

**Art and Critical Peace Education: Fostering Critical Thinking Skills in English
Eighth Grade Learners**

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Abstract

This document presents a pedagogical proposal of an action research project that aimed to develop students' critical thinking skills by fostering critical peace education in the English classes through artistic expressions. The participants of this study were eighth-grade students between 12 and 15 years from the public-school Guillermo Cano Isaza located in Bogotá, Colombia. In this qualitative research, field notes, focus group, questionnaires, among other instruments provided the information to be analyzed to obtain the findings, conclusions, and implications of this project. As a result, it is possible to argue that artistic expressions are a useful resource to develop students Critical Thinking Skills towards armed conflict in Colombia.

Key words: Critical Peace Education, Armed Conflict, Non-repetition of violence, Colombian Armed Conflict, Artistic Projects in the ELT Classroom, Project-Based Learning, Critical Thinking Skills.

Resumen

Este documento presenta la propuesta pedagógica de un proyecto de investigación-acción cuyo objetivo fue desarrollar el pensamiento crítico en los estudiantes mediante el fomento de la educación crítica para la paz en las clases de inglés a través de expresiones artísticas. Los participantes de este estudio fueron estudiantes de octavo grado, de entre 12 y 15 años, del colegio público Guillermo Cano Isaza, ubicado en Bogotá, Colombia. En esta investigación cualitativa, el investigador utilizó notas de campo, grupos focales, encuestas, pruebas diagnósticas, entre otros; los cuales proporcionaron la información necesaria para su análisis y presentar los hallazgos, conclusiones e implicaciones de este proyecto. Como resultado, es posible argumentar que las expresiones artísticas son un recurso útil para desarrollar habilidades de pensamiento crítico en los estudiantes frente al conflicto armado en Colombia.

Palabras clave: Educación Crítica Para La Paz, Conflicto Armado, No Repetición, Conflicto Armado Colombiano, Proyectos Artísticos en el Aula de Enseñanza del Inglés, Aprendizaje Basado En Proyectos, Habilidades de Pensamiento Crítico.

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Chapter I: The problem

In this chapter the main elements of the present research are introduced, starting with the contextualization of the school where the project took place, following with the characterization of the students subjects of this research, and the description of the findings of the English language diagnostic test applied, which leads to the problem identified in this action research. Furthermore, the reason why this research was conducted and was relevant in the ELT classroom is explained. Finally, general and specific objectives are addressed.

1. 1 Contextualization

The school where this action research took place was Colegio Técnico Cedit Guillermo Cano Isaza (CTCGCI). This school was founded in 1987 in Bogotá (Colombia), in the locality of Ciudad Bolívar, more specifically in the Meissen neighborhood. The school offers primary and secondary education, and its mission is to encourage students' autonomy and responsibility as well as to enhance skills necessary for social coexistence. Moreover, its vision focuses on being recognized for quality and efficiency.

The CEDID Guillermo Cano Isaza school (2002), in its educational community handbook establishes five fundamental questions that guide the development and learning of its students: "Who am I? Where am I going? How do I see my future? How do I want to be seen in the future? And how can I achieve this?" (p.36). To answer these questions, this educational institution seeks to guide students' learning towards the development of academic, technical, humanistic and other skills necessary for healthy coexistence in society and to promote access to technical education focused on commerce, industry, and tourism in partnership with SENA and the District University. Although education is not focused on the area of English, it is integrated within technical areas such as tourism, mechatronics, and engineering. Likewise, the English area seeks to promote spaces for reflection that

encourage critical thinking to answer the guiding questions, addressing them from a social and technical perspective.

Considering the above mentioned, one relevant aspect is the presence of classroom commandments, as shown in Figure 1. One of the English classroom walls displays a set of messages encouraging students to become better individuals by promoting fundamental societal values. The first message states, 'Do not lie,' while the second one reads 'Do not steal.' These messages are particularly relevant in GCI school, where cellphone theft is common, yet no preventive activities or reflection processes are in place to address these incidents. The third message emphasizes responsibility, while the fourth encourages solidarity among students. Additionally, the circled sign urges students to avoid violence, a message that responds to the frequent fights occurring both inside and outside the school.

Figure 1 English classroom



The information mentioned above was obtained during informal talks with the coordinator and some teachers who mentioned different violent incidents such as robberies, fights, and murders (this happened when students left the school. The person was part of a gang) which reflects high rates of violence and foster intolerance in the students and the school. The violent situations have escalated to such a degree that the coordinator of the school decided that students should leave at separate times, starting at 6:00 pm with 6th and 7th then at 6:15 with 8th and 9th finishing at 6:30 pm with 10th and 11th.

Notwithstanding the school effort of reducing fights outside classroom, the problems that some students present could be side-effects of the violent context they live in. Notably, students are the reflection of their own environment, as almost 95% of the students in Guillermo Cano Isaza School belong to low-income families (Colegio Técnico CEDID Guillermo Cano Isaza, 2002). According to the lawyer and political scientist Juan David

Cabrera (2018), poverty derives from structural violence, it assaults freedom, well-being and identity because of people's ethnicity, gender or social class. This phenomenon significantly explained due to the substantial number of displaced and demobilized populations residents of the area (Observatorio de víctimas en Bogotá, 2020), a factor that substantially contributes to the observed conditions of vulnerability and conflict. Consequently, structural violence and vulnerability gathers in Ciudad Bolívar, fostering violence among its inhabitants and creating a vicious cycle that this research seeks to help students confront through the exploration of new and peaceful perspectives of life.

Considering that the students live in a context marked by elevated levels of violence—which they also reproduce in their school and daily environments—it is imperative to work around peace education, as proposed by the Colombian Ministry of Education. This initiative aims to foster democratic citizenship through comprehensive education that incorporates socio-ethical learning and citizenship-building components. It also seeks to support teachers in strengthening their capacity to promote coexistence, the construction of agreements, and conflict resolution (CEV, 2022). Furthermore, this initiative is aligned with institutional objectives mentioned above (students' autonomy, responsibility, social coexistence, and critical thinking). This proposal is necessary to shift students' perspectives on violence, enabling them to have a recognition of the history of the context that they inhabit. Considering that this context is marked by structural violence, leading to the forced displacement of communities and, ultimately, perpetuating different forms of in the places where they resettle, this study seeks to empower students to become agents of change in the promotion of a culture of peace.

In order to design pedagogical interventions aligned with these objectives, it is essential to first understand the students' current realities. Therefore, the following sections examine their behaviors, their relationship with the English language, their critical thinking skills, their prior knowledge regarding the armed conflict in Colombia, as well as the current

state of their four English language macro-skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—in order to establish a solid starting point for this research. This proposal primarily aims to foster critical thinking and artistic expression, using English as a means to that end, rather than focusing on the development of the four language skills.

1.2 Participant characterization

The participants of this research were thirty-six eighth-grade students from Guillermo Cano Isaza school, nineteen boys and nineteen girls. The ages of the students range from 12 to 15 years and can be classified as a low-income population.

During the observation phase was noticed that the students were highly expressive; they openly shared their likes, dislikes, and opinions regarding both the activities and the overall development of the English classes. However, it was also observed that instances of violence frequently emerged among them, manifested through verbal insults and even physical aggression; “they [students] started to play troughing the orange peel, [...] one started to be pushed on the floor, some of them even punching, when I asked them to stop, they just told me that it was a game” (Field diary #5, month day, 2024). When approached about these behaviors, students often minimize their actions by describing them as mere games. This normalization of violence as part of everyday interactions highlights the urgent need for explicit peace education, as students lack awareness of the impact of their actions on others. Their responses reflect a broader cultural pattern in which aggressive behaviors are trivialized, underscoring the importance of integrating peace education into their learning experiences to promote a culture of non-repetition of violent actions.

Given this reality, it becomes essential to explore pedagogical strategies that can foster critical reflection and transform how students relate to one another. In this sense, incorporating artistic expressions as part of the English teaching methodology could be a powerful tool to enhance critical thinking skills and peaceful coexistence in a context marked by violence. Art offers students' alternative ways to channel ideas, reflect on their learning

process, and develop empathy, through English language classes and peace learning in a meaningful and transformative way.

To better understand the student's relationship with the English language, their critical thinking skills and their knowledge and recognition of the armed conflict in Colombia, a questionnaire was implemented (Annex 1). The first part of the questionnaire explored students' relationship with the English language, including their interest in learning it, their views on the teaching methods employed in class, and their self-assessment of their language skills. The second part focused on students' knowledge and conceptions about the Colombian armed conflict. To complement the questionnaire and further explore students' experiences, their critical thinking skills in the face of different forms of violence and their engagement with artistic expressions, a focus group was also conducted. This combination of instruments provided richer insights into how students perceive their environment and express their experiences, reinforcing the need for educational strategies that foster both critical reflection and peaceful coexistence.

Regarding students' attitudes toward English, the questionnaire (Annex 1) revealed that almost a one-third of the participants expressed a lack of interest in English language, while approximately half of the class reported that they like the language, and the rest were indifferent about it. Despite the varying degrees of interest, most students expressed the desire to learn English and acknowledged the importance of learning this language for their overall educational development and future opportunities.

In terms of preferred artistic expressions to support English learning, most of students indicated the preference for painting and drawing. In contrast, a smaller group of students expressed indifference toward the teaching methods employed in class, suggesting that for them, the learning tools were less significant than other factors. The student's artistic preferences provide a valuable foundation for the pedagogical proposal. Integrating these methods can enhance student engagement and language learning (Ortega, 2020) while also

offering spaces for emotional expression and reflection, which are essential for promoting peaceful coexistence in a context marked by violence.

Regarding language skills, the majority of the students perceived themselves as stronger in listening than in other skills, showing that they felt more comfortable understanding spoken language (listening) than speaking or reading. It is important to mention that writing was the last favored skill, with students showing greater resistance and discomfort when engaging English writing activities. The student's self-perception of their language skills, highlights the need for a holistic methodological approach, as would integrate the development of all language skills in a balanced and interconnected way, addressing students' specific challenges while leveraging their strengths. In particular, a holistic approach would support gradual, meaningful progress in less favored areas without isolating skills, thus fostering more comprehensive and sustained language learning. As Wulf (1979) mentioned, classes must be related to social problems.

The second part of the questionnaire and the two focus groups (Annex 2 and 3) explored the students' critical thinking skills (CTS) and their prior knowledge of the armed conflict in Colombia. In the two-focus group the students were asked specific questions related with different manifestations of violence, such as armed conflict and everyday violence, while the questionnaire contained two images to elicit written comments from the students in order to evaluate students' CTS as well as their conceptions and comprehension of the armed conflict (Annex 1).

An analysis of students' responses revealed that they struggled to comprehend the intended meanings or messages behind the selected paintings and photographs. Their interpretations included statements such as “dos personas dando cuchillo”, “quiere matar a alguien”, “depresión”, “violencia”, “miedo y suicidio” and “un padre con su hijo, tristeza, persona con mucho dolor y tristeza” (Annex 1). These answers suggested that students have not yet developed basic critical thinking skills necessary for interpreting artistic or

symbolic content, as evidenced by their literal level of interpretation and the challenge to identify and analyze images. For example, when applying the questionnaire, it was possible evidence students' superficial comprehension of Colombian armed conflict due to answers such as: "slavey", "work force", "a satanic ritual" (Annex 4), when analyzing images related to the armed conflict and describing them. Furthermore, their limited knowledge of recent Colombian history, became evident when asked "What is the Colombian armed conflict?" In the questionnaire (Annex 3), responses included comments such as "They [guerrilla] kidnaped a child" "They [guerrilla] are recruiting at Usme". These findings highlight the need to strengthen students' historical understanding and critical literacy, which are essential for engaging more deeply with complex social realities.

1.3 Diagnosis

To develop a project that capable of making a meaningful impact on students' lives through the English language, it was first necessary to gather information about their current learning processes, both in terms of their English proficiency and their understanding of the Colombian armed conflict. For this purpose, a diagnostic questionnaire was applied to eighth graders. The main purpose was to explore their conceptions about the armed conflict in Colombia and assess their proficiency in English.

Due to circumstances beyond the researcher's control, it was not possible to conduct the speaking section of the test. Nevertheless, classroom observations revealed that students faced various pronunciation issues, frequently code-switched between English and Spanish, lacked sufficient vocabulary, and made recurrent grammar mistakes. These findings suggest that their speaking skills were below the expected level for eighth grade.

The results related to reading revealed that, although students were able to engage with text appropriate to their grade level, doing so required significant effort. Despite their limited reading comprehension, it was considered feasible to work with short texts, only if the teacher offered ongoing support to clarify doubts. In contrast, students' listening

comprehension skills were notably more limited. They struggled due to a lack of vocabulary, challenges with grammatical structures, and underdeveloped listening strategies. Even when students were able to decode sounds, their comprehension broke down if they did not recognize the word, understand its meaning, or grasp its grammatical function within the sentence. These gaps significantly hindered their ability to make sense of spoken English.

The students' writing skills, while not well-developed, allowed them to convey their ideas with some clarity, though students frequently relied on limited vocabulary and created new words to express themselves. Yet, these findings underscore the need to strengthen all students' language abilities throughout the research process, not only to enhance communication in the language, but also to enable deeper engagement with the research themes.

1.4 Statement of the problem

Ciudad Bolívar, in 2024, was home to 651,958 inhabitants. This diverse population includes Romani, Indigenous, Afro-Colombian, and Raizal communities (Social integration, 2021). The area has also received a significant number of individuals displaced by the armed conflict in rural Colombia, with 54,235 displaced inhabitants registered, including 13,756 children between 0 and 14 years, and 15,581 teenagers (Social integration, 2021). This context of displacement is combined with significant structural inequalities, as evidenced by the 2017 rates of monetary poverty (26%) and multidimensional poverty (10.09%) reported by the municipal department of social integration (2021). These conditions often foster violent environments, creating a detrimental cycle that profoundly shapes the everyday lives of students in the area.

Classroom observations revealed a critical disconnect within English language classes regarding Ciudad Bolívar context. Despite the important social realities of poverty, displacement and conflict-related violence, English classes are not discussing about the

armed conflict and the crucial objective of non-repetition, that are a central pillar of the 2016 Peace Agreement.

Consequently, students in Cano Isaza School often lack a fundamental understanding of their country's recent historical background, specifically, the root causes of violence that permeate their communities. These intersecting issues, educational disconnection and historical unawareness, are the core problems this research aims to address. Therefore, a holistic pedagogical approach grounded in Critical Peace Education is essential. By integrating this perspective into English language classes, students can not only strengthen their language and critical thinking skills but also engage in meaningful reflection on their sociopolitical reality. Through artistic expression, they can process, articulate, and reimagine their experiences, transforming English learning into a space for empowerment, historical recognition, and the active construction of peace.

1.5 Rationale

Given the ongoing realities of structural violence, poverty, and social exclusion in communities such as Ciudad Bolívar, which deeply affect students at Guillermo Cano Isaza School, many of them are exposed to daily manifestations of violence and inequality. Recognizing these challenging conditions, where violence is often familiar, requires that the school become an active space for transformation. Therefore, teaching English through a Critical Peace Education framework becomes essential. Drawing Freire's (1994) critical pedagogy, education can be a crucial tool to promote awareness of students' realities and the systemic forces that shape their lives. By addressing the principle non-repetition of violence through ELT and fostering critical thinking, students can be empowered to recognize their roles within their social context, and to explore alternative, non-violent ways of interaction.

Integrating an understanding of the Colombian armed conflict into English classes is a pedagogical necessity. Exploring the roots and consequences of violence in the country

and in students' immediate context allows them to critically reflect on their realities and recognize patterns of injustice. Utilizing artistic and communicative strategies within ELT offers a unique opportunity to simultaneously enhance language skills and socio-political awareness, while promoting empathy, dialogue, and peacebuilding. This approach enables students to creatively articulate their understanding of conflict while developing essential critical thinking skills.

This research proposes that, through English classes, students can develop the critical thinking skills necessary to analyze the Colombian armed conflict, its consequences, and possible solutions, empowering them to become active agents of change. Furthermore, this study aims to provide a basis for reflective practice among teachers, fostering a deeper understanding of their students' social realities and highlighting the essential role of education in facilitating personal and social transformation.

1.6 Research question:

What are the impacts of implementing artistic projects, within the framework of Critical Peace Education for the development of critical thinking skills in an EFL classroom in the 803 grade students at the Guillermo Cano Isaza school?

1.7 General objective:

To examine the impact of implementing artistic projects within the framework of Critical Peace Education on the development of critical thinking skills in an EFL classroom among 8th-grade students at Guillermo Cano Isaza School.

1.8 Specific objectives:

1. To promote the understanding of the historical background of the Colombian armed conflict within the framework of critical peace education.
2. To foster the comprehension of the Colombian armed conflict through artistic expression.

3. To encourage critical thinking skills through artistic projects related to the Colombian armed conflict in an EFL classroom.

Chapter II: Theoretical framework

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first reviews a range of research studies that, while differing in their specific approaches and types of action, share similarities with the present study. The second section outlines the key theoretical concepts that underpin this research. It is important to highlight that no studies were found that adopt the exact same approach and focus as this one. Nevertheless, the reviewed literature converges around a common goal: promoting critical peace education in relation to armed conflict and the principle of non-repetition of violence.

2.1 State of the art

In order to frame this study within existing research, the following section presents a review of relevant literature, organized according to the categories that support the development of this project. First, it examines studies focused on art as a pedagogical tool to address the Colombian armed conflict through students' conceptions. Then, it reviews research that presents different pedagogical methods aimed at fostering and achieving peace education and critical thinking. Additionally, some studies are focused on teachers' role in the context of Critical peace education and in the promotion of peace culture. Although some of these studies were not conducted in an EFL classroom, they demonstrated effectiveness in building critical and proactive awareness of violence among students. Ultimately, these studies offer important insights into how art can be used to promote critical peace education within an English classroom.

It is important to discuss the study *El graffiti como herramienta para contraste del imaginario subjetivo de la historia del conflicto armado en Colombia en adolescentes de 12-15 años del Colegio Fernando Mazuera Villegas IED de la localidad de Bosa* done by García

(2019) in Fernando Mazuera School in the municipality of Bosa (Bogotá) and the one of Soriano Ruiz and Silveria Martins qualitative research (2018) called *Construyendo la paz a través de técnicas creativas, artísticas y vivenciales: aproximaciones al caso colombiano* carried out in different territories of Colombia. It is important to highlight that the first study was conducted in a school with students aged 12-15, some of whom had been displaced by the Colombian armed conflict. The second study considered all of Colombia's territory, where ten women were selected to demonstrate how various forms of artistic expressions can be used to analyze different types of violence caused by armed conflict. These women were part of feminist movements, peace building organizations, and academic settings.

Both studies considered graffiti as a form of artistic expression through which individuals can convey their thoughts, emotions, and social critiques. In the context of these studies, the participants share their reflections about armed conflict and domestic violence, developing critical awareness, and promoting non-repetition. These studies are relevant for this research as they establish some fundamentals for understanding the importance of different artistic expressions as pedagogical tools to foster critical awareness and how these can be implemented in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, these studies illustrate the transformative potential of integrating art into educational contexts such as the EFL classroom to engage students in meaningful dialogue about the violence they experience and observe in Colombian society, positioning them as active agents in peacebuilding processes.

With regards to the topic of armed conflict, it is important to discuss the research *Promoting critical thinking through debates about the internal Conflict in Colombia in the EFL classroom with 9th graders* done by Sandoval (2020). This participatory action research was carried out with teenage ninth-grade students in Bogotá. The study aimed to stimulate critical thinking about the Colombia armed conflict within an EFL classroom. To achieve this, the researcher drew on critical pedagogy and provided students with videos and readings, while

also facilitating debates about the conflict in order to explore how such discussions could encourage critical thinking. Although this study did not incorporate artistic expressions, its findings offered valuable insights for this research.

The result of the intervention showed that students changed some initial attitudes, such as indifference and lack of interest in knowing about key historical facts in Colombia. Furthermore, the research demonstrated that it is possible to influence students' thinking and behavior by raising awareness of the historical context they inhabit. The present study aims to generate similar changes in the students' conceptions and attitudes regarding armed conflict, promoting a culture of non-repetition where they see themselves as agents of change capable of positively transforming their context. Sandoval's study provides valuable insights into how the present research could be designed, the kinds of changes it seeks to promote, and its potential impact. Notwithstanding, Sandoval's study does not address the principle of non-repetition, which is a fundamental component of peace education aimed at ending armed conflict and promoting a culture of peace. Additionally, the study does not incorporate art or any form of artistic expression to achieve its objectives, as proposed in the present research. Instead, Sandoval relied on debates and other multimodal strategies to foster critical thinking about the Colombian armed conflict.

A different perspective is presented in the eclectic research titled *English teachers' sites in the diverse lands of peace* by Gutiérrez (2021) who states that it is important to discuss the role of English-language teachers in peacebuilding and peace education in Colombia. The author examines the frameworks "imposed" by the Colombian Ministry of Education and Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje considering English classes and peace processes. The work is divided into several landscapes each of which addresses different aspects of the interplay between peace-building and English language teaching (ELT). Additionally, Gutiérrez (2021) explores the role of English teachers in Colombia as agents of peace building, taking into account the socio-affective dimensions. It means that the study

examines how English teachers in areas affected by conflict contribute to peace through their teaching practices and personal experiences. In other words, teachers in Colombia are considered not just as educators but also potential peace builders who go through complex emotional landscapes to generate and foster a positive change in their communities. This research is relevant because it exemplifies how English language teachers can include in their classes' critical peace education, which is the main pedagogical objective of this study.

In the same way, Vargas (2023), in her qualitative research *Picture Books for Initial ELF Literacy and Rights Recognition*, analyzes the impact on fifth-grade students of implementing a project to create picture-books to develop writing skills, the awareness of the importance of children's rights in areas with armed conflict and the children's self-recognition as subjects of rights. To achieve this, the researcher created a space for reflection and for the development of writing skills through the elaboration of an illustrated book that demonstrated the appropriations of children's rights and integrated social issues such as forced recruitment of children in the context of armed conflict in Colombia. Also, the researcher used the Project Based Learning approach focusing on the importance of having students planning, collaborating and communicating, to become active participants in their social contexts. Thus, students were provided with a more holistic and relevant educational experience. This study showed that it is possible to use the language classroom to talk about social issues, specifically armed conflict resolution, to foster critical thinking and non-repetition through art.

Moreover, Tamayo's (2020) qualitative research called *Addressing violence through critical multicultural education in an EFL class* was conducted with students of a seventh grade. With this study, Tamayo intended to guide participants to reflect on manifestations of violence in their homes, their school, and town in their EFL class. The research presented topics such as domination, power, and different forms of injustice. The main objective of Tamayo's research was to "analyze the possibilities that a critical multicultural framed

pedagogical intervention may offer to address racism, sexism as sources of violence with seventh graders in an EFL class” (p.15). The researcher used class discussions and students’ artifacts to collect and then analyze the data obtained.

This research study demonstrated how by establishing connections of several types of violence such as racism, sexism, classism, and cultural discrimination within EFL classes, can lead to the development of critical thinking in students. The activities implemented during the research helped students to critically analyze violence and empower them. For instance, some students attempt to address situations of violence experienced in their homes or communities when they became aware of them. By encouraging active analysis, recognition of the country’s historical background, and active participation, teachers can play a key role in fostering a culture of non-repetition and promoting critical thinking in students- As a result, this can transform how students interact with their environment, empowering them to become agents of change in a peaceful, empathetic, and respectful manner.

The final study reviewed is the qualitative research called *EFL pre-service teachers challenging media views of Colombia’s armed conflict: exploring the possibilities that critical peace education and pedagogy of memory can offer to ELT* written by Cardona (2019). This study was carried out with foreign language students from a public university in Antioquia, where through critical peace education (CPE) preservice teachers developed and acquired critical awareness of the Colombian armed conflict. The findings reveal that at the end of the study, university students presented a higher level of critically toward mainstream media news about the Colombian armed conflict. Despite being conducted with university students, this study underscores the need for English teachers to address this topic in their classes. Also, the research demonstrated the importance of working with these issues so teachers can address social problems and foster a transformative culture of peace.

The reviewed research studies suggest that both artistic approaches and Critical Peace Education (CPE) can foster students' critical awareness of armed conflict, as they offer safe spaces for expressing feelings and ideas. These approaches allow teachers to guide students in reflecting on and analyzing their own experiences and actions, thereby promoting a deeper understanding of the various forms of violence they may be exposed to. Integrating these themes into English language classrooms fosters empathy, encourages peace-oriented citizenship, strengthens critical thinking skills, and contextualizes language learning. Moreover, alongside artistic expression and CPE, project-based learning, through its emphasis on teamwork, promotes cooperation and empathy, helping to reduce violent behaviors and reinforcing the core objectives of this proposal.

To sum up, the importance of implementing Critical Peace Education in educational settings becomes clear. Peacebuilding, non-repetition, and the promotion of a culture of peace are ongoing processes that require sustained practice and effort. CPE fosters the development of critical thinking and the formation of transformative agents by encouraging students to analyze their country's historical context and understand the root causes of violence. Therefore, this research is grounded in the principles of Critical Peace Education, aiming to strengthen students' critical thinking skills and deepen their understanding of the Colombian armed conflict.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This section introduces the key concepts that underpin the research. Therefore, the theoretical framework focuses on critical peace education, non-repetition, the Colombian armed conflict, artistic projects in the ELT classroom, project-based learning and critical thinking skills.

2.2.1. Critical peace education (CPE)

To explore how to foster critical thinking in students regarding armed conflict, it is essential to adopt a specific approach: Critical Peace Education (CPE). This framework, from

here on referred to as CPE, provides the necessary tools to engage students in understanding and analyzing the complexities of peacebuilding and the consequences of violence. This research draws on five key theorists who contributed to the development of this framework. First, the assistant and academic coordinator of the peace education program Stephanie Knox. Second, the German anthropologist Christoph Wulf, who introduced important concepts related to critical peace education. The educator Lourdes Díaz played a pivotal role in reviving the concept, continued with one of the Critical pedagogy creators Henry Giroux, followed by Monisha Bajaj, a professor specialized in international and multicultural education.

According to Knox (2011), Critical Peace Education (CPE) is understood as a process in which individuals autonomously analyze contexts and issues related to both the construction of peace and the deterioration of peaceful conditions into violence, whether at local, national, or international levels. In the context of internal armed conflict, Knox emphasizes that such conflict entails structural violence that deeply affects communities and individuals in their daily lives. Consequently, CPE seeks to cultivate critical thinking and a commitment to social transformation, enabling students to examine the causes, agents, and consequences of conflict, as well as to explore peaceful alternatives suited to their specific contexts. Regarding the teacher's role in this process, Knox (2011) asserts: "Educators must come to realize that problems must be defined on a local basis; they must emphasize research and reason as the methods in which students formulate their own solutions; finally, they must allow the student to create this understanding on their own" (p. 14).

In contrast to Knox's point of view, Wulf (1974) argues that Critical Peace Education (CPE) is a central pillar of education and a foundation for sustainable development. He suggests that individuals must be prepared to confront the reality of violence, and that CPE plays a crucial role in equipping students to face real-world social problems. Through this approach, students develop critical thinking skills that foster both individual and collective

awareness of social realities, ultimately aiming to promote meaningful social change. Moreover, Wulf emphasizes the role of the teacher as a facilitator who poses thought-provoking questions about social issues, encourages the use of critical thinking strategies (CTS), and promotes interaction and dialogue among students, thereby cultivating a culture grounded in peace and ethics.

Moreover, Wulf (1974) gave 10 strategies that could be used at the moment of planning CPE classes and of which this research used four of them: *Programmed teaching*, which is the class planning considering peace education; *peace games* that help students to be in contact with manifestations of structural violence, aggravated by the armed conflict in Colombia; *audiovisual means* that help students to understand the information about the Colombian background; and finally, *tactile visual means* that help students to comprehend and analyze the information making the classes more interactive. This research pretends that students reflect on their social context creating a culture of peace and non-repetition where they develop critical thinking about their society and its problems, being conscious about the background in which they have grown up.

Additionally, for Diaz Soto (2005) CPE is an approach focused on fostering peace, respect for human rights and social justice and equity. Diaz Soto establishes nine CPE principles: collaborative dialogues, spiritual questions, Freire's pedagogy as a guide, cultural and linguistic consciousness, decolonized scope, the promotion of identity politics, action research and social justice, and finally generate changes to the world. Following these principles can contribute to the construction of a peaceful society and the cultivation of a culture of non-repetition. Through this process, students develop the skills necessary to advocate for peace and prevent the recurrence of violence, which is an essential objective within the framework of CPE.

Although Giroux (2002) does not explicitly define Critical Peace Education, his conception of critical education offers a valuable theoretical foundation for it. He argues that

critical education involves not only questioning official knowledge and power structures, but also encouraging students to take social responsibility, critically analyze the world, and engage with it through hopeful and transformative action. As he states, critical education “is also about encouraging students to take risks, act on their sense of social responsibility, and engage the world as an object of both critical analysis and hopeful transformation” (p.14). From this point of view, CPE entails more than acknowledging students’ social contexts; it requires encouraging their active participation, critical thinking, and engagement in transforming their realities.

Therefore, this research adopts the CPE approach as a means to help students critically engage with their social realities, particularly those shaped by armed conflict. It aims to provide them with the knowledge and critical tools to interpret Colombia’s historical background and respond to it through reflection, dialogue, and peaceful action.

Moreover, Bajaj (2008, p.1) defines CPE as a multifaceted pedagogical and political approach inspired by Paulo Freire’s Critical Pedagogy and grounded in the field of human rights. For this author, CPE operates in two main dimensions: first, by addressing structural inequalities connected to students’ lived realities and exploring ways to overcome them; second, through empirical research aimed at understanding how participants can promote a culture of transformation towards peace at the local level. Bajaj emphasizes the need to foster a sense of critical peace, where students are encouraged to question the systems and norms that perpetuate violence and inequity.

Consequently, Bajaj (2008) advocates for the use of contextualized materials that reflect students’ experiences and sociopolitical environments. In this sense, even though the students in grade 803 have not directly experienced armed conflict, they inhabit a context shaped by its consequences and must be empowered to understand and transform that reality. As Bajaj affirms, CPE leans “towards a more activist approach that interrogates power relations, structural forms of oppression and the importance of learners’ agency”

(2008, p. 6). Thus, students should develop the critical capacity to recognize different manifestations of violence and participate actively in building a peaceful and just society.

Considering the contributions of the theorists reviewed, this research adopts CPE as a pedagogical approach that fosters critical analysis of armed conflict in Colombia. It also urges teachers to engage deeply with students' realities by acknowledging the challenges, communities, and attitudes shaped by decades of violence. Equally important, CPE strengthens students' critical thinking skills, enabling them to reflect on their roles within contexts of structural violence and contribute to a culture of non-repetition.

Moreover, this research seeks to support the development of students as active and critical participants who not only care about the Colombian armed conflict but are also capable of taking informed and responsible stances on it. This involves forming well-grounded perspectives on the conflict and recognizing the need for peaceful alternatives. This study specifically addresses the local realities of students in Ciudad Bolívar, a territory deeply marked by displacement and inequality.

By integrating the topic of armed conflict into the English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom, this research aims to develop students' critical awareness of violence through CPE principles, encouraging them not only to understand their social context but to become active participants in its transformation. A less violent society is not only imaginable, but also possible if students are empowered to build it.

2.2.2. The Colombian Armed conflict

According to the Truth Commission, the Colombian armed conflict is an internal war that began in 1960 and whose main authors are the guerrillas, the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), the M-19, and paramilitaries groups producing different violations to the human rights (terrorism, kidnappings, massacres, among others.). All the damage that it has produced by the Colombian armed conflict are important topics to teach and to consider if the aim is to achieve peace and non-repetition. The Spanish philosopher Jorge Ruiz states

that “a nation that does not know its history is condemned to repeat it.” For that reason, not only talking about peace and non-repetition but understanding about the beginning of the problem and the consequences is necessary.

Although Colombian society have developed different mechanisms to resist armed conflict, it is impossible to erase all the damage and suffering of the victims. However, teachers have a relevant role to accomplish a peaceful society within the framework of armed conflict as they could close the gap between the “knowledge” (recognition of history) and action. By providing the students with contextualized information regarding Colombian background using CPE it is possible to build a more conscious and empathetic society and achieve non-repetition.

2.2.2.1. Non-repetition

According to the Colombian Ministry of the Interior (2016), non-repetition refers to a set of guarantees and measures designed to prevent future violations of human rights and breaches of international humanitarian law. Similarly, the Colombian Truth Commission (2022), defines it as a broad strategy aimed at ensuring that violence and armed conflict do not recur, through institutional, social, and educational transformations.

Within the framework of Critical Peace Education, non-repetition becomes a fundamental principle that shapes students’ commitment to peacebuilding and social transformation. Promoting non-repetition means cultivating a more tolerant, active and critically engaged society, one that actively works to prevent the resurgence of violence. This requires collective awareness of historical events that have shaped the nation, particularly the injustices and harm caused by armed conflict, to envision and construct a peaceful future.

Through this lens, students are encouraged to develop critical perspectives on the conflict and adopt attitudes that reject violence in all its forms. By establishing clear ethical boundaries and reflective stances, they may begin to foster peaceful environments not only

in their own lives, but also within their families, schools, neighborhoods, and broader communities. In this sense, non-repetition is not merely a policy goal, but an educational imperative, one that empowers learners to recognize the past, resist cycles of violence, and participate in building a just and sustainable peace.

2.2.3. Work on the armed conflict

At first sight, violence is a general phenomenon that needs to be seen in specific aspects and each of them should be addressed differently. For the subject of this research, armed conflict is the type of violence the teacher-researcher is focus on with the objective of generating a closer concept about this type of violence and its repercussions in today's society, more particularly in students' closer context. According to Ortega (2020) "teaching English as a foreign language should not only be about teaching the language for the sake of language learning but also about empowering students to discuss issues that are related to their local context" (p.3). According to this, in an EFL classroom, students can be empowered and might be able to establish solutions about violence and create a culture of non-repetition while using the target language.

According to MIRE and ACAPS (2022), the armed conflict in Colombia has left 23,465 affected children, mainly by forced recruitment, sexual abuse, health problems, displacement, and poor government attention. However, the government has low guaranties as the political parties and laws do not provide enough solutions to the conflict and educational critical process results in a lack of consciousness about peace and non-repetition. In the context of this research means that the English teacher's task, as in any other subject, is essential to teach and foster critical thinking towards armed conflict and situations of violence.

Considering Gutierrez' (2021) text called *View of possible impossibilities of peace construction in ELT: Profiling the field*, it is necessary to show how peace construction in ELT can have different approaches as it is possible to foster a peaceful society through language

teaching: “At this point, we are talking about an alternative manner to conceptualize both English language and its teaching. Indeed, ELT seems to go beyond transmissionist communication processes and practices.” (p.4). Additionally, the study presents the necessity of developing more studies that involve sociological factors rather than transmitting and teaching grammar information. It means that there exists a necessity to involve social problems within the ELT classes.

Apart from the above mentioned, the presence of critical thinking among armed conflict usually is ignored and left behind in ELT classes, this might be because English teachers must provide to students the content that Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN) established. This is problematic because school should not only involve instrumental procedures; on the contrary, it is essential that school consider the social problems that surround students to create in their minds a critical thinking about their context, considering as an option the ELT classroom.

Considering the above, the topic of armed conflict has not received the attention it deserves. The consequences of the conflict have deeply affected children’s lives, making them more vulnerable to experiencing situations of violence. The ELT classroom, however, has the potential to offer meaningful resources and strategies that can help students respond to such situations through dialogue, critical thinking, and peaceful alternatives.

For these reasons, and to foster non-repetition, it is essential that all teachers including English language teacher, develop critical thinking considering armed conflict. Being an EFL teacher involves much more than presenting grammar topics decontextualizing students about their environment, in the contrary, EFL should represent and open door to teach the language in a contextualized way and foster critical awareness. For this research it is essential to teach English considering the students context; for this reason, talking about armed conflict in the ELT classes is necessary for students to adopt a

transformative active critical role in their daily lives recognizing themselves as inheritance of the Colombian armed conflict.

2.2.4. Artistic projects in the ELT classroom

As a central component of this research, it is essential to explore how art can be integrated into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching to foster critical awareness about Colombia's armed conflict and promote a culture of non-repetition. Art encompasses a wide range of expressive forms, such as literature, music, performance, visual arts, and sculpture, each with the potential to engage students in reflective and transformative learning. According to Britannica (2011), art can be understood as mimesis or mirroring, through which individuals construct representations of meaningful or significant realities. In this context, art becomes a pedagogical tool to help students interpret, question, and respond critically to their social and historical environment.

According to The New York State Education Department Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign languages Studies (2010) "By placing [visual] arts within the context of the lives of [English Language Learners] ELLs and enabling them to express their ideas visually as well as by speaking and writing, teachers can: [...] Promote high levels of analysis, reasoning, and questioning" (p.5). This suggests that visual arts can serve as a powerful medium to cultivate critical awareness and a culture of non-repetition, by allowing students to engage in deep analysis and reflection on violence through creative expressions, ultimately empowering them to question, understand, and transform their realities, which are crucial elements to develop critical thinking (Wulf, 1974).

Considering the above-mentioned, when it talks about art, it is important to mention figurative and metaphorical art. On the one hand, figurative art, according to Freeman (2010) "it is art that is intended to look like something in reality. At its most general level, it might be taken to include all non-abstract art" (p.5). In other words, figurative art refers to artistic representations that closely resemble real-life subjects, without relying on abstraction or

metaphor. It seeks to depict reality as it is, rather than inviting symbolic or interpretative analysis. On the contrary, according to Dixon (2021) metaphorical art is “a non-literal use of language, a metaphor is a device in which one thing is represented (or spoken of) as something else” (p.3). This means that metaphorical artistic expressions may convey meanings that differ from their literal interpretation. In this sense, individuals who use art to express their thoughts about a situation may do so through symbolic elements that are not directly connected to the original or explicit meaning.

In this sense, for this research both literal and metaphorical art is expected to be implemented by students, using this means of communication to express their interpretations and opinions about armed conflict. During the implementation process each class would produce an artistic representation in which students will show what they understood about the Colombian armed conflict.

2.2.5. Project based learning (PBL) Inquiry cycles.

Looking forward to fostering critical thinking about armed conflict and its recognition throughout non-repetition culture and to impact in students' minds and attitudes towards violence it is necessary a pedagogical approach that aligns with CPE and that focuses on students' voice, participation, and reflection. For this reason, Project based Learning (PBL) was selected as a teaching method considering the construction of a final product in which students' opinions, feelings, thoughts, and knowledge acquired during the implementation of this research are presented in a final project.

According to the educational psychologist Goodman (2010), PBL is an “instructional approach built upon learning activities and real tasks that have brought challenges for students to solve. These activities generally reflect the types of learning and work people do in the everyday world outside the classroom.” (p.2). In other words, students work together to solve a problem proposed by the teacher. In line with this approach and aligned with the

goals of this research, students will create an artistic piece that expresses their perspectives on how to prevent or reduce acts of violence within their communities.

Moreover, according to Buck Institute for Education there is a “gold standard PBL” that “helps teachers, schools, and organizations improve, calibrate, and assess their practice. In Gold Standard PBL, projects are focused on students' acquiring key knowledge, understanding, and success skills.” (2019). In the next image, there is a set of *Seven Essential Project Elements made by* Buck Institute for Education. These elements suggest a path for a class construction considering PBL.

The first element of the standard is the *Challenging Problem or Question* stage which is framed by a meaningful problem that leads students learning throughout the process by providing a driving question that motivates learners to inquire about the problematic presented. In that way learners could develop *Sustained Inquiry*, the second gold standard, by getting immersed and captivated in the process of questioning, finding information, and providing answers. Thirdly, *Authenticity* refers to a real-word context project in which students' *Voice and Choice* take a significant role in their learning process. With the elements mentioned before, learners will have the tools for provide a *Reflection* about their own learning process. It is expected learners ask themselves about project scopes; Was it effective? Did it have an impact on me? Finally, in the stage of *Critique and Revision* students will receive and apply feedback on their projects which allows them to present a final *Public Product* in which other students or educative actors can look at their work (Buck Institute for Education, 2019).

Figure 2 Gold standard PBL



Taken from educational psychology Goodman (2010)

A fundamental component of PBL is teamwork, which plays a crucial role in reducing violent behaviors while fostering collaboration and empathy among students. These social and emotional skills are essential for developing critical thinking about armed conflict and for nurturing a culture of peace and non-repetition. By engaging with a guiding question, students are encouraged to internalize the principles of peacebuilding and to recognize themselves as empowered agents capable of driving meaningful social transformation.

2.2.6. Critical Thinking skills (CTS)

To effectively implement Critical Peace Education, it is essential to foster Critical Thinking Skills (CTS). According to Scriven and Paul (2003), CTS are a disciplined process in which individuals conceptualize, apply, analyze, synthesize, and/or evaluate information collected through reasoning, in an active and skillful way. In this project, Critical thinking skills refer to the ability to objectively analyze information, evaluate arguments, and draw conclusions based on evidence gathered from a given context. CTS allow students to manifest a deep recognition of the Colombian armed conflict following a scaffolding development.

The improvement of these skills is often limited in English classrooms. This is mainly due to the command imposed by the DBA (Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje) and the institutional curricula, which prioritize grammatical and communicative objectives established by the Ministry of National Education (MEN). Consequently, opportunities to promote critical thinking in English Language Teaching (ELT) are frequently overlooked by both teachers and institutions. For this reason, this research considered Bloom's taxonomy that is a hierarchical categorization system of educational objectives (center for teaching and learning, 2025). Those categories (remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate and create) present a scaffolding for cognitive development, with specific learning objectives that influence critical thinking development making it suitable for educational purposes.

According to Bloom's taxonomy, students might develop some skills to accomplish critical thinking. There are six levels, one more complex than the other: *to remember*, that is to recognize and recall facts; *to understand*, that is the comprehension and information learned; *to apply* the knowledge learnt; *to analyze*, that is the process of examine the information; *to evaluate*, that consists of gather information for being critique; and finally, *to create*, that is the development of new ideas. According to *Bloom's taxonomy: Critical Thinking Skills* written by the platform ASK and Rosario English Area (n/d) express that "[f]ollowing these guidelines teachers can help develop critical skills for students to have the capacity to think and act creatively, to meet challenges positively and effectively, and show initiative and enterprise in how they think and learn" (p.4). It means that students might follow a sort of scaffolding in which each step will guide them towards the goal of complex critical thinking.

It is important to mention that this research aims to guide students in developing critical thinking regarding the Colombian armed conflict and the principle of non-repetition following Bloom taxonomy scaffolding process. To achieve this, the process follows several key steps: first, students begin to *understand* the conflict and the issue of violence caused by the Colombian war through the critical reading of related texts. Next, they *apply* this knowledge to promote peace and non-repetition of violent acts by participating in debates to demonstrate their understanding, and through writing exercises where they express a personal commitment to a culture of non-repetition. Then, students *analyze* Colombian armed groups and specific massacres by engaging in discussions about the consequences of the armed conflict and articulating their perspectives. These stages are *evaluated* by the preservice teacher, allowing students to express their initial ideas and reimagine them through the *creation* of artistic projects such as haikus, billboards, drawings, among others. Through these steps, this research seeks to provide a structured path for fostering critical thinking skills.

Guided by Bloom's Taxonomy, this research encourages students to critically analyze the violent environments they inhabit, fostering a culture of peace shaped by their Colombian context. Bloom's framework outlines progression through which learners first identify, categorize, and analyze information, and then move toward higher order thinking processes such as synthesizing and evaluating, which are essential for abstract reasoning about armed conflict.

A central and challenging objective of this study is the development of students' abstract thinking skills. According to Petric (2020), abstract thinking involves the capacity to understand information rooted in real experiences, while also imagining concepts beyond tangible or concrete objects. In this sense, abstract thinking is closely connected to reality yet transcends it through interpretation and symbolic reasoning. To support the development of this skill, students are expected to create an artistic piece progressively throughout the learning process. These artistic productions serve as a medium for expressing ideas and reflections formulated through critical engagement with texts and visual materials in English.

This research proposes two levels of abstract thinking. The first represents a lower level, in which students produce a literal artistic representation of an idea or concept. The second level reflects a deeper, more sophisticated understanding, where students engage with the materials metaphorically and symbolically, offering conceptual interpretations of the texts and images presented in class.

To conclude, fostering students' critical thinking skills is essential for helping them become critically conscious citizens who are aware of and committed to building a culture of peace. Strengthening these skills is pivotal for students to be better equipped to analyze their social context and act as agents of change by proposing peaceful solutions to violent situations. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that their proposals are expected to demonstrate a higher level of complexity. This cognitive ability will enable students to engage in deeper, more nuanced analyses of the realities they face.

Chapter III: Research design

This section outlines the research design, including the type and methodological approach adopted for the study. Furthermore, it describes the data collection instruments and interprets the procedures employed to gather information relevant to the study's objectives.

3.1. Research approach

This study is grounded in the principles of qualitative research. According to Aspers and Corte (2019), qualitative research is an iterative process through which deeper understanding is achieved by engaging closely with the phenomenon under study, allowing for the emergence of new insights and distinctions. This approach not only enhances research design but also acknowledges the presence of qualitative elements even within quantitative frameworks. Similarly, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) emphasize that qualitative research seeks to understand a phenomenon from the participants' perspectives rather than the researchers. In the same vein, according to Tenny, Brannan M. and Brannan D. (2022), qualitative research focuses on the study of human behavior and social problems in which the researcher narrates and interprets phenomena derived from people's experiences.

In this regard, this study employs a qualitative approach to explore participants' conceptions of the Colombian armed conflict. The integration of English language learning and artistic expression allows students to express their thoughts, emotions, and interpretations of violence, conflict, and peace. This approach aligns with qualitative research by prioritizing participants' perspectives and the meaning they assign to their experiences.

3.2. Type of research

According to Burns (2010), action research "involves taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring [...] teaching contexts" (p.3). This approach contributes to the understanding of students' environment, and accordingly to present a strategy in which students can generate a better outcome in their studies. This is carried out through the following cycle: first, observing the students' learning process; second, designing and

implementing a proposal to support that process; third, identifying and applying necessary adjustments to the proposal; fourth, re-implementing the revised proposal; and finally, observing the results to assess potential changes and determine whether the cycle should be repeated.

Moreover, action research is about understanding how participants make meaning out to an experience or phenomenon within their environment (Merriam and Tisdell, 2019). In this study, the purpose of adopting an action research approach is to directly involve students in a reflective process that encourages them to critically consider their sociocultural context, particularly the realities of Colombian armed conflict. Ideally, in this research it is expected students can generate a culture of peace and non-repetition offering non-violent solutions pertinent to their context.

3.3 Data collection instruments

To effectively address the research question, it is essential to select appropriate data collection instruments that align with the study's objectives and methodological approach. Therefore, this research incorporates a variety of tools, including field diaries, focus groups, student artifacts, and tests, which allow for a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences. Each instrument was chosen for its potential to capture rich qualitative data and contribute meaningfully to the development and analysis of this study.

3.3.1. Field diary

First, to characterize the participants of this study, a non-participant observation was implemented. Then, during the implementation phase, participant observation was conducted. To know students and understand their actions, feelings, interactions, and recognition of the topic inside EFL classroom a field diary was designed to have a systematic record of what was observed. The purpose of observing the students before the

implementation was first, know the students, their behavior, and their relationship with English classes; second to find a phenomenon that might affect the students' behavior and their learning process; thirdly, to understand why and how those situations could be addressed according to their context, and ages. Then, the participant observation was recorded through field diaries that allowed the teacher-researcher to document and monitor students' progress regarding Colombian armed conflict recognition and language use.

3.3.2. Focus group

For the purpose of this study, a pre-implementation focus group was conducted. According to Gerger (2007), focus groups are “carefully planned group discussions with the purpose of obtaining conceptions of participants in a permissive and non-threatening environment” (p.1.) The data gathered through this instrument is recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. With this procedure, the researcher pretended to obtain precise information about students' conceptions about armed conflict and English classes, understand and identify their needs, evaluate their prior knowledge about violence and recognize students preferred artistic expressions.

3.3.3. Artifacts

In qualitative research, the collection of diverse data sources is essential to gaining a comprehensive understanding of the subject of study. Among these sources, project-based learning provides valuable opportunities to gather authentic student-generated materials (artifacts) that reflect their engagement and learning process.

This study gathered student-produced documents, such as images, text, poems, paintings, and drawings. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2019), “artifacts are [...] a ready-made source of data easily accessible to [...] the investigator. Artifacts are usually three-dimensional physical “things” or objects that represent some form of communication that is meaningful to the participant and settings” (p.165). Consequently, all the activities, artistic

pieces, and documents submitted by students were considered to strengthen the research findings.

3.3.4. Diagnosis test

Assessment plays a crucial role in understanding students' learning progress and guiding instructional decisions. In this context, tests serve as essential tool to identify learners' needs and evaluating the effectiveness of educational interventions (Zhonghao. 2013 p.43). Hence, the pre-diagnostic test served to identify both the topics that needed to be addressed and the skills that students could further develop. Then, the achievements resulting from the pedagogical intervention were evaluated through the post-diagnostic tests, considering their critical thinking skills related to the armed conflict, non-repetition, and the English learning process.

3.4 Ethical considerations

For the implementation and data gathering of this research, it was necessary to obtain a consent form, signed by the parents of the participants, in which the purpose and use of the information provided by students were clearly explained. It was stated that the data collected would be used exclusively for technical and instrumental purposes. Additionally, it was ensured that participants' names would not be disclosed or shared to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality. Furthermore, the information given by the participants was intended solely for research purposes and was not used for any non-academic or unprofessional activities.

Chapter IV: Pedagogical instruction

This chapter presents and explains the pedagogical design and class planning developed for the intervention, allowing readers to clearly identify the theoretical and practical foundations that guided this process. On the one hand, the selected teaching and learning approach is described in detail. On the other hand, the guiding visions of curriculum, language, learning, and classroom are established as the fundamentals underpinning the intervention.

4.1 Vision of curriculum

In this study, the curriculum is seen as a dynamic and political space, co-constructed by students and teachers through dialogic, reflective, and situated practices. In line with the principles of CPE, the curriculum is understood as a transformative tool that fosters students' critical awareness, enables them to identify and question structural violence, and promotes students to adopt the role of peacebuilders in their communities, through meaningful and authentic challenges. Curriculum is not isolated from the learners' realities; Instead, it is integrated with the development of critical thinking skills, ethical reflection, social awareness and peace education.

Wulf (1974) suggests that peace education curriculum should aim at “learning goals” that foster critical self-understanding and self-liberation. To achieve this, he proposes a structure composed of three key dimensions. The curricular dimension, focused on addressing contextual needs and aligning with students' learning interests. The scientific dimension emphasizes the understanding of the link between politics and science, encouraging students to see themselves as social agents. Finally, the emancipatory dimension promotes critical reflection on the political and social conditions that shape students' lives. These dimensions align with the principles of Critical Peace Education, supporting a transformative curriculum that not only builds knowledge but also cultivates critical consciousness. Through contextualized games, readings, discussions, and artistic

expressions, students are encouraged to reflect on their socio-political reality and take an active role in peacebuilding.

4.2 Vision of language

Language is a fundamental function that enables individuals to communicate, express thoughts, and engage with others. Tudor (2001), for example, identifies four perspectives of language: 1) language as linguistic system; 2) language as social action; 3) language as self-expression; and 4) language as culture and ideology. In the case of this study, language is viewed as a means for students to participate in social change and promote non-repetition of violent actions, expressing their perspectives not only through English but through artistic expression as an alternative language system. For this reason, all the perspectives proposed by Tudor are taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the activities.

In this study, English is conceived not as an end itself, but as a tool for meaningful communication and critical engagement. As a linguistic system, it enables students to articulate their ideas about armed conflict and the principle of non-repetition. At the same time, the integration of artistic expression as an alternative mode of communication enriched students' ability to reflect on and represent complex social realities. Through these multimodal practices, students were encouraged to express their thoughts, emotions, and critiques, aligning with the perspective of language as self-expression. Furthermore, English became a vehicle for social action, allowing students to connect their lived experiences to broader societal issues. Lastly, by critically engaging with topics related to armed conflict, inequality, and peace, students explored language as culture and ideology, questioning dominant narratives and constructing new meanings. Thus, the implementation of this project fully embraced the four dimensions of language proposed by Tudor (2001), positioning English not only as a subject to learn but as a means to understand, transform, and engage with the world.

4.3 Vision of Learning

Learning, understood in this research as a socially situated, reflective, and transformative process, involves not only acquiring linguistic skills but also developing critical awareness and agency. According to Giroux (2010), learning should be active, critical, and socially engaged, encouraging students to reflect on and transform their realities. In line with this view, this study approaches learning through artistic projects as meaningful tools for expression and communication. Tudor (2001) also points out that in foreign language (FL) contexts, establishing a strong connection with the language can be particularly challenging. While errors are a natural part of the process, student autonomy and thoughtful teacher guidance play a crucial role in fostering both affective and political engagement. To support this, the project incorporated original materials such as texts, poems, and images in English. The activities were designed to encourage students not only to engage with the content linguistically, but also to create artistic representations of their learning, allowing them to express their experiences, insights, and critical reflections about the armed conflict and the principle of non-repetition.

Aligned with Critical Peace Education (CPE), five of Wulf's (1974) learning objectives, are essential to this study's vision of learning: recognizing the social consequences of one's actions, considering strategies for social change, understanding peace as a shared interest, identifying inequalities rooted in the economic system, and distinguishing between personal and structural violence. This study's vision of learning fosters a critical stance towards armed conflict, learning is not solely about acquiring information but about raising awareness of structural violence through autonomy, dialogue and collective reflection spaces.

4.4 Vision of classroom

This research envisions the classroom as a place for communication, for meaningful preparation for "real-world" communication and "real" social interaction (Tudor 2001, p. 115). It means that the classroom is considered a space in which students prepare for the real

world. Considering the nature of the activities and the objectives of each session, the classroom functioned as a space where students engaged with language (both linguistic and artistic) as a means of expression, learning, and social action. Through their work, they articulated their perspectives of the world and critically examined structural violence in Colombia, aligning with the curriculum's focus on experiential learning and critical thinking. Thus, the classroom is conceived as a dynamic and inclusive space where historical awareness, political reflection, dialogue, and empathy converge to foster a culture of peace.

4.5 Lesson plans

This study's lesson plans were designed within the framework of critical peace education, following Bloom's taxonomy as a scaffold to progressively develop students' critical thinking skills, mainly analyzing Colombia's armed conflict and reflecting on non-repetition. Moreover, the pedagogical intervention integrated Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Critical Peace Education (CPE). PBL emphasized student-centered, real-world tasks like creating art, while CPE provided a set of ethics and socio-political lenses to critically analyze violence and peace building. Together, these approaches created a meaningful and reflective learning environment.

Bloom's taxonomy classifies learning objectives into various levels of complexity. This classification is divided into the following six categories: *remember*, *understand*, *apply*, *analyze*, *evaluate*, and *create*. However, it is important to clarify that for this proposal the *remember* category was not taken into consideration due to the students' lack of knowledge about the armed conflict in Colombia. Also, in this research Bloom's taxonomy is considered as a tool since it sets the step-by-step process that needs to be followed by the teacher and the students to accomplish the main objective of the project.

Moreover, PBL golden standards were taken into consideration in the design of class activities. As mentioned before, PBL is a path that focuses on students' voices, participation, and reflection which perfectly aligns with the scaffolding approach of Bloom's taxonomy.

Additionally, Critical Peace Education (CPE) and PBL categories were interlinked to foster awareness through the activities design as follows:

Considering the scaffolding of critical thinking proposed by Bloom's Taxonomy, the first step focused on *understanding*, which was fostered through the exploration of a *challenging problem or question*. In this phase, students identified and discussed Colombia's historical background, particularly the roots and consequences of the armed conflict. As previously mentioned, developing a critical reading of relevant texts was essential for students to grasp the complexity of violence in the Colombian context.

The subsequent stages of *applying* and *analyzing* were addressed through processes of *reflection*, *critique*, and *revision*, stages of the Project-Based Learning (PBL), allowing the interpretation of the students' roles in society regarding peace and non-repetition of violent actions. To *apply* their knowledge, students engaged in debates and writing exercises that encouraged them to articulate their understanding and express a personal commitment to promoting peace and the non-repetition of violent acts. To *analyze*, students explored information about armed groups and specific massacres in Colombia, critically discussing the consequences of these events and examining their roles as active citizens.

Finally, the *creation* stage involved the production of a public artifact (as proposed by PBL), in which students synthesized their learning by designing artistic pieces and shared them with their peers.

It is important to mention that the research did not allow for the full development of all the steps in Bloom's Taxonomy, as the *evaluation* stage had to be omitted due to time constraints. Initially, the study was designed to include nine sessions covering the understanding, application, analysis, and evaluation stages, along with three additional sessions dedicated to the final product (creation). However, given the time limitations and the school's schedule, it was necessary to shorten the intervention.

Although the initial plan included nine instructional sessions (Annex 12) and three additional sessions for the development of the final project, time constraints led to a shortened implementation consisting of six content-focused sessions and three dedicated to creation and production. Despite the adjustment, each session, except for the review ones, concluded with an artistic product that served both to demonstrate students' learning and to contribute to the construction of the final project, in alignment with the principles of Project-Based Learning (PBL).

4.6. Lesson plans

As described in the previous section, and in accordance with critical pedagogy, the lesson plans were designed following Bloom's taxonomy of critical thinking skills as a scaffolding framework. Each level of this scaffold structure was planned in a way to increase student critical thinking skills for them to analyze the armed conflict and reflect on the concept of non-repetition. Moreover, the pedagogical intervention was based on the principles of Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Critical Peace Education (CPE). PBL provided an active and student-centered pedagogy for students to engage through purposeful, real-world tasks like creating art, while CPE provided a set of ethics and socio-political frameworks to critically help students explore the causes and effects of violence and explore possibilities for peace building. Together, these frameworks create a rich environment for students to learn through, reflect, come to an agency, and generate new knowledge and understanding.

Bloom's taxonomy classifies learning objectives into various levels of complexity. This classification is divided into the following six categories: *remember*, *understand*, *apply*, *analyze*, *evaluate*, and *create*. However, it is important to clarify that for this proposal the remember category was not taken into consideration due to the students' lack of knowledge about the armed conflict in Colombia. Also, in this research Bloom's taxonomy is considered

as a tool since it sets the step-by-step process that needs to be followed by the teacher and the students to accomplish the main objective of the project.

Moreover, PBL golden standards were taken into consideration in the design of class activities. As mentioned before, PBL is a path that focuses on students' voices, participation, and reflection which perfectly aligns with the scaffolding approach of Bloom's taxonomy. Additionally, Critical Peace Education (CPE) and PBL categories were interlinked to foster awareness through the activities design as follows:

In the first step students needed to *understand* (Bloom's taxonomy), which was trained through a challenging problem or question. In this step the historical background of Colombia was identified and discussed by the students. As mentioned before, for students to understand the conflict and the issue of violence caused by the Colombian war, it was necessary to develop a critical reading of related texts. Next, the steps of *applying* and *analyzing* (Bloom's taxonomy) were followed by *reflection, critique, and revision* (PBL), allowing the interpretation of the students' roles in society regarding peace and non-repetition of violent actions. For *applying* this knowledge, the idea was to promote peace and the non-repetition of violent acts by participating in debates to demonstrate their understanding, and through writing exercises where they expressed a personal commitment to a culture of non-repetition. For *analyzing*, students learned about the Colombian armed groups and specific massacres by getting engaged in discussions about the consequences of the armed conflict and articulating their perspectives. Finally, the stage of *create* (Bloom's taxonomy), presenting a *revision and public product* (PBL); in which an artistic piece –such as haikus, billboards, drawings, among others- was designed and shared with their partners.

It is important to mention that the research did not allow for the full development of all the steps in Bloom's Taxonomy, as the *evaluation* stage had to be omitted due to time constraints. Initially, the study was designed to include nine sessions covering the understanding, application, analysis, and evaluation stages, along with three additional

sessions dedicated to the final product (creation). However, given the time limitations and the school's schedule, it was necessary to shorten the intervention.

Table number 1 (Annex. 12) shows the final schedule implemented considering the dates and steps the researcher followed to achieve the objectives of this study.

Consequently, the research had six explanatory classes and three classes for the creation of a final product derived from students' analysis. It is important to consider that each session (except contextualization games and topics review sessions) ended with an artistic product, either a text, painting, or drawing, in which students presented what they understood. This was designed as preparation for the final project considering PBL.

Chapter V: Data analysis and findings

This section describes the data analysis approach considered for this research. Additionally, it presents the analysis of the data collected through the instruments implemented; focus groups, pre-test and post-test, students' artifacts, and field diaries. Finally, the findings of this research are addressed.

5.1 Grounded theory

According to Charmaz (2006), grounded theory offers a systematic yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct new theories. This theory has three main steps: *open coding*: identifying and coding the information gathered; *axial coding*: establishes relationships between codes to create subcategories; and *selective coding*: generate the core categories that respond to research objectives (Corbin and Strauss 1996).

Moreover, Corbin and Strauss (1990) suggested that grounded theory goes beyond description, focusing on how people interpret and react to specific circumstances. This implies a process-oriented and emergent approach, where participants' meanings and responses are essential for developing a theory grounded in the collected data. The table in annex 13 shows three categories of analysis that have emerged during the codification process to establish a relationship with the specific and general objective.

The first emerged category is *From limited conceptions to recognition*, which analyses students' understanding of the historical background of Colombia regarding the armed conflict; to delve into this information, two subcategories of analysis emerged, namely *Superficial conceptions about the armed conflict* and *Recognition of the Colombian armed conflict*. The second category, called *Art as a manifestation of students' comprehension of the Colombian armed conflict*, shows how students expressed their comprehension of the Colombian armed conflict using artistic tools during the implementation. The subcategories that compose it are *Figurative artistic expressions about the Colombian armed conflict* and

Metaphorical representations of the Colombian armed conflict. The third category illustrates incipient critical thinking skills, such as understanding and analyzing, acquired by students through artistic expressions. Here the subcategories are *Student's abilities of abstract thinking skills* and *Development of CTS*.

These categories provide a structure lens to analyze the impact of implementing artistic projects through Critical Peace Education (CPE) on the development of critical thinking skills.

5.2. Category 1: From limited conceptions to recognition

As was mentioned before, Colombia is a country that has suffered violence for more than sixty years, and even now after the 2016 peace agreement, the armed conflict is still present. The locality of Ciudad Bolivar is a part of Bogotá characterized by a high number of inhabitants being direct or indirect victims of the Colombian armed conflict. The students in class 803 lack sufficient knowledge about Colombia's recent historical background and their consequences in their communities, even worse, their sometimes-hostile attitudes towards classmates and teachers clearly reflect the direct and indirect impact of the armed conflict on this population. This category examines students' recognition and understanding of the Colombian historical context, with a particular focus on the armed conflict. It is directly related to the first research objective, which aims to foster comprehension of the historical context of the Colombian armed conflict within the scope of Critical Peace Education.

Initially, the category considers students' preconceptions, often shaped by dominant or oversimplified narratives, which were evident before and, in some cases, persisted throughout the implementation process. However, the analysis also highlights how some students were able to critically reflect on and transform these preconceptions into more nuanced and informed conceptions. This shift indicates a more meaningful and engaged recognition of the conflict's historical, social, and political dimensions. These transformations

are analyzed through field diaries, characterization questionnaire, diagnosis test, focus groups and students' artefacts, which served to explore their evolving understandings.

It is important to mention that in this research, conceptions are understood as the process by which people register and evaluate information observed from the internal or external environment, consciously or unconsciously regarding a topic to have an understanding of it (Hasa, 2016). Whereas recognition is conceived as an *achievement verb* that implies the process and the end of coding of a situation and allows its understanding and acceptance (Dietz, 2022). The above-mentioned shows that the information (input) along the process is taken into account by the alumni for their final goal learning. For this reason, this category goes deeper into students' conceptions of the armed conflict in Colombia and consequently, shows how the students' recognition was transformed.

5.2.1 Subcategory 1: Superficial conceptions about armed conflict

In this subcategory the preconceptions of the students about the Colombian armed conflict, this means, their ideas, impressions, and thoughts at the beginning of the research and through the implementation are examined. The analysis draws on data collected from two focus groups, field diaries, and students' artifacts, allowing for a comprehensive view of which of these pre-existing conceptions are and which of them persisted during the pedagogical intervention.

To begin, peace educators Diaz Soto (2005) and Wulf (1974) state that students in secondary education who are living in countries with armed conflict should know about this political situation, so they can become active agents who promote tolerance and solidarity in their communities. However, the students of this research demonstrated only superficial preconceptions about the topic at the beginning of the implementation process. One example of the afore mentioned is students' answers to the question: What is the Colombian armed conflict?

Estudiante 14: La guerrilla es como un estado que hace mirar los derechos a los campesinos contra la sociedad del pueblo y no permite tanto la violencia entre los

campesinos y cómo ocasionan limpieza no puede haber tanta violencia en el pueblo ni gente que consume drogas porque que [los matan]
Estudiante 13: el gobierno contra las Farc
Profesora ¿saben por qué?
Estudiante 12: cada uno tiene opiniones muy diferentes sobre el país
[Focus group #1. April 03, 2024]

In the above example from the first focus group done on April 03, 2024, before implementation, students' responses revealed preconceptions and a superficial understanding of the Colombian armed conflict. Most referred to a single armed group suggesting a limited awareness of the multiple actors involved in the conflict. Additionally, their accounts lacked reference to key historical events, indicating gaps in their knowledge of the conflict's complexity and historical development. These responses reflect preconceptions that may stem from dominant narratives or insufficient exposure to diverse perspectives. Another example of this shortcoming is the answers to the same question as above given by the second focus before implementation group (Annex 4), further illustrating the prevalence of these limited conceptions:

Estudiante 10: La guerrilla
-Risas colectivas
Estudiante 10: sí, es verdad
Estudiante 11: el narcotráfico
Profesora: bueno sí, es verdad
Estudiante 12: ay respeto a los militares
Profesora: ¿Cómo se ha formado la guerrilla? [...] ¿Qué opinan acerca de eso?
Estudiantes 3: que cogen mucha gente para la guerrilla
Estudiante 12: que deberían llegar a un acuerdo para no armar guerras
Profesora: ¿saben algo del conflicto armado en Colombia?
Estudiante 10: claro que no
Estudiante 5: yo sé que aquí se llevaron a un niño de primaria
Profesora: ¿Cómo sabes eso?
Estudiante 5: porque yo tengo gente profe.
(Focus group #2. April 03, 2024)

As can be observed in the responses from the second focus group, some students demonstrated a partial knowledge related to the Colombian armed conflict specifically referencing practices such as kidnapping and drug trafficking, but showed limited understanding of the origins, compositions and political aims of the guerrilla groups. These omissions suggest the presence of preconceptions shaped by dominant discourses that

emphasize criminal aspects while overlooking the structural and historical dimensions of the conflict. Moreover, their uncritical comments, suggest a lack of reflection on the accuracy of the information and the broader implications of the armed groups' actions.

Throughout the implementation of the pedagogical proposal, materials and information were introduced with the aim of fostering a deeper understanding among students regarding the causes of the Colombian armed conflict and its consequences. Additionally, various activities were designed to promote the development of critical thinking and artistic expression, encouraging the construction of new conceptions through graphic representations informed by the content given. Despite of the efforts of providing with relevant content regarding the topic of Colombian armed conflict, some limited conceptions prevailed as can be observed in the following students' comments on the famous photograph taken by Jesús Abad Colorado in Urabá depicting two victims of the armed conflict.

Figure 3 Characterization questionnaire. Student 1.
March 14th



Figure 4 Characterization questionnaire. Student 2.
March 14th



In the first response (Figure 3), the student gives a literal interpretation, stating that the individuals are “refuging,” without connecting the image to the armed conflict. The second response (Figure 4) shows more empathy by mentioning pain and sadness yet still lacks an explicit reference to the socio-political context. Although the photograph by Jesús Abad Colorado portrays victims of the Colombian armed conflict, both responses suggest that students struggled to connect the visual material with the concepts discussed in class.

This reveals a gap between the content provided and the students' ability to apply it with criticism.

Although some students' conceptions evolved throughout the sessions as a result of the activities and information shared detailed in the next category, not all were able to critically transform their initial, superficial conceptions of the Colombian armed conflict. This is evident in certain student artifacts, such as the one related to the 2016 Peace Agreement (figure 5), where the complexity of the peace negotiations was reduced to a generic and widely recognized symbol: the dove with an olive branch. In this session number 2, students learnt about armed groups, and they were asked to design a billboard about the reading of armed groups to demonstrate their understanding of the topic. This simplification reflects the persistence of limited or idealized preconceptions, which may hinder deeper engagement with the political, historical, and social dimensions of the peace process.

In addition, Figure 6 further illustrates how some students continued to approach the topic from a predominantly literal and surface-level perspective. The collage is composed almost entirely of images of military forces, with little to no critical framing or questioning of their role in the armed conflict. This selection suggests a limited understanding of the complexities involved, reinforcing dominant narratives rather than exploring the multifaceted nature of violence or its root causes.

Figure 5. Students' artifacts. Billboard 1. May 2, 2024



Figure 6 Students' artifacts. Collage 1. May 30, 2024



Furthermore, students' responses in the final questionnaire reveal that some of them continued to generalize information, oversimplify events, or display a lack of knowledge regarding the historical developments that led the various actors in the conflict to engage in warfare, despite the information and activities provided throughout the implementation (Figures 7 and 8). It is important to note that the questions in this diagnostic were asked in Spanish in order to avoid restricting students' ability to express themselves and to facilitate argumentative use of their mother tongue. However, these responses reflect deeply rooted preconceptions that remained largely unchanged, limiting the development of a critical understanding of the Colombian armed conflict.

Figure 7 Final questionnaire 1. November 6, 2024

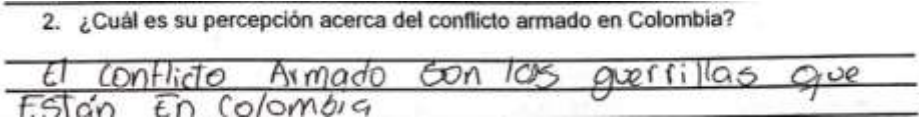
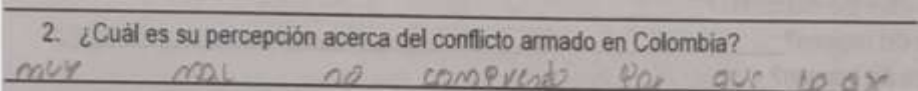


Figure 8 Final questionnaire 2. November 6, 2024



Throughout the analysis of this subcategory, some recurring patterns in their conceptions of the Colombian armed conflict became evident. Many students continued to associate the conflict mainly with guerrilla groups and criminal activities such as drug trafficking and kidnapping, while overlooking the historical, political, and structural causes behind it. These limited ideas reflect deeply rooted preconceptions influenced by dominant narratives that simplify the complexity of the conflict. Although there were constant efforts to address these preconceptions by providing accurate information about historical events, the origins of the conflict, its consequences, and the aims of the different actors involved, many students were not able to develop a critical understanding of the topic.

To conclude, although some students' conceptions remained unchanged, others were significantly transformed, especially from session three onwards, when their mindset

regarding the armed conflict began to shift. For most of them, these superficial ideas started to change progressively. This gradual transition from superficial conceptions to more critical recognition will be further developed in the next subcategory.

5.2.2 Subcategory 2: Recognition of the Colombian armed conflict

In this subcategory it is explored how students' preconceptions of the armed conflict in Colombia were gradually changing towards a nuanced and informed conceptions. The basis of this exploration is the data obtained from students' artifacts, the initial and final questionnaires, and field notes.

As discussed in the first subcategory, at the beginning of this research students held superficial conceptions of the Colombian armed conflict. They often failed to distinguish between the various illegal armed groups and tended to conflate the conflict with issues like drug trafficking. To change these preconceptions and promote more critical perspectives, Soto (2005) and Wulf (1974) emphasize the importance of teaching younger generations about the complex realities of the world they inhabit. In this implementation, one of the strategies used to approach this reality was the creation of haikus. To support this activity, it was first necessary to teach vocabulary and some basic structures in the target language related to the Colombian armed conflict. Students then worked in small groups to compose haikus, a traditional Japanese poetic form.

Despite the simplicity of the poems and some linguistic inaccuracies, the resulting texts reflected not only the use of the covered language structures and vocabulary, but a meaningful shift in the students' conceptions. One haiku (Figure 9), for example, conveyed a clear recognition of the suffering endured by innocent victims, showing an initial but important step toward acknowledging the human consequences of the conflict. This exercise

demonstrated the potential of creative expression to foster deeper engagement and critical reflection.

Figure 9 students' artifact: Haiku 1. April 25, 2024

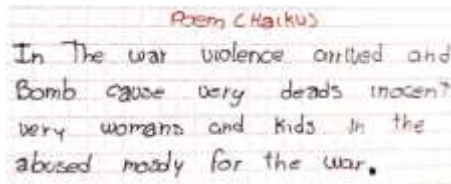
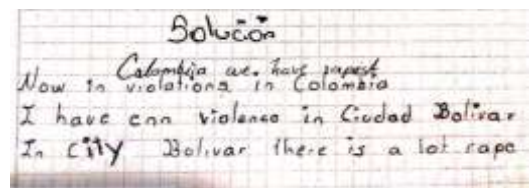


Figure 10 Figure 10 students' artifact: Haiku 2. April 25, 2024



Another revealing example is the haiku presented in Figure 10, which illustrates how some students were able to transpose elements of armed conflict into their own lived realities. In this case, a student connects broader national issues of violence to their immediate environment, referencing Ciudad Bolívar. While the haiku is grammatically flawed, it reflects an emerging awareness of how structural violence, and the effects of armed conflict extend into the spaces they inhabit daily. Moreover, students used English not only as a target language but also as a tool to express these complex ideas. This basic level of recognition indicates a meaningful step in bridging dominant narratives with personal experience and shows early signs of critical engagement with the sociopolitical context that surrounds them.

One clear example of this process is the “friendly-approach game” played on May 23, 2024. The original game, Hombres Lobo de Castronegro (Annex 5), was adapted using Colombian context: instead of wolves, the roles were taken by armed groups such as ELN, M19, FARC, and paramilitaries; the hunter became a soldier; the witch was replaced by the JEP (Special Jurisdiction for Peace); and the peasants remained as civilians. The aim was to identify the armed groups using descriptions in English. Through this game, students began to clarify their conceptions, realizing that peasants had no power to win, reflecting how, in real armed conflicts, civilians often suffer the most despite not being direct participants. This playful activity supports Wulf’s (1974) idea that games can promote a change in students’ conceptions of war by representing structural violence in a way that is easier to understand

As the implementation progressed, students were gradually introduced to more factual and contextual information related to the Colombian armed conflict. This process led to a growing recognition of the actors involved in the violence. One key activity that supported this development was a collaborative task in which students were provided with fact sheets about different armed groups in Colombia. Based on these, they worked in teams to synthesize the information and create billboards to share with the class. This exercise aimed to promote a collective construction of knowledge and to visually represent their understanding. The outcome of this collective exercise (Figures 11 and 12) illustrates how students began to identify symbols used by armed groups and their activities to obtain financial resources.

Figure 11 Students' artifact Billboard 2. May 5, 2024

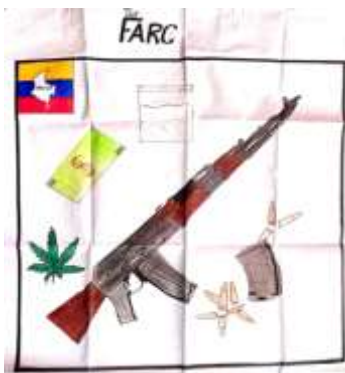


Figure 12 Students' artifact billboard 3. May 5, 2024



The symbols illustrated in the posters reflect a shift from vague views of the conflict to a more nuanced recognition of multiple actors and their roles. For instance, in the first image depicting the FARC, students chose to represent elements such as a rifle, ammunition, among others, symbolizing drug trafficking, visual markers that indicate an awareness of how these groups fund their operations. Moreover, in Figure 12, the group focused on the M-19 guerrilla and wrote their most well-known action in 1980, along with symbols such as weapons, a broken heart, and two intertwined hands. These images suggest an effort to depict both violence and the social rupture caused by the conflict, while also hinting at reconciliation or unity through the symbolism. Importantly, this group labeled their poster in English, reinforcing the use of the target language as a tool for reflection and expression.

Overall, these artifacts suggest that students were not only beginning to distinguish between different armed groups but also to recognize the socio-political dimensions of their actions. The artistic and linguistic choices they made reflect a developing critical awareness of the conflict's complexity, fostered by collective work and dialogic engagement.

The classes followed a kind of scaffolding, moving from a general understanding of the conflict toward a more detailed exploration of its agents and main events. On September 13, during a class titled "Colombia has scars," students learned about several massacres perpetrated by different actors involved in the armed conflict. To ensure accessibility, the original materials that were written in Spanish and containing complex grammar and vocabulary, were adapted to suit the students' language level. Working in groups, students were given information strips (see Figure 13) summarizing key details about these events. They were then encouraged to share this information orally with their classmates in English, using posters they created to answer key *wh-* questions (who, what, where, how), thereby combining content learning with the development of language skills.

Figure 13 Short description "Colombia has scars" September 13, 2024

2. La Rochela Massacre (Santander) - On January 18, 1989, a group of paramilitaries murdered 12 judicial investigators in La Rochela, Santander, when they were investigating previous massacres committed by paramilitaries in the region. The attack sought to obstruct justice and is one of the most emblematic cases of violence against the judiciary in Colombia.
4. El Salado Massacre (Bolívar) - Between February 16 and 21, 2000, AUC paramilitaries murdered more than 60 people in El Salado, Bolívar. The murders were brutal and committed amid torture, rape, and public humiliation. It is one of the best-known massacres in the recent history of Colombia.

To share the information about the massacre in the village of El Salado in 2000, one group created the drawing shown in Figure 14. In this artifact, students represent El Salado as a place marked by death and devastation. The skull and the armed soldier symbolize the omnipresence of violence and fear, while the ruins of the peasant homes suggest destruction not only of physical spaces but also of the community's social fabric. Through these visual elements, students begin to recognize and represent the magnitude of harm inflicted on rural populations during armed conflict. Although the representation is basic, it reveals a developing awareness of the consequences of violence on civilian life and the role of specific actors (paramilitaries), in perpetrating such atrocities. Furthermore, this artifact shows how

artistic expression served as a way for students to process and externalize the historical trauma conveyed in the lesson.

In the same vein, in Figure 15, students exposed the massacre that occurred near the small town of La Rochela in the department of Santander. To the right, there is a figure labeled “X12,” which the student explained as representing twelve people who were killed with firearms and whose homes were subsequently burned.

Figure 14 Students’ artifact el Salado massacre. September 13, 2024

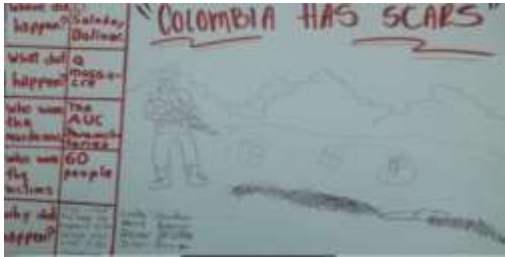
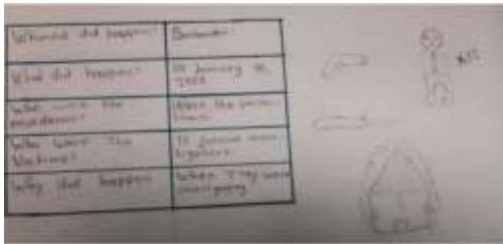


Figure 15 Students’ artifact Santander massacre, September 13, 2024



This depiction not only evidences the student’s awareness of the extreme violence experienced by the civilian population but also demonstrates an emerging ability to symbolize the consequences of armed conflict through visual representation. The inclusion of both death and displacement reflects a more comprehensive understanding of how violence affects communities, going beyond isolated acts to encompass broader patterns of destruction. In this sense, the students’ work suggests a shift from superficial conceptions to a more nuanced recognition of the conflict’s human cost, aligning with the objectives of critical Peace Education to foster awareness of historical events and empathetic engagement through expressive means.

Figure 16 Arrow location. September 13, 2024



Additionally, in Figure 16 students were able to identify the location of the massacre by marking it with an arrow on the map of Colombia. This activity fostered a geographical

and emotional awareness of the country's violent history, enabling students to visualize Colombia as a territory marked by numerous "scars" caused by armed conflict. The act of locating these events on the map prompted a sense of astonishment among the students, as they realized the extent and proximity of the atrocities that had occurred in their own country. In the field note for this day (September 13, 2024) the following can be read: "I happily noticed that most of the students have an opinion about armed conflict and produce an idea about what happened with those situations" As Díaz Soto (2005) asserts, understanding one's history, even when painful, is essential for fostering critical awareness and becoming agents of transformation.

The final stage of scaffolding aimed to encourage students to take a stance and reflect on their role in preventing future violence. For this reason, it was essential to address the concept of non-repetition and highlight how small, everyday decisions can lead to meaningful change. As Giroux (2002) suggests, students should be encouraged to take risks, embrace social responsibility as a personal task, and engage with the world through their own critical reflections. With this in mind, an activity was designed in which students worked in groups to create dioramas (Figure 17) that illustrated their personal and collective commitment to the non-repetition of violent actions.

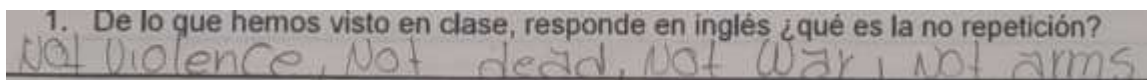
Figure 17 Students' artifact diorama 1 October 25, 2024



The commitments expressed by students such as "being a better person with others, [as] violence only brings sadness," "being respectful," and "not fighting with others" (Students artifacts: dioramas, October 25, 2024), reflect an emerging awareness of the ethical

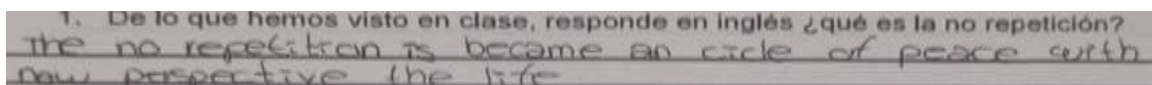
dimensions of the armed conflict. These statements, though simple, indicate a shift from passive or externalized views of violence to a more personal and reflective stance. Students began to recognize that the transformation of structural violence also involves everyday actions and interpersonal relationships, signaling a meaningful, if initial, change in their conceptions of peace, responsibility, and coexistence. The recognition of elements leading to more peaceful environments was also manifested in some answers to the question “¿qué es la no repetición?” in the final questionnaire (Figures 18 and 19).

Figure 18 Final questionnaire 1. November 6, 2024



1. De lo que hemos visto en clase, responde en inglés ¿qué es la no repetición?
Not violence, Not dead, Not War, Not arms

Figure 19 questionnaire 2. November 6, 2024



1. De lo que hemos visto en clase, responde en inglés ¿qué es la no repetición?
The no repetition is became an cycle of peace with new perspective the life

In Figure 18, the student defines non-repetition through a list of rejections. Although the structure is simple, the message is clear: non-repetition is understood by the students as the absence of violent elements that caused suffering. This response reveals an intuitive and powerful association between peace and the elimination of conflict. While, in Figure 19, another student offers a more reflective and abstract interpretation that reveals a meaningful conceptual shift: non-repetition is also the active construction of peace through a “new perspective of life”. This expression suggests that students have begun to internalize the idea that peacebuilding involves personal and collective transformation. Both responses demonstrate that students are moving beyond a superficial understanding of peace to embrace it as an active and ongoing process rooted in critical reflection.

In conclusion, the gradual transformation of students’ conceptions of the Colombian armed conflict passed from simplistic and often biased ideas to more critical, empathetic, and informed understandings, which was visible through the activities development. This shift, though still developing, underscores the potential of Critical Peace Education to promote

critical thinking, and social transformation through dialogue and artistic expression.

Regarding the last one, will be addressed in depth in the second category.

5.3. Category 2: Art as a manifestation of students' comprehension of the Colombian armed conflict

The second category is aligned with the second specific objective of this study: to foster the comprehension of the Colombian armed conflict through artistic expression. As highlighted by the Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies program (2010), art can function as a form of expression through which students make sense of complex social realities. In this research, various artistic tools, such as haikus, cinema billboards, drawings, dioramas, and paintings, were implemented within a project-based learning (PBL) framework, enabling students to externalize their comprehension of the conflict through figurative and metaphorical representations. These two types of artistic expression constitute the subcategories that will be analyzed in this section.

5.3.1 Subcategory 1: Figurative artistic expressions about the Colombian armed conflict

In this subcategory the students' figurative or literal artistic representation of the Colombian armed conflict are analyzed. This means the scope of artistic expressions in the recognition of the Colombian armed conflict historical context and peace building is analyzed using data from students' artifacts and the final questionnaire.

As defined by Freeman (2010), figurative art works could be understood as objects, individuals and physical things, represented as they appear in the real world. This is the type of artistic expression most students create.

Figure 20 Students' artifacts Mapiripán Massacre. September 13, 2024



In this group work, students visually reproduced what they had read about the Mapiripán massacre (see activity from September 9 described above): an armed individual shooting at civilians seeking protection. This scene is clearly depicted in the illustration on the right side of the sheet. Such literal representations do not imply an absence of learning; on the contrary, they show that students understood the factual content of the event (similar examples could be seen in figures 11, 12, 14, and 15). However, the depth of their critical engagement remains limited. In this case, students' visual representations reflect early stages of critical thinking, such as defining, describing, and interpreting, without reaching more complex levels of analysis or evaluation, which will be further explored in the corresponding subcategory.

The images below (figures 21 and 22) are part of the final artistic project, in which students were invited to paint their understanding of the Colombian armed conflict after completing all the lessons. Their creations were also inspired by a set of guiding images provided to support their reflections and artistic expression.

Figure 21 Student's artifact painting 1. November 6, 2024



Figure 22 Student's artifact painting 2. November 6, 2024



In Figure 21, one student painted a peasant sowing the land while a military airplane bombed the area where he lived. This representation reveals the student's ability to connect the content discussed in class with the real-life experiences of rural communities affected by the armed conflict. The juxtaposition of agricultural labor and military aggression suggests an understanding of how violence often disrupts the everyday lives of civilians, especially those

in the countryside. As Britannica (2024) notes, art can serve as a mirror of reality, and in this case, it reflects the historical vulnerability of rural populations in Colombia.

A second example, Figure 22, presents which may seem a confrontation between a Colombian military and an armed group. This representation is particularly powerful in the way it captures the destructive nature of such clashes. The chaotic blending of colors in the background suggests environmental devastation and emotional distress, symbolizing the broader consequences of violent encounters. Rather than focusing on a single defined actor, the student portrays the conflict as a struggle that leaves lasting damage, not only physical and environmental but also psychological. This interpretation aligns with the goals of CPE, encouraging students to consider the structural impacts of war on humans and nature alike.

Figure 23 Student's artifact billboard 4. May 5, 2024



The image in Figure 23 through the act of a handshake between a government representative and a member of an armed group which may be identified by the presence of the words "ELN" and "FARC", students represent a moment of agreement and reconciliation. The text "No to the [arms/violence/war], yes peace" reinforces this message. Despite its simplicity, the drawing effectively communicates the student's comprehension of the conflict as involving opposing actors who must negotiate to reach peace. The contrasting settings of urban and rural areas add another layer, possibly reflecting the diverse spaces affected by violence. This artifact shows how, through visual language, students are able to move beyond literal repetition of facts and begin to construct personal, interpretative responses to historical processes. In this sense, art becomes a bridge between information and reflection, enabling students to externalize their evolving conceptions of conflict and peace.

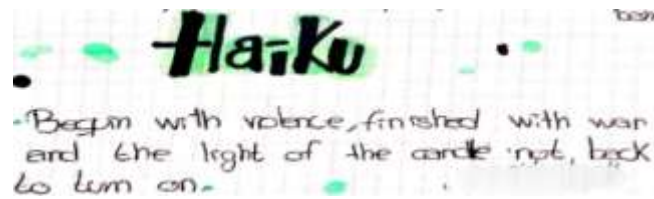
In conclusion, the analysis of students' figurative and literal artistic representations reveals the value of art as both a pedagogical tool and a medium for expressing understanding of the Colombian armed conflict. While many of the students' works remained at a descriptive or literal level, these visual artifacts demonstrate an important process of appropriation and recognition of the historical and social realities explored in class. Art served not only as a means to synthesize information, but also as a space for students to project their emotional and ethical responses to the content. Consequently, artistic expression aligned with the principles of Critical Peace Education functioned as a bridge between cognitive understanding and critical reflection, allowing students to externalize what they had learned offering a creative and meaningful way to engage with memory, conflict, and the construction of peace.

5.3.2. Subcategory 2: Metaphorical representations of the Colombian armed conflict

This subcategory examines students' artistic metaphorical expressions in the recognition of the Colombian armed conflict. To look into this subcategory, artifacts and the final questionnaire were analyzed.

In this research, metaphorical art is understood as representations of symbolic objects that stand for other objects or ideas (Dixon, 2021). It is important to mention that metaphorical expression is a higher CTS level that not all students achieve. For example, when referring to violence, most of them draw a gun, a soldier, or bombs, which are literal expressions; however, some others draw objects or symbols that offer a metaphorical representation of their comprehension. To show some examples, in the first-class activity on March 24th students presented a haiku in which they use metaphorical expressions to express their ideas and opinions about what armed conflict is. In this class, the concept of armed conflict and its implications was introduced. Then in a collaborative task, the students presented haikus, about their conceptions of armed conflict.

Figure 24 Student's artifact haiku 3. April 25, 2024



Through this short poem, students transmitted the consequences of the Colombian armed conflict and began to demonstrate an emerging awareness of its deep impact on civilian lives. In the haiku, “the light of the candle not back to turn on,” (Figure 24) the extinguished candle symbolizes the lives lost, a metaphor the students explained as representing the irreversibility of death and the silenced futures of those affected by violence. This artistic choice suggests that students were not only able to internalize the content presented in class but also to express it through metaphorical language, indicating progress in their critical thinking skills. Specifically, their ability to establish symbolic associations and evaluate the implications of violent acts reflects a move toward the higher order thinking processes of analysis and evaluation, as framed by Bloom’s taxonomy.

Figure 25 Students' artifact painting 3. November 6, 2024



Similarly, in Figure 25, one student painted a butterfly as a symbol of freedom, beauty, and fragility. Yet, this butterfly is enclosed in what appears to be a glass container, suggesting confinement. Within its wings, the student incorporated several symbolic elements associated with the Colombian armed conflict: chains to signify kidnapping, an urban landscape, a campsite symbolizing guerrilla presence, and a foot pressing on a person’s head, evoking oppression and violence. This composition stands out for its complexity, as it contrasts a traditionally positive and liberating image with multiple

representations of suffering. The student's artistic choice not only reflects an ability to symbolize diverse aspects of the conflict but also transmits a critique of societal indifference, particularly from urban centers like the capital, toward the experiences of those living in conflict-affected regions. This work illustrates a metaphorical understanding of violence and demonstrates a more nuanced level of critical thinking and social awareness.

Figure 26 Student's artifact painting 4. November 6, 2024



Figure 27 Student's artifact painting 5. November 6, 2024



Similarly, Figure 26 presents a powerful example of how metaphorical art can serve as a medium for expressing students' understanding of the Colombian armed conflict. In this image, a red fox with multiple tails, which was described by the student as a symbol of wisdom, flies across the canvas facing a dark, colorless butterfly. Unlike its usual association with beauty and transformation, the butterfly here is rendered in grey, trailing behind it a cloud of dust that stains the air, representing destruction and gloom. Below, a shadowy and chaotic ground scene suggests the aftermath of violence, marked by a red cross and what may seem like traces of blood. The visual contrast between the vibrant fox and the grey butterfly highlights a tension between wisdom and devastation. This metaphorical composition moves beyond literal depictions, offering a more abstract and interpretive approach that reveals the student's capacity to symbolically represent emotional, ethical, and political dimensions of war. In this sense, the painting exemplifies how metaphorical artistic expression can deepen the recognition of violence while providing space for critical reflection and personal interpretation.

Figure 27 rather than depicting a specific event, the student used symbolic imagery such as a blindfolded woman, broken chains, and torn visual fragments, to represent broader themes such as repression, conflict, danger, pain or injustice. These metaphors evoke the emotional and psychological impact of violence, suggesting a deeper awareness of how conflict shapes both individual and collective experiences. Through this metaphorical composition, the student moves beyond surface-level representation and constructs a visual narrative that communicates the enduring effects of war. In this way, the artwork becomes not only a form of expression, but also a vehicle for reflective engagement.

This impact was not limited to individual artworks; in fact, students themselves acknowledged the role of artistic expressions (being both figurative and metaphorical) in helping them comprehend and recognize the complexity of the Colombian armed conflict, express their emotions, and feelings, as reflected in their responses to the final questionnaire (Figures 28 and 29).

Figure 28 Ended questionnaire 5. November 6, 2024

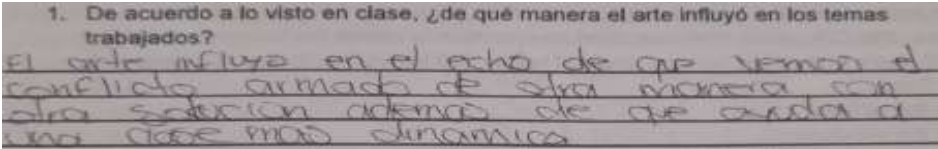
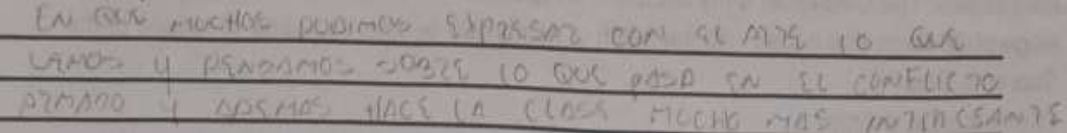


Figure 29 Ended questionnaire 6. November 6, 2024



Independent of the type of artistic representations, figurative or metaphorical, students could manifest their improved recognition of essential elements and consequences of the armed conflict in Colombia. This insight allows complying with the second research objective and also hinting at incipient critical thinking skills, which will be discussed in detail in the next category. As highlighted in their final questionnaire responses, students recognized that both figurative and metaphorical art allowed them not only to understand the conflict’s historical context, but also to express their emotions, reflections, and ethical

positions. Regardless of the form, artistic creation became a space for students to externalize what they learned, transform it into meaningful imagery, and take a step toward more critical and empathetic engagement with Colombia's past and present.

5.4. Category 3: Incipient critical thinking skills (CTS) through artistic expressions

As was mentioned in the statement of the problem, students presented a low developed of critical thinking skills; for this reason, artistic projects were implemented through which students were expected to develop their CTS. Correspondingly, this category answers the third research objective, which is "to encourage critical thinking skills through artistic projects related to the armed conflict in an EFL classroom" and the subcategories that explain it are *Students' abilities of abstract thinking* and *Development of critical thinking skills*.

5.4.1 Subcategory 1: Students' abilities of abstract thinking

In this subcategory the students' abilities of abstract thinking are analyzed based on the data from field notes, pre- and post-questionnaire, and students' artifacts. Abstract thinking here is defined as the ability to think about concepts that are not physical. As Fonden (2020) mentioned, "abstract thinking is a human faculty that allows us to create ideas, imagine events, plan solutions, and project ourselves into the future" (p.10).

Consequently, this type of thinking is essential for understanding the relationships between abstract concepts and for analyzing arguments using reasoning. It also allows us to explain complex phenomena and communicate abstract ideas clearly and coherently. In other words, abstract thinking is a fundamental skill that facilitates the critical thinking process, allowing us to generate interpretations, conceptualize, analyze, evaluate, and explain ideas and situations in a deeper and more systematic way. With this skill, students acquire the ability to interpret artistic projects that have a meaningful intention related to historical recognition, non-repetition, and peace.

As mentioned before in chapter 2, the abstract thinking is divided into two levels: lower and higher; the lower level suggests a literal interpretation of the information and the higher suggests a capacity to conceptualize metaphorically the understanding of a situation. However, few students reached the higher level of abstract thinking and most of them gave literal descriptions of images presented instead of deeper interpretations.

In the first class, a poem called *Cuestión de estadística* by Piedad Bonnet was presented (Annex 6) to the students, whose main objective was to introduce armed conflict and its social and psychological consequences. When the students were asked what they thought about it, they said that they did not understand what the poem was about, as mentioned in the field notes (Annex 7). Moreover, they gave different answers that were not related to the main purpose of the poem, they presented unrelated opinions about the poem, and one student even said that the poem was about counting human limbs, as seen in the field notes, which is a purely literal interpretation.

(...) At first, they didn't understand, but when I explained they understood what the poem was about. I remember that a student told me that the poem was about counting the human body

(Field note 25-04-24)

In the same session, students were presented with a series of powerful images depicting extrajudicial executions, a mutilated soldier, and a cemetery (Annex 8). These images, which symbolized unidentified victims of the armed conflict, the social inequalities it has generated, and denunciations of forced disappearances, were intended to prompt critical reflection. Students were expected to engage in a deep analysis of the images within the broader context of the Colombian armed conflict. As a result, most students presented different ideas such as the representation of loyalty, false friendships, or slavery; only a little group of students presented answers that reflected abstract thinking in the form of establishing relations of abstract concepts (mutilated soldier – combat; red wall – blood spilt). The fact that only a few students demonstrated abstract thinking skills reinforces the

necessity of dedicating more time to activities that may foster these skills, as affirmed in the field notes.

When students have images of activities, most of them present wrong answers about the topic. It was funny that with an image, one student told me that it represented that 'we must be loyal and not to be false with people'

(Field note 25-04-24)

In contrast, the haiku in Figure 24 reveals the development of abstract thinking through poetic metaphors. Phrases such as “begin with violence, finished with war” and “the light of the candle not back to turn on” symbolically express the irreversible damage caused by armed conflict, ideas implied through imagery. This poetic structure requires key indicators of abstract thinking (synthesis, emotional interpretation, and symbolic association). The student showed an ability to reflect on the emotional and existential consequences of violence, demonstrating a meaningful engagement with the conflict’s deeper implications.

Regarding artistic expression, some students demonstrated different levels of abstract thinking (lower and higher) in the final project creation. At this stage, as mentioned before, students were invited to paint what they comprehended about the Colombian armed conflict considering the guiding images.

Figure 30. Students' artifact painting: 4. November 6, 2024



Figure 31 Students' artifact: painting 5. November 6, 2024



The two images above evidence a lower level of abstract thinking in which some students are not able to represent an abstract concept as “war” or “conflict”, and just paint a heart using the colors of the Colombian flag, as can be seen on Figure 30, or a romantic idealized landscape with a chain hanging from a tree branch, as on Figure 31.

On the contrary, Figures 26 and 27 exemplifies a higher level of abstract thinking, as students were able to move beyond literal representation and construct a symbolic narrative that communicates deeper meanings related to armed conflict. Referring to Figure 26, the student combined fictional and symbolic elements (a multi-tailed fox, a colorless butterfly) with visual references to real-world violence (blood, debris), creating a metaphorical composition that reflects complex reasoning. This type of abstraction demonstrates the student's ability to synthesize real and imaginary components to generate a new, original interpretation. As Petric (2020) suggests, abstract thinking allows individuals to imagine, reinterpret, and project meanings beyond the tangible. In this case, the student not only visualizes violence metaphorically but also constructs a visual argument about the emotional and moral implications of conflict.

As for Figure 27, it demonstrates a high level of abstract thinking through the use of symbolic and metaphorical elements. The blindfolded woman with broken chains suggests repression and the possibility of liberation, while the torn images around her such as silhouettes, gestures of submission, and fragmented scenes, possibly represent episodes of violence. Rather than depicting a literal event, the student constructs a visual metaphor that evokes more complex themes related to armed conflict. This artwork reflects the student's ability to communicate through visual language to express not just facts, but deeper meanings and interpretations.

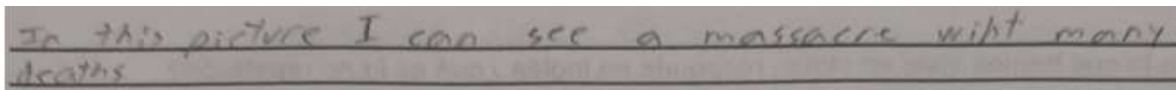
In the final questionnaire, students were presented with a copy of *Masacre en Colombia* by Fernando Botero and invited to interpret the painting using their abstract thinking skills within the framework of the Colombian armed conflict. While many responses reflected a higher level of recognition by identifying actors, locations, and relevant vocabulary, most students limited their answers to literal descriptions of the visual elements (see Figures 32 and 33). This tendency suggests that, although there was content recognition, students largely remained at the level of comprehension or surface interpretation

in written language, which corresponds to one of the lower levels of critical thinking skills. As such, the activity revealed that abstract thinking, particularly the ability to infer symbolic meaning or construct deeper interpretations through the use on written language, remains a developing skill for most students.

Figure 32. Ended questionnaire 7. November 6, 2024

A photograph of a handwritten note on lined paper. The text reads: "An Attack to an Armed group in the poor place".

Figure 33. Ended questionnaire 8. November 6, 2024

A photograph of a handwritten note on lined paper. The text reads: "In this picture I can see a massacre with many deaths".

To conclude, the findings in this subcategory show that most students experienced significant challenges in demonstrating abstract thinking, particularly when asked to express their interpretations in writing. Despite these difficulties using the target language, the evidence indicates that abstract thinking is still a developing competency for many of them. However, artistic expression was a more accessible and effective medium students used to explore and convey abstract ideas, since this allowed some students to construct deeper, metaphorical representations of armed conflict. This suggests that art, as a pedagogical strategy, can serve as a catalyst for the development of abstract thinking. These insights provide a foundation for the following subcategory, which will examine the development of students' critical thinking skills in greater depth.

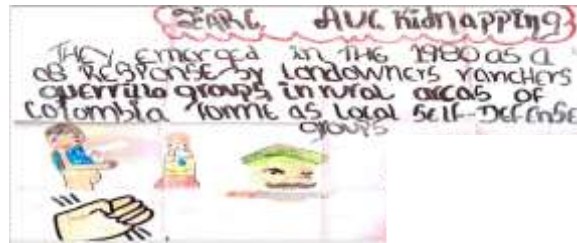
5.4.2 Subcategory 2: Development of critical thinking skills

This subcategory aims to explore the development of students' different levels of critical thinking skills through the analysis of the data obtained through artifacts and final questionnaire.

As outlined in the theoretical framework, the first three lower levels of Critical Thinking Skills (CTS) are remembering, understanding, and applying. In the context of this research, these levels imply that students are first able to recall factual information about the Colombian armed conflict acquired throughout the process; second, they demonstrate

comprehension of the violent situations experienced by Colombian citizens; and third, they apply this knowledge by beginning to form and express an active stance toward the conflict. This progression reflects the foundational stages of critical thinking development, which are essential for enabling more advanced levels of analysis and evaluation. The following examples show how students developed these levels of critical thinking.

Figure 34 Students' artifact billboard 5. May 2, 2024



To start, the billboard in Figure 34 is the outcome of the activity (May 2, 2024) in which students were provided with basic information about armed groups and asked to synthesize and illustrate key pieces of information to present to their classmates. The image presented shows how students were able to remember factual information such as the origin of the AUC in 1980s, their ties to landowners and ranchers, their role as self-defense groups in rural Colombia and their locations. Additionally, students demonstrated the application of this knowledge by organizing and transforming it into a visual and didactic product for their classmates. Through this, they began to take an active stance, selecting and representing information that highlights the causes and nature of violence in the country. Thus, this artifact illustrates students' development of both the first level (*remember*) and the third level of CTS (*applying*). Although the product is creative in form, it does not yet reflect the higher-order CTS level of "creating" as understood in critical thinking Bloom's taxonomy, since it remains closely tied to provided content without significant transformation or personal reinterpretation.

The second level of Bloom's taxonomy involves cognitive processes associated with "understanding". During the activity carried out on September 13 of 2024, students were asked to match vocabulary related to the Colombian armed conflict with its respective definitions, an exercise that aligns specifically with this level of CTS. According to the field

note from that day, students completed the task successfully “They had a clear understanding of the words presented, it means that the classes that we had, their life experiences, and their conceptions are clear when they need to identify definitions of words related to the Colombian armed conflict.” (Field diary 7) This suggests that, at this stage, students were able to comprehend key terms and concepts, drawing not only from classroom instruction but also from their own lived realities, thereby demonstrating solid progress within the foundational stages of critical thinking.

To progress through the levels of Critical Thinking Skills (CTS), the next two images reflect the application stage. This means the third level of Bloom’s taxonomy, where students move from understanding to action. In this artwork, students expressed personal commitments aimed at fostering a culture of non-repetition such as “Not more bullying”, “To be a good person”, or “My family happy” (Figures 35 and 36) these statements, while simple, reflect an intention to apply the knowledge and reflections gained throughout the process to their immediate social environments. At this level, begin to identify concrete problems, for example bullying or family conflicts, and propose behavioral responses to address them. Although these commitments are grounded in their everyday lives, they signify a meaningful internalization of peace-related values. As Giroux (2020) mentioned, in the broader context of peace education, acting for one’s community by taking a stance or proposing solutions is a crucial step toward social transformation. Thus, these early applications represent an important transition from reflection to responsible action, even if still situated within familiar, close-to-home contexts.

Figure 35. Students' artifact diorama 2. October 25,2024



Figure 36. Students' artifact diorama 3. October 25,2024



The following refers to the higher levels of CTS, which are to analyze, evaluate, and create. For this specific research, students analyzed the information given in each class, evaluated the information presented, and created alternatives to avoid violent behavior in their environments to construct a culture of non-repetition.

Although the creation of a Haiku was one of the first activities in this implementation, Figure 37 reveals an early attempt to engage with the higher-order thinking skills of analysis, evaluation, and creation. The student constructed a basic yet meaningful cause-effect chain, they related war to bloodshed, bloodshed to death and death to evil. The haiku reflects an analytical process, in which the student connects abstract concepts and moral judgment into a sequence that reveals an understanding of consequence, the fourth level of CTS: analyze. Moreover, the phrase “the dead is bad” suggests an evaluative stance, indicating a moral rejection of the violence associated with armed conflict, reflecting the fifth level: evaluation. Finally, the act of writing the haiku demonstrates the student’s ability to synthesize classroom content into a personal and creative expression, indicating the final level: Creation. This artifact shows that poetic language can serve as a vehicle for higher-level thinking, enabling students to articulate complex ideas about war and peace through their own voices.

Figure 37. Students' artifact haiku 2. April 25, 2024

A photograph of a student's handwritten haiku on a grid-lined notebook page. The text is written in blue ink and reads: "The war has very blood / The blood has dead / And the dead is bad".

In the same vein, the two following paintings (Figures 37 and 38) reflect how some students reached the highest levels of Bloom’s taxonomy: evaluate and create.

Figure 37. Students' artifacts painting 6. November 6, 2024



Figure 38. Students' artifacts painting 7. November 6, 2024



In the image on the left, justice is represented as a blindfolded woman sitting against the “map” of Colombia. This image suggests that the student is aware of the violent consequences of armed conflict, and the absence of justice. Meanwhile, in the painting on the right, the justice gavel appears surrounded by red and black shapes that may symbolize blood and bodies. Moreover, both painting communicate a critical position toward how justice fails to operate, in the Colombian context, which reflects the level of evaluation. These visual choices show that the students were able to build their own position and express it through artistic language. In this sense, painting becomes evidence of the highest CTS level where students transform knowledge into personal and critical representations.

Besides artistic creations, the students also formulated written reflections that aimed to promote a culture of non-repetition, as shown in the two responses from the final questionnaire (Figures 18 and 19). In these answers, students begin to construct their own understanding of peace, justice, and the need to prevent future violence, demonstrating the acquisition of the content discussed, and a personal evaluation of what non-repetition should involve. These responses reflect the CTS level of evaluation, as students make judgments about the essential values that should guide future actions; they were able to articulate their thoughts in their own words. Moreover, they engage in the creative process of imagining and expressing a vision for a more peaceful society. This act of creating new meaning through written language shows that, for some students, non-repetition became a goal to build.

The development of critical thinking skills among students was gradual and followed the stages of Bloom’s taxonomy. All students reached at least the basic levels: remembering, understanding and applying. Their artifacts showed how they connected classroom knowledge with personal experiences and social realities. Some students went further by evaluating injustice and suggesting peaceful alternatives through artistic expression. Written and visual creations provided clear evidence of their ability to analyze, evaluate and create. Despite limited language skills, they expressed critical and personal views on peace and

justice. This ongoing process of reflection and creation helped them internalize values of peace and move from passive learning to active, critical engagement. Students began not only to recognize violence but to imagine peaceful alternatives, showing their potential as agents of peace and non-repetition in their communities.

Chapter VI: Conclusions and limitations

This chapter presents conclusions, implications, limitations, and further research drawn from the findings according to the established objectives. For this, the research objectives are analyzed considering the findings presented above.

The findings of this research demonstrate that implementing artistic projects within the framework of Critical Peace Education had a meaningful impact on both students' understanding of the Colombian armed conflict and the development of their critical thinking skills in the EFL classroom. Regarding the first specific objective, the analysis revealed that the eighth-grade students moved from simplistic and often biased conceptions to more critical and empathetic understandings of the armed conflict. This shift was evidenced in both their discussions and artistic productions.

In relation to the second objective, artistic expression proved to be an effective pedagogical tool that enabled students to synthesize information and express emotional and ethical responses to historical realities. Figurative and metaphorical representations allowed them to internalize and reinterpret the content in personal and reflective ways. Concerning the third objective, while students initially faced difficulties in abstract thinking, especially through writing, artistic creation became a powerful medium to explore complex and abstract ideas. Most students reached at least the foundational levels of critical thinking according to Bloom's taxonomy (remember, understand, and apply), and some began to demonstrate higher order thinking skills such as analysis and evaluation which positions them as potential agents for peace and social change.

In response to the research question, it can be concluded that the implementation of artistic projects within the framework of Critical Peace Education had two main effects. First, artistic expression allowed students to communicate their ideas and reflections more easily and meaningfully. Second, it supported the development of their critical thinking skills, at least at the foundational levels, as shown in the depth of their metaphorical representations.

In conclusion, actively engaging students in the exploration of this complex phenomenon, starting from their own ideas and perspectives, promoted meaningful learning and, to some extent, the integration of language development in real-life situations. This research enhanced their critical thinking by giving them a voice. Finally, the analysis of the collected information was communicated in English, fostering not only language use but also interpersonal understanding.

6.1. Implications

This project demonstrated the value of integrating CPE into English teaching, by addressing the Colombian armed conflict, and promoting CTS, enriching social awareness and peace culture. Based on the findings, Colombian education might introduce CPE in all grade considering students' development stages. Furthermore, this project exemplifies how to adopt innovative strategies for practicing EFL enabling students to engage with meaningful content relevant to their realities. To support similar initiatives, schools should enhance classroom infrastructure such as internet connectivity and audiovisual resources, as well as teachers training following the Comisión de la Verdad (CEV) suggestions, including the use of pedagogical materials from the 2016 peace agreement such as artistic materials to promote communication and recognition about context among students.

Equally important is the fact that teachers should think about their role as mediators and facilitators regarding social problems. This means that teachers need to reconceptualize their role not just as knowledge transmitters, but as mediators and facilitators of learning that connects language education with students' social contexts. This perspective could

encourage teachers to guide learning processes that value students' voices and lived experiences, helping them critically engage with societal issues, promoting reflection, dialogue, and empathy in the classroom. Students can also take advantage of this proposal in two ways. First, through practice students can develop their CTS to increase their abstract thinking and the ability to express their ideas in a complex and metaphorical level. Second, getting to know about the Colombian armed conflict help students to develop empathy and understanding of the reality of many people around the country, especially in their immediate context: Ciudad Bolívar.

Finally, for pre-service teachers, it is entirely feasible to design and implement projects that meaningfully connect students' social and personal contexts. When lessons are grounded in students' realities, they foster autonomy, creativity, and critical thinking. This connection encourages independent exploration, stimulates the search for original solutions to communicate and conceptualize complex issues, and deepens students' ability to analyze information that is directly relevant to their lives. Moreover, this experience underscores the importance of designing flexible, yet well-structured lesson plans that balance content, language objectives, and socio-political relevance. These insights are crucial for shaping future teaching practices grounded in social responsibility and educational innovation.

6.2. Limitations:

It is important to mention that this research faced several limitations during the implementation process. Some classes were cancelled due to other academic activities in the school, which affected the continuity of the proposal. Also, there was a general lack of interest from students, which resulted in low participation during some sessions. There was not enough time to build closer relationships with the students, which could have helped increase their engagement with the topics. Finally, the proposal was affected by the lack of didactic resources and the teacher-researcher's limited experience using the materials produced by the CEV to raise awareness about the Colombian armed conflict and its

consequences.

6.3. Further research

During this research project, it was difficult to find studies that explore the development of CTS and the Colombian armed conflict through artistic expressions in ELT classrooms. Consequently, more research on this topic and the possible impacts on EFL classrooms is needed. Furthermore, through deeper research, new and more helpful strategies to develop students' CTS, including related to writing skills, can be discovered, producing a higher impact on the development of these essential skills. Finally, it is suggested to implement the same study with different population (elementary and high school), since it can provide additional and interesting results that can be compared with the data obtained from this project; additionally, a new proposal can be more focused on the language skills and implement a quantitative approach to obtain different data that can enrich the results.

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Annexes

Annex 1. Questionnaire



UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA
NACIONAL

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL
FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES - DEPARTAMENTO DE LENGUAS
LICENCIATURA EN EDUCACIÓN BÁSICA CON ÉNFASIS EN
HUMANIDADES: ESPAÑOL E INGLÉS

Encuesta de caracterización

La siguiente encuesta trata de recolectar información acerca de los aspectos sociales, políticos, sentimientos y culturales de los estudiantes. El cuestionario es anónimo, tenga la confianza de expresarse de manera libre al momento de contestar las respuestas.

1. ¿Cuál es tu edad? 13-14
2. ¿En qué barrio vives? La Playa - Sta. Fe
3. ¿Cuál es tu estrato social? 1-2-3
4. ¿Cuáles son tus hobbies?
me gusta jugar fútbol x2

5. ¿Qué tipo de series o películas te gustan?

Marca de 1 a 9, donde 1 es la que más te gustaría ver y 9 es la que menos.

- Suspenso 6-5
- Terror 10-10
- Drama 10-10
- Fantasía 6-10
- Psicológico 8-10
- Suspenso 6-5
- Romance 7-10
- Comedia romántica 8-10
- Comedia 10-10

6. Si pudieses aprender alguna habilidad artística ¿cuál te gustaría aprender?
Señala todas las que desees.

Marca de 1 a 9, donde 1 es la que más te gustaría aprender y 9 es en la que menos interés tienes

- o Dibujar 10-10
- o Pintar 8-10
- o Modelar 2-0
- o Bailar 1-9
- o Actuar 5-10
- o Fotografía 10-8
- o Cine 10-10
- o Graffiti 10-10
- o Cantar 1-1

7. ¿Te gusta el inglés? ¿Por qué?

No me gusta porque no entiendo

8. ¿Te gustaría aprender inglés?



1 Totalmente en desacuerdo	2 En desacuerdo	3 Neutral	4 De acuerdo	5 Totalmente de acuerdo
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9. ¿Crees que es importante aprender inglés?

1 Totalmente en desacuerdo	2 En desacuerdo	3 Neutral	4 De acuerdo	5 Totalmente de acuerdo
-------------------------------	--------------------	--------------	-----------------	----------------------------

10. ¿Cómo cree usted que aprende mejor? Marque con una X

- Viendo _____
- Haciendo _____
- Escribiendo _____
- Escuchando _____

11. ¿Cuáles cree que son tus fortalezas en inglés? Marca con una X

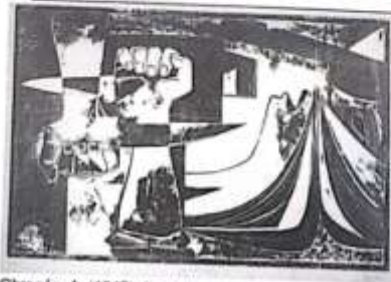
- Listening _____
- Reading _____
- Writing _____
- Speaking _____

12. ¿Te gustaría aprender inglés utilizando métodos artísticos alternativos tales como la pintura, el baile, performance, dibujo?

1 Totalmente en desacuerdo	2 En desacuerdo	3 Neutral	4 De acuerdo	5 Totalmente de acuerdo
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13. ¿Qué te transmite esta imagen?

dos personas dando cuchillo



Obregón, A. (1945). La violencia.



¿Qué piensa de esta fotografía?

que se están reflejando



Abad, J. (2019).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9T6hNe-er5Y>

14. ¿Qué opinas sobre este performance?

No entiendo

15. ¿Te gustaría hacer parte en la creación y actuación de un performance?

1 Totalmente en desacuerdo	2 En desacuerdo	3 Neutral	4 De acuerdo	5 Totalmente de acuerdo
-------------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------	-----------------	----------------------------

Annex 2. Focus group. 1

Interview focal group

19 de abril de 2024

Profesora: Nos encontramos acá con el grupo 803 para hacer una entrevista. Entonces, primera pregunta para usted ¿qué es violencia?

Estudiante 1: él dijo que era violento

Estudiante 2: ser agresivo con otras personas

Profesora: ¿quién más?

Estudiante 3: llegar a un punto de agresividad, no controlarse

Profesora: ¿Cómo es la convivencia con el grupo, entre ustedes?

Estudiante 4: good, goodness

Profesora: o sea está bien, no tienen problemas, no han peleado, nadie le roba las cosas a nadie. Bueno.

¿Qué opinan ustedes de la violencia?

Estudiante 2: que es mala

Estudiantes 3: que está mal

Profesora: que está mal, ok, ¿Qué más?

Estudiante 4: que está mal

Profesora: ¿considera que en el grupo se presentan situaciones violentas?

Voces repetidas: Noo, para nada

Estudiante 5: Es que así se demuestran el cariño

Estudiante 6: si, eso es amor mutuo.

Profesora: ¿Alguna vez ha ayudado a resolver un conflicto?

Voces repetidas: uy si

Estudiante 7: si, diciéndoles que no peleen

Estudiante 8: que hablen y se digan las cosas, pero que no peleen.

Estudiante 9: qué no se dejen

Profesora: ósea, ¿incentivas la violencia?

Estudiante 9: si

Profesora: chicos ¿saben algo acerca del conflicto armado en Colombia?

Estudiante 10: La guerrilla

Risas colectivas

Estudiante 10: síiii, es verdad

Profesora: ¿las farc?

Estudiante 11: el narcotráfico

Profesora: bueno sí, es verdad

Estudiante 12: ay respeto a los militares

Profesora: ¿Qué opinan de la guerra en Colombia? sabe ¿Cómo se ha formado la guerrilla? ¿Cómo se conformó el m-19? ¿Qué opinan acerca de eso?

Estudiantes 3: que cogen mucha gente para la guerrilla

Estudiante 12: que deberían llegar a un acuerdo para no armar guerras

Estudiante 14: La guerrilla es como un estado que hace mirar los derechos a los campesinos contra la sociedad del pueblo y no permite tanto la violencia entre los campesinos y como ocasionan limpieza no puede haber tanta violencia en el pueblo ni gente que consuma drogas porqueeee [los matan]

Aplausos colectivos

Profesora: ¿tú eres de allá? ¿Eras del Huila?

Estudiante 15: ella creció allá

Estudiante 14: yo soy de allá

Profesora: y ¿tú has vivido ese tipo de situaciones?

Estudiante 14: pues sí

Profesora: chicos, para ustedes ¿Qué es violencia intrafamiliar?

Estudiante 14: pues es cuando el padre golpea a la mamá o al hijo lo que hace que no se entiendan bien y halla muchas discusiones en la familia mutuamente

Estudiante 2: psicológico y mental

Estudiante 3 cuando lo agarra a puño la mamá

Profesora: chicos, para ustedes ¿Qué es bullying?

Estudiante 14: bullying es cuando ustedes se burlan de mis papás

Estudiante 16: es cuando ustedes se burlan por lo que hago

Profesora: ¿conocen a alguien que ha tenido problemas de violencia?

Estudiante 12: compañeros que han tenido problemas en su casa, les doy consejos, como discusiones entre amistades o discusiones entre mis hermanos, pero más que todo son problemas de familia.

Estudiante 5: para que se desahogues

Profesora: Para ustedes ¿qué es arte?

Estudiante 17: puede ser una forma de expresión expresarse hacia el mundo. Para la mayoría de los artistas el arte es una forma de liberarse, expresarse, entablar sentimientos en una cosa que les gusta.

Estudiante 18: hacer manualidades, pintar

Estudiante 3: hacer manualidades con pintura

Estudiante: con plastilina, con pintura

Profesora: ¿Qué es arte?

Estudiante 12: una forma de expresarse

Estudiante 18: expresándose se desastrosa

Estudiante: 12: por el arte podemos ver el mundo

Profesora: ¿creen que el arte puede transformar la sociedad?

Voz colectiva: síiiii

Profesora: ¿Cómo?

Estudiante 4: con murales, para pintar algunas cosas.

Estudiante 5: incentivar a la gente con murales de que no hagan tal cosa. Un mural de no arrojen la basura acá o algo así

Profesora: ¿conocen algún centro artístico acá en Ciudad Bolívar?

Estudiante 18: el crea en el lucero, en hermanitas.

Annex 3. Focus group. 2

Interview focal group

Entrevista 19 de abril al grupo 803

Profesora: ¿para ustedes qué es violencia?

Estudiante 1: pegarle a alguien

Estudiante 2: cuando dos personas pelean por algo que no cuadra

Estudiante 3: vulnerar el derecho de las demás personas, maltratar o golpear a alguien, psicológicamente o físicamente

Profesora : segunda pregunta, ¿Cómo es la convivencia en su grupo?

Estudiante 4: normal

Profesora:¿Cómo defines normal?

Estudiante 4: pues cada uno en su grupo

Estudiante 5: tampoco es mala, una convivencia sana

Estudiante 6: algunos se llevan, otros si, otros no

Profesora: ¿Qué opinan ustedes de la violencia?

Estudiante 7: que es muy mala porque le pegan y maltratan a las mujeres...

Estudiante 8: a las mujeres no y a los hombres

Estudiante 9: pues que está muy mal porque no se le puede hacer un maltrato a una persona

Estudiante 10: está mal porque puede ser maltrato físico y verbalmente

Profesora: ¿Consideran ustedes que en su grupo se presentan situaciones violentas?

Estudiantes 11: hay unos momentos en los que sí, como hay unos momentos en los que no

Profesora: ¿Cuáles son esos momentos?

Estudiante 11: cuando por ejemplo uno trata mal al otro y ahí hay conflicto y ahí empiezan a pelearse

Estudiante 12: situaciones de violencia no hay, por el momento

Profesora: ¿por el momento?

Estudiante 12: no, no van a haber

Estudiante 14: ¿vale en insulto?

Profesora: pues si para ti vale

Estudiante 15: entonces no, pues me preguntó si valía el insulto

Profesora: eso ya es personal, si para ustedes vale

Estudiante 11: eso es violencia verbal

Estudiante 15: entonces un insulto

Profesora: ¿algunas veces han ayudado a resolver un conflicto?

Estudiantes: siiii

Profesora: a ver ¿Cómo?

Estudiantes 16: pues quitándonos

Estudiante 10: para yo meterme a pelear

Risas colectivas

Estudiante 17: pues la verdad, no creo. Por un lado, sí y por el otro no

Profesora: ¿por qué?

Estudiante 17: porque hay veces en las que me toca meterme a mí y a ratos que toca separarlos

Profesora: meterse ¿Cómo? ¿A pelear?

Estudiante 17: sí porque digamos que le están dando la muenda a él y yo soy amigo de él. Yo tampoco voy a dejar que le peguen ahí

Profesora: ósea que te metes

Estudiante 17: en algunas ocasiones

Profesora: y ¿cuándo no te metes?

Estudiante 17: pues los separó y les digo ya no más, se calma

Profesora: chicos, ¿saben algo del conflicto armado? Sobre las Farc, ¿Qué saben de las farc?

Estudiante 17: que están rodeando como por Usme, algo así, por Usme pueblo y todo eso y que se están llevando a más de un joven

Estudiante 12: la guerrilla

Profesora: ¿saben algo del conflicto armado en Colombia?

Estudiante 10: claro que no

Estudiante 5: yo sé que aquí se llevaron a un niño de primaria

Profesora: ¿Cómo sabes eso?

Estudiante 5: porque yo tengo gente profe

Profesora: pero esperarme, explícame, se llevaron ¿quiénes?

Estudiante 5: un camión

Profesora: chicos, ¿Qué saben de la guerra en Colombia? Además de ser mala saben ¿por qué se creó? ¿Saben por qué existe el conflicto armado?

Estudiante 13: el gobierno contra las farc

Profesora ¿saben por qué?

Estudiante 12: cada uno tiene opiniones muy diferentes sobre el país

Profesora: ¿estás de acuerdo o en contra?

Estudiante 12: no sé

Estudiante 17: es que algunos son re corruptos, por ejemplo, los tombos en las noches, dijo Petro

Profesora: ¿Para ustedes qué es violencia intrafamiliar?

Estudiante 5: normalmente violencia intrafamiliar es que el hombre de la casa le pega, golpea a las mujeres

Estudiante 8: cuando se le obliga a alguien a hacer lo que no quiere en la casa

Estudiante 2: cuando se pelean las familias y meten a otras familias en problemas y eso causa peleas en la familia y toda la cosa y también hay algunas ocasiones donde el papá llega y maltrata a la familia, digamos más como de hombres o mujeres los que maltratan

Profesora: ¿Para ustedes qué es el bullying?

Estudiante 8: cuando molestan a un niño por obesidad, que le digan gordo

Estudiante 1: cuando molestan hasta herir los sentimientos de una persona emocionalmente y físicamente, puede ser porque su físico no sea bueno, su cuerpo y su personalidad

Profesora: ¿ustedes creen que eso es violencia?

Estudiantes: obvio

Profesora: ¿Algún momento han ayudado a alguien que ha sufrido de violencia?

Estudiante 17: digamos, él le pegó a él y digamos, yo le pregunto por qué y los pongo a que se arreglen así con lo siento y ya. Yo he hecho así

Estudiante 7: que las personas se arreglan entre sí y lleguen a un acuerdo fácil

Profesora: ¿Para ustedes qué es arte?

Estudiante 17: cuando se expresan de varias formas por un dibujo

Estudiante 9: es una creación donde la gente se siente mejor haciendo arte y expresándose

Estudiante 10: es la creación, la expresión de aquellos que inventa la gente, que lo hace con amor y todo eso

Profesora: ¿para qué creen ustedes que sirve el arte?

Estudiante 2: para expresarse porque si la persona se siente deprimida no puede concentrarse en algo más

Estudiante 6: para expresarse las personas

Profesora: ¿ustedes creen que el arte puede cambiar la sociedad?

Estudiantes: síiiii

Profesora: ¿en qué sentido?

Estudiante 12: evitar problemas, evitar que se la pasen en la calle haciendo cosas malas, porque si están concentrados, no van a estar en la calle haciendo cosas malas

Annex 4. Diagnostic

1. Lea atentamente el siguiente texto y responda las siguientes preguntas.

The monster of my bedroom

My house is on a hill near the Andalucía station. Three people live there. My mom, The monster and me. Every time I go to sleep, I can see that in the corner of my room, the monster is standing to watch me while I sleep. I'm afraid he'll do something to me while I can't see him, I can feel his gaze getting deeper, as if you can hear his intentions screaming. I have given him several names, The Monster, The Watcher, The Boogeyman and many others. But my mom calls it love.

- Miguel angel Lopez.

1. Where does the character live?

My house the Andalucía

2. How many people live in the house?

the monster is standing

3. What is the character afraid of?

The monster

4. Who is the Monster?

the monster the boogeyman

Escucha

1. Escuche atentamente el audio. La grabación se reproducirá tres veces.

<https://www.ello.org/grammar/A1-04-ShantelTodd-Weekend-BasicVerbs.htm>

2. Responda las siguientes preguntas teniendo en cuenta lo que escuchó en el audio

- 1) What does she put on her toast? .

- a) Jam
 b) Butter
 c) Veggie Mite

- 2) What does he do on Saturday?

- a) Vacuum
b) Wash his car
c) Wash his clothes

- 3) What does she do on Sunday night?

- a) Read a book
b) Go the gym
c) Listen to music

- 4) What is his favorite show about?

- a) Money
b) Sports
c) People in New York

- 5) When does she go to bed?

- a) 8
b) 9
c) 12

1. Escritura

Seleccione una imagen y escriba en inglés que siente o qué interpreta cuando observa la imagen.



González, B (2019) Zulia Zulia Zulia



Arango, D (1948) El tren de la muerte



Arango, D (1957) La república

I think they are people in some point of slavery in ancient times

Annex 5. Game hombres lobo de Castronegro



Annex 6. Poem: Piedad Bonnett (Amalfi, Colombia, 1951)

CUESTIÓN DE ESTADÍSTICAS

Fueron veintidós, dice la crónica.
Diecisiete varones, tres mujeres,
dos niños de miradas aleladas,
setenta y tres disparos, cuatro credos,
tres maldiciones hondas, apagadas,
cuarenta y cuatro pies con sus zapatos,
cuarenta y cuatro manos desarmadas,
un solo miedo, un odio que crepita,
y un millar de silencios extendiendo
sus vendas sobre el alma mutilada.

Annex 7. Field notes



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Diario de campo

Diario de campo N° 4 WHAT IS ARMED CONFLICT?			
Date:	25/04/24	Class objective:	English
Students number:	36	Topic:	First class
<p>1. Attitude before the topic When I arrived, they started to "booing" me saying that they didn't have class with me today. Camly, I told them that I went top started to give them the English classes, and they started to tell the teacher to continue the math class.</p>			
<p>2. Attitude pre class First, I read the poem that I had prepared. At first, they didn't understand, but when I explained they understood what the poem was about. I remember that a student told me that the poem was about counting the human body, that was strange. I presented the topic, with the poem in which they gave me words in Spanish, and I gave them in English. When students have the <u>imags</u> activities, most of them <u>presented</u> wrong answers about the topic. It was funny that with an image, one student told me that it represented that "we must be loyal and not to be false with people". Then, I told them to make a <u>Haiku</u> in groups. I must say that they work actively.</p>			
<p>3. Attitude finishing the class They were happy because the class was over</p>			
<p>4. Violence perceptions About armed conflict.</p>			
<p>5. Comment, attitude, answers They don't pay attention, you must have a conditional incentive (in this case positive or negative points). They do it if you tell them <u>that</u> is a grade.</p>			
<p>6. Opinions Is sad notice that they don't like English, they even prefer math's.</p>			
Hours:	1:00	Other situations:	



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Diario de campo

Diary N° 2			
Date:	06/0/24	Class objective:	Clarify topics covered in before classes glish
Students number:	36	Topic:	Review of topiccs
<p>1. Attitude before the topic We took some time to start due to the teacher presenting the fourth semester goals, and the school students' objective. Because of that, the class started later, and I only had one hour and a half</p>			
<p>2. Attitude pre class Most of the students were anxious about the recuperation and for presenting the recuperation. For that reason, they were not a hundred percent into the class. When we started with the game, some of them were involved and others were practicing their recuperation dialogue. Then, when we started matching the words with the meanings, students started to speak to one another or watch the cellphone. For that reason, I started to pass in each group and make "pressure" telling them that they should make it Quickley the activity.</p>			
<p>3. Attitude finishing the class Some of the students were angry due to the pressure, but they worked and presented the activity. It was grateful for me to notice that most of them had clear meanings and definitions and that <u>more or less</u>, they understood or tried to understand the meanings words.</p>			
<p>4. Violence perceptions They had a clear perception about the words presented, it means that the classes that we had, the life experiences that they lived, and their perceptions are clear when they need to identify what is what.</p>			
<p>5. Comment, attitude, answers More of the students were unfocussed and their intention were to pass the subject.</p>			
<p>6. Opinions Students are more ready when you use a TIC activity because it is more didactic.</p>			
Hours:	2:00	Other situations:	

Annex 8. Class images



Annex 9. Consent form

 UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL <small>Proyectos Educativos</small>	FORMATO		
	AUTORIZACIÓN TRATAMIENTO DE DATOS PERSONALES Y DE MENORES DE EDAD <small>Resolución 767 de 18 de junio 2018</small>		
FOR009GSI	Fecha de Aprobació...	Versión: 01	Página 1 de 2

AUTORIZACIÓN TRATAMIENTO DE DATOS PERSONALES

Ciudad y fecha _____

_____, identificado con C.C. C.E. No. _____ expedida en _____, declaro que he sido informado por **LA UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL** (en adelante la **UPN**), identificada con NIT. 899.999.124-4, con domicilio en la ciudad de Bogotá y sede principal en la calle 72 No. 11 – 86 de Bogotá, que, de conformidad con los procedimientos establecidos en la Ley 1581 de 2012, Decreto Reglamentario 1377 de 2013 y el *Manual de política interna y procedimientos para el tratamiento y protección de datos personales de la Universidad* disponible en la página web www.pedagogica.edu.co, actuará como Responsable del tratamiento de mis datos personales¹, necesarios para el cumplimiento de la misión de la **UPN**, obtenidos a través de canales y dependencias institucionales y que podrá recolectar, almacenar, usar, actualizar, transmitir, transferir y poner en circulación o suprimirlos, mediante el uso de las medidas necesarias para otorgar seguridad a los registros, evitando su adulteración, pérdida, consulta, uso o acceso no autorizado o fraudulento incluso por terceros.

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FIRMA _____

Nombre: _____

Identificación: _____

Annex 10. Classes

Stage			Sustained inquiry		
Taxonomy			Understand		
Session	1	Date	25/04/24	School	Guillermo Cano Isaza
Grade	803	Time	1 hour	Teacher	Sandra Baquero
Topic	What is armed conflict?				
Objective	1.To identify meanings of violence				
	2.To identify how and when violence is produced				
Question	How can you express your comprehension of the Colombian armed conflict?				
Activities		Materials resource		Assessment	
<p>1.Vocabulary introduction: Learn definitions of armed conflict</p> <p>2.Artistic expressions: Students share what they interpret about some artistic images.</p> <p>3.Haiku: Students write a haiku about what armed conflict is.</p> <p>4.Presentation: Each group presents their poster and explain the concept</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whiteboard and markers - Paper - Research materials (images, poems) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate students' participation - Haiku presentation - Students' reading and writing. - Observe how well students understand the topic and produce their ideas. - Provide feedback to clarify misconceptions. 	
Stage			Sustained inquiry		
Taxonomy			Understand		
Session	5	Date	13/09/24	School	Guillermo Cano Isaza
Grade	803	Time	2 hours	Teacher	Sandra Baquero
Topic	Colombia has scars				
Objective	1. To discuss the consequences of war in Colombia				
Question	How can you express your comprehension of the Colombian armed conflict?				
Activities		Materials resource		Assessment	
<p>1.Text: In groups students select a "scar" in a Colombian map with a short text about a violent situation</p> <p>2.Activity: Students answer WH questions related to the text and then make a drawing with the information.</p> <p>3. Presentation: students share what they did and with an arrow signal on the map</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whiteboard and markers - Paper - Research materials (images, Colombian map, arrows) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate students' participation. - Reading comprehension - Students' writing - Observe how well students understand the topic and produce their ideas. - Students' presentation 	

the place of the violent situation 4.Presentation: Each group presents their poster and explain the concept					
Stage		Sustained inquiry			
Taxonomy		Apply and analyze			
Session	6	Date	13/09/24	School	Guillermo Cano Isaza
Grade	803	Time	2 hours	Teacher	Sandra Baquero
Topic	Our role in non-repetition				
Objective	1. Recognize myself role				
	2.Peace commitments				
Question	How can you express your comprehension of the Colombian armed conflict?				
Activities		Materials resource		Assessment	
1. Explanation: I present what non-repetition is 2. Diorama: In groups, students create a diorama with persona peace commitments 3. Presentation: Students share their dioramas with one another 4.Presentation: Each group presents their poster and explain the concept		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whiteboard and markers - Paper - Research materials (images, scissors, glue) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate students' participation. - Observe how well students understand the topic and produce their ideas. - Students' presentation - Provide feedback to clarify ideas. 	

Annex 11. Reading

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)

Origins and Ideology:

They emerged in 1964 as a Marxist-Leninist communist guerrilla group.

They emerged as a response to socioeconomic inequalities and political exclusion in Colombia.

Their initial objective was to overthrow the Colombian government and establish a socialist regime.

Historical Evolution:

For decades, the FARC was one of the main insurgent forces in Colombia.

They controlled vast rural areas of the country and financed themselves primarily through drug trafficking, extortion, and kidnapping.

They participated in numerous clashes with the Colombian army and other paramilitary forces.

Peace Agreement:

In 2016, after years of negotiations, the FARC and the Colombian government reached a historic peace agreement.

The agreement included provisions for the demobilization of combatants, reintegration into society, and the political participation of former FARC members.

The FARC became a legal political party, the Common Alternative Revolutionary Force Party (FARC).

Current Activities:

Following the peace agreement, many former FARC combatants laid down their weapons and reintegrated into society.

However, some FARC dissidents rejected the peace agreement and continued to operate as armed groups.

The legalized FARC has participated in Colombian politics, running candidates in local and national elections.

Annex 12. Project based learning and Bloom's taxonomy

Learning cycle 1	Sustained inquiry		
Skill	Understand		
Session	Topic	Objective	Activities
Session #01	What is armed conflict?	1.To identify meanings of violence	1.Vocabulary introduction: Learn definitions of armed conflict
		2. To identify how and when violence is produced	2.Artistic expressions: Students share what they interpret about some artistic images. 3.Haiku: Students write a haiku about what armed conflict is. 4.Presentation: Each group presents their poster and explains the concept
Session #02	War in Colombia	1. Recognize different armed organizations	1.Mind map: Students gave different ideas about armed conflict
		2. Identify the armed groups financial resources	2.Reading: students meet into groups with a text about an armed organization 3.Locate in the map of Colombia the place in which armed groups were 4.Billboard: Students create a billboard about the reading
Session #03	Contextualization game	1.Billboard exposition	1.Presentation: Students groups present to their partners their Billboard
		2. Generate a closer relationship with students 3.Understand the Colombian armed conflict	2.Game: Present a contextualization game (hombres lobo de castronegro) with representative characters related with the Colombian armed conflict
Session #04	Notable events	1.Clarity topics covered in before classes	1.Game: Students remember words with a hangman game
			2.Definitions: Students generate some definitions about the words presented in the hangman 3.Socialization: Students present some of their definitions about some words
Session #05	Colombia has scars	1.Discuss the consequences of war in Colombia	1.Text: In groups students select a "scar" in a Colombian map with a short text about a violent situation 2.Activity: Students answer WH questions related to the text

			and then make a drawing with the information.
			3.Presentation: students share what they did and with an arrow signal in the map the place of the violent situation
Learning cycle 2	Reflection, critique, and revision		
Skill	Apply and analyze		
Session #06	Our role in non-repetition	1. Recognize myself role	1.Explanation: I present what non-repetition is
			2.Diorama: In groups, students create a diorama with personal peace commitments
		2.Peace Commitments	3.Presentation: Students share their dioramas with one another
Learning cycle 3	Revision and public product		
Skill	Create		
Session #07, 08, 09	Final production	1.Design an artistic piece	1.Final project: Students develop a painting considering the topics seen in class
		2.Develop the artistic peace	2.Share product: Students share what they did one another

Annex 13. Analysis table

Analysis table			
What are the impacts of implementing artistic projects, within the framework of Critical Peace Education for the development of critical thinking skills in an EFL classroom in the 803 grade students at the Guillermo Cano Isaza school?			
General objective	Specific objectives	Categories of analysis	Subcategories of analysis
To examine the impact of implementing artistic projects within the framework of Critical Peace Education on the development of critical thinking skills in an EFL classroom among 8th-grade students at Guillermo Cano Isaza School.	To promote the understanding of the historical background of the Colombian armed conflict within the framework of critical peace education	From limited conceptions to recognition	Superficial conceptions about the armed conflict
			Recognition of the Colombian armed conflict
	To foster the comprehension of the Colombian armed conflict through artistic expression	Art as a manifestation of students' comprehension of the Colombian armed conflict	Figurative artistic expressions about the Colombian armed conflict
			Metaphorical representations of the Colombian armed conflict
	To encourage critical thinking skills through artistic projects related to the armed conflict in an EFL classroom	Incipient critical thinking skills through artistic expressions	Students' abilities of abstract thinking
			Development of critical thinking skills