has had a relevant growth due to three factors. The first is based on the characteristics of the scientific method because those characteristics are not able to be applied in some research fields. The second is the large disappointment that scientific method produced in results related to vital areas such as education and human development and finally, the different request from public and private agencies to provide qualitative projects (Martínez, 1998). The qualitative research rejects the idea of quantifying all human reality and at the same time the qualitative research is aware about the irrelevance relate to the quantification and the importance of the context, the role and meaning of the human acts.

We choose the Qualitative Research paradigm taking into account the research question and based on what Tezanos (2001) says about this topic. To here the Qualitative Research paradigm refers to the streams such as positivism in which social phenomena are defined like objects that produce an external and casual power on the subjects.

The chart below is an adaptation of a chart in a text called Understanding and conducting qualitative research by Stainback and Stainback (1988, p. 8-9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Qualitative paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Understanding-seeks why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality</td>
<td>Dynamic-reality changes with people’s perceptions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1: Understanding and conducting qualitative research by Stainback and Stainback (1988, p. 8-9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewpoint</th>
<th>Insider-reality is what people perceive to be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Value bound- Values are important and need to be understood during the research process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Holistic-a total or complete picture is sought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Discovery-Theories and hypotheses are evolved from data as it is controlled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>Subjective-Data are perceptions of the subjects in the environment (context).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Human-the human person is the primary data collection instrument such as observing and reporting on behavior and expressed feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditions</td>
<td>Naturalistic-investigations are conducted under natural conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Valid- the focus is on design and procedures to gain rich, real and deep data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chart above offers and clarifies in a wide view the reason why we choose the qualitative method and clarifies that people is the most important element in the research followed by the types of data that can be collected and the results that we can achieve using this research method.
Since we took into account the student’s perception about the use of a wiki log, this research method is perfect for our purpose because as it is stated above subjective data are perceptions of the subjects in the environment.

3.3.1 ACTION RESEARCH

In this section we will talk about the research paradigm that we chose: Action Research (AR) which according to Fandiño (2007) based on Carr & Kemmis (1986) “is a combination of the terms action and research. AR puts ideas into practice for the purpose of self-improvement and increasing knowledge about curriculum, teaching and learning. The ultimate result is improvement in what happens in the classroom and school”. This definition is a valid concept because we want to help to solve a problem identified in a group of students related to the use of the new ICT more specifically about the use of a tool called wiki. Then this paradigm fits perfectly taking into account the purposes of the research and the objectives stated above.

There are some principles in AR. O’Brien (1998) cites Winter (1987) who says the following:

**Reflexive critique:** An account of a situation, such as notes, transcripts or official documents, will make implicit claims to be authoritative, i.e., it implies that it is factual and true. Truth in a social setting, however, is relative to the teller. The principle of reflective critique ensures people reflect on issues and processes and make explicit the interpretations, biases,
assumptions and concerns upon which judgments are made. In this way, practical accounts can give rise to theoretical considerations.

**Dialectical critique:** reality, particularly social reality, is consensually validated, which is to say it is shared through language. Phenomena are conceptualized in dialogue; therefore a dialectical critique is required to understand the set of relationships both between the phenomenon and its context, and between the elements constituting the phenomenon. The key elements to focus attention on are those constituent elements that are unstable, or in opposition to one another. These are the ones that are most likely to create changes.

**Collaborative Resource:** participants in an action research project are co-researchers. The principle of collaborative resource presupposes that each person’s ideas are equally significant as potential resources for creating interpretive categories of analysis, negotiated among the participants. It strives to avoid the skewing of credibility stemming from the prior status of an idea-holder. It especially makes possible the insights gleaned from noting the contradictions both between many viewpoints and within a single viewpoint

**Risk:** the change process potentially threatens all previously established ways of doing things, thus creating psychic fears among the practitioners. One of the more prominent fears comes from the risk to ego stemming from open discussion of one’s interpretations, ideas, and judgments. Initiators of action research will use this principle to allay others’ fears and invite participation by pointing out that they, too, will be subject to the same process, and that whatever the outcome, learning will take place.
Plural Structure: the nature of the research embodies a multiplicity of views, commentaries and critiques, leading to multiple possible actions and interpretations. This plural structure of inquiry requires a plural text for reporting. This means that there will be many accounts made explicit, with commentaries on their contradictions, and a range of options for action presented. A report, therefore, acts as a support for ongoing discussion among collaborators, rather than a final conclusion of fact.

Theory, Practice, Transformation: For action researchers, theory informs practice, practice refines theory, in a continuous transformation. In any setting, people’s actions are based on implicitly held assumptions, theories and hypotheses, and with every observed result, theoretical knowledge is enhanced. The two are intertwined aspects of a single change process. It is up to the researchers to make explicit the theoretical justifications for the actions, and to question the bases of those justifications. The ensuing practical applications that follow are subjected to further analysis, in a transformative cycle that continuously alternates emphasis between theory and practice.

3.3.1.1 Action Research methods

Inside this approach there are AR methods as follows: research journal, document collection and analysis, participant observers, nonparticipant observers, questionnaire surveys, structured and unstructured interviews. We will mention some of the
characteristics of each one of these methods and the possible relations that they might have direct or indirectly with the purpose of the project.

Fandiño (2007) based on Burns (1999) says that observation is taking regular and conscious notice of classroom actions and occurrences which are particularly relevant to the issues or topics being investigated. It also refers to using procedures that ensure that the information collected provides a sound basis for answering research questions and supporting the interpretations that are reached. This is key information that works for us because during the development of our project we had the chance to be the assistants of the head teacher in the institution where the project was carried out the CUN University. Our role as students-teachers was to observe and then write in our journals all the meaningful data, activities and useful information that could help us to answer the research question. We were **Participant Observers** which stands for the person that “takes part in whatever is going on in the site in order to better understand the insider or emic experience” (Riemer 2008 p. 207). We had the chance to interact with students and provide them with training about the steps to join to the wiki and how to develop the activities in the Wiki log itself.

On the other hand there is the **Nonparticipant Observers** who only observe and ask questions to write down what they see and heard (Fetterman 1989). It is clear that we also took part of this method because we could see on the Wiki what the students were doing independently if they were following the instructions or not. This method was the one that we used most of the time in the data collection process.
3.3.1.2 The AR cycle

In AR there is a cycle that according to Gerald Susman (1983) which includes five steps: diagnosing, action planning, taking action, evaluating, and specifiying learning as shows the following figure.

(Figure 2: the AR cycle taken from Gerald Susman (1983).)
Our research had all of the steps above and guided us when developing each of the activities planned and the process itself.

In addition to this Ferrance (2000 p. 16) says that there are some step in AR. Here we have her point of view.

**Identify a problem area:** it is a step where we have to be very careful to avoid false starts frustrations. To her there are several criteria to take into account as well as the research question should be:

- A higher order question. Not a yes/no
- Stated in common language, avoiding jargon
- Concise
- Meaningful
- Not already have an answer.

**Gather data:** “The collection of data is an important step in deciding what action needs to be taken. Multiple sources of data are used to better understand the scope of happenings in the classroom or school” (ibid, p. 17) To her there are many ways to collect data: “interviews, portfolios, diaries, field notes, audio tapes, photos, memos, questionnaires, focus groups, anecdotal records, checklists, journals, individual files, logs of meetings, videotapes, case studies, surveys, records – tests, report cards, attendance, self-assessment, samples of student work, projects, and performances. “Use at least three sources (triangulation) of data for the basis of actions. Organize the data in a way that makes it useful to identify trends and themes. Data can be arranged by gender, classroom, grade level, school,” (ibid, p. 17).

**Interpret data:** analyze and identify major themes. Teachers are allowed to use classroom data, individual data, or subgroup data. Data can be quantifiable and analyzed
without the use of statistics or technical assistance. To her data that are not quantifiable can be reviewed holistically and important elements or themes can be noted (ibid, p. 18)

**Act on evidence:** “Using the information from the data collection and review of current literature, design a plan of action that will allow you to make a change and to study that change” (ibid, p. 18) To her It is important that only one variable be altered. As with any experiment, if several changes are made at once, it will be difficult to determine which action is responsible for the outcome.

**Evaluate results:** Assess the effects of the intervention to determine if improvement has occurred.

**Next steps:** As a result of the action research project, identify additional questions raised by the data and plan for additional improvements, revisions, and next steps.

### 3.3.1.3 Interpretative Action Research

O’Brien (1998) says that interpretative action research is characterized by a belief in socially constructed, subjectively-based reality, one that is influenced by culture and history. To him the researcher is a passive collector and expert interpreter of data. In this case the data that we collected throughout the observations, the Wikilog and the surveys answered by the students at the end of each activity that they developed.
3.4 Participants and settings

This research was developed in an university located in Bogotá D.C. called Corporación Unificada Nacional CUN at the downtown branch. The zone is located in the downtown of Bogotá D.C in the locality of Candelaria in Las Aguas neighborhood. The socio-economical level is between 2 and 3. This university offers students technical, technological and professional degrees. We performed our research practicum there during a year and a half. The study was developed with students from the first semester in the evening schedule of careers like Business Administration, Hostess and Tourist services, Accounting, Health Services Administration and Graphic Design as well. The group was composed by 28 students. They are aged between 20 and 30 years old.

It is important to clarify that most of the students sometimes do not have time to do the assignments because they have to work late or cannot attend to class, too. Even though, there were students that did not have these difficulties because their schedule was flexible and they handed all the activities in and attended to class regularly. In order to develop this pedagogical intervention La Salle University chose the CUN University as the place where we had to develop our practicum and at the same time carry out the project. The CUN assigned us the groups, the main teacher, the class’s schedule, and the syllabus as well.
This section attempts to describe the pedagogical innovation which was related to the implementation of the wiki as a teaching-learning tool at LA CUN University. The context in which students were attending classes was the main branch of the institution located downtown in Bogotá. This implementation took place with twenty-eight students in English introductory, ages between 18 and 30. The students took English two hours once a week.

During the observation carried out by us at La CUN University our intervention was focused on identifying the characteristics and the students’ needs regarding to English learning process. Through that intervention we had in mind the location and cultural context of the students. Taking into account those aspects we were able to identify the specific problem with the most suitable strategy to try to give more spaces to the students in order to develop the English communicative skills by using Internet tools in a virtual context.

At the beginning of the practicum, we noticed that students enjoyed the few dynamic activities which allowed them to contextualize the topics developed by the head teacher. At the same time, it was possible to observe some of the difficulties related to the time available to have contact with the foreign language in this case English due to most of the students had to study and work simultaneously. On the other hand, there was the fact of the short time and the few spaces provided by the University with the aim of improving the students’ proficiency in English. These aspects added to the lack of motivation and the great amount of students in the same classroom provoked that the
material design and the activities were not the most suitable strategies to supply the requirements established by the curriculum.

Based on the new trends, the Constructivism approach tries to engage students to be relevant part in the construction of their knowledge, generating thus strategies that require an autonomous process in the development of their activities. This main characteristic makes the teaching-learning process redirects the traditional methods. Nowadays the technological tools allow making the constructivism approach a suitable aid to get better results in the EFL through the development of didactic activities. Inside of the characteristics of these trends it is also important to mention the teacher’s role which is basically to serve as a students’ guide in the acquisition of knowledge process.

3.5.1 Approach method: Constructivism

The meaning of constructivism varies taking into account our point of view and position, although in the educational context we can identify different meanings. By this reason, this theory has been traced to the eighteenth century with different meanings. (Cannella & Reiff, 1994), defined Constructivism as “an epistemology, a learning or meaning-making theory which offers an explanation of knowledge’s nature and how human are learning of a constantly way”. The building of the knowledge in the constructivism is through interaction based on the previous experiences in relation with the new knowledge, allowing in the individual an easy acquisition of different knowledge through didactic activities.
3.5.2 Teachable question and thematic development

According to the methods and approaches used for the development of this project, we proposed this pedagogical question as the support of this research project:
How do students develop their writing and reading skills in English as a foreign language by means of a wiki based on the Constructivism approach?

The activities were designed based on the Constructivism which describes the teacher’s role as passive and the students’ roles as active as Jia (2010 p:1) says that “teachers should be the designer of teaching environment, the guider for students’ learning, and the academic consultant for students. It discards the traditional teaching mode that takes teachers as the center, which merely focuses on conveying knowledge, regarding students as the object for receiving knowledge. The new teaching mode takes students as the center, under the guidance of teachers. Teachers organize and guide the whole teaching process”.

In addition to this we were able to design the activities uploaded them to the wiki and students were in charge of copying, pasting and developing the activities themselves in their own page. This let us see that the students are active instead of passive.

The first activity was thought in order to identify the inconveniences, problems about editing or adding new information, and following instructions by means of developing a training activity. The training was created with the aim of giving the enough instructions such as the way to create an account, a password, how to log in, follow instructions,
among others in order to start to use the wiki. That activity was based on the first topic of the syllabus which was related to the vocabulary about professions, nationalities as well as the use of the “A” and “An” articles. The verb To Be was also included because we considered it very important to produce basic sentences.

At the beginning of the page students could find the images about the different professions that people choose in order to execute in their lives. The images were useful and eye-catching with movement. This characteristic made the activity interesting. After students observed the images they had to observe six sentences that had words with different colors like this: the articles “A” and “An” are in blue, the professions are in green, the preposition from is in brown and the countries are in green. This was in order to help students to understand the use of the indefinite articles, the verb to be in relation to the nationalities.

Then students had to click on the red bottom and observe a chart with the names of the countries, the objective and the noun related to the nationalities. The first activity was a hung man activity in which they had to guess the name on the nationality word by word. The second activity included a listening exercise related to the nationalities.

The evaluation of the activity was basically focused on the observation to determine if the students had learned how to use the wiki, in order to clarify any doubt or inconvenience before the development of the real activities.

The first activity was designed in order to develop the topic about family members. The purpose was that students had to be able to recognize the vocabulary about the family members taking into account the Simpsons Family. In this part students should get into the website http://cun-university.wikispaces.com/My++Family and log-in with their user
name and account in order to develop the activity. We wanted to use the Simpsons family as a context because it is very familiar for the students. It also offers the opportunity to show culture values as well as it is motivating because most of the students like to watch this TV show.

At the beginning of the activity students could see an image about the relationship among the family members in order to help them to get contextualized through a visual aid. Then, they could find a short greeting from Lisa Simpson inviting students to develop the activities in which they had to choose the correct relationship between Lisa and one of her family members.

The next activity aimed the completion of Maggie’s physical and personal description based on the explanation and the exercises carried out with the guidance of the head teacher in the classroom, so it was not necessary to give them a second explanation. And last but not least the writing production had to do with the composition of each one’s biography using as reference the previous content. The last activity showed us a little bit about the students ‘level writing, management of vocabulary as well as appropriateness of the topic taught.

Part of the sequence included an assignment regarding to the description of the human body. In that activity we kept the context of the Simpson’s Family but we just used one of the member of the family who was Homer. The purpose of the activity was focused on identifying basic vocabulary by means of filling in the blanks in a picture with the help of another image previously shown. We also provided them a website in which they had to listen the pronunciation of the vocabulary worked in the task. After there was a vocabulary available to be used by students with the purpose of producing a description related to their own body. Students were given a model which could be used as a reference to develop their own paragraph body description. The final activity
allowed us to identify the writing skill applied to produce a personal paragraph using a basic vocabulary.

One of the last activities was designed in order to reinforce the topic about how to describe the preferences in other words likes and dislikes. Students might look for the likes and dislikes link and then identify the vocabulary as well as the grammar structures. Those grammar structures were based on the simple present tense and were shown using sentences based on the Simpson’s family as well. The next step included a short dialogue which was used to contextualize and exemplified the content. Based on that dialogue students had to click on a link and then develop an activity in which they had to drag the correct answer and put it on the blanks to complete the exercise.

After having done the activity students needed to watch a video that was uploaded in the wiki. That video had as purpose to help students with the pronunciation and use of the topic developed. Then they could complete the next task which allowed them to identify the correct expressions to express likes and dislikes based on some images.

In order to analyze the grammar management and the understanding of the topic, students might produce a short paragraph expressing their preferences and dislikes about food, and free time activities.

Finally the last activity was focused on developing a cooperative writing among six students. They had to include all the topics used in the wiki. The design of the activity required to make a division among the topics and in this sense assign responsibilities to avoid repetition in the topics. Through this way we finished the implementation of the activities through the wiki with students from la Cun University.
3.5.3 Methodology

The first decision taken about the methodology to follow in the wiki was related to introduce the concept of wiki. In the first stage of explanation we gave them the instructions about how to create a Wiki account, the process to edit the information and to save the changes and how to be careful with their classmates information and even their own one. However, some of them did not follow the steps given, other students could not create the account, some others did not develop the activities, and some of them deleted the information making the process even longer and difficult. Because of all of the situations mentioned above, we had to design a document that provided students step by step instructions about how to access the platform, how to join the wiki, how to edit the information and how to develop the testing activities as well.

We began an awareness process about the importance of carrying out the activities on their own pages and especially the fact related to avoiding copying or using information of their partners, nevertheless, there were some activities that involved collaborative work, thus they could have in their minds their classmates activities so that they develop their own. At this point of the process we were able to identify that for most of the students it was difficult the fact of following instructions about how to access the wiki. In addition to this some computers did not allow students to access certain pages such as Hotmail, Youtube, Facebook even to the Wikispaces web pages. Some of the students could not access with the passwords that were sent to their e-mails. That is why the situation became stressful for students because they did not understand what they had to do or they felt lost in the process.
In order to develop the educational activities we took into account the topics related to the curriculum provided by the head teacher. The activities had to be short, to provide a meaningful context, to involve cultural aspects as well as to include the vocabulary related to the activities that were developed previously by the teacher in the classes. It is important to point out that the level of the students was basic so we had to develop activities that were not too demanding regarding grammar structures and vocabulary as well.

Based on this situation, we decided to use a technological tool in order to develop activities that could promote the practice as well as the learning of a foreign language, in this case English. This tool is available in a web page called Wikispaces. The wiki allows the implementation of a wide set of activities that cover each one of the topics introduced with the support of the teacher in the classroom. In addition to this, the activities were designed for basic level students with level A1 according to the common European Framework. It also provided students a certain percentage of grammar examples with the objective of clarifying doubts about verbs, tenses and vocabulary. This gave motivation to the students in order to achieve certain development skill to perform activities in the wiki.

The available activities in the wiki were developed by the students along three sessions, these ones were about the following topics: Simple Present Tense, Nationalities, Defined articles, Family members, Parts of the body, Likes and dislikes, Food vocabulary, Personal information, Verb To Be, Physical and Personality description and Leisure activities. Each of the activities contained three steps: a warm up which introduced the topic, a short practice activity and finally an exercise in which students had to write a paragraph or short sentences.
On the other hand, six students out of twenty-eight developed the activities proposed in the wiki. Students perceived the tool and the activities as a suitable strategy to improve their Basic English level and they also considered the wiki an excellent way to practice what they have learned in class because it allows the learning of vocabulary and makes better their performance regarding technology.

3.5.4 Achievements gained with the methodology

At the end of our pedagogical intervention which was carried out with the group of A1 students from the CUN University, we could notice that the students’ motivation towards the implementation of the Wiki was good in general. They acquired a significant amount of vocabulary as well as good competence related to the use of grammar structures like the Simple Present Tense, the Verb To Be and the tasks developed in the wiki.

The fact that the head teacher asked us to work with the vocabulary already taught by her in class meant that students could reinforce the acquisition and practice of the vocabulary itself. As the activities showed, the performance of the students reflected the improvement and management about the themes proposed. In addition to this, we designed authentic activities related to familiar topics. This fact made easier the understanding of the activities because they linked the grammar structures and vocabulary taking into account the context provided by the images, pictures, words, examples, videos, and conversations in the dialogues.
Despite of the fact that the design of the activities was focused on grammar and vocabulary aspects they had a second goal related to the involvement of students in the reading and writing processes. This situation allowed students to change their perception about English as an isolated subject making them able to understand the deep cultural value involved in the learning of an EFL. For us, the students researchers of this project, it was great to find that it is possible to create dynamic activities that allowed students to feel more comfortable and confident through the use of technological tools in this case wiki as well as the fact of overcoming different obstacles for finally getting good results, achieving with this the objectives stated at the beginning of this research project.

As a conclusion, we think that the project took the students to start thinking that the learning of a language does not have to be linked with the traditional teaching method. Instead of that they could notice that there are other ways to learn English, among these new teaching trends they could find that the ICT is an alternative path to acquire a certain level of EFL.

3.6 Data collection instruments

In our case we decided to choose the qualitative research taking into account that it is important to recognize the importance of the human being for the purpose of the research because is the main part where information is taken (Stainback and Stainback 1988). Then other instruments were chosen like the journal, the survey and the wikilog. All of them provided us with rich information.
3.6.1 Student journal or diaries

Fandiño (2007 p. 125) cites Burns (1999 p. 89) who says that Diaries and journals are an alternative to field notes, or a supplement if time permits. For Fandiño the diaries and student journal provide continuing accounts of perception and though processes as well as of critical events or issues with surface in the classroom. Not only do they contain subjective and personal reflections and interpretations but also they enable some of the pressures to be taken off’ (2007 p.125). Our thesis tutor asked us to write a journal which was used in order to register all the activities developed in class in order to identify a problem that we could give a possible solution. We also wrote the explanations done about the way to access to the wiki and all the steps needed to join the wiki.

(Artifact 1: Student journal Yanneth Montero April 15th 2009)
3.6.2 Online Questionnaire

Fandiño (2007) based on Burns (1999) defines questionnaires as non-observational techniques for data collection. Questionnaires are written sets of questions used to gain responses in non-face-to-face situations. The questions are usually focused on specific issues and may invite either factual or attitudinal response. We used the online questionnaire which consist in getting information students as well as form teachers asking for perceptions, attitudes and main information about the ways processes were carried out and the possible suggestions that could emerge.

**Online Questionnaire sample Nº 1**

**Name:** Satisfaction survey Activity #1 professions

**Objective:** To see the percentage of satisfaction that students had after they developed the activities related to the professions.

**Design:** includes seven closed-ended questions and at the end there is an open ended questions.

At the beginning of the survey there was a request that asked students to spent five minutes answering the questions in order to improve the wiki for the students benefit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name and last name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Did the presentation of the activity had an order? And the possible answers were:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Neutral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Was the exposition of the topic clear? And the possible answers were:
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree

4. Was the activity motivating? And the possible answers were:
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree

5. Did the information given facilitate the comprehension of the topic? And the possible answers were:
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree

6. During the development of the activities Did you doubts were answered? And the possible answers are:
   - Yes
   - No

7. Grade this activity from 1 to 5 taking into account that 1 is bad and 5 is excellent.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

8. For us it is really important your suggestions in order to improve our tool.
(Table 2: online questionnaire about the students’ perception in the first activity related to the professions)

The webpage provided us with the results of the survey. Then we did the analysis of the results in a qualitative way with the idea of systematizing the information provided by the students.

(Artifact 2: online questionnaire about the students’ perception in the first activity related to the professions


October 2010)
Online Questionnaire sample Nº 2

Name: Perception about the use of the Wiki

Objective: To see what is the students’ perception about the facility and utility of the Wiki

Design: includes five closed-ended questions

At the beginning of the survey there was an explanation that stated that most of the questions are related with the perception that was generated about the use of the wiki. It includes terms as facility and utility.
Questions:

1. Name and last name

2. What is your career? And the possible answers are:
   - Business Administration
   - Agroindustrial Business Administration
   - Accounting
   - Health Services Administration
   - Direction and Production of Audiovisual media
   - International Business
   - Design and Production of Fashion
   - Hotel and Tourist Administration
   - Graphic Design
   - Electronic Engineering
   - Systems Engineering

3. Were the instructions clear enough? And the possible answers were:
   - Totally
   - A lot
   - Not enough
   - A little
   - No

4. What is the grade of satisfaction until now? And the possible answers were:
   - Excellent
   - Very good
   - Good
   - Regular
   - Bad

5. The access to the wiki was:
- Easy
- Difficult
- Normal

(Table 3: online questionnaire about the students’ perception about the wiki. October 2010)

(Artifact 4: online questionnaire about internet technology’s use
October 2010)
Online Questionnaire sample Nº 3

Name: Internet technology's use

Objective: To see what is the students’ perception about the facility and utility of the Wiki

Design: includes five closed-ended questions
At the beginning of the survey there was an explanation that stated “This survey will aim us to determine the frequency in which you use the Internet, the places where you use to access to this service and the main reasons for using this tool. It is important that you answer the questions sincerely and fill the data clearly”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name and last name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age. Possible answers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. E-mail: Example (laura.12@gmail.com)

### 4. Gender: possible answers
- Male
- Female

### 5. Where do you use the internet? Possible answers
- At Home
- At School
- At Cyber café
- At Library
- At Work

### 6. How often do you use internet for personal or professional purposes?
Possible answers
- Never
- Less than once a month
- 1 - 3 days a month
- Once a week
- 2 - 4 days a week
- Day after day
7. **Do you know what a wiki is?**

- Yes
- No (if your answer is "NO" please go to question 10)

8. **What do you know about wiki?** Possible answers

- It is a platform to meet people
- It is a web site to get information
- Wikis are collaborative Web-based environments that allow multiple users to easily and quickly contribute content
- Everybody can make changes in the wiki
- It helps to develop writing and reading skills
- It helps to produce shared knowledge that benefits everyone
- It is for free

9. **Choose which of these platforms do you know:**

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Wikispaces
- Blogger

(Table 4: online questionnaire about internet technology’s use
Artifact 6: online questionnaire about internet technology’s use


October 2010

Artifact 7: online questionnaire about internet technology’s use

(Artifact 8: online questionnaire about internet technology’s use
October 2010)
3.6.3 Wiki log

We used the Wiki log which is really important because since it is the main record of information and where students had the chance to practice some of the topics that were studied in previous classes. It is linked with the questionnaire because at the end of each activity students could answer some questions and provide their perception and suggestions about the educational use to the wiki, the advantages and disadvantages it has. Wikis are dynamic and in constantly changing (Op cit, p.29). To him Wikis are web pages where readers become authors and editors. There are also some authors who state that wikis work as cooperative learning tools by promoting communication in a web-site (Op cit. P.29)

The following images belong to an activity developed in the Wiki

**Name:** The Simpson’s Family

**Objective:**
To identify the vocabulary related to the members of the family.
To write down a short description of any member of the Simpson’s family
To write down a short description of the student.

**Design:** images of the Simpson family. It includes three micro activities in order to allow the students to write about them.


3.7 Data coding procedures

Fandiño (2007, p. 128) cites Merriam (1988) who says that the analysis of qualitative data range from organizing a narrative description of the phenomenon, to constructing categories or themes that cut across the data, to building theory and Miles and Huberman (1994) proposed similar processes of data analysis: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In our project we decided to use categorizing as follows:

Categorizing: We used this data coding procedure in order to come up with categories that allowed us to analyze the info collected. We took into account the what Burns (1999) on Bodgan and Biklen says “there is a range of coding possibilities which includes: setting/context codes, situation codes, subject-shared perspective codes, process codes, activity/behavior codes, event codes, strategy codes, and social structure codes. Fandiño (2007) says that subject-shared perspective codes. These codes identify
and include participants’ ways of thinking about particular and specific aspects of the topic. We captured these codes in surveys that had questions about the perception of the students when they finish any activity in the wiki. We also included activity/behavior codes. These codes are directed towards regularly occurring behaviors or activities within the research context. They can include informal behaviors (student games, coffee break activities) and formal activities (student writing conferences, student placement exams) (ibid, p. 129). This type of coding was chosen because students had the chance to interact with the students when giving explanations about the use of the wiki, the activities they had to develop. So in that sense we could capture those codes.

### 3.8 Validity and Reliability

Fandiño (2007) on Finch 2000, based on Nunan 1992) states that there are problems of AR regarding validity and reliability as the following table shows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Key question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal Reliability</td>
<td>Would an independent researcher, on reanalyzing the data, come to the same conclusion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Reliability</td>
<td>Would an independent researcher, on replicating the study, come to the same conclusion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal validity</td>
<td>Is the research design such that we can confidently claim that the outcomes are a result of the experimental treatment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External validity</td>
<td>Is the research design such that we can</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first question is answered by Finch (2000) on Fandiño (2007) who says that “AR investigates problems as perceived by and as addressed by actors in those situations. In this context, individuals interpret data according to their own perceived realities, in order to find solutions which produce the required results”.

Regarding the second question, “it refers to the possibility of replicating the study. It is a propositional question since AR is concerned only with a unique problem in a unique learning environment. When variables such as classes, teachers, students, age, proficiency level, motivation, attitudes, beliefs, anxieties, perceptions, learning preferences, and teaching styles are considered, it immediately stands out that every class is different, and that conditions cannot be replicated. An independent researcher on replicating the study, would need come to somewhat dissimilar conclusions” (ibid, p. 131).

Research should identify cause and effect, this is closely related to the third question. However, Finch(2000) on Fandiño (2007) argued that “the educational context, with the classroom at its center, should be viewed as a complex system in which events do not occur in linear causal fashion, but in which a multitude of forces interact in complex, self-organizing ways, and create changes and patterns that are part predictable, part unpredictable. Thus, AR does not seek for causal relationships, but attempts simply to describe the interaction of local variables and to predict the global emergence of learning trends. Rather than claiming that results are dependent on research, AR
investigates the participants and their perceptions in order to positively influence them, often through raised awareness (on the part of the participants) of the existence and nature of certain variables and factors”

The last question Flinch claimed that this is not an issue for AR since its purpose is to affect the immediate learning situation. If the results are of interest to other practitioners, then this can be seen as a bonus side-effect. To Flinch, action researchers are saying no more (and no less) than. (ibid, p. 131)

We took into account what Fndiño (2007) on Finch (2000) says that “the apparently normal process of identifying a problem in the local classroom, and of attempting to find a solution for that problem, is in itself an act of research, and when carried out systematically in order for reliable results to emerge, it is immediately valid since it impacts the local situation. Given the complex, dynamic nature of every language class and the subjective nature of the inquiry, the results of such research cannot be used to infer conclusions about other similar classes”. In our research we were really aware about the importance of providing reliable and valid data, this in order to present a project that respects that other’s ideas and takes into account the ethical issues that must be taken into account when doing research.

3.9 Bias

At the beginning of our practicum at the CUN University we were worried about the English students’ level, the short time that we had to do the explanations about the use of the wiki. On the other hand the university did not provide enough space and
computers for students in order to use them in the class. Classes were on Mondays, it was difficult because there were some holidays and we had to wait two weeks in order to meet again with students. We were also worried about the knowledge of students about internet and computer issues. We were interested on the research topic since it was a new purpose and research about a new trend topic which is ICT as well as Web 2.0 and the impact that they may produce in teaching and learning education processes.

### 3.10 Ethical issues

Fandiño (2007) cites O'Brien (2001) who lists a number of principles to be taken into account when conducting research. They are the following:

- Make sure that the relevant persons, committees and authorities have been consulted, and that the principles guiding the work are accepted in advance by all.

- The development of the work must remain visible and open to suggestions from others.

- Permission must be obtained before making observations or examining documents produced for other purposes.

- Descriptions of other’s work and points of view must be negotiated with those concerned before being published.
The researcher must accept responsibility for maintaining confidentiality.

Researchers are explicit about the nature of the research process from the beginning, including all biases and interests.

There is equal access to information generated by the process for all participants.

This research is aware about the privacy of participants. They were informed before the research started. Their names are confidential and we asked them for permission in order to publish their names. The participation of the students helped them in their grades, we gave them extra positive point by helping us with the research. We didn’t ask students to sign a consent form because the research was one of the outcomes of the practicum carried out at the CUN University.

### 3.11 Summary

Throughout the whole chapter we provided key information about the research methodology including theories, definitions, authors and our point of view about the classroom research, qualitative and quantitative approaches and Action Reasearch paradigm. The data collection instruments and their analysis as well as the coding data procedures, and last but not least some ethical issues, validity and reliability aspects and ethical issues that are very important for this research.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Working together, students generate online materials that reflect what they have learned and show connections between their prior knowledge, the course content, and their personal experiences. During the collaborative work of creating a wiki, the community of users develops trust and gets to know one another (Evans 2006)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we attempt to systematize and analyze the different information gathered through the investigation process in order to give an answer to the questions posed in the research. We defined the trends inside of categories and sub-categories which centralize all the aspects that involved the implementation of a virtual tool as wikis inside an educative field. The answers that we found are related to the perception that first English level students from “La CUN University has about their own experience in reading and writing using a wiki as a tool. At the same time we documented the learning process lived by the students during the development of the different tasks through Wiki.

Our task was to document the process by which students participating were presented a range of uses of ICT for teaching and learning purposes specially in reading and writing and therefore to try to capture the types and advantages of ICT use. The information collected was divided in four different categories which attempt to answer the following constructs: 1) virtual relation between the tool and the members 2) impact within the pedagogical field 3) wiki as an ideal space to centralize the production of texts and finally 4) Wiki as a pedagogical tool.
Despite we used technological research in order to look information about other projects related with our research topic we focused the investigation on examination multiple facets about advantages and disadvantages of ICT use. During the process of this research, each time the students participated providing valuable information about their learning process and the impact that the wiki was generating on them. Two categories emerged from the data analysis; the first category called: impact of the wiki within the pedagogical field. The second category is called: Wiki as a pedagogical tool to develop the reading and writing skill in English. Each one of the categories attempted to answer the question and sub-questions posed in this research:

1. What are La CUN university students’ perspectives about learning a foreign language through wikis?

   a. The students impact from La Cun University in front of the implementation of wikis

2. How can wikis be tool to facilitate the reading-writing process in a foreign language?

   b. Wiki as pedagogical tool to develop the reading and writing skills in English

With the aim to make the focus of this study clear, we always attempted to keep in mind these questions and choose the appropriate information that in fact give answers to them. Also, there was explicit data analyzed as well as samples in an implicit way. Different research methods are used in order to get the necessary data without asking in an explicit way about an aspect.

Based on the real purpose of the information, we selected what in our concept was important for this research. We used sub-categories to delimit the object of study, organizing the information; this table was the result of the sub-questions posed in the
study in order to analyze the categories and subcategories that will provide the necessary information.

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2. How wikis are able to facilitate the reading-writing process in a foreign language?

| 2. Wiki as an ideal space to centralize the production of texts during processes of individual or collective writing and reading in English |
| g. Wiki as pedagogical tool to develop the reading and writing skills in English |

(Table 6: Categories and subcategories)

4.2 The use of wikis generate a virtual relation between the tool and the members

Nowadays, our society provides day by day new challenges with the aim of learning a second language like English, but the ICTs as blogs and wikis have been one of the more didactic communication tools based on the different functions, advantages and features that they develop in the web. We try to show the relation of these communicative tools and the CUN’s students experiences during the use of Wiki with the objective to identify and systematize the different students’ experiences during the use of this.

In order to facilitate our research study, it is important to select the best information which answers this categorization, through information explicitly analyzed from the wiki and surveys applied to some students and some information from theory. Taking into account the real purpose of the data, in this case students’ experiences in the wiki can help to define the subject of study with the purpose of showing answers related to the research. By this reason, this category tries to show the different reactions of the
students with the use of Wiki, at the same time it seeks to establish what kind of relationship is generated between the tool and the student inside the educative field.

To understand, how we can establish the relationship between the students with the wiki, it is important to know the generalities of the ICTS. Crie Molli (2006) shows advantages of the tools which facilitate the learning process in students who are not active in the classroom motivating them to use this tool, in this case the wiki. This kind of tool allows the students to communicate with the teacher, especially those who otherwise might not become active in classroom. This tool also represents a suitable opportunity for students to read and write through collaborative discussions.

For us, this type of statement is fundamental, since it allows us to address correctly this research. For example According to Thomas (2008) one of the most common particularities of the wikis is that they are dynamic and constantly changing. The author also says they are web pages where readers become authors and editors. Because of this, it is possible to say that this characteristic makes students interact more with this platform. Furthermore, Wikis work as cooperative learning tools by promoting communication in a web-site (Farabaugh, 2007)

With the aim of showing an example of the previous theory, it is necessary to check the following activity taking into account that it went straight to their learning process:
For us, it was a fit example, due to it shows a relation with the previous theory especially in the autonomous and independent process in the students, based on a specific grammar structures that were showed to them, trying to make the learning process easier.

Besides, international Competition “Educare” defined the wiki as an easy tool which different people can participate and at the same time it is possible to include external links as (web page, images, videos) that complement the information acquired and help
to develop the proposed activities generating thus an interaction with others web-sides. As a sample, we can identify a relation of this theory with the following artifact:

(Artifact 15: Nationalities: http://cun-university.wikispaces.com/NATIONALITIES)

(Artifact 16: Nationalities: http://madridteacher.com/Activities/hangmannationalities.htm)
With these links the students had the opportunity to improve their knowledge with the objective to learn easier respecting copyright. During the process of the creation of the wiki we realized there was not the opportunity to design activities which resemble to some features of web pages as the possibility to create an interactive game. However the fact of using links made that the students knew other funny sites without requiring to always be on the wiki or otherwise without departing from it. In other words, they can learn more about the topic with the help of other WebPages, developing different interesting activities. Through the use of web pages and the wiki log we can observe an excellent relation between students and the wiki tool, since it does more didactic tasks in their learning process.

Based on the previous web pages we can check some comments about the relation between the uses of web pages in her learning process in English as a second language. An example of this is Cecilia who gave the following comment about the activity

“Me encanto los temas porque nos ayudan muchísimo en nuestras clases además los videos son también de gran ayuda porque aparte de que nos muestra como se escribe y que es nos muestra la pronunciación, de verdad estoy muy agradecida muchas gracias. Por favor no dejen de ayudarnos con estas actividades tan dinámicas “.

(Online questionnaire wiki, October 9th, 2010)

English equivalent:

“I loved the themes because they help us greatly in our classes the videos are also helpful because they show us how to write and they show the pronunciation, I am really grateful thank you very much. Please do not stop to help us with these so dynamic activities”
Through this comment from Cecilia, we can observe the importance of the wiki in her learning process in English as a second language. Besides, she believes that these activities are helpful. From this excerpt we can say that the explanation of the grammar structures with specific examples and the use of some colors with the objective to facilitate the learning in the student were fit strategies in order to achieve our goals.

In general, the ICTs allow an interaction between the student and the tool in a didactic way, promoting an easy learning especially in English language. In this case we have other example which complements our research line related to the students and the tool as it is explained by Pere Márqués (2007) who says that the information sources and communication channels as web pages, videos and links of activities facilitating a learning of autonomous way and collaborative allowing a participation in activities increasing the interest and motivation in the students.

(Figure 3: Was the activity motivating Online questionnaire September 18th 2010)
In this survey six students named Raul, Erwin, Maria Angelica, Sebastian, Luz Derly and Cecilia were in agreement in a one hundred percent, identified none in total disagreement. This means that the students developed the activities independently reaching a high impact in their learning process. We can also infer that they felt motivate in front of the different activities developed on the wiki. Based on these answers we can identify that this wiki is useful enough for them.

In order to get more information related to our analysis we decided to take the following question which was answered by the same students:

(Figure 4: Organization of the activity: Online questionnaire N° 3 September 18th 2010)

With this second survey, we identified that the organization was an essential aspect in the different activities that will be presented, since the eighty-seven percent agreed that the activity was well organized by promoting an easy learning in the moment it was
developed. Thanks to this survey, we observed that visual aspects are important in the developing of an activity.

4.2.1 Impact of the wiki within the pedagogical field

This category had two stages. The first stage is related to relevant questions which were kept in order to open the collection of interesting responses and perspectives. We are able to analyze by means of those answers the impact of the tool in the students’ learning process. Open ended questions were chosen because of their potential to generate rich and detailed individual’s experiences. Students answered some questions about How wikies can facilitate or difficult the process of reading and writing.

Do you think wiki makes easier or more difficult the reading-writing processes?

- Easier
- More difficult

100%
This question shows that students perceive the tool as an element which facilitates the development of activities related to reading and writing. That is why we infer that students can recognize wikis as a friendly tool which provides them with the necessary features, steps and explanations to develop the activities designed for them. The second stage of this category is closely related to the concepts which emerged from the first stage involving more strategic information about the impact.

**How do you grade the activity taking into account that 5 is excellent and 1 is bad**

(Figure 6: Perception about WIKI questionnaire N° 3 October 18th 2010)

As we can see for most of the people the activity was good, however there were some comments that made us go beyond in the analysis:
“Que las actividades estén directamente en la página de cada usuario para tener menos inconveniente”

English equivalent
“That the activities are straight in the page of each member in order to have less problems”

As a result, Maria angelica, Sebastian has been mentioned that perceptions begin their process through sight sense where all the images give us a first impression creating new interesting activities for them.

Based on Dougherty (2004) who says that access an unlimited number of communities and social networks has made increase the opportunity to interact with other people no matter the culture or geographical location, we dare to say that wikis offer lot of opportunities generating thus a great impact in all levels.

4.2.2. Students’ perception about the tool.

This subcategory is based on the concept given by Massarik and Wechsler (2000) where they define “Perception” as the action of forming positive or negative impressions which are able to influence our social behavior. We tried to understand the kind of impression that the students from La Cun University had related to the use of wiki, through the different comments done by them.
“Me parece una excelente pagina le ayuda a resolver mucha dudas y además le hace recordar vocabulario olvidado.”

English equivalent:

“I think it is an excellent website it helps to solve many doubts and it also makes you to remember forgotten vocabulary”

(Online questionnaire wiki, October 9th, 2010)

Through this excerpt we can released that the student has a positive impression about the tool which is favorable to develop the activities. However it is necessary to analyze the following comment

“Muy buena la actividad pero falta mejorar, en la manera de acceder a las actividades, algunas actividades realizadas se me borraron y que nos permita mas opciones para trabajar y mejorar la presentación de la pagina”

English Equivalent:

“Very good the activity but the way to access to the activities needs to be improved, some activities done were erased and that it allows us more options to work and improve the presentation of the website”

(Online questionnaire wiki, October 9th, 2010)

In this case the student as an user of the tool needed to take into account some features of the wiki in order to build his/ her impression about it however through the expression “very good the activity…” we can say that many aspects influenced the impression but
the judgment that the student does is according to what he or she perceived when they interacted with the web page (Rieh and Hilligoss, 2008).

For us the analysis of the students’ impression was deeply connected to the comments that they did after completing each activity so the focused of that information was based on finding their impressions about the tool and some other aspects.

4.2.3. Students’ perception about the activities

This subcategory tries to show the effectiveness of using this tool in the design and application of building activities; that is why we are going to analyze the following excerpt:

“me parece que es de gran ayuda tanto las actividades como los videos ya que aprendemos a pronunciar mejor y nos ayuda en nuestras clases muchas gracias por la ayuda, y ojalá todas las actividades que nos brindaran fueran así de interesantes.”

English equivalent:

“I think it is helpful as the videos as well the activities due to we learn to pronounce better and it helps us in our classes thank you very much for the help, and hopefully all the activities that provide us were so interesting”

(Online questionnaire wiki, October 9th, 2010)

Once again we can analyze the students’ impression through their comments which showed that the students developed the activities independently reaching a high impact.
in their learning process. All the design of the activities was focused on reinforcing the topics worked in class that is why the topics became in something interesting for them. In general terms we can define that the perception of the activities was positive because the activities were suitable for the students from la Cun University.

4.2.4. Students’ perception about the topics

This subcategory is based on the concept given by Massarik and Wechsler (2000) where the design of the Wiki could be a strong issue between social behavior, which can be analyzed through the participation of the members in the development of the different activities and the impression in the uses of technological strategies. We connected this in a sort uses of topics relate to writing context and at the same time we can analyze the students’ perception through the following comment.

“Porque vemos como se escriben las oraciones y realizamos inmediatamente ejercicio del mismo tema, lo que nos permite aprender y practicar”.

English equivalent

“Because we see how to write the sentences and imidiatly after we do the activities about the same topic which allows us to learn and practice”

(Online questionnaire wiki, October 9th, 2010)
Taking into account the positive impression about the tool which helps to develop and practice the topics worked in the classroom, it is possible to say that wiki was a good strategy to help the students learning processes especially because the topics were linked to what they needed. Due to this, it is important to say that students promote their own knowledge using the tool as a plan among others activities instead of the classroom management.

Indeed for us was extremely strong the use of the wiki as an external tool to help students and teachers to recollect more information about the topic and features in a useful way. We did consumptions surveys and field notes in order to gathering information which was collected as a part of the themes chosen.

4.2.5. Students’ perception about the reading and writing processes.

Through the analysis done in this subcategory we try to give an idea about the students’ perception related to the reading and writing processes which were carried out through the wiki. As in the previous categories it is necessary to appeal to some questions done in a survey:
In order to analyze the information gathered we can see that despite we tried to design activities focused on developing reading as well writing skills the students from la Cun University felt that they worked the reading skill more than writing which means that the writing activities were not as many as the reading activities for them. However as researches and using the information collected we can say that wikis allow due to their features working the reading skill better.

4.2.6. Students’ perception about the collaborative work

This subcategory is based on the concept given by Farabaugh, 2007; Mitchell, 2003 which permit a strong aware cultural and personal benefits used. We identified that the organization was an essential aspect in the different activities that were going to be
presented; that is why we designed an activity with the aim of forcing the students to work in an easy cooperative learning. In fact, we observed that students participated more actively and take into account each student’s knowledge.

“Que las actividades estén directamente en la página de cada usuario para tener menos inconveniente”

English equivalent
“That the activities are straight in the page of each member in order to have less problems”

As a result, the participant has been mentioned that sensitivity begins their process through sight sense where all the features give us a first impression creating new interesting activities for them. Wiki offers a new strategy to learn with least problems to understand in their own platform and activities currently posted on it. Besides, the guarantee about the impact of tool in all levels make the collaborative learning processes more effective and successful and it allows the interaction with other people in community social networks.

This subcategory showed as Dougherty 2004 says an unlimited access number of communities and social networks which have made increase the opportunity to interact generating collaborative learning process. In this way, the collaborative tasks show the need to respect each student’s ideas and knowledge which are available and are a resource for everyone in the class. We did this training in order to develop the design of materials and we expected different collaborative results to switch over different useful features for any context.
After performing the triangulation and analyzing each one of their answers, we could identify that relationship between the tool and the students is very active. At the same time we realized that the relationship was active due to each one of the activities might be presented in a striking way that captures the students’ attention. Thus was how the students carried out a good relationship with this ICT. Thanks to each data collected from our research we dare to say that the wiki tool is useful in the learning field of English as a second language.

This leads us to conclude that this category is appropriate to answer our research question because we can see that the as the title as the data analysis are reliable; we can also understand that the impact can be defined through the point of view of the relationship held by the students and the tool. That is why we can say that this tool is useful enough in the learning process of a second language.

4.3. Wiki as an ideal space to centralize the production of texts during processes of individual or collective writing in English

In this category, the aim is to show how wikis, due to their features, can be a fit tool in order to centralize multiple text projects generating thus the possibility to maintain processes with the students. The information analyzed in this category is specially focused on the observations done by us during the data collection. Through this analysis we try to direct our research project to the development of the activities and the different facts that were around them.
The idea of centralizing the students’ production in just one place, in this case wikis, is something that helps to observe step by step the students’ process. Farabaugh, (2007), Mitchell, (2003) say that this kind of tool becomes the students in a community. Through the first steps to introduce the wiki inside of the pedagogical process at la Cun University with beginning students of the English group, we realized that to work on the wiki was necessary to create a community or group as we can see in the following sample:

(Artifact 17: Training to join to the wiki.)

As the sample shows, the first thing that the students needed was to be part of our wiki with the aim of developing the different tasks. It was not necessary from them to create an individual account to participate in the activities which made the process easier to
join. However we decided to create personal pages inside the wiki as is shown in the following sample:


Within the characteristics of wikis it is possible to say that this tool gives us the chance to generate profiles where each student can find his/her own space in order to work in the activities. It is also important to say that thanks to wikis there is a possibility to engage students in workgroups tasks. Based on Evans, (2006) Wikis connect a group’s collaborative, creative energy to produce shared knowledge that benefits everyone with
at times unexpected results. This statement was useful in order to develop the design of the activities, because we were expecting different individual’s achievements but we could not pass up the chance to see if this type of feature was useful for any context.

The collaborative tasks show the need to respect each student’s ideas and knowledge which are available and are a resource for everyone in the class (Hewitt & Scardamalia, 1998). There is a sample of how the development of a collaborative activity with the students from la Cun University was:

In this activity the students who were participating had to complement each part of Lisa’s biography by describing a specific feature about her. Through this sample we were able to see the great amount of possibilities with the aim of generating knowledge sharing among the students.

Through this analysis we can say wikis allow creating an educative online community where teachers and students can carry out different activities in their teaching-learning process. At the same time wikis can be considered as virtual portfolios where each member can save or edit the information there, share knowledge or just participate of the activities which helps to generate the conception of a process. As teacher-researches this is one of the best ways to centralize the information about students and the results of this investigation were satisfactory because we can prove that this category helps to know how wikis can be fit tools to help the improvement in the reading and writing process.

4.3.1. Wiki as pedagogical tool to develop the reading and writing skills in English

This category attempts to show the contribution of wikis in order to develop the reading and writing skills in a foreign language, in this case English. The information gathered during the research process will give us the connection between technology and teaching learning process.

In this category the theory plays an important role in order to understand how appropriate it is to include the use of technology in teaching methods such as wikis as
tools to stimulate the development of certain skills focused on learning a foreign language. At the same time we systematize the students’ experiences with the aim of knowing if they really developed the activities acquiring the expected skills. It is important to clarify that as teacher-researchers we used the foreign language in the activities every time, however, because of the lack of knowledge, time and understanding of students it was necessary to combine the mother tongue and the foreign language in the online surveys. In this survey the students were asked about their reading and writing process:

1. Do you write in English?

(Figure 8: first English level students’ from “La CUN” write in English)

In this question most of the students say that they write in English, which lead us to think that writing is an easy and common activity for them, however at the moment of analyzing this question in detail we needed to move on to the following question:
If your answer is yes please indicate the frequent reasons why you write in English

(Figure 9: frequent reasons why first English level students’ from “La CUN” write in English)

In this question fourteen students say that the main reason why they are used to writing in English is because they have to develop activities in class. In order to understand how the English teachers from la Cun University are used to handling the writing process it is necessary to check the following excerpt:

“…then he asks what kind of food the students used to eat when they were children and through that activity he introduces the grammar topic USED TO …. The teacher asks the students to move on page 67 in the book… the students have to complete the exercises according to the situation…”

(Field notes February, 18 th 2009, Y, M)

Based on the observation made before about one of the classes it is possible to define that the writing process is carried out by completing tasks. Comellas (1984) who says that writing is drawn signs without meaning and that acquiring the learning of writing is
paramount in communication can be a reference which allows seeing that writing could be developed based on the need that students have to communicate. That is why the activities done by the students at La Cun could be named as part of writing process. Through the researching process we realized it was possible to complement the processes carried out in class through short activities but which had a great amount of visual material.

We decided to name this category because we wanted to know if wikis could support in any way the students learning process. This reason is established in one of our research objectives. That is why we consider the category Wiki as pedagogical tool to develop the reading and writing skills in English suitable in order to give an answer to the main research question. With the aim of obtaining more information that allows us to achieve the objectives of this research, students were asked about their reading process:

3. Do you read English materials?

(Figure 10: first English level students’ from “La CUN” use to read English materials)
In this question we can infer that the reading process is a common activity for the students, but as the question related to the writing process, we needed to analyze through the following how the reading process is normally carried out by the students from La Cun University:

If your answer is yes please indicate the frequent reasons why you read English materials

(Figure 11: frequent reasons why first English level students’ from “La CUN” use to read English materials)

Once again what we noticed is that students are used to reading English materials, just to meet the planned activities for the class. An example of this is showed in the following excerpt.

“…The teacher asks to get in groups of four people in order to start the activity…. The teacher hands some copies out which contain a reading and some activities with the aim of encouraging students to develop them. So some students take the dictionaries out and
they start to look up the words they don’t know but some others seem to be not interested on doing the activity...”

(Field notes February, 23 rd 2009, Y, M)

To understand the viability of such strategies it is necessary to go to Pretorius E(1996) who argues that there is a strong correlation between the reading skill and the understanding ability. The fact to generate different spaces to work with readings can be helpful for the students but as we notice in the excerpt of the field note, those kinds of activities can also become boring. In this sense our research work becomes a suitable possibility to design tasks that allow engaging students.

When we decided to apply online activities it was necessary to know how was the students’ performance. In the following sample students were asked to complete Lisa’s biography based on a model gave them before:

In the artifact showed before we can notice there was an appropriate amount of elements which tried to catch the student’s attention. This kind of activity was done in order to guide to the students through specific structures without the teacher assistance however, and with the aim of determining how positive the implementation of the wiki was we needed to apply a collaborative activity (see the activity in Artifact: http://cuniversity.wikispaces.com/TALKING+ABOUT+OURSELVES, October 22nd 2010, J.M)

Through that sample it is possible to say that although as teachers-researchers we thought the topic was clear enough some students assimilated the instructions in other way doing the activity based on what they thought it was. In this sample Cecilia, Erwin, Jose Raul and Maria Cristina did the activity but with their own information. Luz Derly and Maria Angelica did the activity with Lisa’s information which is a popular character. We were expecting students not to show any doubt related to the topic so our first reaction was focused on the problems with the instructions. That aspect led us to be concerned about the success of the strategies but more than it about the success of the tool. Then we decided to analyze this sample from another point of view regarding the fact that they worked on the wiki and despite they did not follow instructions most of them completed the task by using appropriate grammatical structures. Thus, we understood that wiki allows students to build their own knowledge and at the same time this feature makes wikis an opportunity to generate authenticity in the tasks. It is also important to remark that wiki as a pedagogical tool which requires a high autonomy level. Little (1995) argues that learner autonomy happens when the student handles all aspects of the learning process from planning to assessing performance.

During the process of identifying the categories which would play an important role in order to give an answer to our research question, we realized that the impact of using wikis was going to be directly related to the students’ learning process. That is why we
selected two communicative skills with the aim of observing the different reactions. Is in this sense it was necessary to know if they felt the wiki helped them to develop their reading and writing skills (see artifact …

In this excerpt Erwin, Alonso, Jose Raul, Cecilia, Maria, Luz Derly and Maria Cristina who were the students that complete all the activities agree with the fact that by using wiki the reading and writing process becomes in something easier to put in practice. This prove is one of the most important because as teacher-researches we can see that all the theories and researches that have been made on the implementation of ICT in the educative field can be tested in any context where you meet some minimum features
CONCLUSIONS

This research allowed us to understand the importance of the new ICT in today's world. Staying in touch with EFL students provided us with meaningful experiences about the different ways to teach and learn English in that sense teachers really need to start using the new ICT and include them into their classroom practices.

We conducted an investigation process about how to help the first English level students’ from “La CUN” to learn more using a virtual tool and we focused the research on the reading and writing skills. At the beginning we were concern about if the students were capable of getting more out of the learning opportunities they had, and taking more initiative and responsibility for their own learning. We also felt limited because there were many different obstacles such as the poor technological conditions and the limited time. However we had lot of expectations related to the results of this study.

Being this the first contact we had with real research, we have had all kinds of reactions towards, not only the results, but also the process as a whole. Some of the experiences we had during this complicated research project were happy, some sad, some bitter and some others we do not have words to describe them. Looking back in time, to the beginnings of the study, we can clearly see the change that is present in the paper as in our attitudes and ideas towards academic projects like this one.

The most important factor to highlight in the end of this road is the time. This factor was our constant enemy, because sometimes we felt like there were some more things to be done, but unfortunately we could not cover all the possible things we had in mind.
We applied some tests and we observed the different development of the activities in order to get information which gave us the opportunity to identify the importance and the real benefits of this tool. Whether or not this research was permanently beneficial for the students, we can definitely say that it was an enlightening experience for us as researchers and learners. This project has given us more understanding about the process of teaching and the significance of learning how to learn. The research has given us tools to approach strategy instruction, even to low-proficiency students. We can say with confidence that we feel better because we could prove that it is important to learn that nowadays students need well prepared teachers with the ability to handle the ICT

In addition to this, as EFL student-teachers was a great pleasure to share time, knowledge and amazing experiences at the Cun University. For us there is a big challenge related to the teaching of English for the other teachers that want to do research. This project is an amazing first step related to the new ICT and provides an opportunity for them to do research related to this issue.

Inside of the conclusions we can highlight the following.

1. The implementation of the Wiki as a tool in the educative field was successful because despite the few time that we had it was obvious that the students who participated in the activities, enjoyed the use of new alternatives to improve their learning process, generating thus a positive perspective about the tool and its features.

2. We could notice that due to the features of the wiki it is possible to design communicative language activities which allow improving the reading and writing skills on English language.
3. We realized it is possible to provide students with authentic contexts and examples through the use of a wiki which allow motivating them to build their own knowledge.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

As it was said before, this research showed that more time is needed in order to achieve better improvement in the work with students of a second language, also that maybe an appropriate syllabus design is needed in order to avoid confusions in terms of methodology among working groups and among class topics.

For those interested on following this line of research be sure of doing so for your own interest because this is very hard, due to the many obstacles in order to acquire good results in the teaching-learning process.

It is important to consider that not only institutions with enough technological materials will be able to develop this kind of projects due to our experience we proved that the only required thing is that the students feel engaged with the activities so it is necessary to be sure of doing authentic activities.
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