

FERNANDO SILVÉRIO DE LIMA

**SIGNS OF CHANGE IN ADOLESCENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT
LEARNING ENGLISH IN PUBLIC SCHOOL:
A SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE**

Dissertação apresentada à Universidade Federal de Viçosa, como parte das exigências do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras, para obtenção do título de *Magister Scientiae*.

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APROVADA: 16 de Março de 2012.



Maria Helena Vieira Abrahão



Hilda Simone Henriques Coelho



Ana Maria Ferreira Barcelos
(Orientadora)

*To my parents, **Neusa** and **Henrique**, the ones who told me in my adolescence, that Education was the best heritage they could offer and that no one could take it away from me.*



*Aos meus pais, **Neusa** e **Henrique**, que me disseram, quando era adolescente, que a Educação era a melhor herança que poderiam me oferecer, e que ninguém poderia tirá-la de mim.*



***“All my values and beliefs are imbued
into how I do what I do each day.”***
(Alanis Morissette)

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TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

(Adapted from Marcuschi (1986) and van Lier (1988))

Refers to...	Example
Unidentified student	X
Comments about the transcript including non-verbal actions.	((double brackets))
Lengthening of the preceding sound	:::
Emphasis	UPPERCASE
Emphasis on questions	?
Unintelligible or incomprehensible sound	(INCOMP)

RESUMO

LIMA, Fernando Silvério de, M.Sc., Universidade Federal de Viçosa, março de 2012. **Sinais de Mudança nas Crenças de Adolescentes sobre Aprender Inglês na Escola Pública: uma Perspectiva Sociocultural**. Orientadora: Ana Maria Ferreira Barcelos.

Esta pesquisa teve por objetivo a investigação das crenças de alunos adolescentes de uma escola pública sobre a impossibilidade de aprendizagem da língua inglesa nesse contexto. O estudo de natureza interventiva foi realizado em uma turma de 32 alunos adolescentes com idade entre 13 e 15 anos em uma escola pública do estado de Minas Gerais (Brasil). O referencial teórico foi baseado em estudos da teoria sociocultural (Gallimore & Tharp, 1996; Johnson, 2006; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Kinginger, 2002; Kozulin, 2003, 2004; Kozulin et al, 2003; Lantolf, 1994, 2007; Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Moll, 1996; van der Veer & Valsiner, 1993, 1994, Vygotsky, 1978, 1986), crenças e mudança de crenças (Alanen, 2003; Barcelos, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2006; Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Basso, 2006; Conley et al, 2004; Johnson, 1999; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011; Pajares, 1992; Pintrich, Marx & Boyle, 1993; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Richards, 1998; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003; Taylor, 2009; Tobin et al, 1994; Vieira-Abrahão, 2006; Wilkins & Ma, 2003; Yang & Kim, 2011), assim como características das adolescência (Arnett, 1999, 2006; Bandura, 2006; Basso, 2008; Buchanan, 1990, 1992; Macowski, 1993; Schunk & Meece, 2006; Pajares, 2006; Tiba, 1985; Vygotsky, 1994a, 1994b, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c). Para a metodologia, foram utilizados dois questionários semi-estruturados, uma narrativa da professora, *feedback cards* dos alunos, gravações de aulas em áudio, notas de campo e um grupo focal. Os resultados apontaram uma descrença dos alunos por cinco razões: indisciplina dos colegas, poucas aulas, material insuficiente, excesso de alunos por turma e a falta de um conhecimento básico na língua inglesa. Após a intervenção com o grupo, com a implementação de diferentes atividades para envolver os alunos na aprendizagem em sala de aula, suas crenças foram comparadas em termos de mudança. Os sinais de mudança nas crenças dos alunos sobre aprender inglês na escola pública foram observados como resultado de experiências positivas de aprendizagem na intervenção. Embora alguns fatores

contextuais ainda influenciaram o grupo, o estudo mostrou que a mudança de crenças, apesar de difícil, é um processo que envolve prontidão, tempo e novas experiências de aprendizagem, que neste caso, foram oferecidas nas novas atividades propostas e as contínuas interpretações positivas dos alunos sobre elas.

ABSTRACT

LIMA, Fernando Silvério de, M.Sc., Universidade Federal de Viçosa, March, 2012. **Signs of Change in Adolescents' Beliefs about learning English in Public School: a Sociocultural Perspective.** Advisor: Ana Maria Ferreira Barcelos.

This study aimed at investigating the beliefs of adolescent learners in a public school about the impossibility of learning English in that context. This was an intervention study carried out with 32 adolescent language learners aged between 13 and 15 years old in a public school in the state of Minas Gerais (Brazil). The theoretical framework was based on studies from sociocultural theory (Gallimore & Tharp, 1996; Johnson, 2006; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Kinginger, 2002; Kozulin, 2003, 2004; Kozulin et al, 2003; Lantolf, 1994, 2007; Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Moll, 1996; van der Veer & Valsiner, 1993, 1994, Vygotsky, 1978, 1986) on belief and belief change (Alanen, 2003; Barcelos, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2006; Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Basso, 2006; Conley et al, 2004; Johnson, 1999; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011; Pajares, 1992; Pintrich, Marx & Boyle, 1993; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Richards, 1998; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003; Taylor, 2009; Tobin et al, 1994; Wilkins & Ma, 2003; Yang & Kim, 2011) as well as adolescence and its characteristics (Arnett, 1999, 2006; Bandura, 2006; Basso, 2008; Buchanan et al, 1990, 1992; Macowski, 1993; Schunk & Meece, 2006; Pajares, 2006; Tiba, 1985; Vygotsky, 1994a, 1994b, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c). The methodology comprised two semi-structured questionnaires, a teacher narrative, students' feedback cards, audio-recorded classes, field notes and a focus group. The results suggested that students did not believe in learning English in public schools for five reasons: students' disruptive talk and behavior, too few classes, insufficient materials, crowded classroom and lack of a basic knowledge in the English language. After an intervention with the group, with the implementation of different activities to engage students in classroom learning, their beliefs were compared in terms of change. Signs of change were observed in students' beliefs about learning English in public school as a result of positive learning experiences in the intervention. Though contextual factors still had influence upon them, the study revealed that belief change, despite difficult, is a process that involves

readiness, time and new learning experiences, which in this case, were provided in the new activities proposed and students' ongoing positive interpretations of them.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 A foreword

Teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in schools have become a perilous task for several factors such as: indiscipline, disinterest for learning, crowded classrooms, among others. As suggested by Macowski (1993), these problems are common in both public and private contexts. This ensemble of factors contributes to the frustration of teachers who work with adolescents on a regular basis (Basso, 2008). Although adolescents constitute a large group of learners of English in Brazil, there are few Brazilian studies within Applied Linguistics focusing on this age group as language learners or on their beliefs. Yet, this is an important group to study.

Adolescence is acknowledged as a transitional age, the years that entail changes in cognition (Steinberg, 2005; Paus, 2005), bodies (Tiba, 1985), emotion and hormones (Buchanan & Eccles, 1992; Eccles et al, 1992), social roles (Bandura, 2006) and academic success (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2006; Schunk & Meece, 2006; Pajares, 2006). These changes sometimes explain why youngsters struggle with life in this phase when they try to find their place in a society that already poses certain demands at them. These demands are possible indicators of conflicts that occur between adolescents with their teachers and parents (see Buchanan et al, 1990).

This different group of learners who undergo transitions (Vygotsky, 1994a, 1994b, 1998a, 1998b) and different types of changes (biologic, cognitive, social and affective), and who are seen mainly as chaotic by other people (see Arnett, 1999, 2006), make up the largest part of the target public in schools. It is, therefore, relevant to understand the beliefs of this group of learners. Thus, this study is about adolescents' beliefs about studying English in public school. The reasons that brought me to this topic are diverse. They are related to my interest in beliefs, adolescents and public school.

The relationship between what we think and what we do has always fascinated me. Do we need to see in order to believe or the contrary? In language learning, beliefs have drawn my attention since my first language learning experiences. The choices I made in order to learn, the things I believed were best for me to learn (i.e, listening to music). I then realized that, even when I did not give enough credit, they were there, influencing my decisions, defining a part of my identity as a language learner and later as a language teacher.

My interest in studying adolescent language learners occurred by a simple reason: they were everywhere I worked, in language courses and regular schools. I was also fascinated by their readiness to learn languages but felt confused about their lack of interest to learning and resilience to participate in language classes or engage in classroom activities. Having studied in public schools most of my life, I realized that this context could be studied from the perspective of adolescent learners who struggled with learning EFL in that environment, often remembered by the common major discourse of failure (Algebaile, 2009). Thus, considering adolescent learners' beliefs about learning a language in a public school context, I began wondering mainly on the challenges and bad experiences that could have caused a (dis)belief in possibility of learning EFL. In addition, it crossed my mind whether such bad experiences could be minimized when good experiences prevailed, and whether that could influence belief change.

Regardless of the resistance in peoples' beliefs, could they be changed? If so, what efforts, as teachers, could we do to promote an environment that allows learners (and why not teachers as well?) to (re)negotiate their meanings about learning a language and (de)construct beliefs that may influence their actions? How do students respond to efforts on helping them construct alternative beliefs? Would they resist or adapt to change? These questions led me to this research study.

1.2 Significance of the study

This study is relevant for five mains reasons. The first reason is related to contemporary discussions in Applied Linguistics that have been carried out in the field (Moita Lopes, 2006) about the role of research which focus on the subjects left on the margin of scientific studies. In the globalized world, many people are

excluded of the benefits of modern life which has conquered outstanding evolutions in several fields (science, culture, technology, etc). But social inequality is yet latent. And one example of a setting which suffers with exclusion and inequality is the public school (Moita Lopes, 2006; Algebaile, 2009). Schools have been forced to embody new responsibilities that go beyond their main one with education; it has to be in charge of health, culture and social assistance (Algebaile, 2009). Also, discourses about the failure of the public school system become more socialized in the media¹.

The second reason has to do with the lack of intervention studies with students. Research about beliefs in public school is consistent (Andrade, 2004; Araújo, 2004; Coelho, 2005; Lima,S. 2005; Luvizari, 2007; Lyons, 2009; Maitino, 2007; Pirovano; Sturm, 2007). Nonetheless, most of these studies consider either solely teachers' beliefs or compare them to their students' beliefs. Few are the studies focusing only on the learners.

The third reason refers to belief change, a timid topic in recent research with language learners. Most studies in Applied Linguistics about this issue have considered teacher change, in continuing education programs (Barcelos & Coelho, 2010) or in their classroom practice (Maitino, 2007). Beliefs are part of every adolescent's efforts and experiences, either in success or failure. Thus, it is relevant to understand how trusting in their capacities is crucial to succeed in different moments and endeavors of their lives (Pajares, 2006). In the last decade, several studies in Applied Linguistics (Andrade, 2004; Araújo, 2004; Coelho, 2005; Custódio, 2001; Lima,S. 2005; Luvizari, 2007; Lyons, 2009; Maitino, 2007; Miranda, 2004; Pirovano, 2001; Piteli, 2006; Silva, 2004; Sturm, 2007, Zolnier, 2007) have investigated beliefs about learning EFL in public schools and have listed innumerous contextual issues that constrain the possibility of learning and demonstrated influences on teachers' and learners' (dis)beliefs. These studies seem to echo the need for inquiries that offer alternatives to cope with such contextual aspects that hinder learning as a meaningful (Almeida Filho, 1993) or transformative experience (Pajares, 2006). In other words, find ways to negotiate and make students experience learning as something possible.

¹ See, for example, documentaries about current educational crisis in American public schools, such as: "Lottery Ticket" (2010) and "Waiting for superman" (2010). In Brazil, the documentary "Pro dia nascer feliz" (2006) is a similar example representing adolescents' in different educational settings.

The fourth reason is related to the fact that adolescence has not been acknowledged for inquiries on beliefs. Most studies on language classroom have not considered adolescence as a key element to understand contextual factors such as indiscipline or lack of interest in language learning, despite the fact that most students involved in such belief studies were adolescents².

Finally, the fifth reason states that although this study considers the particularities of a specific language classroom, its contributions may be relevant for language teachers who work with adolescents in different contexts, and who may compare or contrast the perspectives that I present in this inquiry.

1.3 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- How is the language learning and teaching process constructed in a public school with adolescents who do not believe in the possibility of learning EFL?
- What contextual factors influence the beliefs about learning EFL of this group and in which ways?
- Does the process of belief change happen after an intervention period in the adolescent students' classroom routine? How?

1.4 Aims of the study

This research had the general aim of investigating adolescent language learners' (dis)beliefs about learning EFL in school. After a first phase of classroom observation, an intervention phase was designed to observe if their beliefs would change. The specific aims of this study were stated as follow:

- To observe the construction of language learning with a group of adolescents who do not believe in learning English in school.

² One of the exceptions is Zolnier (2007). The author presents a specific section in her research to report theoretical considerations regarding adolescence and indiscipline.

- To investigate how the contextual factors can influence this group in relation to their beliefs about learning EFL in this public school.
- To propose an intervention period with the group, with change in their learning routines (materials, activities, etc) to identify if belief change (and under which conditions) can occur.
- To verify if learners changed their beliefs after the intervention phase.

1.5 Overview of the thesis

In this introductory chapter, I presented the significance of the study and its relevance for research about language learners' beliefs and adolescence, the three research questions that guided this investigation and the aims of this qualitative study.

In chapter 2, I present the theoretical framework. The literature review is divided in three major topics. The chapter begins with a discussion about Sociocultural Theory in Applied Linguistics, vygotskian assumptions in Cultural-Historical Psychology and the view of classroom context as sociocultural environment. I then talk about studies on language learners' beliefs and a sociocultural perspective to study beliefs. Next, I summarize studies that focused the public school context in Brazil for the last two decades and argue in favor of a recent trend in belief research: learners' belief change. Change is discussed based on perspectives from Applied Linguistics and other fields. In the third section, I present an overview of studies about adolescence, focusing on the changes in this period, the language classroom with adolescents and a review of Vygotsky's writings about this transitional age.

Chapter 3 comprises a detailed description of the instruments, procedures for data collection and ethic principles. Chapter 4 presents the findings and results. And in the final chapter (5), I revisit the research questions, discuss some limitations of the study and conclude with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study, which is divided into three sections. In the first, I discuss the impact of vygotskian studies for Applied Linguistics and its implications for language pedagogy. I also review some of the basic concepts in his writings which have been used in studies about the language classroom. In the second part, I offer an overview of research on beliefs about language learning, which includes the definition of the term, a sociocultural view, the role of contextual factors, the history of studies in the public school context, and belief change. In the third and last section, I discuss a few perspectives regarding adolescence and learning, the role of change in this phase and Vygotsky's writings about this age.

2.1 SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

In the last decades, Vygotsky's writings have had a great influence not only in the field of Education (Kozulin et al, 2003; Moll, 1996; Smagorinski, 2007), but also in Applied Linguistics, in classroom research and teaching (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Guk & Kellog, 2007), as well as in language teaching education (see Johnson & Golombeck, 2002; Johnson, 2006; 2007; Mateus, 2006).

Lev S. Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a Russian psychologist known for the studies in the field *Paedology*³. His intellectual production covers around 180 written texts, which have inspired several new studies in different fields with new

³ *Paedology* or Educational Psychology refers to the study of children development and behavior. Kozulin (2003:37) recalls the "child study movement" notion from American Literature to exemplify the meaning of the term. In Soviet Union, *Paedology* was an emergent science, but not in the west (Kinging,2002).

interpretations (Blanck, 1996). His writings came up in a scenario of revolution in 1917, but also with high levels of illiteracy (Lucci, 2006).

In Brazil, the first texts became available with the translation of his collected works *Language and Thought* and *Mind in Society* published earlier in the U.S.A. In that time, the works of Jean Piaget were a common reference for both Psychology and Education. In the mid-1980's, the first papers in Applied Linguistics were published within a Vygotskian approach (Zuengler & Miller, 2006). Years later, mainly in the 1990's, some of his ideas started to be used in theorizations regarding language teaching and learning in Brazil.

Several concepts from his original texts were used or re-interpreted for research in second (L2) (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994) and foreign languages (Faltis, 1990). Among these concepts, some of them were used more extensively and became more popular, such as the notions of mediation (through signs and psychological tools) and also the zone of proximal development (ZDP). Other scholars in Psychology and Education, influenced by such sociocultural framework presented other concepts, such as the scaffolding, which also related to the ZDP, but with discrepancies (see Valsiner & van der Veer, 1993). But in general, the studies seemed to have considered the premise that the human development entailed the "intersection of the person and the social world" (Valsiner & van der Veer, 1993:35), therefore, these concepts are embedded in the idea that development occurs as a result from the relationship between the social context and the people who act and interact in this context through mediated activity.

2.1.1 A Vygotskian approach within Applied Linguistics

In Cultural-Historical Psychology, Vygotsky's works are understood based on the underpinning that "there is an intimate connection between the special environment that human beings inhabit and fundamental, distinguishing, qualities of human psychological process." (Cole & Wertsch, 1996: 251). Hence, the social environment plays an important role in human development, and thus, the view that only biological aspects of human cognition were responsible for development is rejected.

Zuengler and Miller (2006:37) point out that in the field of SLA, a sociocultural perspective is the one that entails “varied approaches to learning that foreground the social and cultural contexts of learning”. Among different terminologies (i.e., socio-cultural, Cultural-Historical Psychology), Sociocultural Theory is the most recurrent to refer to vygotskian assumptions in studies within Applied Linguistics⁴.

As Lantolf (2007) explains:

“SCT is not a theory of language, language learning or language processing. It is a theory that unites human social activity and human mental activity through communication, and as such, it is very much grounded in everyday experiences rather than controlled experiments – experiences that themselves are holistic activities” (Lantolf, 2007:699)

This theory that acknowledged the role of communication in human constitution, the development of mental process (Lantolf, 1994) and social life, has presented a suitable framework for the study of language acquisition (L2 and FL) with learners who come from specific cultural-historical settings (John-Steiner; Mahn, 1996; Thorne, 2005) to learn by themselves and with others. Thus, the core of the theory suggests that “humans are *fundamentally communicatively organized* beings” (Lantolf, 2007:695, my emphasis). They interact, they act on the world mediated through tools or artifacts (i.e. language) making use of the “special mental quality of humans” (Cole & Wertsch, 1996:252) as well as transform other people, the context and are transformed by them.

In Applied Linguistics, sociocultural studies emerged in the mid-1980’s (Zuengler & Miller, 2006) but it was in the following decades that more studies would be reported in the form of articles (Faltis, 1990) and books (Lantolf & Appel, 1994). After 2000, more specific books about sociocultural theory for language teaching have been made available (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Lantolf & Poehner, 2008) and articles addressing specific aspects of the theory (Kinginger, 2002) have been constantly used (i.e, interpretations of the ZPD). Thus, the

⁴ For a discussion regarding the use of the terminology, see Lantolf and Thorne (2006: 2-3). Also, as Zuengler and Miller (2006) claimed, even with the name pointing out to different approaches, there are scholars who refer to *sociocultural theory* similarly to the *vygotskian sociocultural theory*. Since in this thesis, I will not consider other approaches that have been also labeled as sociocultural (for example, situated learning theory, a bakhtinian framework and the dialogic perspective, among others), here my mentions regarding sociocultural theory will be related to a Vygotskian framework.

research agenda has covered several topics such as: peer interaction and the ZDP (Guk & Kellog, 2007; Moll & Greenberg, 1996; Tudge, 1996), language teacher education (Johnson, 2006), narrative research (Pavlenko, 2006 ; Johnson, 2007) and language learning beliefs (Alanen, 2003; Aro, 2009; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011; Yank & Kim, 2011).

In Brazil, studies within a sociocultural approach have emerged through inquiry on different topics as well: language teaching with adolescents (Macowski, 1993), peer collaboration among private (Lima & Basso, 2009) and public school language learners (Basso & Lima, 2010; Ferreira, 2000, 2008), language learning experiences (Miccoli, 2010) and language teacher education (Mateus, 2009), just to name a few. In the next section, I focus on the classroom and discuss some concepts in sociocultural theory.

2.1.2 The classroom as a sociocultural context: essential keywords

Sociocultural theory has brought insights to the classroom environment and to the way people learn languages through interaction. Collaboration and assistance are frequent words used by contemporary scholars based on Vygotsky's original writings. John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) offered a description of how the studies of the soviet psychologist have been understood in Education and Linguistics. The authors claim that socioculturally, the student has an active role in the classroom; thus, the responsibility of learning is no longer contingent exclusively on the teacher⁵, but depends on "their mutual negotiation and collaboration to build knowledge" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996: 197).

Nevertheless, despite the fact that teacher and students are expected to build their knowledge in classroom interactions, this will not necessarily happen just by forcing them to work together. In fact, as I discuss in the following sections (2.2.3 and 2.2.4), there are other aspects at stake when it comes to the challenges of promoting an environment in which students are aware of the responsibility for their learning. As suggested by Johnson (2006), even if learning

⁵ Paulo Freire (1993) also criticized the kind of education in which students are seen as empty containers who come to school to be filled with the teachers' knowledge, which he referred to as *banking education*. For a similar discussion from a sociocultural perspective, see Kozulin (2003).

is not always a consequence of teaching⁶, the impact of the teacher's decisions and actions in the language class (i.e, materials, activities and tasks, etc.) is very significant on students. In addition, John-Steiner and Mahn (1996:198) describe the Vygostkian view as one which “recognizes and empowers” different students, from different backgrounds.

The sociocultural environment of schools is important for the development of learners in the internalization of scientific concepts. As suggested by Valsiner and van der Veer (1993:38), in Vygotsky's research, it is possible to observe that his “dialectical⁷ theoretical core of understanding of development meets his applied focus on the teaching-learning process (...)”. In fact, as explained by Oliveira (1997:61), it has “an essential role in the construction of the adult psychological being of the individuals who lived in schooled societies”.

Vygotsky and his collaborators (Luria and Leont'ev) were interested in the study of the development of higher mental functions, considering not only the biological and cognitive aspects of development, but the cultural-historical dimension of the human race. The thinking process was not considered as an isolated activity (Kozulin, 2003) that took place inside peoples' brain without any external interference. Conversely, it was in the interpersonal interactions that human development was understood, with interactions mediated through tools and artifacts (Cole & Wertsch, 1996), such as language, which allowed people to transform the world around them and themselves as well (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

In the next subsections, I discuss important Vygostkian concepts which have been used in recent research in Applied Linguistics, in Brazil and abroad, which will be useful in this study as well.

2.1.2.1 Mediation

Mediation is one of the fundamental notions in Vygotskian writings (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). For him, the relationship between humans and the

⁶ See section 2.2 on research on public schools (2.2.3), and contextual factors (2.2.4) for examples that support this argument.

⁷ It comprises the sense of understanding phenomena, such as change, with opposing ideas. His work was influenced by a Marxist view about change. In the study of language learners' beliefs, contradictions help researchers to understand how teachers and learners make sense of mediated activities in the classroom (see Negueruela-Azarola, 2011).

world is not direct; it is actually mediated by signs and psychological tools⁸, which emerged from a need to control and affect reality, and as a consequence, changed people as well (Lantolf & Appel, 1994). Therefore, this mediated mental activity distinguished humans from other animals, with the capacity to incorporate external elements that allowed new forms of behavior (Vygotsky, 1989a:45).

Human activities take place in cultural settings and are mediated through signs and tools. The most cited tool⁹, and also the one which Vygotsky was interested in, (Cole & Wertsch, 1996) is language (Vygotsky, 1986, 1989a). In his work, it is possible to observe an emphasis on the appropriation of symbolic tools by children in different contexts (i.e., home), being (formal) education, the most prominent one (Kozulin, 2003:17).

In language teaching, studies which have brought the vygotskian framework for theorization (Ferreira, 2008; Guk & Kellog, 2007; Moll & Greenberg, 1996; Tudge, 1996), investigate, for instance, the different forms of interaction in the language classroom. Such interactions are generally mediated through the target language or the mother tongue, besides gestures and other resources which learners use in the attempt to construct their knowledge in collaborative settings. Hence, activities that are carried out in the classroom, as well as the content involved, are understood “as a social interaction encounter” (Pekarek Doehler: 2002:22). Next, I discuss the notion of Zone of Proximal Development, which regards interactions and assistance as important for the development of embryonic capacities.

2.1.2.2 Zone of Proximal Development

This is probably the concept with more impact on research related to education (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), contrary to the studies in Vygotsky’s time, which considered the autonomy of the learner as an evidence for effective

⁸ “Psychological tools are those symbolic artifacts – signs, symbols, texts, formulae, graphic organizers – that when internalized help individuals master their own natural psychological functions of perception, memory, attention, and so on” (Kozulin, 2003:15-16). In addition, tools and artifacts are developed by people according to conditions that involve both culture and history.

⁹ Despite his interest in language, it is important to point out that not every means of assistance will necessarily be linguistic. (Gallimore & Tharp, 1996). Language is a key concept in sociocultural theory studies, but other tools and artifacts, besides language, are also considered in other studies (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

development (Vygotsky, 1986). The author acknowledged the importance of looking at the functions which were unfolding, that is, in an “embryonic state” (Vygotsky, 1989a:97) and not only at those which were evident through test measurements (Valsiner & Van der Veer, 1993). He observed that during some tasks, the young learner could rely on some kind of assistance which created the possibility to carry out this task until the moment he or she could reach a more independent level, and no longer required help from another person.

This is when Vygotsky presented the notion of the *Zone of Proximal Development*, in the early 1930’s (Kinging, 2002). This concept refers the distance between the actual development to the one that is unfolding, or in his own words, “the discrepancy between a child’s actual mental age and the level he reaches in solving problems with assistance (Vygotsky, 1986:187). This notion was proposed based on experiments with children who could carry out certain tasks successfully with the assistance of a peer (generally and adult) that provided the necessary support¹⁰.

Such a powerful concept soon gained various adepts in different fields (Kinging, 2002), but the massive acceptance and use of the term in different perspectives also led to a reductionist view (Smagorinski, 2007) and even misinterpretations (Lantolf, 2007)¹¹, which did not relate to the core underpinnings of vygotskian writings. Despite this fact, in Education, the concept has helped teachers to look at learners’ unfolding capacities. As Lantolf and Thorne (2006) discuss:

“The ZPD is not only a model of the developmental process, but also a conceptual tool that educators can use to understand aspects of students’ emerging capacities that are in the early stages of maturation. In this way, when used proactively, teachers using the ZPD concept as a diagnostic have the potential to create conditions that may give rise to specific forms of development in the future” (Lantolf &Thorne, 2006:267)

Thus, this concept in language teaching has been used to explain that the effective language classroom is the one that provides opportunities for progress in the learners’ zone of proximal development. Mediated through language (i.e., L1,

¹⁰ For an interpretation of the ZPD unfolded in four stages, see Gallimore and Tharp (1996).

¹¹ See Kinginger (2002) for some insights and reviews about the way scholars used the ZPD concept.

L2, FL, etc), learners and teachers interact and negotiate meanings towards the construction of their knowledge, that is established in the interpersonal relationships and result in changes for the individuals as well. As Gallimore and Tharp (1996) point out, the performance of students in the process of learning and development have to be accompanied by the teacher.

Under the light of sociocultural assumptions, researchers¹² have considered the role of assistance in educational settings and its influence on students' learning and development. Those studies have focused mainly on the role of assistance that is provided and the influence of the more capable peer among learners while carrying out a given task (Guk & Kellog, 2007).

2.1.2.3. Scaffolding: sociocultural influences

Scaffolding is a term that has been commonly recurrent in the study of the language classroom and was presented in the pioneer work of Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) in Psychology. They investigated the role of tutoring in problem solving. The study consisted in the analysis of assistance offered by adults for children (ages between 3 and 5). In the role of collaboration and provided assistance, they highlighted the fact that besides learning, humans are capable to teach as well. The authors define scaffolding as:

“[a] process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts. This scaffolding consists essentially of the adult “controlling” those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner’s capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence” (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976:90)

In language teaching, scaffolding has been observed not only in interactions among teachers and children, but also in other ages, such as adults in the university setting (Donato, 1994) and adolescents in public and private schools (Basso & Lima, 2010; Ferreira, 2008; Lima & Basso, 2009).

¹² Valsiner and Van der Veer (1993:48) explain this movement in Psychology and Education suggesting that some authors have referred to their works within the “umbrella label of “Vygotskian” (or “neo-Vygotskian”)” to present perspectives of concepts who share some of the ZPD characteristics. For the differences and similarities between the ZPD and the scaffolding metaphor I recommend Valsiner and van der Veer (1993: 49-51).

Donato (1994) observed the collaboration in French classes with undergraduates. With adult learners, he noticed that during interaction the assistance was provided by a more capable peer, but still, the student who provided the assistance would benefit as well. In the collective scaffolding, “the effects of this help are substantial enough to redefine and further cultivate the role played by the social context in L2 development” (Donato, 1994:52).

In other settings, especially with adolescents, studies have showed that there are specific constraints when it comes to learners’ engagement with the task and motivation to carry on (Basso & Lima, 2010; Ferreira, 2008). Ferreira (2008) studied peer collaboration between adolescents who took part on an extra-class language course. Conversely to the results presented in other studies, such as Donato’s (1994), some limitations were observed which in fact did not allow the activity to go further. Among the aspects, it is worth mentioning the problems with the linguistic levels of the learners which constrained their participation and also the lack of involvement in the task.

Despite the positive image that assistance provides, in which everyone involved participates actively, conducting research on peer collaboration reveals the difficulties teachers may face. For educational settings, a teacher who wants to incorporate such perspectives in his or her practice should also be assisted, receiving the necessary support from the school staff, for instance (Gallimore & Tharp, 1996).

Basso and Lima (2010), in a similar perspective, but this time in a Brazilian public school context, studied peer collaboration among adolescent learners (high school freshmen) in classes based on speaking activities. In that EFL context, the authors concluded that there is evidence of scaffolding during oral activities, but still, more evidence was shown on how the adolescent does not engage at all in the activity if it does not call his or her attention. In order to recruit the learner to solve the task (i.e., an oral activity) the topic has to be relevant and significant for the ones involved (Moll & Greenberg, 1996), otherwise they will not participate. Also, in this context where EFL is taught with a focus on reading skills, the teacher is considered the main source¹³ of the target

¹³ This seems to confirm Gallimore and Tharp’s (1996) argument on the relevance of the teachers’ assistance in students’ performance.

language, the one students run to when they feel interested in engaging in the task and want to learn.

2.1.3 Implications for teaching and classroom research

Research on Sociocultural Theory has followed Vygotsky's original writings (Vygotsky, 1976, 1986, 1989a, 1994a, 1994b, 1998a, 1998b, 2001) as well as interpretations from vygotskian readers (Cole & Wertsch, 1996; Kozulin, 2003; Valsiner; van der veer, 1993; van der Veer, 1994; Wertsch, 1985, 1991). The insights and criticisms of Vygotsky's work also contributed for the study of teaching, learning and development (Gallimore & Tharp, 1996; Kinginger, 2002; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Johnson, 2006; 2007; Lantolf, 1994, 2007; Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Lantolf & Poehner, 2008; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, 2007; Moll, 1996; Moll & Greenberg; Oliveira, 1997; Smagorinski, 2007; Thorne, 2005).

Besides everyday interactions, learners develop from the instruction they receive in schools, once instruction is the most recurrent form of assistance in educational settings (Gallimore & Tharp, 1996). In Vygotsky's words, "school instruction induces the generalizing kind of perception and thus plays a decisive role in making the child conscious of his own mental processes" (Vygotsky, 1986:171). For learners, in general, and not only children, the classroom as a sociocultural environment is the place where they may develop their potentials, mainly those related to scientific knowledge. It is a place where the role of the teacher (capable adult) and the content that is going to be taught are designed and planned accordingly to their life phase.

As a social process, learning involves dialogue and language is crucial for learners' instruction and development . Teaching is what is going to foster the learners' development according to their own capacities (John-Steiner & Souberman, 1991). But for productive interactions to occur (i.e. the ones who may result in effective development), it is necessary to set specific goals to be reached collectively, or in other words, having each subject to play their part (Tudge, 1996).

In the following section, I discuss about language learning beliefs and how they are seen under the light of sociocultural theory.

2.2 BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING

2.2.1 Understanding a concept

“It's not the events of our lives that shape us, but our beliefs as to what those events mean.” (Anthony Robbins)

Based on a sociocultural framework, I have considered the role of human consciousness as a feature which distinguishes people from the other animals. Also, regarding the importance of the sociocultural context and different means of interaction, human cognition and learning are not seen individually and independently from social context (Kozulin, 2003), but are, actually, situated in it (Johnson & Freeman, 2001; Johnson, 2006; Mateus, 2009). Beliefs, as part of human cognition and life in society, are also embedded in these views of socially situated activity.

Research on beliefs has a long tradition in sciences such as Anthropology and Sociology (Barcelos, 2004). Yet in language learning, studies on this concept emerged in the 1980's in the United States and in the 1990's in Brazil¹⁴. After two decades of research in Brazil, the field has expanded and the amount of research has increased considerably. Many papers in the last decades have attempted to define this concept, which was described by Pajares (1992) as a *messy construct*. Different researchers have presented significant state-of-the-art papers reviewing beliefs aliases (Pajares, 1992; Barcelos, 2000, 2004; Borg, 2003).

In Borg's (2003) extensive review, the author dedicated a section to the wide terminology that has been understood as belief/cognition¹⁵. Pajares (1992) argued that sciences such as Educational Psychology do not offer a precise concept “and so, defining beliefs is at best a game of player's choice” (ibid: 309). Barcelos (2004, 2007a) and Silva (2007) have considered studies in Brazil and abroad to demonstrate several ways people have referred to this topic. Despite the fact that this multiplicity of terms have led to a terminological confusion (Pajares, 1992; Borg, 2003) I agree with Barcelos (2004) who pointed out two main

¹⁴ Almeida Filho (1993) mentioned briefly about the role of beliefs in the teachers' language teaching approach. Years later, Barcelos (1995) used the term culture of learning to study beliefs. Decades later, the term beliefs is more frequently used in research, such perspective may be seen in several literature reviews (Barcelos, 2007a; Lima 2010, 2011)

¹⁵ Borg (2003:81) understands *cognition* as what teachers “know, believe and think.”

features in these several terminologies, a) the fact that they relate specifically to the nature of language learning and the construction of this process, and b) the recognition of its social nature and relationship with culture, similar to the sociocultural perspective which conceives learning with the same socially constructed characteristic¹⁶.

Among the different terms used, the examples may vary. Richards (1998) defined *belief systems* as a set or display that teachers form throughout their career, which they take with them to their classrooms. It is made up with “information, attitudes, values, expectations, theories, and assumptions (...)” (ibid, p.66). Similarly, Johnson (1999) defined teacher’s beliefs as *the rock we stand on*. She explains that when teachers attend professional development programs, their beliefs come as a result of experiences they have had, which suggests why sometimes they “tend to be quite stable and rather resistant to change” (Johnson, 1999:30)

Definitions for learners’ beliefs are also present in the literature, since the interest in understanding them and “unveiling the learners’ world, that is, their desires, preoccupations, need, expectations, interests (...)” (Barcelos, 2004:127) was an alternative to understand how people learned languages in different contexts. According to Richards and Lockhart (1996), learners’ *belief systems* entail

“a wide range of issues and can influence learners’ motivation to learn, their expectations about language learning, their perceptions about what is easy or difficult about a language, as well as the kind of learning strategies they favor” (Richards & Lockhart, 1996: 52).

As Richards (1998) suggested, teachers go to classrooms bringing their own beliefs. Similarly, learners also bring to their learning environment beliefs that may be crucial to their actions and that influence “how they conceptualize learning and the way they interpret learning within the classroom context” (Richards & Lockhart, 1996: 58). According to these authors, learners may have beliefs about the nature of English, the speakers of English, the four language skills, the teaching (process), the good ways for learning, about themselves as

¹⁶ However, I do recognize that even defining the social nature of beliefs I do not intend to imply that these authors necessarily share neo-vygotskian assumptions. But as a choice for this research, I prefer to understand beliefs socioculturally.

language learners and their goals. But these are just a few among many possibilities to be mapped.

Despite the different approaches and aliases for beliefs, in the literature, I adopt the definition of beliefs by Barcelos (2006), which I believe, is coherent with both a contextual approach (Barcelos, 2001) and a sociocultural perspective (Alanen, 2003; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011; Yang & Kim, 2011). Beliefs are conceptualized as “a way of thinking, as reality constructions, ways to see and perceive the world and its phenomena, co-constructed in our experiences and resultant from an interactive process of interpretation and (res)signification” (Barcelos, 2006:18).

This definition is not contrary to the sociocultural perspective on beliefs that I discuss in the next section. In fact, it reminds us of the role of experiences which occur in a social plan, with people interacting mediated through language and other tools (Vygotsky, 1986). The ways of perceiving the world is also explained by Johnson (1999:30) who adds that beliefs also “guide both our thoughts and our behaviors”. It is through beliefs that people represent experiences from the realities they lived. As mentioned in the introductory quote of this section, it is with them that people attribute meaning to their experiences, as a way to represent reality (see Barcelos, 2006).

For adolescent learners, beliefs may have a key role in this age. As I discuss later, the different types of change they have to cope with, possibly creates the chance for confusion and uncertainty. Just as every human being, adolescents rely on what they think they know in an attempt to understand themselves as social beings, since “their actions are largely influenced by feelings and other social influences” (Steinberg, 2005). Therefore, adolescents’ beliefs work as a compass which allows them to choose a direction and form an opinion at an age when things are changing and seem uncertain.

In the next section, I talk about a sociocultural view on language learning beliefs influenced by Vygostkian works.

2.2.2 A sociocultural perspective on language learning beliefs

As discussed above, research on language learning beliefs has come a long way. Developments in recent studies have shown that they are not seen only as individual variables, but intrinsically related to the social context. Hence, sociocultural theory has established as one of the various approach for applied linguists to study beliefs (Alanen, 2003; Basso, 2006; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011; Sturm, 2007; Yang & Kim, 2011), as well as for language teacher education (Johnson & Golombeck, 2002; Johnson, 2006, 2007). Researchers have relied mainly in Vygotsky's writings, finding the necessary underpinnings to support a social perspective for studies regarding human cognition.

Unlike the normative and metacognitive approach, in the contextual approach to study beliefs (Barcelos, 2001, 2003a) there is an emphasis on learners' environment. However, not necessarily all inquiries in this contextual approach are theoretically influenced by vygotskian assumptions. As Alanen (2003) argues, specific studies about beliefs under the light of sociocultural theory are still recent. In a recent volume of the journal *System* edited by Barcelos and Kalaja (2011), other inquiries have emerged (Negueruela-Azarola, 2011; Yang & Kim, 2011) within a sociocultural approach, and also have endorsed Alanen's (2003) claim for more studies in this topic.

In the study of higher mental functions Vygotsky explained that what makes humans different from other animals is our consciousness, our ability to make plans and control behavior consciously (Oliveira, 1997). These special mental features of human beings (Cole; Wertsch, 1996) were intrinsic to understand how humans could learn through activity and interact with other people mediated by artifacts (Kozulin, 2003, 2004). And then, by this social feature, transform themselves intrapersonally.

Since beliefs are related to the actions we take, based on our cultural experiences, studying them within a sociocultural approach provides us with insights on how individuals perceive their context and the people who surround them. As suggested by Negueruela-Azarola (2011:360), beliefs are conceived as "socially relevant and personally meaningful". Within this view, sociocultural

studies can understand the impact of the cultural mediated forms of interaction¹⁷ in peoples' lives, an important aspect of sociocultural theory, present in Vygotsky's writings (1978, 1986, 1989a, 1994a, 1994b, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 1998d).

Alanen (2003) revisited Vygotsky's writings and neo-vygotskian scholars, such as Alex Kozulin, Michael Cole and James Wertsch, to propose a meditational perspective on language learners' beliefs. She states that beliefs are social and thus, they entail the setting where learning and teaching takes place. Also, they are seen as stable and variable. In Table 1, I present a summary of Alanen's (2003) sociocultural characterization of beliefs.

Table 1. A sociocultural characterization of language learning beliefs

<i>Features</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Understood as <i>cultural artifacts</i>	Just like other cultural artifacts (tools, signs, symbols, etc.) they mediate human activity (i.e. language learning).
Come up in the social plan	They can come up during an interview or also in classroom, when there is a possibility for it. They occur socially, may be shared, but are also constructed subjectively (perceived in specific ways by each learner).
Include learner's social environment	Students' and teacher's belief system are influenced as they interact in the classroom, but are also susceptible to external influence (school counselors, principal, other teachers, parents, etc.) ¹⁸
Are both <i>stable</i> and <i>variable</i>	There is a possibility for changing beliefs ¹⁹ . They may or may not be part of <i>students' reservoir</i> , depending on the impact of their learning experiences.
Have to be studied in the actual context of activity (especially during interaction).	By stimulating learners to think about their learning experiences during an interview or an actual English class, they become more aware of their own

¹⁷ That entails the impact of peoples' actions and discourses.

¹⁸ In section 2.2.3, where I discuss belief research in the public school context, I present a review of Lima (2005) and Lyons (2009), other examples of inquiries which considered other participants (parents and school staff, respectively).

¹⁹ In a similar perspective, Negueruela-Azarola (2011) adds that beliefs are *stable* for historical reasons but *variable* because of contexts where they are formed.

	perspectives. And “speaking out does, at the same time, shape learners’ ideas about learning.” (p.59)
“(Co)constructed and appropriated through mediated action” (p. 67)	Learning a language is a mediated process, in which the person acquires a whole range of signs and representations that are culturally defined.

This perspective is compatible with what is discussed in section 2.2, which focuses mainly on beliefs research and belief change. In the contextual approach (Barcelos, 2003a), beliefs are investigated no longer by the unique use of scales and questionnaires. Researchers are conducting classroom observation, field notes, recording classes and talking to teachers and learners, as reported in Alanen (2003) and as pointed out in Barcelos and Vieira-Abrahão (2006), for example.

Whether or not the research is socioculturally oriented, the research agenda requires a more holistic perspective of the learning process, which occurs in specific context with specific people. This study, which follows a sociocultural perspective for language learning, also considers a sociocultural perspective to understand learners’ beliefs. And as Alanen (2003:82) concluded, the study about beliefs within this perspective is “still rather embryonic” and more research has to be carried out investigating the emergence of beliefs in cultural activities and classroom research interaction.

2.2.3 Focus on the public school context: a decade review

After presenting studies on beliefs within sociocultural theory and arguing on the importance of context for belief research, in this section, I focus on the review of Brazilian inquiries on language learning beliefs carried out in the public school context for the last two decades.

The first studies on beliefs in the 1980’s in the USA were carried out with adult language learners (see Horwitz, 1987; Wenden, 1987). In Brazil, in 1990’s, the first studies also considered adult learners, but mainly future language teachers (Barcelos, 1995). Since then, as pointed out in Barcelos (2007a), two main frequent contexts for research are the Public School and the Language Teacher

Courses²⁰. Following Barcelos' (2007a) review, the first study carried out in a public school was conducted by Leffa (1991) who actually employed the term "language learning conceptions". With a group of fifth graders and through short narratives the author concluded that those language learners had a simplistic view of language which was basically a subject they studied and a set of words to be remembered. Unlike other countries, where research in public school setting is yet "minimal" (see Borg, 2003:106), Brazilian Applied Linguistics have presented a solid agenda.

By the end of the 1990's, six other studies emerged (Saquetti, 1998; Reynaldi, 1998; Rolim, 1998; Felix, 1998; Cunha, 1998, Garcia, 1999). Saquetti (1998) investigated attitudes and beliefs of both teachers and students of French language in two public schools. Félix (1998), Reynaldi (1998) and Rolim (1998) focused on language teachers' beliefs through the use of qualitative instruments such as: questionnaires, classroom observation, classroom audio recordings and field notes. Cunha (1998) was the first study in a public school focusing on the learner. The participants were high school students and she observed the role of experiences in their beliefs. Garcia (1999) also focused on the language learner, in the study of *cultures of learning* of sixth graders in an interdisciplinary classroom.

In this first decade, half of the studies focused on the teacher (3), two on the learner (2) and one on both teacher and students. Also, in this decade, the terms *beliefs* and *cultures of...* were more recurrent, but not yet more conventionally used, and hence different terms were employed, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. First public school studies in the 1990's

Study	Terminology	Focus
Cunha (1998)	<i>Students' beliefs</i>	Student
Félix (1998)	<i>Teachers' s beliefs</i>	Teacher
Reynaldi (1998)	<i>The Culture of teaching</i>	Teacher
Rolim (1998)	<i>Teachers' culture of evaluation</i>	Teacher
Saquetti (1998)	<i>Beliefs</i>	Both ²¹
Garcia (1999)	<i>Cultures of learning</i>	Students

²⁰ In Brazil, *Curso de Letras* is the course they take in order to become language teachers. Its curriculum may comprise a major in their mother tongue (Portuguese) and also a foreign language. Also, they study the respective literatures of these languages and Linguistics.

²¹ The author also included the school principal in the research.

The next decade presented a significant increase in the number of studies, which represented the expansion period (Barcelos, 2007a). Moreover, studies after 2000 converged more frequently to the use of the term beliefs, but still other terminologies were used (see Bandeira, 2003; Silva, N. 2003). In Lima (2011), I presented a review of the studies carried out in public schools, between 2000-2009. Studies were reviewed and categorized according to the focus on the participants: a) the teacher, b) both the teacher and the students, or c) the students. Table 3 is a summary of the studies.

Table 3. Studies about public schools in Brazilian Applied Linguistics²²

<i>Studies</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Methodology</i>
Pirovano (2001)	Teacher	Beliefs about the “class” event	3 teachers	Video stimulated recall, classroom video recordings, interviews
Custodio (2001)	Teacher and students	Beliefs about language learning	4 teachers and 99 students	Likert-scale questionnaire for students’ beliefs (CREAL) and for the teacher’s beliefs (CREPROF), personal profile questionnaire (teacher) and COLT scheme ²³ for classroom video analysis.
Andrade (2004)	Teacher and students	Beliefs about language learning in regular schools	434 students and 10 teachers	Semi-structured questionnaire, semi-structured interview (audio)
Silva (2004)	Teacher	Beliefs about error correction	2 teachers	Questionnaires, interviews, stimulated recall, classroom video recordings.
Araújo	Teacher	Beliefs about the	3 teachers	Open-ended questionnaire,

²² Reproduced from Lima (2011). For this literature review I considered the studies that mentioned the terms “public school/system” and “beliefs” in their titles. Other studies using terms such as representations, images were not considered. Other studies about beliefs in the public school context may not be referred in this review, but are mentioned elsewhere.

²³ *Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching* (COLT) was an alternative to assess how the communicative teaching was understood and its configuration in the classroom, that is, its effects and outcomes for learning.

(2004)		role of the good learner		interviews, teachers' journals
Lima (2005)	Teacher and students	Beliefs and its influences in learning and teaching English in a public school	A fifth grade classroom, 33 pupils, the teacher and 10 parents	Teacher: 3 semi-structured interviews, beliefs inventory, autobiography and classroom observation. Parents: semi-structured interview. Students: interview, beliefs inventory and drawings
Miranda (2005)	Teacher and students	Beliefs in the discourse of teachers and students in Public Schools	5 teachers and 10 eight grade students (two students from each teacher's classrooms)	Likert-scale questionnaire and semi-structured interview (both)
Coelho (2005)	Teacher and students	Teachers' and students' beliefs about language teaching in a Public School	4 English classrooms and their respective teachers.	Teachers' narratives, questionnaires and interviews
Piteli (2006)	Students	The relationship between beliefs and learning strategies (reading)	40 high-school students	Classroom recordings (audio), semi-structured questionnaires, verbal protocol sessions and logs
Luvizari (2007)	Professor	Beliefs in the reflexive education of a public school teacher	1 teacher enrolled in a continuing education program	Interviews, researcher's diary, classroom recordings (audio and video) and video stimulated recall
Maitino (2007)	Teacher and students	A teacher's and her students' beliefs about language learning	1 teacher and 30 students	Questionnaires, autobiographies, interviews, stimulated recall
Sturm (2007)	Teacher	The relationship between teachers' beliefs and actions in their classroom practices	2 teachers in a continuing education program	Autobiographies, portfólio, teachers' diaries, interviews, stimulated recall
Lyons (2009)	Teacher and students	Beliefs about language learning and their relation to the public school context	1 teacher, 1 principal, 8 students e 2 school counselors	Diaries, interviews, a conversation recorded in audio, two questionnaires for the students and a testimonial recorded in video (teacher)

Studies that focused on teachers' beliefs (Araújo, 2004; Luvizari, 2007; Pirovano, 2001; Silva, 2004; Sturm, 2007) comprised specific beliefs. Pirovano

(2001) observed beliefs regarding the class event. Silva (2004) focused on error correction and Araújo (2004) on the role of the good learner. Luvizari (2007) observed the impact of a continuing education program in the teachers' beliefs and actions. Sturm (2007) also conducted a study with public school teachers involved in a continuing education program but with the purpose of understanding teachers' beliefs about context, students and their teaching methodologies.

All of these studies contributed by providing evidence of contextual factors that limited the teachers' practices. In Pirovano (2001), for instance, besides the different views about a language class, teachers endorsed beliefs regarding their identification with the profession, that is, their motivation about being a teacher (as one of the teachers demonstrated to be), necessary for coping with contextual factors (i.e., excessive number of students in a classroom).

Luvizari (2007) pointed out divergences among students' expectations and the teacher's beliefs (i.e., contents, types of activities and teacher/student relationship in the classroom) and also, the quality of teaching that is possible to offer, which is frequently not much. Sturm (2007) presented a specific section in her analysis based on the teacher's beliefs about her teaching context. The teacher in this study reported the difficulty to control larger groups (which is why teachers in general often do not propose group activities) and the necessity of having a textbook which turns out to be the main input for the classroom.

In a discussion about teacher cognition and classroom practice, Borg (2003:91) concluded that "classroom practices are shaped by a wide range of interacting and often conflicting factors". Luvizari (2007) showed an example of conflicting factors, when the teacher's beliefs did not relate to what her students wanted to do in the English class. Just like Johnson (1999:37) claimed, "A classroom will always be a classroom", therefore, conflicts may be part of it. This author also suggests that relying on the teachers' experiences (when they were learners) is way to understand students' point of view and try to resolve conflict.

Other studies (Andrade, 2004, Coelho, 2005; Custódio, 2001, Lima,S. 2005; Lyons, 2009; Miranda, 2005) tried to understand the relationship of beliefs from both perspectives: the teacher and the learners. Custódio (2001) portrayed an example of the impact of teachers' beliefs on their students. Through qualitative and quantitative data, she observed that even by stating that grammar would not need to be the core of their teaching, the teachers' actions not necessarily

confirmed their discourse. And for the students, she observed that grammar is the most important aspect to learn a language.

Andrade's (2004) study presented different results. The students in her research demonstrated to dislike activities based on grammar topics and translation, because they did not seem to be interested in it. However, they do seem positive about the possibility to learn English in the public context, especially if they have a competent²⁴ teacher. Teachers, conversely, reported that contextual factors play an important role in their practice, and that changes were necessary (fewer students in the classroom, more motivated students, among others).

Lima, S. (2005) is another research study that highlighted the mismatch of expectations between the teacher and her fifth graders. In a study that combined the concept of beliefs and motivation, she concluded that the mismatch influenced the loss of motivation for both sides.

Miranda's study (2005) investigated a specific belief regarding the public school context. The teachers involved in her study believed that learning EFL is difficult and even if this was part of the school curriculum, they were not sure that the school offered the best conditions for that to occur.

Coelho (2005) also investigated students' and teachers' beliefs about the (im)possibility of learning EFL according to the students learning English is conceivable, but preferably, they would have to start it as soon as possible. However, the teachers in her study explained that they believe students would not follow more difficult contents, which is why they stick to the basic ones. Also, they seemed to rely on the role of affective variables for learning (mentioning and explaining beliefs related to anxiety and motivation, for instance). Two years later, Maitino's study (2007) also showed a divergence between students' expectations toward the subject and the teacher's actions.

Maitino (2007) concluded that continuing education programs are important environments for teachers to reflect on their actions and beliefs. Lyons (2009) investigated the role of the context and the beliefs in a public school. Her results have shown teachers' (dis)beliefs about English teaching as well as

²⁴ Competence here is strictly referring to the idea of a language teacher with good qualifications, a good proficiency level of the target language, etc.

teachers' helplessness, i.e., they do not receive the support they need (from other teachers, the school staff, the government, etc).

I found one study that focused only on the learners (Piteli, 2006), similarly to studies in the first decade, as I mentioned earlier (see Cunha, 1998; Garcia, 1999). Piteli (2006) is an example of an intervention carried out with high-school freshmen. The author investigated students' beliefs about reading and their strategies about it. She concluded that this intervention helped learners to be more aware of the strategies they would use to read texts, which required them to participate more actively in class. As a result, some of them became more independent and developed more metacognitive awareness (Piteli, 2006:170) towards the reading process.

Most of these studies have mapped students' and teachers' beliefs in different regions but have demonstrated similarities regarding the impact of contextual factors in their beliefs and outcomes (this topic will be addressed next section). They all relate to the methodological characteristics of the contextual approach to study beliefs (see Barcelos, 2001, 2003), that is, researchers went to the actual context, they observed classes (and in several cases recorded in video or audio), they talked to the participants, some of them were involved in continuing education programs (Luvizari, 2007; Sturm, 2007), or proposed an intervention (Piteli, 2006). Although, they used questionnaires, these are no longer the only source for inferring beliefs²⁵.

With a considerable amount of studies in the last decade, contemporary studies that want to understand beliefs in the public school context need to step forward (Lima, 2011a). Especially in a time when discussions about public school inequality, the possibility for learning (Barcelos, 2011) and lack of governmental investment (Algebaile, 2009), the research agendas need to consider mapping as a starting point. Piteli's study (2006) differs from the other researches for the fact that she carried out an intervention. Inferring their beliefs was the first step, and then she proposed an intervention that combined the use of reading strategies. The debate about learners' belief change, which was timid during the nineties, has also increased in Applied Linguistics and studies seem to have embodied this perspective.

²⁵ For criticisms regarding the use of closed questionnaires see Barcelos (2003a)

I argue that studies about beliefs in public schools need to establish a new research agenda, instead of strengthening results (which are already consistent) that teaching EFL in public schools is a harsh, challenging experience, based on the review presented earlier. Several studies have pointed out that students are, in fact, positive about the possibility of learning EFL (Andrade, 2004, Coelho, 2005) while teachers see this possibility as limited (Coelho, 2005) or even impossible. Further studies need to propose alternatives to meet the participants' needs in both ways, which leads to the investigation of belief change. Intervention studies seem to be one of these alternatives, which will be considered here as an attempt to promote belief change. However, before talking about belief change, it is relevant to address the issue of contextual factors first, since they are key aspects to understand belief change.

2.2.4 Contextual factors at stake

Contextual factors are evident in all of these research studies reported in the previous section. Several aspects may be understood as contextual factors. Borg (2003:94), for example, suggests: "parents, principals' requirements, the school, society, curriculum mandates, classroom and school layout, school policies, colleagues, standardized tests and the availability of resources". Fullan (2007) considers internal and external factors to the classroom, which may affect teachers' practices. For example, classroom management (see Lewis, 2002; Partis, 2009) and indiscipline problems with students are considered internal, while raising money for events, "making announcements, and dealing with the principal, parents, and central office staff" (Fullan, 2007: 24) are seen as external. If we want to understand how beliefs are situated, it is important to pay attention to contextual factors.

School teachers struggle with these issues on a regular basis and it seems to affect their desire or attempt to change. Vieira-Abrahão (2002) reported a study with public school teachers involved with a continuing education program. She analyzed the impact of contextual factors in the practice of an in-service teacher and pointed out that the attempt to renew the practice is "complex" (Vieira-Abrahão, 2002:74). The complexity was understood by the existence of conflicts between the teacher's approach (traditional – that came from her education

course) and the new approach that was suggested to her in the continuing education program (communicative approach). Also, the author implied that contextual factors (namely students' beliefs and expectations, teacher's expectations towards her students, among others) also seemed to influence her practice.

Factors related mainly to the students, such as classroom indiscipline (Soares, 2007; Ur, 1999) and large groups have demonstrated strong impact upon teachers' motivation to teach (Richards & Pennington 1998). According to Johnson (1999), when teachers start teaching they generally have *idealized views* of a classroom. Yet, their enthusiasm is affected by the reality of their contexts, especially the more challenging ones.

However, teacher education research studies (Luvizari, 2007; Sturm, 2007; Vieira-Abrahão, 2002) have shown that in continuing education programs, teachers have found the time and space to reflect about the role of contextual factors in language teaching and also sought for assistance. Therefore, in face of this problematic scenario, there have been several studies on teacher change, focusing on their beliefs and actions. Nevertheless, we cannot say the same for students' belief change. But I do believe that studying learners' belief change may contribute for a better understanding of the learning and teaching process in public schools.

In the next subsection, I discuss about belief change bringing perspectives from applied linguistics and other fields.

2.2.5 Belief Change

Changing is part of everyone's life. Some people may prefer to stay in their comfort zones, while others are always positive when it comes to try something new and unknown. Despite the fact that *change* may make some people apprehensive, if they think about the meaning and implications of this word, people are more constantly involved with change than they might think. At the same time, they may not give enough credit to what that process means. In fact, as Fullan (2007:21) explains "the crux of change is how individuals come to grips with this reality."

In this section, belief change is first discussed based on studies from Applied Linguistics and Education and then contributions from other fields such as Educational Psychology and Mathematics.

2.2.5.1 Perspectives in Applied Linguistics and Education

For a long time, authors have mentioned the complexity of belief change (cf. Borg, 2003; Johnson, 1999; Mercer, 2011; Pajares, 1992, 2006) even though this topic was not the focus of these papers I mentioned. As discussed earlier, beliefs are formed through experiences (Barcelos, 2006; Pajares, 1992), are subjective but socially constructed as well. These characteristics hint at the complexity of changing beliefs.

Johnson (1999) described teachers' beliefs as *the rock we stand on*. Thus, beliefs are seen as the foundation, the parameter people run to, when they make a decision or judgment, for example. Which is possibly why, I would add, that changing these beliefs that serve as parameter for choice and judgment represents, can be a drastic shift, once teachers have strengthened their beliefs through years of experience. Thus, according to Johnson (1999), teachers' beliefs are "quite stable and rather resistant to change" (p.30). Richards' (1998) definition of *belief systems* also provides a view on different aspects that compose peoples' beliefs, and this specificity is another reasonable explanation for the complexity of change.

Pajares (1992), based on Rokeach's (1968) belief system, argued that the more central a belief is, the more resistant it is to change, whereas a more peripheral one may be susceptible to transformation. Nonetheless, quoting Nisbett and Ross (1980), he pointed out that changing beliefs is not impossible "but that they generally do not change even when it is logical or necessary for them to do so" (Pajares, 1992:317). Later, in another paper, when discussing self-efficacy and self beliefs of adolescents, he highlighted how during this period adolescents may form beliefs that are harmful or "frustratingly difficult to break" but emphasizes that adults (teachers and parents) "must work to prevent them from forming in [these frustrating beliefs] the first place and to challenge them when they do"

(Pajares, 2006:354). Despite this difficulty, there is a chance for studying and trying to evoke belief change.

Woods (2003) contends that in order to provoke change in students' beliefs, it is probably best to start with the teacher planning what actions will guide this attempt to change. According to this author (2003), it is important that students feel ready, that is, they have to be aware or willing to change their beliefs. Notwithstanding, students may not be aware that a change is necessary, or may not be willing to do so, in cases, for example, that beliefs prevent the possibility to learn.

Tanaka and Ellis (2003) and Tanaka (2004) are examples of research centered on learners' belief change. Tanaka and Ellis (2003) focused on 166 Japanese learners' belief change over a 15-week study-abroad program. They considered the relationship between the undergraduates' beliefs and L2 proficiency using questionnaires (beliefs) and the TOEFL test (proficiency).

With regard to proficiency, it was observed a significant change from the beginning of the study-abroad program (as they took the TOEFL). Also, it was statistically significant that self-efficacy beliefs and confidence were benefited the most as a result of taking part in the program. Nevertheless, the relationship between belief change and proficiency (loss or gain) was not statistically relevant, which led to their final suggestions that qualitative methods, such as a study case, would be a more a more appropriate alternative to study the relationship "between beliefs, behaviours and learning outcomes (...)" (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003:82).

Barcelos (2007b) also addresses the issue of belief change by reminding that the topic is directly related to the educational context, once "educating is provoking changes or creating conditions for them to happen, always starting from a place that, in this case, are our beliefs about the world that surround us" (Barcelos, 2007b:110). Sometimes, schools do not offer the best conditions for teachers to try something new. Time may not be enough, students may be resistant and support may not come from other teachers and the school staff. But still, doing something different is way to change and show other people that changing is for the better.

Yang and Kim (2011:326) argue that changes in beliefs are learners' "agentive efforts to reconstruct the relationship between the learner and the L2 learning environment". From a sociocultural perspective, the authors understand

some beliefs as remedial tools, that is, a change in the mediation between learner and environment. As they explain, some beliefs may change according to the purposes established in the learning context and it also shows the learner's attempts to accomplish or abandon their purposes.

In Brazil, the most recent studies have focused mainly on the language teachers (Freitas, Belicanta & Corrêa, 2002; Pessoa, 2006; Pessoa & Sebba, 2006; Barcelos & Coelho, 2010). In Barcelos and Coelho (2010), there are several examples of public school who wrote about their experiences of joining a continuing education program for English language teachers (PECPLI)²⁶. The teachers reflected about their beliefs when they first started attending the meetings and how they have even overcome negative feelings of frustration and chaos, resultant of burnout and stress. Also, they strengthened beliefs of the possibility of teaching a foreign language in the public school context. But still, studies reporting students' belief change are scarce.

From the different perspectives that I reported here, it is possible to understand that the process of change is still seen as complex and hard, just as authors have claimed (Borg, 2003, Johnson, 1999; Pajares, 1992; Barcelos, 2007b). Yet, they are no longer seen as fixed and immutable, as suggested in the beginning of the research in the eighties (for criticisms, see Barcelos, 2000).

Having discussed perspectives on belief change within the field of Applied Linguistics, in the next section, I look at how change is viewed in different areas such as Mathematics and Psychology.

2.2.5.2 Perspectives from different fields

In Applied Linguistics, the topic of students' belief change is still emerging, despite the fact that, as I have mentioned before, studies generally fall on this topic, mainly when discussing the nature and constitution of beliefs (see Pajares, 1992; Johnson, 1999). Studies focusing on different types of beliefs in different fields are also available in Educational Psychology (Conley et al, 2004; Pintrich, Marx & Boyle, 1993; Tobin et al, 1994), Mathematics (Taylor, 2009; Wilkins & Ma, 2003).

²⁶ For more information about the Project, visit their website: <http://pecpli.webnode.com.br/>

In Mathematics, studies about belief change are more frequent with teachers (Chapman, 2002; Hart, 2002; Lerman, 2002; Llinares, 2002; Loyd, 2002; Philippou; Christous, 2002), but there are some examples focusing on students (Wilkins & Ma, 2003; Taylor, 2009).

Wilkins and Ma (2003) proposed a model change in students' beliefs and attitudes toward mathematics. The beliefs were related to the social importance of mathematics and notions on the nature of the discipline through the application of three likert-type scales: 1) attitudes towards Mathematics (seven-item scale), 2) social importance of mathematics (four-item scale) and 3) nature of mathematics (three-item scale). Regarding sections 1 and 2, the authors concluded that beliefs and attitudes are *stable* and described the process of change as *gradual*. A salient change is the fact that students' attitudes and beliefs in secondary school seemed to be "increasingly less positive" (Wilkins & Ma, 2003:59). Yet, beliefs about the nature of mathematics did not seem to change in this period. And despite the argument that changing beliefs is a slow process, the authors reinforce the impact of the teacher and choice of his/her activities to use in the classroom by reminding that teachers have a "prime position" (ibid: 62) to stimulate and support change in their students.

Taylor (2009) reported the results of a 5-week summer program with the purpose to change beliefs about Mathematics related to students' achievements and efforts. Through the use of quantitative analysis and belief scales, she concluded that the main aspect related to pupils' belief change was the implementation of *learner-focused curriculum*²⁷ which allowed even in a short period of time, belief change and an increase in low-performing students' performance in Math classes. Taylor (2009) also pointed out the correlation between beliefs and achievement, highlighting that "a high level of achievement is associated with a high change in belief" (Taylor, 2009: 111). However, another aspect she investigated, beliefs about the nature of intelligence, remained unchangeable.

²⁷ "The "learning-focused" curriculum used in the experimental class was designed to necessitate collaborative problem-solving and emphasized both the debriefing of final answers and the sharing and discussing of mistakes and roadblocks" (Taylor, 2009:107).

From the field of Educational Psychology, Conley et al (2004) studied changes in epistemological beliefs²⁸ of science students. With a group of 187 fifth grade students (57% female), they examined the process of change through an initial and final self-report questionnaires throughout a nine week science unit. The beliefs were investigated under four aspects, namely: source, certainty, development and justification. These factors entailed students' perspectives on the nature of science and knowledge and its development/evolution over time.

The authors observed that changes were, actually, not prominent by the end of the nine week unit; however, they explained that besides this fact, "students became more sophisticated in their beliefs about the source of knowledge and the certainty of knowledge over the course of instruction" (Conley et al, 2004:198). The aspects of improvement and justification of beliefs, conversely, did not show much difference. It is suggested that major changes did not occur in these elements because the designed materials for the science classes did not emphasize "argumentation and reflection" (ibid: 200), in fact, the emphasis was for exploration of the contents.

A similar perspective shared in different fields is the role of the teacher in the selection of materials that he or she will bring to the classroom in relation to students' reactions to it, and consequently the learning experiences they will have there. It is the *prime position* that teachers have, quoting Wilkins and Ma (2003:62). And for language teaching, the use of authentic materials has been a valuable source to motivate students in different ways (Melvin & Stout, 1987).

Another aspect is that, even if the outcome does not show several changes (Wilkins & Ma, 2003) or whether it is not "large" (Conley et al, 2004), "statistically relevant" (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003), they all have shown that clues for change have appeared and even in short periods of time (Taylor, 2009) students have responded to new materials that have been brought to their classes.

In this section, I have outlined the main aspects of belief research such as its definition, the results of studies carried out in public school contexts, the role of contextual factors and belief change. In the next section, I discuss about adolescence, since this is a study with adolescents.

²⁸ These beliefs are related to the nature of knowledge and knowing. The term epistemology in philosophy relates to the "nature and justification of human knowledge" (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997:88)

2.3 ADOLESCENCE

In this section I discuss about adolescence addressing the following aspects: a) definition and characteristics of adolescence, b) the role of changes in this period, c) perspectives from Applied Linguistics about the adolescent learning languages and d) the adolescence in the classroom setting and e) vygotskian considerations about the transitional age.

2.3.1 Defining Adolescence

According to the Aurélio Dictionary of Portuguese language, adolescence is the period of life between childhood and adulthood. Adolescence is a Latin word formed by the prefix *ad* (meaning “to”) and *alescere*, meaning increasing, growing up, being nourished. The etymology of this word suggests a continuation, that is, adolescents are growing up, are being nourished to a life of being part of an adult society. Such definition is coherent with perspectives in research from different fields (Arnett, 1999, 2001, 2006; Arnett & Taber, 1994; Bandura, 2006; Buchanan et al, 1990, Eccles et al, 1993; Jersild, 1965; Pajares, 2006; Schunk & Meece, 2006; Macowski, 1993, Schmuck, 1965; Steinberg, 2005; Tiba, 1985, Ward, 2005; Zarret & Eccles, 2006; Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006).

The literature in Psychology about adolescence has expanded considerably since the two volume pioneer studies²⁹ of G. Stanley Hall (1904). After them, some characteristics of adolescence were corroborated while others in this initial work were criticized for a prescriptive, universal (Arnett, 1999, 2006; Eccles et al, 1996; Jersild, 1965) and also stereotypical manner to define this moment that human beings go through. Nowadays, scholars have showed a more circumspect way to understand adolescence not only as a period of *storm and stress*³⁰, since

²⁹ As Arnett (2006) contended, the works of G. Stanley Hall about adolescence were important for the growth of the field as a research area in psychology, embedded in a scientific approach. Besides a tendency to see adolescence as *storm and stress* he also contributed to the study of some individual differences (i.e., conflicts with parents).

³⁰ The origin of this expression, according to Arnett (1999:317) comes from German literature. A popular genre in literature named *sturm and drang* – translated as storm and stress – emerged. A century later, Hall (1904) used this reference from a literature genre known for young characters with strong feelings such as “anguish and angst” (Arnett, 1999:317) to define adolescence as a stormy phase.

adolescents tend to experience this phase in different ways. They have discarded the notion that defiance or rebellion is purely a biological feature, but agree that, in this period, adolescents are more likely to demonstrate these kinds of behavior according to how they experience their own changes.

This transitional characteristic makes adolescence a preparation for adult life, that is, it entails the distance from childhood dependency to adult independency (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006). For some authors, it is considered one of the major transformations in peoples' lives along with birth, because of the suddenness of these changes (Tiba, 1985). Also, it is the age when both parents and teachers have more expectancy towards the adolescents' capacities and abilities to take responsibilities (Bandura, 2005; Buchanan et al, 1990).

2.3.2 A time for change

The idea of change is a constant variable in adolescence. Different fields have pointed out the innumerable changes and adolescent undergo during puberty. In a biological perspective, there are physical and emotional changes with sexual maturation (Jersild, 1969; Tiba, 1985), a variation in hormones (Buchanan, Eccles & Becker, 1992; Buchanan & Eccles, 2002; Zarret & Eccles, 2006), a cognitive development of the brain (Begley, 2000; Paus, 2005; Steinberg, 2005; Zarret & Eccles, 2006), among others.

Within a cognitive oriented perspective, Steinberg (2005) emphasizes the notion of critical or sensitive period. In cognitive psychology, researchers (Paus, 2005; Steinberg, 2005) have argued that during adolescence the brain still continues the process of maturation. As a result of development, the adolescent presents improvements in cognitive functions such as deductive reasoning and information processing. The maturation of the brain helps the increase of different capacities for the adolescents, "including long-term planning, metacognition, self-evaluation, self-regulation and the coordination of affect and cognition" (Steinberg, 2005:70).

According to Steinberg (2005), a recent trend in cognitive research has considered the role of the social context in adolescence and its influence on cognitive functions such as the act of judging, making decisions or taking risks. When addressing this issue, the author contends that:

“New perspectives on adolescent cognition-in-context emphasize that adolescent thinking in the real world is a function of social and emotional, as well as cognitive, processes, and that a full account of the ways in which the intellectual changes of adolescence affect social and emotional development must examine the ways in which affect and cognition interact” (Steinberg, 2005:71).

Following this trend, researchers seem to consider cognition no longer isolated from context but related to sociocultural aspects such as affect, which should be considered in interplay with cognition. Therefore, the adolescent thinking process is understood under the light of social and emotional processes as well. In 1930's, Vygotsky (1994a), for example, already defended this perspective in his sociocultural studies when he referred to the debate among psychologists whether or not the adolescent brain presented new features.

Within a cultural and social perspective, adolescence presents a new phase in the story of human development, such as the unfolding of creativity, imagination and abstract thinking (Vygotsky, 1994a, 1994b; 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 1998d). And even their sociocultural environment for formal learning (schooling) presents new challenges for which they had not been prepared for.

Bandura (2006) claims that adolescence represents a transition in the educational and social roles. His argument is corroborated with studies in Psychology, for example, (Eccles et al, 1993) that have highlighted the impact of students' transition to high school in their attainments, motivation and learning. At the same time they have to manage all the novelty in their lives, try to fit in the adult society and start thinking about the next move: a future career.

Zimmerman and Cleary (2006) also attributes another change that creates a specific impact on adolescents' lives. It is the change of expectations that come mainly from parents and teachers (see Buchanan et al, 1990; Eccles et al, 1993). Once the pubescent is no longer seen as a child, the level of demands extends, and therefore it is expected that they excel in the things they do, mainly in his/her academic accomplishments.

Family relationships and peer affiliations comprise another change mentioned by Schunk and Meece (2006). The influence of peers during this period is extremely important, even for the later relationships they will have in life (Bandura, 2006). Socialization occurs with adolescents in small groups, with

people they can trust and relate to, by communicating with specific codes (Jersild, 1969). And considering the possibility of conflicts between parents and adolescents in early adolescence, another change is that “peers assume much of the socialization function formerly carried out by parents and caregivers” (Schunk & Meece, 2006:75).

According to these authors, these changes play a decisive role on students’ motivation and learning, depending on how well they feel welcomed and accepted by groups or how they relate to people in general. Moreover, identity formation is also influenced by their social interactions in different settings, in a time that when looking for a direction, adolescents tend to have and desire “cultural expectations and standards for behavior” (Schunk & Meece, 2006:78).

2.3.3 Adolescence and language learning

In Brazil, the studies in Applied Linguistics concerning the different ages for learning language are still scanty. Classroom research with language students has presented important contributions that when analyzed under the light of studies about language learning in different ages, show that such characteristics, tendencies, styles and even constraints are related to their age.

The studies I reviewed in the previous section about language learners’ beliefs in the public school context (Coelho, 2005; Lima, 2005; Pitelli, 2006), for example, reported the scarce conditions for learning in different contexts and how these contextual factors affect both teachers’ practices (Fullan, 2007; Vieira-Abrahão, 2002, 2010) and learners’ motivation. Eccles et al (1993) considered how during adolescence it is common that motivation decreases from secondary school to the transition to high school.

Despite the different biological and emotional changes entailed in adolescence (Arnett, 1999, 2006; Arnett & Taber, 1993; Buchanan et al, 1990; Jersild, 1969; Paus, 2005; Steinberg, 2005; Tiba, 1985; Zarrett & Eccles, 2006), students need to find a way to manage social changes that occur as well (Bandura, 2006; Schunk & Meece, 2006), such as their roles as learners, teachers’ and parents’ expectations towards their academic success and performance, peer affiliations, among others.

Macowski (1993), in a study with adolescents learning English in private and public school contexts, observed the construction of this process in teacher and student interaction and in students' participation and involvement with the classes. Based on assumptions derived from the communicative language teaching (Almeida Filho, 1993) and Cultural-Historical Psychology (Vygotsky, 1989a, 1989b), the author verified the existence of incongruent interactions in the language classroom established by *affective strategies* (Macowski, 1993:108). This notion implies that students seek for protection and isolation from classroom exposure, and the reactions about the language class varied from apathy, indifference and even irony. And it is in this confrontation with the teacher that conflicts emerge. Conflicts which may even take up most of the class, that most of the times are already insufficient for learning.

Zolnier (2007) carried out an ethnographic based study to investigate learners' beliefs and expectations with adolescents in fourth, fifth and eighth grade. She also considered one teacher's beliefs. Based on assumptions from the theoretical approach to beliefs about language learning (Barcelos, 2004) and its relationship with motivation (Lima, S. 2005), the author noticed a similarity of beliefs between fifth graders and their teacher which led to contentment with the language class. With the eighth graders, Zolnier (2007) confirmed previous studies in Psychology that pointed out learners' motivation decline as their transition to high-school starts (Arnett, 1999; Eccles et al, 1993). This problem is intensified especially when students' and teachers' beliefs do not match.

Zolnier (2007) suggested four aspects that are responsible for the harmony in the language classroom: students' beliefs, expectations and motivation and classroom discipline. She concluded that these aspects could lead to a satisfactory learning experience while the contrary creates motivation decline and intensification of indiscipline. In the theoretical framework of her study, Zolnier (2007) relied on studies about adolescence to understand the specific kinds of changes that occur in this phase and also the reasons why indiscipline is a common problem for teachers in their classrooms, regardless of the contexts.

Rocha and Basso (2008) edited a series of studies that focused on language learning in different moments of life (childhood, adolescence, adulthood and third age). By comparing the amount of studies presented, adolescence is the one with fewer articles, represented only by Basso (2008) and Hagemeyer (2008).

Hagemeyer (2005, 2008) also considered the role of adolescence in a study that aimed at understanding the role of motivation in language classes with reading activities. The author concluded that reading is a multifaceted process in which students are influenced at the same time by internal (inherent to adolescence) and external issues (the teacher's role and the activities).

Basso (2008) revisited some aspects regarding this period of foreign language teaching and learning, such as cognitive and affective oriented factors that are evident in the type of interactions that students have with their English teachers and with their colleagues as well. She reported the importance of group affiliation for the adolescent, corroborating other studies in Psychology (Arnett, 1999; Jersild, 1969; Schmuck, 1965; Tiba, 1985).

Another emergent topic in Basso's (2008) study is indiscipline, a common complaint from regular school teachers when they have to work with adolescent language learners. She suggested that teaching adolescent students may not be easy, but teachers need to be persistent and make every possible effort to understand their students, get to know why they act the way they do. This suggestion to my view is a first step towards the understanding of conflicts that may occur in educational settings. Instead of responding to a disruptive or violent behavior with confrontation, dialogue has been suggested as a strong strategy to avoid more conflict.

Lima and Basso (2009) and Basso and Lima (2010) presented an analysis of student and teacher interaction in the foreign language class, carried out in a language school and a public school respectively. In the first study, they analyzed group interaction, in a classroom made up with eight adolescent language learners. In sociocultural theory, peer collaboration has been a prominent topic for research mainly in pairs (Guk & Kellog, 2007), followed by a tradition that came from initial studies with collaboration between adults and infants. The participants in Lima and Basso (2009) revealed to have benefited from peer collaboration in two instances: a) pronunciation checking and b) new vocabulary. As beginner students (first semester), they felt comfortable to be assisted by other friends, but mainly the ones they trusted and not by a random choice.

In Basso and Lima (2010), in a public school classroom with 27 students they analyzed video recordings of an oral activity based on personal information (name, age, address, nationality, hobbies, etc). The authors observed some factors

that hindered the possibility of an *effective scaffolding*³¹ (Donato, 1994; Ferreira, 2008), such as the lack of interest of students who ended up not finishing the task, compromising a possible interaction in the target language. The teacher is considered the more capable peer for students, and once they prefer to see themselves as equals (even if they feel/know that they are not), they tend to ask for assistance only with the peers they are familiar with³².

Also, with these adolescents, they noticed that the task was concluded mainly because the teacher was monitoring them, that is, constantly visiting the pairs and interacting with them as way to incite them not to give up. Nonetheless, they concluded that a major challenge is the recruitment³³ of the students, because once they demonstrated to be interested in the topic of the activity, they made an effort to participate.

Based on the studies I mentioned here, the implications that arise from different contexts is that affective and cognitive factors tend to be part of students' attitudes about their own learning and the activities provided in the language class. Other factors such as beliefs (Lima, F., 2011b, Zolnier, 2007) motivation (Hagemeyer, 2005, 2008), lack of interest and indiscipline (Basso & Lima, 2010; Zolnier, 2007) are suggested as problems that teachers have to manage on a regular basis. The sociocultural context is extremely important for the interpersonal relationships of the adolescents. They tend to choose to work with the ones they like, based on affective reasons of peer affiliation. And from this perspective, the following section is dedicated to the role of the classroom context for their learning.

2.4 The classroom context and learning

Besides the characterization of different types of change about adolescence, researchers have also tried to understand the impact of these changes

³¹ A more detailed explanation of scaffolding was given in the first section of this chapter (sociocultural theory, section 2.1.2.3).

³² The adolescents in this study formed pairs and groups of three based with people they wanted to work with. As explained in Basso and Lima (2010), this was a strategy to involve them with the task, because they had demonstrated unwillingness to participate in the class.

³³ Recruitment has been used in sociocultural studies referring to the act of getting students to be interested and participate of a specific activity, that is generally a lit bit ahead of its actual competence, in consonance with ZDP concept.

in other environments other than the family and circle of friends. School is considered the environment where students spend half or even most part of their day: school. Academic achievement is a major concern and at the same time a big expectation held by parents and teachers. They expect teenagers to be more independent than children, more autonomous and with more initiative to make use of the competences that are more accurate in this phase, such as reasoning (Paus, 2005, Steinberg, 2005) pointed out in cognitive sciences but also creativity, imagination and concept formation (Vygotsky, 1994a, 1994b).

In the academic context of learning, Pajares (2006) contends that the beliefs that adolescents have about themselves and their capacity to succeed are extremely important for the future experiences that waits for them, whether it will be filled with success or failure. Believing in themselves is sometimes a difficult task for the adolescent, mainly because they may be influenced by common stereotypes attributed to them in their actions and behavior (see Arnett, 1999; Buchanan et al, 1990; Jersild, 1969).

In today's world where adolescents are surrounded by all kinds of information and technology (Bandura, 2006; Ward, 2005; Zarret & Eccles, 2006) that has mediated new forms of interaction, sometimes school subjects and some classes are not part of their main interest. They like to go to school to meet their friends but may not be interested in learning (Basso, 2008; Macowski, 1993). As a way to overcome this problem, Bandura (2006) makes an interesting consideration on what happens when adolescents lose their desire and motivation to learn at school. According to the author:

“Adolescents need to commit themselves to goals that give them purpose and a sense of accomplishment. Without personal commitment to something worth doing, they are unmotivated, bored, or cynical. They become dependent on extrinsic sources of stimulation. A vision of a desired future helps to organize their lives, provides meaning to their activities, motivates them, and enables them to tolerate the hassles of getting there.” (Bandura, 2006:10)

As suggested by Bandura (2006), adolescents need to find relevance and meaning in the things they do at school. When they do not feel those experiences offer them the feeling of being able to learn something that is relevant, they tend to respond negatively (boredom, apathy, etc). The dependence on *extrinsic sources of stimulation* is another sign for preoccupation. Learners start caring only

about activities that they know it will come down to a final score. Tests and assignments become the only option or alternative for teachers to engage students in classroom activity, and these contextual factors accumulate and influence both the teacher practice and students' learning (Fullan, 2007; Vieira-Abrahão, 2002, 2010).

When facing such problems, believing in personal potential and capacity to overcome a tough situation is a necessary key for success, once positive experiences play a decisive role in peoples' lives (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006). Pajares (2006) pointed out the idea of *self-efficacy beliefs* as an important component of students' motivation that will help them not to give up when faced with failure. These specific beliefs are related to achieving goals, not only in school context but in life as a whole (Bandura, 2006).

Making comparisons also seem to impact adolescents' beliefs and actions. In this age of identity formation, they tend to compare themselves with other friends most of the times (Jersild, 1969; Schunk & Meece, 2006; Tiba, 1985). Therefore, they do not feel comfortable when other people do that to them. As a possible consequence, in the classroom, they use the strategy of self-preservation by avoiding situations (Macowski, 1993) in which they are exposed by being compared to others. They tend to cooperate with classroom activities "that they believe will result in favorable outcomes and avoid those with perceived negative consequences." (Schunk & Meece, 2006:73).

Despite the conflict that may arise among their own peers (Schmuck, 1965), one of the most important role of their friends in the classroom is in socialization, which may influence how adolescents view themselves. As Schunk and Meece (2006) suggested, socialization, which used to be a responsibility of their parents, is now assumed by their colleagues.

Classroom indiscipline has been mentioned as a major problem in classrooms with adolescents (Macowski, 1993; Partis, 2009; Soares, 2007; Basso, 2008; Basso & Lima, 2010b; Lima, 2011; Zolnier, 2007). The idea of a disciplined group is relative for some contexts, because most of the times students and teachers do not share the same views on what is considered disruptive talking and what is a mere short conversation (Soares, 2007).

Ur (1999) suggests eight characteristics of what could be considered as a disciplined group: a first sign is the feeling that learning occurs (1), that is, no

limitation is noticed and people cooperate. (2) Silence is another feature of this environment, where the classroom control (3) belongs to the teacher. Cooperation (4) is settled in a place where harmony takes over conflict, and as a result students feel motivated (5). Purposes are fulfilled (6), needs are met and then everyone works for the same purpose (7). And finally, after all these characteristics the teacher is perceived as the one with a *natural charismatic 'authority'* (8)(Ur, 1999:121).

However, this balanced characterization does not seem to be the reality in several language classrooms. Ur (1999) is cautious by suggesting these elements as possible signs of a disciplined classroom. In some studies (Basso, 2008; Basso & Lima, 2010; Macowski, 1993; Soares, 2007; Zolnier, 2007), results have shown that the harmony in this model suggested by Ur (1999) is generally constrained by a mismatch of interest, a response to conflicts between teachers and students (Macowski, 1993), as well as a symptom of unwillingness or disbelief in their own learning.

Other researchers have suggested that for adolescents to become agents of their own learning process, the classroom environment needs to be at the same time “intellectually challenging and supportive” (Schunk & Meece, 2006:82). In a sociocultural perspective, I understand this argument as promoting conditions for learning to go beyond their competences (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), extending their development process, but at the same time providing the necessary assistance that ensure that the activity will not lead to giving up. For that to happen, learners have to be required to participate (Basso & Lima, 2010) and also, activities should be negotiated among participants, problems should be exposed and discussed within constructive dialogues (Soares, 2007).

Working on negotiation and dialogue leads to getting to know our students and what they need and like in a class. Thus, getting students' feedback on the kinds of activities they believe are best to learn or the ones they just like is also an alternative to problems with indiscipline when it is caused, for example, as a result of students' disinterest in the subject. Classroom activities must entail flexibility because several aspects influence the way they are conducted. Crawford (2002) emphasizes at least three of them: time, contents and students' behavior. These contextual factors are important to be considered, because when they turn

out to be more problematic, they may result in beliefs that such activities do not help to learn, but favor indiscipline instead (see Sturm, 2007).

Classroom games are also alternatives for language teachers (Ur & Wright, 1992; Wright, Betteridge & Buckby, 1994; Hadfield, 2002; Hunter et al, 2005). Adolescents usually enjoy games and tend to be motivated by music (see Medina, 2000 and Murphey, 1992 on the motivational aspects of music). Some classrooms tend to appreciate the competition the games can provide, while in others, competition can lead to conflict or even lack of participation, which means, students avoiding exposure. Thus, some adaptations in games or rules always have to be made, but when combined with the regular classroom activities, they can get students to participate more.

A suggestion given by Schunk and Meece (2006) to improve adolescents' achievements is that such settings should focus on goal setting, which hopes for their progression, "improvement and mastery" (Schunk & Meece, 2006:82). In this way, this could favor the development of good habits, based on positive beliefs that influence their actions in the classroom (Pajares, 2006). When they start recognizing the importance of their learning, the potential they have and start cooperating with their teacher and peers, they are favoring their personal and academic success.

2.5 A Vygotskian perspective on adolescence

Vygotsky's writings covered several topics and most of his work is associated with the studies carried out with children. Although child development was a constant theme of his work³⁴, there are also a few studies in which he addressed the issue of adolescence, mainly early adolescence (van der Veer & Valsiner, 1994). Such studies were published in English in a collection of papers edited by René van der Veer and Jan Valsiner in 1994. Two of the fifteen chapters are dedicated to Vygotsky's papers about adolescence. They are: *the development of thinking and concept formation in adolescence* and *Imagination and creativity of the adolescent*.

³⁴ See for instance the popularity of the ZDP concept (Kingtoner, 2002).

In 1998, Robert W. Rieber in the volume 5 of *The Selected Works of L.S. Vygotsky* dedicated to Child Psychology, presented a specific section entitled *pedology of the adolescent*. Such works covered a variety of themes: development of interests (Vygotsky, 1998a), concept formation³⁵ (Vygotsky, 1998b), development of higher mental functions (Vygotsky, 1998c), imagination (Vygotsky, 1998d)³⁶, and personality development (Vygotsky, 1998e).

Consistently referring to adolescence as a *transitional age* (Vygotsky, 1994a, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c) the soviet psychologist claimed that at his time, the study of adolescent thought development in Psychology was also in a transition period. For him, a crucial characteristic of adolescence is that it was conceived as “the age of cultural development and the development of higher psychological functions” (Vygotsky, 1998a:195). In the 1930’s, Vygotsky also devoted some attention to a discussion in psychology regarding the role of brain development in adolescents, whether or not it differed from child’s brain development.

More recently, cognitive psychologists (Paus, 2005; Steinberg, 2005) have agreed that, in adolescence, the maturational process of brains is still occurring. However, according to Steinberg (2005), more studies have yet to be carried out in order to understand the complexity of changes³⁷ that occur in this specific age. But despite these important biologic changes in human cognition, Vygotsky also emphasized the role the sociocultural environment for the adolescent environment, which “include social relationships, cultural development and children’s and adolescents work activities” (Vygotsky, 1998a:195).

As suggested in his other studies (1986, 1989a) children development through the internalization of language and culture represents an important qualitative change that differ humans from other animals. Concept formation also represents an important step for the development of children in the school age, but it is during adolescence that he or she “masters the process of concept formation for the first time and (...) progresses to a new and higher form of intellectual activity, i.e. to thinking in concepts” (Vygotsky, 1998a:198). Therefore, the

³⁵Published earlier in van der Veer & Valsiner (1994).

³⁶Published earlier in van der Veer & Valsiner (1994).

³⁷ Among these different changes in the adolescent brain, Steinberg (2005:69) claims that adolescence “is a period of great activity with respect to changes in brain structure and function, especially in regions and systems associated with response inhibition, the calibration of risk and reward, and emotion regulation.”

formation of concepts has a *central stage*, once it opens space for other changes in thought, both in its form and content.

Another particular aspect of adolescent development discussed by Vygotsky was the role of imagination and creativity. The main novel of this period, according to him, is that imagination (fantasy) becomes part of a more intellectualized activity, closer to thinking in concepts. And a common concern that parents and teachers have with adolescents is the situation when they lose their attention and focus to specific activities, such as class at school. Vygotsky then recalls the daydreams³⁸ that adolescents have in this period, that is, the capacity to use his or her imagination when awake. Thus, the soviet psychologist comes to the conclusion that a major change in adolescent intellectual activity regarding imagination is “the rapprochement between fantasy and thinking, and the imagination beginning to rely on concepts” (Vygotsky, 1994b:275).

Imagination in adolescence is compared to play in childhood in their importance for each age. In fact, he suggests that imagination is the *successor* of play, when the young person leaves behind the objects of his real world (toys) and is capable to rely on his imagination. In the psychologist’s words, “images, eidetic pictures and visual conceptions begin to play the same role in the imagination as a doll representing a child, or a chair representing a steam engine, in a childish play” (Vygotsky, 1994b:275).

Therefore, the sociocultural studies about the *transitional age* were also attentive to the changes that occurred in this period, changes that distinguished them from the other two stages of life (childhood and adulthood). Concept formation is an important activity for the human mind, but the cultural and social dimensions of contexts are also important for the changes that occur in the adolescents as they interact with other people. Imagination and creativity are more developed in adolescence as well, when they realize the capacity to rely more on their abstract thinking (what they can picture) and not only in the objects in the real world (palpable).

These qualitative changes are important to understand the stories of success and failure teenagers have in different contexts, especially in school, where satisfactory academic performance is a challenge for them but also a pre-

³⁸ Daydreaming in adolescence is understood as a “type of dream visionary thinking” (Vygotsky, 1994b:273) with eidetic images - clear representation of a missing object.

requisite for success, in the view of their parents and teachers. As hard as adolescence can be, considering the innumerable changes I mentioned here, it also reveals an age for exploring potentials that benefits from the unfolding capacities in the story of their development. Then, it is better to seize this positive features students present instead of helping them to reinforce stereotypes that they will be problematic or lost cases.

In this chapter, I presented the theoretical framework. I started with considerations about sociocultural theory and how studies in Applied Linguistics have embodied such perspective for classroom research. Then, I talked about beliefs about language learning, focused on Brazilian studies in the public school context and concluded with perspectives on belief change. Finally, I discussed about adolescence as a transitional phase, considered the common changes in this period and its implications for adolescents' learning and involvement in the language classroom. Also, I presented a sociocultural view on adolescence. Next, in chapter 3, the methodology is described as well as the context, subjects and data collection instruments.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I give details on the methodological procedures used in this study on adolescents' beliefs about learning English in a public school context. It is divided in five sections. First, I define the nature of the study. Second, I describe the school context and the participants. Third, I explain how the intervention phase was designed and implemented. Fourth, I present the data collection instruments adopted for this qualitative inquiry. Finally, I explain the procedure for data analysis and conclude with some ethical principles considered in this study.

3.1 Nature of the study

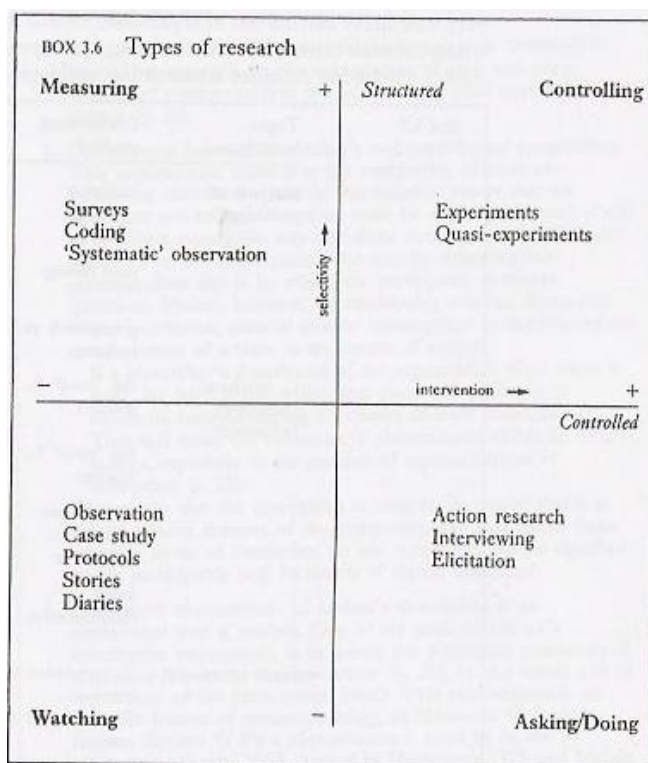
This is a qualitative research with both an ethnographic and interventionist basis. The ethnographic nature turned out to be appropriate for the beginning of this inquiry in order to understand how language learning happened in this particular adolescent classroom and how the participants made sense of it (Erikson, 1984; Moita Lopes, 1996). Thus, for an initial approach with the group, with the aim of observing their context and the “beliefs the participants attach to their activities, events and behaviors” (Dörnyei, 2007:130), some ethnographic instruments were relevant.

The *Aurélio dictionary of Portuguese Language* (2010) presents several definitions for the term *intervene*. It is defined as the process of coming between events or specific points of time, as an interruption, as a way to change or even hinder something. It is also a way to interfere in a process to prevent something that is harmful, for instance.

Intervention studies have been very frequent in Social Sciences, Education (Santiago, 1990) and also in EFL teaching (Moita Lopes, 1991; Piteli, 2006). Freeman (1998) compares intervention with painting a room or putting new wallpaper on it, because it creates some changes, and possibly brings a different result from the original state. In language teaching, changes may be established by

the teacher himself or with the help of a researcher, for example. van Lier (1988:24) outlines a typology that explains different ways to conduct classroom research, with different levels of researcher's intervention in that reality (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. van Lier's typology for classroom research



Source: (Freeman, 1998)

The scheme is made up with two central axis: a) selectivity and b) intervention³⁹. The former corresponds to the relation of the researcher to the context and the participants, while the latter is related to the level of the researcher's interference in the context that is being observed (whether he/ she will only observe or try to modify this reality somehow). The vertical axis of *selectivity* varies from the highest to the lowest, representing the intensity of the relationship with the participants (and data to be collected). In the same way, the horizontal axis (intervention) varies from highest to lowest level of researcher's interference in the context.

³⁹ van Lier (1998) uses the term *organization* instead. This adaptation was made by Freeman (1998)

Both axes create the possibility of balance between the decisions to be made concerning the purposes of the study. Thus, I agree with Freeman (1998), who highlights the validity of this typology to elaborate projects regarding classroom research, because the teacher and/or the researcher may determine in which level between the two axis the study will place itself, according to the needs and the problems observed. Therefore, this research is placed in the highest level of the horizontal axis, once it proposes an intervention period with the group, combined with previous classroom observation and a selection of other qualitative instruments to understand participants' interactions in the classroom (vertical axis) and design the intervention phase, aiming at the possibility of belief change. In the following section, I describe the context of the study.

3.2 Context

The study was conducted in a public school located in the Zona da Mata region, Minas Gerais state, which comprises elementary through high school levels, as well as EJA⁴⁰ classes in the evening. There is an estimate of 1163 enrolled students in the three periods (morning, afternoon and evening).

The school is located in a small city, with around twelve thousand inhabitants. Approximately sixty percent of these people live in the countryside. Rural activities, such as agriculture and cattle breeding, are responsible for most of the families' income, just like the participants' families.

3.3 Participants

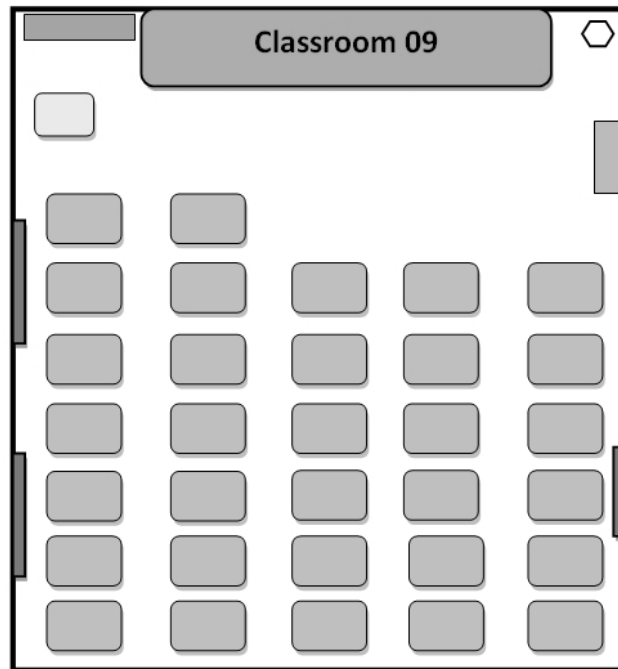
3.3.1 Classroom 09 students: the adolescents

The students were enrolled in the ninth year (former eighth grade) and attended classes in the morning. The group was made up of 32 students, 16 boys and 16 girls. Their ages varied between 13 and 15 years old. They had English classes twice a week (Tuesday and Friday), being the first 50 minutes long and the

⁴⁰ EJA stands for *Educação de Jovens e Adultos* (Young and Adult Education). It is a modality of education provided in public schools for older people who did not complete their studies.

latter 30 minutes⁴¹. Only one student had studied English outside school in a private language course, the other ones attributed their learning to experiences they had in regular schools. This group was known for students' misbehavior and for pupils who had failed this same grade the year before. In figure 2, I represent the physical organization for classroom 09.

Figure.2 Classroom physical representation



The students were neither encouraged nor allowed by their teacher to sit in pairs during classes to avoid chattering and unnecessary noise. They usually sat in five rows, two on the left with seven students per row, and the rest with six (Fig.6). In the beginning of the year, the teacher moved some students sitting them in different places, aiming at separating the ones who were usually noisy. Her desk is on the left side of the room. The classroom had only three windows on top of the wall, and thus, during hot weather, the fans were on most of the time, which created extra noise. To the left of the blackboard, they had a smaller board with their test schedules and some posters they had made for other subjects.

⁴¹ Every Friday, the entire school had five classes (30 minutes each class) and later a sixth class (50 minutes long). During this sixth class, students were supposed to take tests about all the subjects they had been studying. A schedule in the beginning of the semester determined the dates and the subjects for each Friday. Some classrooms had a 30-minute Math class, this group, specifically, had an English class. More details about this routine may be seen in Appendix F (field notes, entry 2).

During the classes, students in the front participated more. The teacher attempted to involve all of them in the activities, but some still did not respond. Despite some students who were apathetic and non-participative, the group was known in the school for their energetic behavior, with teachers' complaints about disruptive talking and indiscipline, as it will be discussed in chapter 4.

3.3.2 The English teacher

The English teacher, Dona Cidinha⁴², has a major in Portuguese and English languages (and respective Literatures) from a private College. She started to teach English by the end of the nineties, at this very school where the study took place. In the previous year, she had already been their English teacher, which explained their rapport and how well she knew each of them. The original idea for this study included the teacher as a participant of the study, since the classes in the intervention phase would be given by her. However, unfortunately, the teacher had some health problems at that time and had to undergo surgery. I was then responsible for teaching the classes in the intervention phase. Thus, once the scope of this research is the adolescent group, I considered the teacher as a secondary participant, and data collected from her was used mainly for triangulation of primary data.

3.4 The Study

3.4.1 Entering the field

The opportunity to conduct this study in a public school setting started with an open invitation to public school teachers attending the PECPLI⁴³, a continuing teacher education program. I was invited by the coordinators to present two workshops for the teachers. After the second workshop, I talked about my research project, and said that I was looking for a public school teacher who would like to have one of her classrooms studied. Firstly, three teachers showed

⁴² I asked the teacher if she wanted me to give her a pseudonym. However, she asked me to refer to her in the research in the way students called her in class, Dona Cidinha. They rarely used the words teacher or *professora* (Portuguese word for teacher). The students, however, are identified with pseudonyms.

⁴³ The term stands for *Programa de Educação Continuada para Professores de Língua Inglesa* (Continuing Education Program for English Language Teachers).

interest, but teacher Cidinha was chosen for two specific reasons. First, she had two specific adolescent groups she was struggling with (one of them became the participants of this study) and wanted to do something about them. Though her school was not located in the same city of the university I was studying, it was very close and there was a transportation service that connected both cities. Second, she was interested in having a research project in one of her classes, and had easy access to the school staff (principal and school counselor), in order to obtain authorization for the inquiry.

After that, I sent her a copy of the project, to which she agreed. She immediately set a meeting with the school principal to talk about the research. A week later, she replied and said the principal welcomed the study to take place in their school, and three days later, a meeting was arranged with her.

The day of the meeting was also my first contact with the school. I arrived there and presented the project, especially the ethical principles I would adopt to protect students' identities and how students would be asked to participate. The principal had no further comments about it, and then signed a copy of the informed consent statement authorizing me to conduct my research there. She kept a copy of the document for her and welcomed me to the school.

In the same day, I met with Dona Cidinha and she introduced me to the other teachers during the recess. The teachers were very receptive and were already aware of my study because she had told them about it. She also introduced me to two of her groups, the ones she had considered to be the participants. Later, she suggested me one of them to start the observation, because she had read the project and thought that group would match the intentions of the research. In the following week, I started classroom observations.

3.4.2 Phase 1: Classroom observation

Classroom observation entailed a total of eight English classes taught by Dona Cidinha. The data were collected mainly through field notes. I used a notebook where I usually wrote down topics which reminded me later about the classroom events. After each class, I remained in the context for about 40 minutes and wrote extra comments about my observations. The entries were written in the

actual day of the class that was observed, in order not to miss relevant details that were not written during observation, but that arose as I was writing an entry.

Observing classes allowed me to get to know the classroom routines, the usual interactions among the students and the teacher. Students seemed to be comfortable with my presence, but constantly asked why sometimes I took notes. I also tried to observe if some of their beliefs would be verbalized during class and how they participated in each activity the teacher tried to do with them. After observing five classes with that group, I applied an initial questionnaire to obtain more information about those learners and map their beliefs. Classroom observation continued after that for one more week as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Classroom observation schedule

	DATE	CLASS SUMMARY
1	03/25/2011	Test day: the subjects included Arts, Math and Geography. The English teacher applied the test. I observed students' while taking the test.
2	03/29/2011	Homework: the class was focused on the correction of several exercises from their book. Only a few had done it, so the correction lasted longer. Book reading (1): the classroom was assigned to read the book "Lucky Break". The teacher conducted the reading aloud.
3	04/01/2011	Book reading (2): the group continued reading the book from last class. The teacher focused on the new vocabulary and gave them homework for next class.
4	04/01/2011	English test: they had History and Math tests as well. The group remained silent during the test.
5	04/05/2011	Book reading (3): the reading activity was resumed. This time, students practiced reading aloud. The teacher also solved students' doubts regarding vocabulary from the book.
6	04/08/2011	Questionnaire. Students answered the first questionnaire during this class.
7	04/12/2011	Music (1). The teacher asked me to bring a song for the classroom. They had a speaking activity. I assisted the teacher in this class.
8	04/15/2011	Music (2). The students listened to the song, did a listening exercise (fill the gaps type of exercise) and translated the lyrics.

3.4.3 PHASE 2: Intervention

As I explained before, the teacher could not teach these classes, so I taught all the classes in the intervention phase while Dona Cidinha was on a sick leave. This phase was originally designed to comprise 17 to 20 classes with the group

plus one extra class just to apply the final questionnaire. However, due to some contextual factors such as, dismissal of classes, tests during the English classes, among others, the number of classes came down to twelve, plus the two classes used for phase 3 (evaluation), giving a final total of fourteen (14) classes. By the end of May, there was a possibility of teachers' strike in the school. Therefore, I had to shorten some classes in order to have time to apply the final questionnaire and conduct the focus group. The intervention happened during the months of April, May and June of 2011. I conducted the classes, prepared the activities and tests. The teacher also allowed me to be responsible for 80% of their total score in that bimester which resulted in one test (Appendix R) and one pair work activity (see appendix T and U).

Before the intervention phase, I talked to Dona Cidinha and she suggested that I taught a unit from the book the students were using⁴⁴. The unit I was assigned to teach was based on the idea of music in peoples' lives (main theme). In this broad theme, it was suggested topics to be used in class such as: I) music styles and instruments, II) famous singers' biographies. Also, for the vocabulary, there was an indication of exercises related to English words that have been used in Portuguese language. And for the grammar topic, simple past tense (regular/affirmative form) was the main content for the activities. From these guidelines, I tried to articulate activities from their book and extra ones in order to develop the classes for the intervention, taking into account sociocultural assumptions in language learning (see Chapter 2).

Table 5 presents a synthesis of the activities developed for the classes. These activities were carried out aiming at providing possibilities for experiences that could engender belief change. Examples of all activities are presented in the appendices (from O to V).

Table 5. Schedule of activities – Intervention Phase⁴⁵

	DATE	FOCUS	ACTIVITIES
1	04/19	<i>Speaking</i>	Personal info cards: pair work activity in which students had to share personal information to get to know each other. Each student

⁴⁴ SOUZA, S.M. *Easy Way : The new way to learn English – 8º ano do Ensino Fundamental*. Scrithos gráfica. p.94.

⁴⁵ For more specific details of these classes see appendix F (entries 10 to 21)

			received a card to complete with such information. (see Appendix O)
2	04/22	----	Holiday
3	04/26	<i>Test</i>	The students took their English final exam (first bimester).
4	04/29	<i>Speaking Reading</i>	<p>Introduction to the lesson theme (Music).</p> <p>Reading: we read the introductory text and did the exercises (text comprehension).</p> <p>Speaking: The students finished the speaking exercise from the previous class. (personal info cards).</p> <p>*Writing (homework for next class): students had to complete 5 profiles about famous singers in their book.</p>
5	05/03	<i>Reading Writing</i>	<p>Writing: exercise correction – famous people profile.</p> <p>Writing (homework): students had to create two profiles about their favorite singers</p> <p>Extra Reading/Writing: Osama Bin Laden’s Biography. The exercise focused on reading comprehension and finding specific information to complete a profile.</p>
6	05/06	<i>Speaking (Game)</i>	Game: Students asked personal questions to guess a famous singer in a few cards. The ones who had any idea could make a guess and the student who was right would get a prize.
7	05/10	<i>Vocabulary</i>	Vocabulary activity: The exercise presented a list of English words also common in Portuguese language. They had to explain the use of each term and find out the literal translation to check if it helped them understand the meaning.
8	05/13	<i>Test Review (focusing Writing, Reading, and new vocabulary)</i>	<p>Test review. The students asked for a review of the contents in order to take the test.</p> <p>Content reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English words in our daily life. - Biographies: famous singers.
9	05/13	<i>English Test</i>	The test presented two (2) exercises about English expressions used in Portuguese language, one (1) reading exercise based on a biography, and one (1) based on word formation. The test time was 30 minutes (see Appendix R)
10	05/17	<i>Grammar Simple Past Tense –</i>	Content explanation: This class focused on regular verbs (conjugation) and the affirmative form.

		<i>Regular Verbs (Explanation)</i>	
11	05/20	<i>Grammar Simple Past Tense – Regular Verbs (Exercises)</i>	Simple Past Exercises grammar exercises from their textbooks.
12	05/24	<i>Music (Listening and Reading) Peer Work</i>	Music <i>Price Tag</i> (by Jessie J.) with listening comprehension and discussion exercises (see Appendix S for lyrics).
13	05/27		Each pair received 2 papers. One of them was a wordsearch in which they had to find verbs in the simple past. The other was a text which presented for them a contextualization of TV series <i>That 70's show</i> . In pairs they had to help each other to complete the text and find the missing words.
14	05/31	-----	This was the first shutdown .Students did not have class that day.
15	06/03	<i>Reading and Speaking</i>	Reading: the 32 students were divided in 4 groups. Each group received eight different short texts with a characters' biography from the series <i>That 70's Show</i> . Students read and made comments for the rest of the group (in Portuguese).
16	06/07	<i>Final questionnaire and goodbye.</i>	Questionnaire: students answered the final questionnaire. I explained about the possible strike, a reason why the intervention had to end that week.
17	07/06	<i>Focus Group</i>	Students were invited to discuss topics regarding their experiences as public school students and as participants in this intervention research.

The type of activities designed for this stage comprised some basic principles which were outlined *a priori*:

- (I) The activities were planned considering the available resources the school provided for the actual teachers, that is, activities that the teachers themselves could use without contextual limitations. In this school, for example, they had limited⁴⁶ access to the photocopy machine, a video room and a sound system.
- (II) The classes were planned according to the initial subject plan, designed by the English teacher in the beginning of the term. That

⁴⁶ The school staff makes an effort to help teachers when they need copies of texts and other materials for their groups. However, their budget is limited, and then, teachers have to be more selective about the quantities of copies of a given material. This aspect was also mentioned by the teacher and also by the adolescents in the focus group.

implied that I would not discard the themes that were selected and also the schoolbook that students had bought. Extra activities and book activities were intertwined.

- (III) Some of the activities were planned under the light of sociocultural theory in language teaching, as discussed in chapter 2, especially the ones that involved peer and group collaboration.
- (IV) The idea of the kind of materials to choose and the kind of classes to be prepared for them was based mainly in the first questionnaire during phase 1 (classroom observation), in which students elicited some ways they liked to learn and things they would like to do in class⁴⁷.

3.4.4 Phase 3: Evaluation

By the end of the intervention, two instruments were used to collect data on whether students had changed beliefs about learning EFL or not. The first one, was a final open ended questionnaire applied in order to compare with the information provided in the beginning of phase 1 (see appendix J). The second instrument was a focus group with the adolescents, in the last class we had together. Initially, I had planned to have the Focus Group not during an English class, but in another moment. However, after a first shutdown, and a second one that was expected a week later, I decided to do it during the last class. A day after the focus group and also my exit of the field, there was another shutdown, which almost led to a teachers' strike⁴⁸, but in this school, teachers decided not to call off their classes.

⁴⁷ It is important to emphasize that I acted as the teaching of this group of students because, due to health problems, the teacher was granted with a leave of absence. I do not discard the idea that my presence as the teacher of the group could have had influence upon them, or in any specific instrument such as the feedback cards. However, as in any qualitative inquiry, the presence of the researcher already changes the normal routine of the group. Hence, the trustworthiness and credibility of this research were not compromised, since I combined different instruments for triangulation, and the students and Dona Cidinha had access to results in the end of the study to check what they thought about it.

⁴⁸ The strike started on June, 2011 in several schools around the state. Teachers claimed formally for an increase in their minimum wage for a 24-hour weekly work schedule. In this school, specifically, after some unsuccessful attempts for shutdown, the teachers decided not to go on a strike.

3.5 Data collection

In this section, I present each instrument which was selected for this inquiry justifying its relevance to answer the research questions for data triangulation. Table 6 presents all of the instruments separated by the three phases of the research (Classroom observation, intervention and evaluation:

Table 6- Instruments for data collection

INSTRUMENTS		
<i>Classroom Observation</i>	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>
✓ Questionnaire	✓ Feedback cards	✓ Questionnaire
✓ Teacher's narrative	✓ Field notes.	✓ Focus Group
✓ Field notes	✓ Classroom audio recordings	✓ Field notes.

3.5.1 Classroom observation and field notes

The first contact with the group consisted of a non-participant observation⁴⁹ (Freeman, 1998; Darlington & Scott, 2002). I observed the classes and took notes. These notes followed a non-structured pattern and were based on the most prominent events. The focus was given to students' participation in classes and ways they interacted in that setting, with a look at "non-verbal information, physical setting, group structures, interaction between participants" (Freeman, 1998:94). With these notes I aimed at registering "ongoing accounts with perceptions on the events and critical issues that stands out in the classroom context" (Vieira-Abrahão, 2006a:226).

⁴⁹ There was only one day when I actually intervened during observation. The teacher had asked for a suggestion for a class with music, and I brought the song for her to use in class. But still, I consider phase one as non-participant observation.

3.5.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires have been a recurrent instrument to gain access to students' and teachers' beliefs about language learning (Richards & Lockhart, 1996) since the pioneer studies in the field (see i.e., Horwitz, 1987). I chose semi-structured questionnaires (with open-ended and close-ended questions), once they create the possibility to raise all at once, students' "personal information, expectations and even beliefs, to attest or not data collect through qualitative methods" (Vieira-Abrahão, 2006a:221).

The first questionnaire (see Appendix G) was applied on April, 08th 2011, and aimed at raising initial information about the group. It entailed factual, behavioral and attitudinal questions. According to Dörnyei (2007), these are three major kinds of questions that will elicit different information from the participants. The first one is related to personal information (that allows the researcher to outline a profile on the individual learner or the group), the second focuses on actions in different moments of their lives and the third expects learners to express "attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests and values" (Dörnyei, 2007:102).

There were ten questions in this questionnaire. Four of them were closed, two of them were open and the other four were closed questions with an extra space for personal comments or an explanation. The questions comprised aspects such as: a) beliefs about language learning in that public school context, b) beliefs and preferences regarding activities to better learn English and c) contextual factors that may influence their learning at school, among others. There were 29 present students in this day. Initially, I explained the importance of their sincere answers and read each question separately. Then, they had some minutes to ask questions, but according to my field notes (Appendix F – entry 7) some of them had already started. The teacher remained in the classroom but she did not talk to the students during the application. She encouraged students to answer the questions as they really felt. In the next class, I talked to the three students who had missed the class and they accepted to complete the questionnaire later.

The second questionnaire was applied on June 07th and the thirty-two (32) students were present. This questionnaire was similar to the first one but with a few discrepancies (see appendix J). Essentially, it was used with the purpose to

verify if there had been any change of beliefs and their perceptions concerning the intervention. There were a total of seven questions in it. Six of these questions presented alternatives, but also extra space for personal comments. There was also one open question and in the end a blank space where students would write whatever they wanted (a criticism, a question, suggestion or something not addressed in the questionnaire).

3.5.3 The teacher's language teaching narrative

Oral and written narratives are widely used in qualitative inquiry and have been more frequent in Applied Linguistics' research as a primary source for data collection (see Barcelos, 2006b; Bell, 2003; Pavlenko, 2002; Telles, 2004). It is from them that participants "give sense to their past experiences and share those experiences with others" (Gibbs, 2009:80), and in language teaching, they recall experiences, positive or not, as students and teachers. Under a sociocultural perspective, Pavlenko (2002:214) argues that narrative inquiry makes possible for the researcher to gain access to the participants' desires, motivations, but also the "ideologies that guide their learning trajectories".

The narrative was chosen with the purpose to recall the teacher's experiences about teaching EFL for teenagers, and more specifically the students in classroom 09, since she had already been their teacher the year before, she had almost two years of experience with them. She was told about the narrative in the beginning of the study and had the option to write in English or in Portuguese. She chose to write it in Portuguese. A guideline was given suggesting some topics for her to write about, but she could also write her opinions freely (Appendix H). This allowed the teacher's point of view about the main participants of the study (adolescents) in the research, and it figures in the study in the triangulation for the analysis.

3.5.4 Classroom audio recordings

Audio recording of classes allows registering the interaction among teachers and students (Dörnyei, 2007; Freeman, 1998; Richards & Lockhart, 1996) in real time, and may be used to corroborate classroom observation notes,

for example. Also, it makes possible to understand specific problems of groups, which may not be observed only through observation, serving as a *diagnostic aid* (van Lier, 1988:232).

A total of four classes were recorded during the intervention phase with a digital recorder. Table 7 presents the dates classes were recorded, their number within the intervention schedule (see again table 5 from the intervention section) and the main topic of the class.

Table 7. Class recordings schedule

Class Number	Date	Main activity
07	05/10/2011	Vocabulary
10	05/17/2011	Grammar – Simple Past Tense
12	05/24/2011	Music
13	05/27/2011	Peer work

I chose to record mainly Tuesday classes because they lasted longer (50 minutes). Although some authors stress out the possibility of an electronic device intimidating participants (Macowski, 1993; Vieira-Abrahão, 2006a), the recordings did not seem to intimidate them; on the contrary, there were case of students who enjoyed saying things close to the recorder because they knew I would listen to it later.

3.5.5 Feedback cards

Feedback cards are commonly used at the end of a class when a teacher wants to have access to individual opinions about a specific aspect (the class itself, the activities, the theme, etc.) and have an immediate characteristic because they are written “on the spot, just after an activity, and have a short time limit” (Freeman, 1998:206). The cards contain generally one or more questions with the purpose to register students’ opinions after an activity or class, while the experience and memory is still fresh. Freeman (1998) suggests some principles for using feedback cards, such as: a) intelligibility of questions, that is, a question that will not confuse the student, b) enough quantity of questions in relation to the time that is available to answer it, and c) an incentive that even the time for

answering being short, students try to avoid superficial or insufficient answers (see appendix I and M for an examples of feedback cards used in class).

Students wrote feedback cards in a total of six classes throughout the entire intervention (166 collected cards). A first major limitation was the quality of initial answers. Feedback cards from the first classes were short, with limited sentences and even cases of “yes”, “no” or “cool” kinds of answers. I tried to tell students and reinforce that it was important to give a sincere answer, but it could not be limited to just a few words. By looking at the cards as the study developed, it is possible to notice that more students demonstrated to have embodied the idea that their contribution was important, because their answers were less monosyllabic or at random⁵⁰, but had become personal and critical in some cases.

A second limitation was time. During some classes not all the students had time to complete the cards⁵¹, then I let them give it back to me in the next class, and that was connected to the third limitation. Not all students brought back their cards each class. Also, I do not discard the fact that some students missed classes, and therefore, getting the actual 32 cards in one class, for example, did not happen at all. Table 8 presents a summary of the quantity of cards I collected each class.

Table 8. Feedback cards schedule

FEEDBACK CARDS						
Date	05/03	05/06	05/13	05/20	05/24	05/27
	27	25	31	27	27	30
						Total: 166 cards

Despite all these limitations, feedback cards revealed to be a useful instrument. It engaged the students into giving their opinions more than any other instrument because they created a habit, in every class, to give their opinion about what was done in their classroom. A questionnaire or an interview is a onetime instrument, after they complete it, their part is over, the rest relies on the researcher, but feedback cards encourage this ongoing participation of the

⁵⁰ However, even in the last classes I received feedback cards with monosyllabic answers.

⁵¹ Also, there were some classes in which the bell rang earlier. (see, for instance the Field notes in appendix F – Entry 11, 04/29/2011).

students, showing the dynamicity of their opinions, which varied throughout the semester.

3.5.6 Focus Group

Originally, focus groups were used by marketing companies to measure public opinions about a subject or product (Barbour, 2009; Kitzinger, 1994, Trad, 2009). In health and social sciences they have been used as an alternative for studying peoples' experiences regarding health problems (Barbour & Schostak, 2005; Mitchel & Braningan, 2000), drug addiction (Carlini-Cotrim, 1996) among other issues. Studies in Applied Linguistics have considered using a focus group (FG) when researchers want to observe participants' interaction about a discussion topic.

Barbour (2009) highlights the relevance of this instrument for studies in which the researcher wants to approach delicate issues, because in a group, people may feel more comfortable to express themselves rather than in an individual interview, but there is also a chance that people may have reservations to share personal (and previous) experiences. Then, quality of peoples' interaction within a FG will depend on the group itself, because in a comfortable environment "groups can sometimes facilitate the discussion of otherwise taboo topics because the less inhibited members of the group 'break the ice' for shyer participants (...)" (Kitzinger, 1994:111). In Health Sciences, for example, in FGs people who suffered with a similar disease (i.e., cancer) can feel more comfortable to express themselves by knowing that the other participants around may relate to the experiences that are shared.

This instrument also demonstrates the "capacity to capture answers to events while they develop" (Barbour, 2009:46). Thus, it may be carried out during or after an intervention, for instance. Mediated by a moderator and initial questions, the group is invited to start a discussion over a main theme. The moderator's role is to maintain the discussion in the original topic, if participants change the direction of the discussion. But the people involved have total freedom to express themselves, which explains why generally in FGs the moderator does not interrupt all the time, only when it is necessary.

This instrument is adequate for studies with adolescents because it strengthens group participation rather than an individual approach, and has been used by several researchers to approach topics such as: aids and sexuality (Rieth & Leal, 1996), gender and health (Gomes, Telles & Roballo, 2009) and adolescents at risk situation (De Antoni et al, 2000). And in education, issues regarding school counseling (Kress & Shoffner, 2007) and teachers carrying out FGs in their own classes (Whitney, 2005) are some other examples. Many of these studies reported here embody the idea that the FG is a very effective strategy to assess adolescents' opinions because in groups they feel more confident to talk, even the more "reluctant" ones (Barbour, 2009:42)⁵².

For this study, the FG happened in the evaluation phase. Its purpose was to register the adolescents' impressions about the study and later observe if there was any kind of belief change about learning EFL in the public school context. I outlined a script based on data collected in the first questionnaire to motivate them to share opinions and justify their beliefs about the (im)possibility of learning EFL there (see appendix K). The FG lasted for almost an hour and was held in their own classroom.

Originally, it was supposed to happen outside their classroom, in an extracurricular meeting, but time was not enough to schedule it due to the strike possibility in June, 2011. I was the moderator of the group, and the teacher was also present that day, but she only intervened twice during the discussion, because she was aware of the purpose of the FG. Not all the students felt comfortable to participate, but the ones who did, really engaged in a debate regarding the topics they were asked. Sometimes they digressed and changed the topic, but as the moderator I tried to bring them back to the original discussion.

3.6 Data Analysis

This inquiry followed the assumptions of qualitative analysis (Patton, 1990; Darlington & Scott, 2002; Dörnyei, 2007). Data were analyzed through content analysis, which entails "the process of identifying, coding and

⁵² See Barbour (2009) for examples of FGs with juvenile delinquents, Rieth and Leal (1996) about FGs with adolescents on sexuality and AIDS, and Gomes, Telles and Roballo's (2009) report on adolescent's perspectives about gender and health.

categorizing the primary patterns in the data. This means analyzing the content of the interviews and observations” (Patton, 1990:381). Through content analysis, the researcher observes categories and patterns that emerge as he revisits each data source, which reinforces the notion that “qualitative categories used in content analysis are not predetermined but are derived inductively from the data analysed” (Dörnyei, 2007:245).

The written accounts were read several times, and then I started the coding process individually. That consists of “highlighting extracts of the transcribed data and labelling these in a way they can be easily identified, retrieved, or grouped.” (Dörnyei, 2007:250). The outcome of each instrument was analyzed that way. Later, they were revisited with the purpose to check the categories but also notice if new ones would emerge as well, and which had not been thought previously.

Analysis of phase 1 instruments began with the first questionnaire which was organized for sampling. The number of alternatives was counted and graphs were designed. Later, the students’ answers were qualitatively read and categorized according to content analysis. My analysis presents the graphs to illustrate the answers, but the focus will be mainly from a qualitative perspective. Since the teacher’s narrative was already typed (the teacher sent me through e-mail) I already started the analysis by pointing out the patterns and topics. I also used the field notes from the observation phase for triangulation. Thus, these data were gathered and again they were labeled and coded (Darlington & Scott, 2002) with the aim to register the patterns and topics emerged in several instruments, which later led to the categories found.

For phase 2, I started with the feedback cards. They were typed and organized according to the date they were written. The coding process involved a careful reading and the highlighting of topics (Patton, 1990). Then, I transcribed classroom recordings. For the transcriptions, I considered a few transcription conventions from conversation analysis⁵³ in order to illustrate relevant aspects for the scenes that were registered (i.e., students talking and interrupting a class explanation, a louder tone of voice to talk to someone), which, however, does not qualify as a conversation analysis research in nature. They were useful to

⁵³ An adaption of codes suggested in Marcuschi (1986) and van Lier (1988). The FG was also transcribed but conventional codes were not used on it.

complement transcriptions and help the understanding of excerpts. And similar to phase 1, I also used my field notes for triangulation in this phase.

Finally, for phase 3, I transcribed the focus group recording. For the final questionnaires, graphs were designed and the answers were categorized qualitatively. Field notes were used in this phase again, regarding the closing of the study and my leaving of the field. My choice of coding and categorizing data in different moments is justified as a strategy to manage time and because some instruments relied on others to carry on the intervention. For instance, the FG script was based on classroom experience, but also presented data collected in phase 1. The last questionnaire was designed regarding what had been asked previously in order to create the possibility for a later comparison, by the end of the study. Therefore, these three periods for coding and labelling do not imply that data was analyzed separately; on the contrary, they are the basis of triangulation (see Flick, 2009a).

3.7 Ethical Principles

Ethical principles were adopted in to assure participants that their identities would not be revealed and they would not be coerced or harmed by taking part in this qualitative inquiry in any form (Barbour, 2009; Celani, 2005; Darlington & Scott, 2002; Flick, 2009a, 2009b; Gibbs, 2009; Piper & Simons, 2006).

All the participants of this study signed consent forms⁵⁴. No field entrance was made until I had the consent of the school staff (Bell, J.S, 2005; Darlington & Scott, 2002; Flick, 2009a; Piper & Simons, 2006). The teacher had access to the project before I went to her school and talked to the principal. She had the opportunity to ask questions about it and then accept it or not. Then, I went to the school, presented the project for the school principal who signed the consent form, which allowed me to attend classes and observe their routines (Appendix C). Second, the English teacher signed her consent form (see Appendix D) and then I was introduced to the groups. All the 32 students signed the consented form

⁵⁴ Although scholars have shown different perspectives about having or not consented terms (in relation to some specific cases that the investigation would be constrained) I asked all participants to sign the document, including the school principal, who permitted my presence in the field. For further discussions on consented terms discussions I recommend Piper & Simons (2006).

before answering the first questionnaire and all students agreed to take part in the research.

In order to facilitate data triangulation and categorizing, students wrote their real names on the 2 questionnaires (initial and final) and the feedback cards, but only I would have access to that information, as a request they made to me on the day I applied first questionnaire. The teacher and the school staff could have had access to the whole data, if they wanted to, and it was already coded with the fictional names, in order to respect students' desire.

In classroom recordings, their names were replaced with pseudonyms⁵⁵ as well, and the situations when they mentioned subjective facts (name of the city, or the school/ teacher, for instance), were replaced with fictional names. During the focus group, students had the access to their answers in questionnaire 1, because some of the questions were based on it.

This chapter aimed at contextualizing the methodological procedures for the research. I started by defining the nature of the study, explaining the combination of ethnography with a posterior intervention in an adolescents' classroom. I then presented the context, participants and the instruments that were selected for data collection. I argued on the relevance of each instrument for the three different moments of the inquiry due to their capacity to collect data about different events that happen in a classroom. Next, an outline of the three phases was presented (classroom ethnography, intervention and evaluation). Then, I addressed the procedures for data analysis and finally concluded with ethical principles that guided my approach to the field and the participants. The following chapter addresses the results.

⁵⁵ Only my name remained the same in transcriptions (Fernando). Some students referred to me as teacher during phase 2 and others just called by my name, as shown in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and discussion of qualitative data collected throughout the three moments of this research. The first part begins with an overview of the sociocultural context for learning EFL in classroom 09, pointing out students' beliefs and preferences about learning in that setting. I then present a portrayal of the (dis)belief observed in the group and explain the reasons that support it. The second part is dedicated to the intervention phase, regarding, mainly, the process of implementing different activities and observing students' reactions to them. The final section comprises students' perspectives about the end of the study and the signs of change in their (dis)beliefs.

4.1 Phase 1 – Classroom Observation

4.1.1 The construction of language learning by adolescents

I observed nine English classes in classroom 09. Throughout these classes, I tried to perceive how these adolescents engaged in classroom activities responded to the teacher's activities and the lesson plan. Initially, the students did not seem uncomfortable with my presence there, but they demonstrated to be curious about my note taking⁵⁶.

Classroom observation in this initial phase showed that the pupils' participation in classes varied from one day to another. Classroom 09 was known in the school for being noisy and difficult to control, but even with these complaints, teachers seemed to have a good relationship with them, and so did Dona Cidinha, as she explains in her narrative:

⁵⁶ See Appendix, Field notes – entry 6 (04/11/2011)

Excerpt 1

“And then, in February, 2011, there I was again, working with them. Besides being mischievous, they are very affectionate and funny. So, that also made me want them again. It is very pleasant to be around affectionate and funny people.” (Teacher’s narrative – 06/2011)

In this first excerpt⁵⁷, the teacher confesses that despite these students’ challenging and mischievous behavior, she chose them because she liked them, and thought they were even *affectionate* and *funny*. Thus, Dona Cidinha had a positive view of the group. Other teachers also seemed to have conflicts with these pupils, as reported during one of the classes, when the principal scolded the students:

Excerpt 2

“When I arrived the principal was talking to them about their Grade Point Average (GPA) and their classroom behavior. I noticed that many of their teachers have reported behavior problems, especially continuous talk in the classes. She ended up her scolding by saying they needed to have dreams and make effort to pursue and accomplish them. As I entered, one of the students asked me if I had heard the things she told them. I confirmed and told the group that if they chatted less inside the classroom they would avoid the biggest part of the problem.”

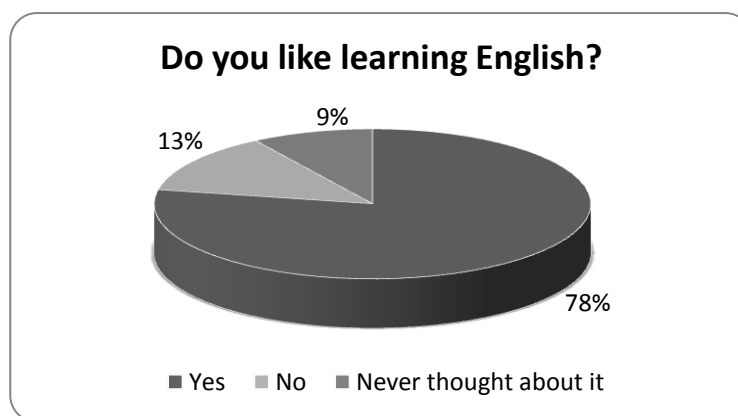
(Field notes – entry 11 – 04/29/2011)

The scolding by the principal seemed to have been based on the amount of teachers’ complaints about classroom 09 in the first bimester. Their grades in subjects such as Portuguese and Math were low, and their indiscipline was hampering the classes. During these moments, students remained silent. Only one student or another tried to give an opinion (Tânia, for example) about the situation, but as the bell had already rung, the principal ended the discussion and warned the students that they needed to work on their behavior in classes and improve their grades.

⁵⁷ Only my field notes were written in English. All the other excerpts in this chapter were translated from Portuguese to English by me. For the excerpts in the original language see Appendix X.

English was not one of the subjects that students had low grades, but most of them were average or close to it. In the first questionnaire, after a few weeks of observation, they were asked two different queries in order to know how they felt about learning English and about the English language subject. Graph 1 shows their answers:

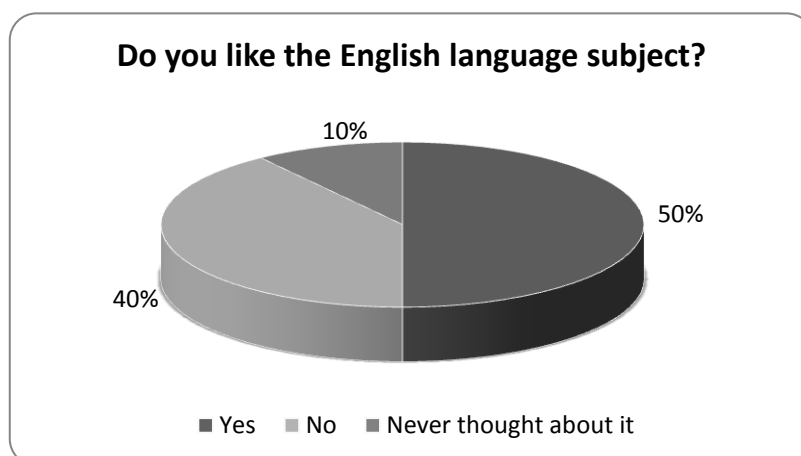
Graph 1. Opinions about learning EFL



(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

As shown in Graph 1, the majority of students in classroom 09 revealed that they enjoy learning English (78%) while a smaller group (13%) did not. The group of students who had never thought about it was small as well. This fact corroborates Basso (2006) in her research with a large group of public school teachers (33) and students (966) in the south of Brazil. In her study, a total of 649 students also reported enjoying learning EFL for several reasons. Initially, this positive feature in students' answers would be a clue for a possibility to learn, once most of them demonstrated enjoying learning this foreign language and they seemed to have basic conditions for that (a teacher with a major in English language, a textbook, etc.). But when it comes specifically to their opinion towards the English language subject, opinions demonstrated some variations, as Graph 2 represents.

Graph 2. Opinions about the English language subject



(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

Half of the group liked the subject while 40% did not. The other 10% had never thought about it. Although a major part of the adolescents enjoyed the subject, the number of students who disliked it was high. This dislike of the subject is a clue to understand why some of them do not participate in class. Despite saying that they enjoy learning another language, 40% of them were not content with the subject. This disparity between the interest in learning but the dislike for the subject recalls Negueruela-Azarola's (2011) emphasis on contradiction for understanding how teachers and students make sense of every activity they participate in the educational context. In fact, he suggests that under a sociocultural perspective, contradictions do not need to be seen as a problem, but actually, the alternative to understand this phenomenon as it unfolds, in what he refers to as "the logic of dialectics"⁵⁸. A perspective on the dislike for the subject is expressed in excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3

Alan	<i>"English is violent"⁵⁹; I only study because it's obligatory. If it weren't obligatory I would never study this boring language"</i>
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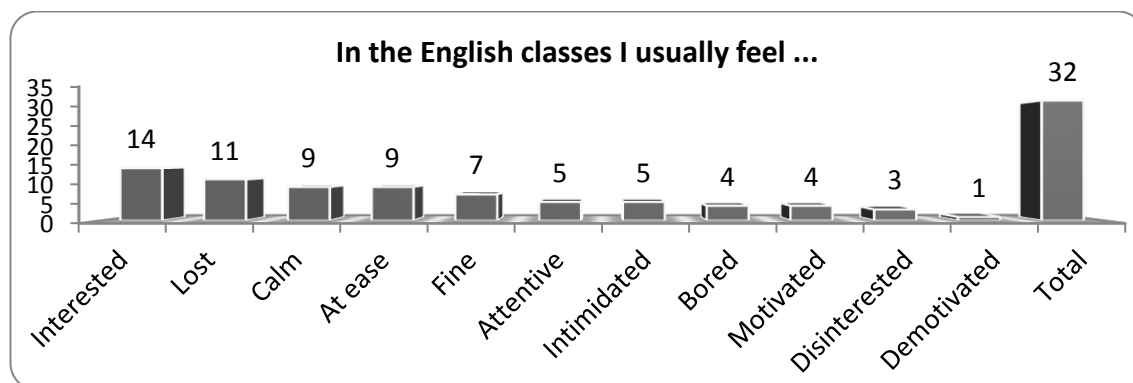
(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

⁵⁸ Dialectics was a basic premise in Vygotsky's works and influences the work of contemporary sociocultural scholars. See Mercer (2011) for a complex view about beliefs in which she also considers opposing ideas of stability/change.

⁵⁹ By the term "violent" Alan refers to the English subject as something "tense". In Portuguese, the word is used colloquially in situations that require a lot of effort, or cause distress, discontentment, etc.

Alan is an example of the students who despised like the English subject. He studied it because it was in their curriculum, but found it boring. In fact, this is how many students felt in the English language class. Their answers ranged between positive affective states and negative ones, as pictured in Graph 3.

Graph 3. How students felt in English classes



(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

The 32 students demonstrated different ways to explain how they felt in the same English classes they all attended. Most of them felt interested (14); followed by lost (11), calm (9), at ease (9) and fine (5). Other five students felt intimidated (5), and the number of bored and motivated students was similarly four (4). Three of them felt disinterested (3) and only one, demotivated. Some of these perspectives are exemplified in Table 9.

Table 9. How students felt in the EFL class

STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE	Mariana	<i>"I feel very interested because the subject is cool. Intimidated because I am afraid to speak, or to say something wrong and they mock me (for it). Lost is because I wanna learn, but there are times when I can't. And fine because the teacher is very nice."</i>
	Lais	<i>"I try to understand but I can't, so I feel lost, then it [the English class] ends up being boring."</i>
	Cláudia	<i>"[Lost] because I don't get anything, I don't pay attention and I disperse with other stuff, with people who are around me and I end up not understanding [things in class]."</i>
	Rebeca	<i>"You know, like, in English classes, just like other subjects I feel calm, interested and at ease because I learn easily. And also because the [subject] content is very cool."</i>
	Marcelo	<i>"Interested because I am willing to learn, to speak and understand the English [language]. Calm because I do not get nervous with my difficulties and doubts."</i>

	Vinícius	<i>“Unmotivated. Because I try to learn but I don’t get anything”</i>
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(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

Mariana chose several options to show the many ways she felt in her English classes. She felt intimidated when her friends made fun of her. Mariana, Laís and Cláudia felt lost when they were not able to understand something and that made them feel excluded inside the classroom. Cláudia, unlike the other students, was the only one to acknowledge partial responsibility for feeling lost, because she did not pay attention to the class. Being physically present in the classroom but mentally away was discussed by Vygotsky in the role of daydreaming (Vygotsky, 1994b) in adolescence. In this phase, when they make more connections using their imagination instead of physical objects, it is also possible to lose interest or attention to things more easily, especially if the class does not call the adolescents’ attention. Macowski (1993) and Basso and Lima (2010) also reported moments of interest decrease in the language classroom, when the students are looking away in class or leaning on a desk.

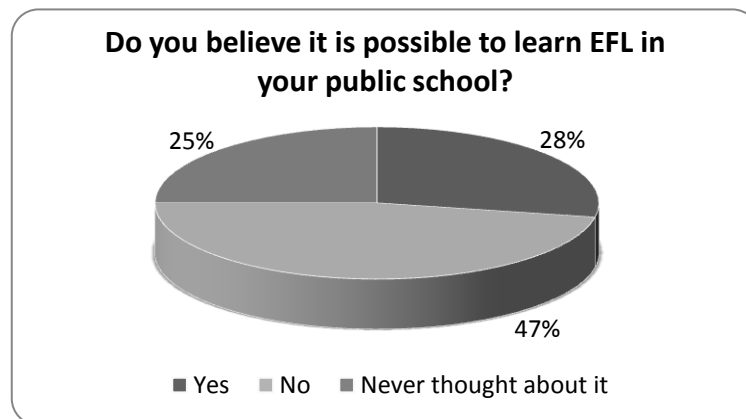
Vinícius, similarly to Cláudia, Mariana and Laís, also felt lost and, as a consequence, demotivated. Students who like the subject, such as Rebeca, for instance, pointed out they felt calm in the class, were interested to learn, and just like Marcelo, did not feel afraid to ask their questions and doubts. With this initial scenario in mind, I move on to the next section in which I explain another feature of classroom 09 students: their (dis)beliefs about learning EFL in their school and the way they construct those (dis)beliefs.

4.1.2 Portraying the (dis)belief

Studies in Brazilian Applied Linguistics (Andrade, 2004; Coelho, 2005) have showed, on the one hand, that students often hold beliefs that learning English in public schools is possible, but they list some requisites for that to happen (i.e., more classes, motivated teachers, different activities, etc.). On the other hand, both studies suggest that teachers do not hold the same beliefs for several contextual reasons. The adolescents in this study were asked whether they

believed it was possible to learn English in their school or not, or if they had thought about it. Their answers are shown in Graph 4.

Graph 4. Students' beliefs about learning English in school



(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

The majority of students (47%) do not believe that learning EFL in their context is possible, followed by 28% of the group who believes in this possibility, while a quarter of them (25%) had never thought about it. Unlike other studies with students (Andrade, 2004; Coelho, 2005) a (dis)belief here was evident. Also, the great number of students who demonstrated not to have reflected on this possibility is preoccupying. Although they have been studying English since fifth grade and are heading to high school, they have not stopped to realize what goes on with the subject they take each year.

Among the ones who did believe in the possibility of learning English in school, four main reasons emerged in their answers to support their belief: good teachers, self-efficacy beliefs, good conditions to learn and peers' examples. These reasons are exemplified in Table 10.

Table 10. Students' reasons for believing in the possibility of learning EFL

Students	Perspective	Excerpts
Carlos	Peers' example	<i>"I've had many friends who succeeded with learning English in this school"</i>
Fabiana	Good teachers	<i>"Because our teacher teaches very well"</i>
Eduardo	Self-efficacy beliefs	<i>"Because here we have capacity to learn English well"</i>
David	Good conditions	<i>"Because we have conditions for it."</i>

Ricardo	Self-efficacy beliefs	<i>“Because what it takes to learn is the student. It depends on us and our interest”</i>
Ellen	Self-efficacy beliefs	<i>“I guess when I’m a senior in high school I’ll leave here with a good background”</i>

(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

As table 10 illustrates, their reasons are positive, and in this way they see the possibility for it. Some of them recognize their own capacity as learners (Eduardo, David and Ellen); others recognized their teachers’ capacity (Fabiana), while others recalled direct experiences to support the belief (Carlos). For Ricardo, learning was a process which required attention, and success depended mainly on the student. Contrasting with other studies with public school learners (Basso, 2006; Basso & Lima, 2010; Lamb, 2004), these adolescents recognized the teacher’s importance, but the responsibility to learn (and consequently its possibility) seemed to be on the learner. Yet, this was not straightforward like this, since when it came to their actions, most students contradicted what they said, as it will be shown in the next subsections.

The students who answered “never thought about it” (25%) actually did not offer further details, as the examples show:

Excerpts 4-6

Karen	<i>“Because I’ve never really stopped to think about it”</i>
Gisele	<i>“You know, that never crossed my mind”</i>
Kelly	<i>“Never stopped to think over this topic”</i>

(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

A total of eight students in classroom 09 had not considered the implications of years of learning English there. In their explanation, they paraphrased the question to explain that, indeed, they had never given attention to whether or not they were learning EFL. Studies have shown that when learners are aware of their learning process, they may use certain learners’ strategies and also reflect on the ways they might learn a language successfully (see Wenden, 1987). For the adolescents in this category, thinking about their learning would be a good alternative for them to understand and become more aware of what they think or believe.

The adolescents who do not believe in learning English at school (47%) also had to explain their point of view. Five reasons were elicited for their (dis)belief. These 5 reasons are part of the contextual factors that constrain their learning: 1) students misbehave in the EFL class, do not cooperate or do not take the class seriously, 2) two classes a week are too few, 3) students do not get the necessary basis (for learning) or have problems to understand (i.e. classes/content/the language). Also, 4) there are too many students in the classroom and 5) the material is insufficient.

Figure 3. Reasons that support classroom 09 students' (dis)belief

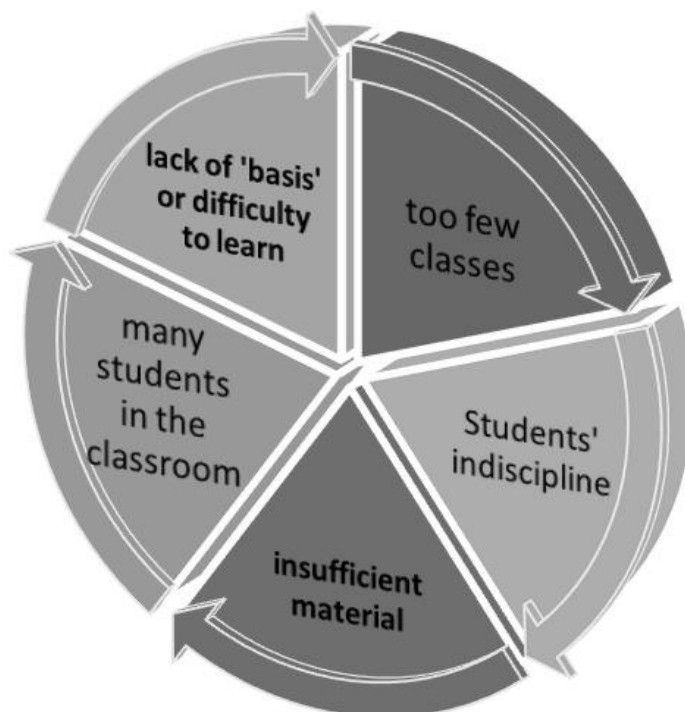


Figure 3 illustrates the reasons students gave for not learning EFL in their school. They all corroborate their (dis)belief in learning English at school, and thus are clues to understand how students interpret the conditions to learn in their context. It is important to highlight that not all the same students share all of these beliefs, but there were cases of students who pointed out more than one, for instance. However, together, these reasons endorsed the (dis)belief about learning English of the majority of students. Each of the five reasons will be discussed in the following sections.

4.1.2.1 Indiscipline and lack of cooperation

The first reason why students believed they did not learn had to do with indiscipline. Students described their classmates as “students who talked a lot”, “did not cooperate”, “make a lot of noise” or regard the class as not serious. They mentioned several times how they were disturbed by disruptive talking. These are some of the recurrent examples:

Excerpt 7-8

Mariana	<i>“The teacher tries to teach, but other people (students) do not let her explain anything, sometimes they even let her, but most of the classes they do not take the class seriously.”</i>
João	<i>“Because the teachers try to explain, but most of them misbehave and the students who are interested end up being harmed.”</i>

(Initial Questionnaire –

04/08/2011)

Both João and Mariana reported the teacher’s effort to conduct the class, but they explained that not all the students took it seriously, and that affected especially the ones who wanted to learn. Despite acknowledging their teachers’ effort, they believe they did not learn English because of other mates (none of them included themselves in the *noisy category*). Indiscipline was also reported during classroom observations, mainly in classes that focused on other activities that were not in the textbook, as excerpts 8 and 9, from my field notes show:

Excerpt 8

During the correction disruptive talking did not cease and while a student (in the middle) was reading, the teacher stopped her to call the attention of two students in the front who were talking. The two last students of each line (5 in total) talked during almost the entire class. I couldn’t hear them talking from where I sat (in the front) but I noticed that they do not pay attention to what happens there in the front.

(Field notes - 03/29/2011 entry 3)

Excerpt 9

Four students were talking while she was trying to explain Vinicius' doubts on the board. She had to interrupt to shut them up. "You two are disturbing the rest of the group. The people in the back may not hear me", said the teacher. While saying that, three small groups start talking in different corners of the classroom and at the same time.

(Field notes - 04/01/2011 - entry 4)

Both excerpts come from classes with reading activities. Students were reading a book (15 pages) for elementary readers. These classes usually followed a common routine: the teacher chose individual students to read aloud a paragraph but when they were not up for that, she read it herself. In the first class, when they were reading aloud, there were moments in which Dona Cidinha interrupted the activity to call their attention, reprehend, and then conducted the rest of the activity. In the first excerpt, for example, while one student was reading for the rest of the group, several students were not engaged at all with the topic of the class. They formed cliques, and while one group was adverted in the front, others in the back kept doing the same thing.

Excerpt 8 pictures the following class, when the teacher carried on the same reading activity. She asked students individually to read aloud passages of a storybook, while the others would follow and later check doubts regarding vocabulary⁶⁰. Excerpt 9 gives an insight a class with the teacher on the board explaining the meaning of a word for Vinicius, while the other students started chatting. She had to interrupt the explanation to ask students to be quiet, but while she was doing that, other groups started talking as well. Even maintaining a good classroom management most times, the class was a constantly interrupted, because the activity was interrupted to reprimand them. Another explanation for this conflict was that perhaps students were not interested in such activities, because of the fact that reading aloud led to classroom exposure, something that teenagers generally dislike (Macowski, 1993; Tiba, 1985).

In the first questionnaire, students generally cited the disruptive talking that constrained their learning possibility. However, it is worth having in mind

⁶⁰ This activity was a common strategy to control students. Dona Cidinha, as she told me in informal conversations (field notes), was not fond of letting them doing the activities in pairs or groups because it was more difficult to control and check if everyone was actually doing it.

that teachers and students may have different views on what types of talking may disturb a class or “on what is or is not acceptable behavior” (Soares, 2007:43). Sometimes a student might think that talking to someone close is not disturbing the class. They tend to think that only the noisier ones are in fact disturbing the whole group, when actually, they contribute to indiscipline by being another pair (or group) that the teacher will have to reprimand⁶¹. And in the “battle” of 32 against one, the teacher will have to spend a lot of time trying to quiet down learners full of energy.

The teacher recognized that the disruptive behavior was actually worse when she taught English for them in the previous year (2010). She believes they have changed from one year to another, but the new students in 2011 also offered new challenges as shown in her narrative below.

Excerpt 10

“They welcomed me. However, there were some who failed in the same group last year, and now were in classroom 09 as well. They were different from the previous group (former classroom 07). Then, the first couple of months, I resumed a lot of the arguments, the “punishments”, but, of course, they were much better than in the year before.”

(Teacher’s narrative, 06/2011)

According to Dona Cidinha, the second year started with the same problems. She recalled that during the first bimester it was necessary to reprehend their behavior, and punish them whenever necessary. Yet, she also acknowledged their behavior as better than the year before. In the initial questionnaire, students did not name the ones who disturbed the class with noise and talk. Actually, they all referred to the group in general saying that “there are students” who talked a lot.

Suzana, exceptionally, was the only one who referred to the boys as the reason for indiscipline. She explained: *Because sometimes I do not get it (the class), and the boys talk too much during the entire class”* (Initial Questionnaire – 04/01/2011). She stated that sometimes she had problems to understand what was being taught because the boys talked too much and interrupted the class. To

⁶¹ See Appendix (Field notes, Entry 3, 03/29/2011) for an example of different groups who were talking at the same time during one class, and even one group talking more than the others in general, they all talked non-stop during the class.

conclude, in Suzana’s perspective, as well as other teenagers’ in classroom 09, the most recurrent reason that supported their (dis)belief was the fact the learning did not occur as result of something the students themselves caused: indiscipline and disruptive talk.

4.1.2.2 Two classes are not enough

In Brazil, public school students have the right to study a foreign language since fifth grade⁶². The *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional* (LDB) highlights the obligatoriness⁶³ of at least one foreign language in the school curriculum, respecting the school conditions to do so (Brazil, 1996). And for four years, classroom 09 students have had English classes twice a week. Two classes a week (50 minutes each) are not enough for both the teacher and the students. This fact is even acknowledged in the *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais* for foreign language teaching (Brazil, 1998). In this group, specifically, as mentioned before (see chapter 3) they had a 40/30 minute class on Friday. Thus, insufficient time to study English was pointed out as another reason for not learning English, as illustrated in the following excerpts.

Excerpts 11-12

Gustavo	<i>“Because we only have two classes a week, only with that we do not learn enough to pass on a test or be hired for a job, travel abroad, etc. And the students don’t collaborate with the teacher.”</i>
Rebeca	<i>“Because it’s just two classes a week, the content is good, we get some things, understand a little bit, but to learn “learn” indeed, no.”</i>

(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

These students argued that two English classes a week were scanty. Gustavo added that only through these classes people do not have a chance to succeed on a test or travel to a place where they will need to interact in the target language. In his response, he associated EFL learning to outcomes that benefit his

⁶² Since 1824, in the first Constitution of Brazil, when the country was an Empire, there is a reference to education as something that was expected to be provided free for every Brazilian citizen, but even then responsibilities of the government were not clearly expressed.

⁶³ In fact, this idea of obligatoriness started with the Constitution of July, 16th 1934, which, according to Algebaile (2009), stated for the first time that education should be a responsibility (duty) of both the family and the government, and also, the government’s responsibilities were then expanded.

life (study, career, etc.) and also mentioned the lack of collaboration with the teacher, that is, indiscipline.

Rebeca portrayed the same perspective relating *few classes* and *quality of learning*. According to her, during these couple of classes, students were able to learn something and there were students who indeed benefited from what was taught. Yet, for her, effective learning did not happen there because there was not enough time. By emphasizing the words *learn*, she seemed to express her frustrated expectations of what learning English should be like. Yet, she seemed to acknowledge having learned something. Her perspective was also connected to the next reason the pupils presented for the (dis)belief: the lack of a “basis” (see next section).

Their teacher, Dona Cidinha, also thought that time for the English classes was not enough. In addition, her full schedule did not allow her extra time to plan different activities for her groups:

Excerpt 13

*“Another difficulty is the fact we have only 2 (two) classes a week. This time is not **sufficient** to give what is **necessary**. We end up giving **less** than what is **necessary**. It is **possible** to introduce the pupils in the study of English Language and encourage them to search for more.(...) This is what I’ve been doing lately, trying to show them the importance to learn English and giving them alternatives to search for the this learning. Sometimes, they ask for something (else) and unfortunately, I need to be honest, I can’t. As an example I may cite the countless requests for reinforcement classes and classes with videos (movies). ”*

(Teacher’s narrative, 06/2011 - my emphasis)

Dona Cidinha believes time was a constraining factor because, in her work, she did not have a chance to develop the content at length. Therefore, students got only a sample, a portion of the content. She believes in the possibility of offering her students an introduction to the English language and also stimulating them to go on and search for more. Another important factor mentioned here, is that classroom 09 students have asked for extra classes and different activities (i.e., videos), but the teacher was not able to respond to that, since her full work schedule did not allow her to do so.

In Coelho's study (2005), the teachers suggested a belief that public schools were not the most suitable context for learning. In addition, they also believed that only basic contents were possible to be taught there. On the one hand, Dona Cidinha also shares this belief. On the other hand she believes in EFL teaching as an introduction, because time and other factors did not allow a more lengthy approach.

The contextual factors, mentioned by Dona Cidinha, that affected her classes resemble the ones reported in several studies (Coelho, 2005; Vieira-Abrahão, 2002; Zolnier, 2007). Yet, she tried to teach what she could, in the time that was available, and attempted to motivate them to learn more with other sources. During the focus group, students also referred to the lack of time, comparing to other subjects that they had more classes a week, but pointing out as well, that sometimes even with two classes a week, they ended up having only one of them, as shown in excerpt 14:

Excerpt 14

Fernando: *what did you say Marcelo?*

Marcelo: *I think two English classes are few.*

Tânia: *It's little, and yet there are days we have no English class.*

Alan: *Why does Portuguese have to be four and English Just two?*

Marcelo: *We have 5 math classes*

Jéssica: *Yeah, there's a lot of math [classes].*

(INCOMP) several students speaking at the same time.

Fernando: *Rebeca repeated here that sometimes you do not have English class (i.e. holidays). On Friday you have a 30/40 minute class.*

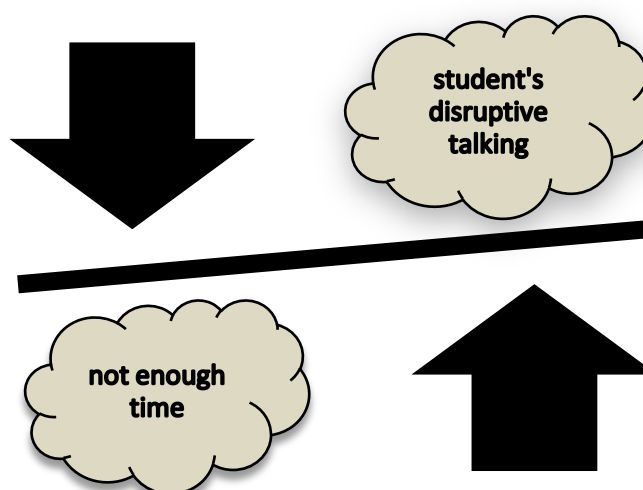
Ricardo: *30 minutes, if that.*

The adolescents seemed not to be aware of the difference between subjects in their curriculum, mainly the foreign language which does not have the same priority or prestige as others (Brazil, 1998). To add to that problem, there were many holidays, school events that made it harder for the group to have the English classes that were expected. In the end of excerpt 14, Ricardo tried to correct the

researcher by saying “30 minutes, if that”, which is understood as a reference to the days when they did not have a full 50 minute class. Also, for this group English was the last class of the week and some days, they were eager to finish the class and go home⁶⁴.

The first reason for not believing in learning EFL is indiscipline (caused by students) and the second is the scanty time. If classes were already scanty, then indiscipline diminished its possibility even more, because as mentioned previously, the teacher needed to interrupt the class to call their attention or ask some students to be quiet and this took up a lot of class time. I try to illustrate the interaction between these two reasons in Figure 4:

Figure 4. Reasons reinforcing each other



As shown in figure 6, both reasons pose a contradiction in students' perspectives. There were the ones who believed they did not learn because of their colleagues' disruptive behavior, and considering that time was not enough, it was expected that they would not waste time with this type of behavior and try to seize the class. Yet, indiscipline was still present, which explains the contradiction. Hence, a fifty-minute class was hampered, when calling students' by their names or trying to motivate them to participate was one of the many efforts by Dona Cidinha. The interconnection of both factors recalls the notion of complexity (Mercer, 2011) and contradiction (Negueruela-Azarola, 2011) when it comes to

⁶⁴ (i.e., Field notes, entry seventeen (17) - 05/20/2011)

understand how these students made sense of their learning process in public schools.

4.1.2.3 The necessary ‘basis’ that students do not have or get

The third reason given by students for the impossibility of learning English in public schools was related to the other two reasons discussed before, indiscipline and few classes, once it refers to the belief that they did not have or received the necessary ‘basis’ for learning.

In Brazil, there are guidelines for language teaching in public schools such as the *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais* (PCNs)⁶⁵. This document, which may or may not be followed by teachers and schools for different reasons, presents suggestions of topics to be covered for primary, secondary and high school. However, states may have the autonomy to elaborate their own guidelines for public education they are in charge of. Books that are designed to be used in these schools, such as the book adopted in classroom 09, were designed in consonance with these documents, and in the case of Minas Gerais state, the *CBC – Currículo Básico Comum*⁶⁶ is the reference. Therefore, in theory, by the end of each school year, it is expected that students have benefited from classes that provided a *basis* that comes from the contents covered throughout that whole year.

Bearing that in mind, year after year, we expect students would progress from one grade to the next, by learning more complex contents. However, the reality is not always like that. For them, one of the reasons they did not learn is because they did not have or get the necessary ‘basis’ for successful language learning, as illustrated below.

Excerpts 15-16

Alan	<i>“It’s complicated because we don’t have much basis, and because of the mess we do not learn right.”</i>
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⁶⁵ The National Curricular Parameters is a document which consists of the guidelines for different subjects in public schools. Every subject has its own section in the document which is elaborated for secondary education and high school. English language teaching in secondary education follows the guidelines of module 9 – Foreign Language.

⁶⁶ The Common Basic Curriculum is the guideline for public education in Minas Gerais state. It was elaborated with the ideal to be suitable for different contexts and their specificities and in accordance to the National Curricular Parameters (PCNs).

Leonardo	<i>“Because I think we don’t get the necessary basis to work (with English) or go to another country.”</i>
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(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

Alan stated that he and his colleagues did not get the necessary basis, i.e. the basic knowledge of the language they would have to have acquired throughout the four years of schooling. Once again, he quoted indiscipline as the reason for not learning the way they should. Leonardo believes that they did not get this basis that would be useful for them outside school, in their future career or in another country, for instance. Perhaps, as a consequence of this belief, some students may doubt that they will succeed in their language learning or that they will acquire a good level of English, as the following excerpts show:

Excerpts 17-18

Bento	<i>“Because when I finish [school] I don’t know whether I will succeed in learning English.”</i>
Daniel	<i>“Because my school does not have a good learning level”</i>

(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

Bento was not certain if his knowledge of English during the four years he spent learning will be enough. His comment revealed uncertainty and distrust towards the school to teach them the basic skills in a foreign language. Likewise, Daniel supported the belief that learning did not happen in his context because his school did not have a “good learning level”. In fact, this was the only mention regarding the quality of the school. Neither the teacher nor the rest of the students held negative opinions about it. Their comments, in excerpt 19, about one of the classes focused mainly on this *basis* or the difficulties to learn:

Excerpt 19

The class began with exercise correction, homework from last class. The teacher writes the answers on the board. The exercise presented sentences in Portuguese (using reflexive pronouns) and they had to translate into English. She asks, for some of them to read aloud the sentence in Portuguese and give the respective translation. Some of the students do not answer when she asks.

- Teacher: *“You, read the sentence in Portuguese, and give the translation”*
- Student: *(reads the sentence in Portuguese and stops). “No, I don’t know the answer.”*

- Teacher: *“Now, you read your answer” (his translation)*
- Student: *“No, I didn’t understand it.”*

They often say during the class they do not know how to do something but when the teacher asks them to try, the ones who answer are generally correct. In one moment the teacher said: *“Why do you say you can’t do? I don’t understand.”* (in a louder tone of voice)

(Field notes – phase 1– 03/29/2011)

On this day, the teacher was correcting an exercise on the board and asked some students to read the sentences (in Portuguese) and say the translation into English, but when elicited the translation, they replied “I don’t know”. Moments like these were recurrent, and, as shown in the field notes, students tended to make right guesses, but whenever asked, they seemed to protect themselves and avoided answering by not taking a chance. Classroom exposure is very intimidating for the adolescent and the fear of feeling ridiculous (Macowski, 1993) by having to say things in a language that is not theirs, make them uncomfortable. Dona Cidinha did not seem to understand why they insisted in saying they did not know or could not do something, because she believed they could, as she explained in her narrative.

Excerpt 20

*“I do see the possibility of my classroom 09 students to learn English, but they are learning less than they need and can, **not because they are limited.** But because they have a teacher who works with a lot of classes, thus, not being able to meet their needs for a better learning.”*

(Teacher’s narrative – 06/2011, my emphasis)

The teacher seems to believe in her students' capacity to learn. Although she did not discard the idea that if conditions were more favorable they would learn more, she appears to be more positive about their potential to learn. As I already discussed, she saw her work schedule as an obstacle to responding to their needs and provide them a better learning.

4.1.2.4 Too many students in the classroom

The high number of students in a classroom is another frequent complaint teachers have, which may generate other problems such as misbehavior and indiscipline⁶⁷. The more students a teacher has, the more people he/she will have to talk to when managing misbehavior, for instance. And in classroom 09, this reason was presented by one⁶⁸ student in the first questionnaire, as presented below.

Excerpt 21

Jéssica	<i>“Because there are too many students, the teacher can't give attention to just one [person], so you can't learn right, and there are times that for you to learn right you need to have more attention, when you have a difficulty”.</i>
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(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

According to Jéssica, the large number of pupils hindered the teacher from giving attention to every student (individually). Contrary to the students who saw learning as something that depended on themselves (self-efficacy beliefs), Jéssica acknowledged the role of her teacher's assistance as very important. As mentioned by Tudge (1996), students rely on their teacher to offer them the solution for every problem. She also added that more attention is required in moments of difficulty, and since the teacher could not assist every student, she did not learn “right” in those moments.

⁶⁷ I do not necessarily argue that a full classroom leads to indiscipline, suggesting a cause/effect relationship or a stereotypical determination. My point here is to stress out that the more students she had in class, the more she had to intervene with ones who were chatting.

⁶⁸ Though Jéssica was the only student to acknowledge this reason in the initial questionnaire, in the focus group students agreed with her point of view, but they discussed other aspects as well (i.e. indiscipline).

Engaging these 32 students in the class was not an easy task. In fact, their teacher recalled that a year before, they were, according to her, more complicated to handle.

Excerpt 22

“My first impression was not so good, because the classes for me were fatiguing, once this group had no boundaries.”

(Teacher’s narrative, 06/2011)

Despite her initial impression, she accepted the challenge. During classroom observations it was possible to notice that students oscillated from class to class. One day they were receptive and calm: the other they were indifferent or making a lot of unnecessary noise. However, there were also days when even participating in class, they made a lot of noise. This volatile reaction in class and an attempt to manage the excessive noise is presented as follows:

Excerpt 23

*There are several students doing small talk, the others don’t talk, they remain quiet but do not participate. During this class there was a lot of noise, because the school is under reform. The employees were painting and using a machine to prepare to wall for painting, so the teacher had to speak louder. She has a **potent voice**, which **surpasses the students’ noise**, then, she has the **last word**. Keeping them quiet is a ‘constant exercise of patience’ she explains to me. The students in the front engaged more during the reading process, but even when responding to the teacher they made a lot of noise.*

(Field notes – Phase 1 – 04/01/2011, emphasis added)

This extract portrays an event during an exercise correction. While the teacher was correcting an exercise that most of the students had not done at home, she had to deal with both inside and outside noise. In the outside, construction men were preparing the walls to be painted, and inside, students were, at the same time, participating in the activity and talking to friends about things other than the English class that was happening in the front of the class. But at the same time, during these conflict moments, Dona Cidinha generally had the last word. She was able to control the noise, even if that implied ceasing an activity she had just begun (and which she resumed right after).

4.1.2.5 The material is insufficient

Another reason for not believing in EFL learning in school was that their material, seen as insufficient and explicated in two perspectives. The first one is related to the quality and availability of materials for them to use in the classes, and it was suggested in the first questionnaire by Marcelo, whose explanation I present below.

Excerpt 24

Marcelo	<i>“It’s not that the school is bad, but classes are few and there is not enough or adequate material.”</i>
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(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

Marcelo started by saying that the problem per se was not his school but the classes that were not enough (see the previous section) and he defined the material used as not “enough” and “adequate”. This was the only mention related to school material in the first instrument. In 2011, classroom 09 was using a book they had the year before but had not finished. Once they finished it, they would start new contents. Their situation with materials was registered in the beginning of the classroom observation as I talked to the teacher in her free time from one class to another.

Excerpt 25

<i>In 2011 the government sent English textbook but the quantity wasn’t enough. Thus, students couldn’t take it home. The book stays at school and if the teacher wants to use it she borrows them from the school library and by the end of the class she has to take it back. Then more than one group can share the same book. She complains that this routine is not good, because she can’t give homework from the book. Then, she isn’t using the textbook, she’s using “Easy way” which I believe they will finish until July.</i>

(Field notes – 03/25/2011)

This was a first limitation the English teacher had, which she overcame by asking students to bring back the book they had purchased in 2010, and which they had not concluded yet. But another problem occurred. Despite all the

students had the book, many of them did not bring it to the class, which made the teacher use other strategies to keep them on task in the classroom. She let them sit in pairs during some classes, and the most talkative ones, she separated. The second perspective about the materials relates to not bringing their books to the classes. And that seemed to be a routine for some of them as shown in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 26

The teacher concludes the peer reading didn't work out because they were talking too much. She tells them not to forget the book next class.

(Field notes - 03/29/2011)

Excerpt 27

(on teacher's) Left side of the classroom: two students rearranged their chairs to sit together and talk during the whole activity. They pretend to have the book and to participate, but apparently they were talking about something else.

(Field notes -04/01/2011)

Excerpt 28

And the reading [activity] goes on. The students make lots of random guess; some of them don't even have the book or are paying attention to reading and even so speak during the activity.

(Field notes - 04/05/2011)

These are passages from different classes in which students had not brought their books. And as cited in these examples, the absence of the material was an opportunity for disruptive talk, noise and lack of participation. Once they did not bring the material, they were not engaged. They seemed to use this as an excuse not to participate. This issue was also addressed in one moment of the focus group by the end of this study, as shown in the excerpts below:

Fernando: *So, a few a classes a week are a problem, and what about “insufficient material”, what did you mean by that?*

Mario: *The book, isn't it? Almost nobody has it.*

Fernando: *The book, do you think you should buy it or get it for free?*

Alan: *The government should provide this s#*%].*

Dona Cidinha: *Actually the government sent a few books. It is not possible to reach the entire school. Then, if you distribute to one group we will be depriving the others. Then, it was not possible for some to be with a book and the others without. (...). But now, as soon as I finish the eighth grade book, we will settle this issue [lack of material], because without the textbook there's no way, either you buy or photocopy the activities I program, because there's really no way.*

(Focus group – 06/07/2011)

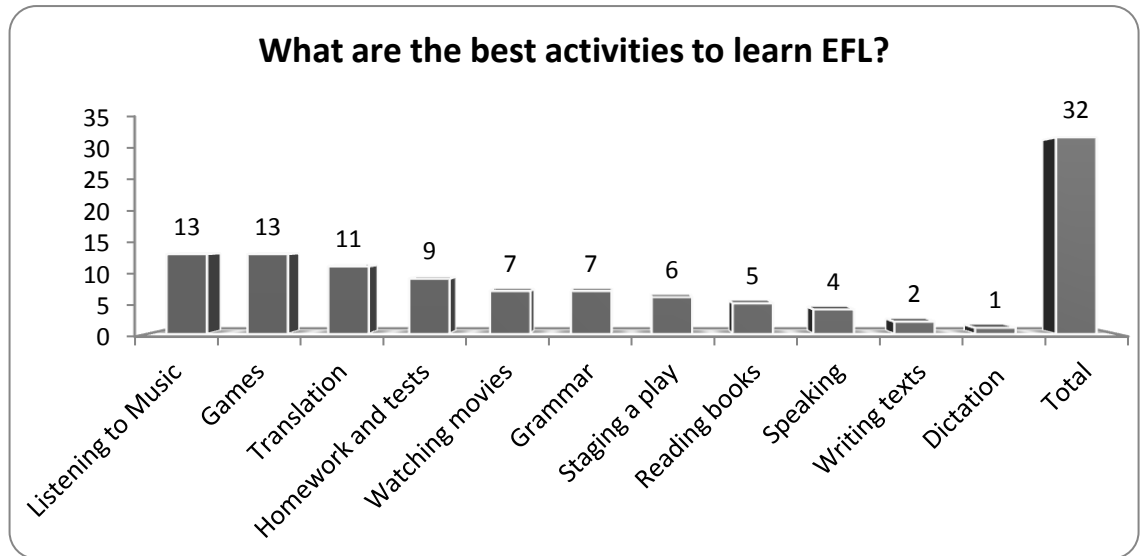
Mário first related my questions to the idea that most of his friends did not have the material. In fact, a lot of them did, but most of them did not bring it to the class. And when asked whether they should buy it or the government should provide it, Alan promptly claimed that the government should be responsible for it by using the “S” word. Then the teacher explained that, in fact, the school received some books but the quantity was not enough⁶⁹.

4.1.3 What would be the best way to learn then?

In this last section of portraying students' (dis)belief, I present their beliefs about the best ways to learn a language at school. Since I was interested in seeing if these students could find some value in learning English at school, it was important to understand how they thought they could learn EFL, or the best ways they would like to learn this language. Graph 5 shows their preferred ways of learning a language. Their suggestions would be considered for phase 2 (intervention) by using their preferences as guidelines for the design of activities to be used with them.

⁶⁹ After the intervention, the teacher informed me that they had finished the book purchased in 2010. However, they did not use the textbook sent by the government. The school had received around 23 samples but it was not enough to cover one of their four groups. Most eighth grades have more than 30 students therefore, using this book was impossible.

Graph 5. Beliefs about best activities to learn EFL



(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

Students had to choose the kind of activities they believed were helpful to learn. As illustrated in Graph 5, the most popular options were: a) listening to music b) playing games and c) translating. Translation was, perhaps, the only activity they were used to doing in their classes, as I noticed during the observation of classes. The other two activities – listening to music and playing games exemplify the motivational aspect of music in language teaching (Murphey, 1992) and how language learners enjoy such types of activities (Lima & Basso 2009). Both games and music were chosen for reasons that reveal the impact of positive affective variables for the classes as shown in Table 11 below:

Table 11. Best activities to learn EFL according to students

		<i>Students' opinion</i>
ACTIVITIES	Music	<i>“Everybody likes music, so, besides learning, the classes become more interesting and less boring” (Laís).</i>
		<i>“Because it’s easier to do such activities for the learning end up being better.” (Karen)</i>
	Games	<i>“Games, because the class would be more entertaining and we would have more enthusiasm” (Marcelo).</i>
		<i>“With the games you relax and it gets easier to learn.” (Gustavo)</i>

Translation	<i>“It’s interesting to translate texts. We get to know words and their meaning in Portuguese, and vice-versa” (Rebeca).</i>
	<i>“Translation. Because by translating a text you learn the words and may observe how certain sentences are written.” (Carlos)</i>

(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

Both Laís and Karen defined learning with music a positive experience. Karen stressed that learning English with music was better, while Laís stated that it made the classes less boring. Murphey (1992) explains that music is a motivational resource for teachers and students. Adolescents usually have a favorite artist, band or a group. In this age, when parents may be a cause for conflict (Schmuck, 1965; Tiba, 1985; Buchanan et al, 1990) some of them look for a role model or a hero, and find in music someone who can speak to their feelings. Besides, teachers have used music as a way to improve vocabulary acquisition (see Medina, 2000, 2002, 2003) and in a group like this, in which translation was pointed out as an effective way to learn, music also created the possibility for such combination of activities (vocabulary acquisition, translation and lyrics comprehension).

There are many resources on games for teachers who want to incorporate them in their classes (i.e., Ur & Wright, 1992; Wright, Betteridge & Buckby, 1994; Hadfield, 2002; Hunter et al, 2005). Teachers usually use games in language classes to motivate students and/or practice what they have been learning in different ways. Games present several advantages. First, according to Hadfield (2002), games present “rules, a goal and an element of fun” (p.4). Second, games help students to work together and give them a purpose of usefulness and meaning (Wright, Betteridge & Buckby, 1994). However, for numerous classrooms, conducting games can be a challenge when students cause a lot of noise, do not engage properly in the activity (Basso & Lima, 2010) or monopolize it (Pajares, 2006). Hence, in using games in the language classroom, teachers should have a specific goal and keep students focused on the activity, checking if they are on task.

After portraying students' reasons for not learning EFL, in this section, I presented their beliefs about the best way to learn English which were important for the design of the intervention phase, described in the following section.

4.2. Phase 2 – Intervention

4.2.1 The intervention: a first step for belief change

As explained before, this study involved an initial phase to find out students' beliefs about the possibility of learning EFL in school. The second phase (intervention) was designed to implement activities, based on their preferences, and see if these would have any influence on their beliefs about learning English in that context.

This intervention was based on students' preferences of activities which were mapped by the end of phase 1 (see section 4.1.3). As shown in graph 7, the adolescents in classroom 09 suggested the kind of activities and materials they thought of as best to learn. The classes were planned aiming to combine original exercises from their textbook with extra activities, mainly the ones they had suggested in questionnaire 1 (i.e., music, games, translation, etc.).

In the next sections, I report on the intervention phase and the process of implementing and conducting the classes with classroom 09. Section 4.2.2 focuses on the challenges regarding the progress of the classes versus students' resistance, and 4.2.3 on the discussions of their new learning experiences during intervention and how they related to the process of belief change.

4.2.2 Challenges in classroom 09: Resistance

After the initial classroom observation was almost over, the students demonstrated to be curious to see what we would be doing in the following classes. By that time, they were already aware that Dona Cidinha would not be present. Thus, to start the first class I chose a speaking activity to engage students into working in pairs.

However, despite the curiosity of what they would do, the first class already showed that promoting change was not an easy task, and that the idealized views (Johnson, 1999) that students would correspond peacefully and full of motivation became clearer to me as the teacher of the adolescents in classroom 09.

Resistance to engage in the activities and participate in the classes was a major issue during the intervention. This resistance can be understood in different forms, such as: lack of interest and cooperation in activities, the non-stop talking in cliques during the intervention and a specific episode, after they were scolded by the school principal as a result of teachers' complaint on their misbehavior. Such factors were also evident in their classes with Dona Cidinha. Excerpt 29 presents an example of their lack of interest and engagement to activities during the intervention.

Excerpt 30

Then, the last 8 minutes I asked them to practice with a partner. And again, only a few pairs (around 3) were really focused on the activity. Students complained it was the last class of the week; they were really looking forward to the holidays. If I got closer to a pair of students they would do it right, but if I went to another group they stopped. Classroom control in these conditions is complicated. I conclude they need to be more used to that type of activity before doing it again, thus, in the next classes I shall focus on other types of exercises (reading).

(Field notes, 04/19/2011)

In most of the classes, a great amount of time was spent in “calming” students, i.e. trying to make them participate of classes, and be quiet. As shown in the excerpt, it was their last class of the day and in the following day they would not have to go to school, thus, students did not want to study. Also, it exemplified that despite teachers' efforts, a class may be constrained by elements not directly related to that subject and that day (Lewis, 2002), but from aspects outside the classroom, such as the holiday they were craving for. But still, the activity was carried out and each one had to do their part. In the whole group, only a few pairs engaged in the activity, while the rest of the group was chatting. In order manage the classroom, it was necessary to walk around the class and check if they were really interviewing the other friend.

Several adolescents mentioned in their feedback cards that they were enjoying the classes but other peers were disturbing them with the talking and the

noise. The following examples, in Table 12, were from classes that entailed topics such as: Grammar, Speaking, Reading and Music.

Table 12. Students' feedback on intervention classes

	Student	Comment
Grammar	Bento	<i>"I like it [Grammar]. Today they talked way less, but even so there are some people who keep talking and ended up losing an opportunity to learn the content".</i>
	Suzana	<i>"The boys disturbed me a little with their talking and I got a bit lost."</i>
	Kelly	<i>"The classes are cool, it's just that some colleagues draw my concentration, they mess around."</i>
Speaking	Carlos	<i>"I think the class was very interesting, in which students learned in a cooler way. But there are students that neither in this way gets interested, and end up disturbing the whole group."</i>
	Karen	<i>"I found it really cool, it was a different easy to learn, but I think if the group paid more attention when the teacher was speaking we would have seized the class much better."</i>
Music	Bento	<i>"Pretty Cool. I think it would be nice to keep listening to songs in the English class. Except for some people who made noise, it was cool".</i>
Reading	Marcelo	<i>"Nice. I think it's great [the EFL classes], just with the talking I think the guys should move slow. They disturb us."</i>
	Andréia	<i>"The class was great but some students upset me"</i>

(Feedback cards – 05/20/2011, 05/06/2011, 05/24/2011 and 06/03/2011 respectively)

As illustrated in Table 12, students' comments show how they were actually seizing the classes but disturbing problems were frequent, mainly for some students who got lost during an activity (Suzana). Also, some of the adolescents already acknowledged that, in fact, their friends who were not interested, ended up losing a chance to learn (Carlos and Bento) and affecting their colleagues' attention and concentration as well (Kelly). As suggested by Karen, students would benefit more from classes if they actually paid attention to them.

Among the different social roles that adolescents have (at home, in their group of friends), the student role is one of the most important (Tiba, 1985), and

thus, it is expected they may fulfill this role competently, that is, with good behavior. Moreover, this importance is even highlighted by the pressure and expectancies held by parents (Tiba, 1985) and also their teachers. Thus, a student who would know the right time to keep quiet and not disturb is one of teachers' desires. But actually, today's classrooms show that a quiet student, passive or totally subservient to the teacher, has changed. There are cases of indifference or apathy (Macowski, 1993), decrease in interest (Eccles et al, 1993) and, of course indiscipline (Soares, 2007).

Despite the several changes which are common in this age, another shift that creates a possibility for conflict, but not in every case, is the increase of demands in this age. Since the adolescent is no longer a child, more autonomy is expected in times when thinking about the future is another preoccupation for them. This is very common with students who are in transition to high school (Eccles & Midgley, 1993), once in this period, more responsibility is required, not only to their academic achievement but also the vocational aspect of defining the next step: going to university (Schunk & Meece, 2006; Pajares, 2006). Students in classroom 09 were about to embrace this transitional perspective in the following year when they would start the first year of High School.

As mentioned before, classroom 09 had a reputation among teachers as a complicated group to work with. During the intervention, there was one day that before the English class, when both the principal and the school counselor were talking to the students. This episode was mentioned earlier to exemplify their reputation, but I bring it back here to discuss how students responded that day, in the English class, after they had been scolded because of their (mis)behavior, see excerpt 31.

Excerpt 31

When I arrived the principal was talking to them about their GPA and their classroom behavior. I noticed that many of their teachers have reported behavior problems, especially continuous talking in the classes. (...) As I entered, one of the students asked me if I had heard the things she told them. (...) They were really agitated this day, especially after the principal's scolding.

(Field notes, 04/29/2011)

Also, two reasons led to this meeting between classroom 09 and the principal: a) their GPA and b) their behavior. The complaints came from more than one of their teachers and several students had failed in their previous tests. Notwithstanding, what was an attempt to develop more awareness in their minds turned out to be a “fuel” which intensified their agitation. After they were scolded, they responded with more noise and disruptive talking, and thus, more time was dedicated to managing the classrooms than teaching or conducting the activity (Eccles, et al, 1993).

One way to respond to their constant chattering and interest decline in the class was trying to make them aware of their time waste. As they pointed out in phase 1, the time they had for English classes was one of the reasons for not learning as they should. Thus, they had to realize that in these conditions, some of the students were depriving themselves of learning, and hindering their friends of the chance to learn as well. Inside the classroom, time seems to go by faster than other places people are. In fact, Partin (2009:76) claims that “classroom research studies have observed that an average of 18 percent of class time is consumed by discipline matters”. This estimate may not be true for every classroom, but illustrates the difficulties⁷⁰ teachers have to struggle in the attempt to make the time-on-task as profitable as possible.

With such misbehavior, some students could not stand the situation, and there were times when they raised their voice, complaining about their peers who were disturbing. These two excerpts below (32 and 33), registered in the same class, illustrate moments when even the students were upset by their colleagues’ (mis)behavior.

Excerpts 32 and 33

((The group of students close to the recorder – 4 boys – talks and the teacher stops the explanation and look at the group))

Fernando: *Is the chattering over right there? ((staring at the group))*

Marcelo: *Come on! That’s mean. There are people here who wanna learn ((staring at the group as well))* *((the boys stop talking))*

(phase 2, 05/10/2011)

⁷⁰ Others aspects in the classroom are time consuming, such as: calling the roll, unexpected visitors, students who have to be reprimanded, concluding one activity to start a new lesson, etc.

((The teacher hits the eraser against the blackboard))

Marcelo: *He::y, for God's sake, let's cooperate!!!*

Fernando: *I'm gonna wait for you then.*

Tânia: *Shut up people!*

Fabiana: *He:::y people!*

Fernando: *You got to learn how to control yourselves.*

((the group calms down – little by little))

(Classroom recording, phase 2, 05/10/2011)

The left extract (32) is an example of the *back-row distractor* (Lewis, 2002). In situations like this, when the teacher is conducting the activity but some students are talking at the same time, Lewis (2002) suggests to look firmly at the distractors as the activity is being explained and slow down the rhythm of the explanation waiting for them to stop. In this case, another pupil interrupted and complained about his friend as well. The disruptive talking was brought to an end as they realized they were the reason why the activity had stopped. However, this was an example of a major disturbance. Smaller groups (especially pairs) also took advantage to talk during class, and the teacher had to try to silence all of them. As suggested in the beginning of this analysis, in the “battle” of 32 against 1, classroom management poses an actual challenge for teacher.

In both extracts, we have Marcelo's reaction to the noisier mates in his classroom. In the first excerpt (32) the explanation of the activity was interrupted because of four boys who sat close to the recorder and who were making fun of themselves, knowing that it would be registered⁷¹. In the second, when the eraser was hit on the blackboard as an attempt to make the whole group quiet, again, students started calming down. Thus, the beginning of the intervention was characterized by the challenge of making them aware that time was running, and they should not waste it with unnecessary chattering, and also with scolding and punishments.

As a group, classroom 09 had a good relationship, with few internal conflicts, but the chattering occurred mainly in the cliques. In the previous excerpt, for example, four boys who sat close to each other were making fun of themselves because they knew it would be recorded in the digital recorder. And it was Marcelo, a colleague who was not in their clique, who complained about

⁷¹ Students were curious to hear their classroom recordings, as mentioned in the focus group.

them. When the four boys realized that everyone was looking at them (teacher and students), they cooperated more.

Macowski (1993) concluded that in *teacher x student* interaction in the EFL class, the adolescents involved the minimum desire to be exposed in front of the other peers which is why voluntary participation did not occur very often⁷². In a similar perspective, the four boys who were disturbing the rest of the group realized the extension of their action (which for them could have been seen as something negative) by the exposure, as the teacher stopped the class to wait for them to stop talking.

Despite this struggle with indiscipline, there was no record of aggressive or more serious conflict during the intervention. All conflicts were solved bearing in mind that using an even louder tone of voice (from me, as their teacher), instead of resolving the conflict, would actually lead to unnecessary argument. The agitation in the English classes and the disruptive talking did not totally disappear during the intervention; yet, they started to participate more in the activities as time progressed, lowering their resistance and misbehavior.

4.2.3 New Learning experiences in classroom 09.

Human interaction covers a lot of different experiences⁷³ that come from the relation with the sociocultural environment and also through the use symbolic tools in mediation (Kozulin, 2003). In the language classroom, learning experiences are related to the kind of beliefs learners develop and strengthen over time. In this section, which is divided in three parts, I focus on students' beliefs and their response to the classes I taught.

In the first part, I focus on a translation activity, in which some students were engaged in building their knowledge by negotiating meanings and relating to what they already knew. In the second part, I focus on the classes based on music activities. These classes presented another prominent fact regarding their beliefs

⁷² Another reason was the approach used with those students. In Macowski's (1993) observations, activities were based on the audio-lingual method. By that time, in Brazil, the communicative approach was recent, but already familiar for a few teachers.

⁷³ According to Kozulin (2003:23-24) Vygotsky considered both types of experience (with the environment stimuli and with the use of tools) distinctively.

and experiences: a mismatch between what was proposed (the purpose the activity) and the way students generally do activities with songs. The third part is based on a class which focused on peer collaboration. Students reflected about the role of learning with assistance and whether or not they saw it as relevant. These perspectives illustrate the impact of the intervention on students, how they evaluated the classes and the way it corresponded (or not) to their own beliefs.

4.2.3.1 Learning through translation: from mediation to meaning

In the seventh class of the intervention (05/10/2011), I talked to them about English terms that are present in their daily lives. This topic was part of the annual planning that Dona Cidinha had determined. I adapted the activity from one exercise in their textbook and inserted extra vocabulary. First, students had to define the term to its use in their lives (i.e., *lan house = the place I access the internet or play online games*). After that, with the whole group, students had to guess the meaning of the terms and check the original meaning to the way they use the words.

This activity was planned based on students' belief that they did not know a lot of English words⁷⁴. English is an international language often used in the media they have access to, so the acquisition of English terms is more frequent than they realize (though it seems imperceptible for some people). In general, students responded well to the activity as the extract from the field notes explicate:

Excerpt 34

This class was audio recorded. Students enjoyed the idea of understanding the literal meaning of the words they generally used, especially because they helped them to associate the translation to the concept they have already developed to the expressions (without knowing the literal meaning).

(Field notes, entry 14, 05/10/2011)

⁷⁴ See again section 4.1.2.3, excerpt 19, regarding students' beliefs on the lack a basic knowledge in EFL.

The classroom recording provided more details of this class: a mediated interaction where students demonstrated to be engaged into building their knowledge and negotiating meaning in the target language (which I discuss later).

Just as cited in the previous section, getting students' attention to participate and not talk disruptively was the most prominent challenge in phase 2. One way to motivate them was to propose activities in classes that they could find relevance and significance for them⁷⁵. Thus, a more traditional activity (i.e, a worksheet), in which students had to guess and make connections between new vocabulary and what they already knew, would not engage the group as this activity did. Excerpt 35 illustrates this point.

Excerpt 35

((the group is trying to guess the words))

Fernando: the next word, let's see if someone knows this one. (teacher writes 'e-mail' on the board).

Tânia: I know!

Ellen: It's electronic...

Tânia: It's mail! ((using the Portuguese)) word "correspondência")

Alan: It's electronic mail... ((using the term "correio eletrônico" in Portuguese))

Fernando: Ok. But what about just the word "MAIL"?

((students nod their heads and Fernando moves on))

Fernando: The word "mail", just this word... it means "correspondência" ((translation)).

Rebeca: And post office? (("correio" in Portuguese))

Fernando: That is another word, an institution. Because... for example, when the postman has got a letter for you, no one says "you've got post office today" ((the right expression would be 'you've got mail today'))

((some students laugh))

X: Sedex ((a Brazilian service for fast shipping))

Mário: So, is it ((e-mail)) an electronic mail?

Fernando: Yeah, thus "E" means...?

Alan: Electronic. (INCOMP)

Rebeca: Eletroshop

Alan: (laughs) I was gonna say that.

(Classroom recording, phase 2, 05/10/2011)

⁷⁵ Language learning itself is already relevant and significant. However, if learners do not realize that, regardless the effort, it may be difficult for learning to occur satisfactorily.

The excerpt indicates a scene where students made a lot of guesses to define the meaning of the word “mail” and connect it to the word “e-mail”. Different students participated in the discussion trying to offer the possible correct answer (i.e., Alan, Rebeca and Tânia). Their guesses were then followed by a teacher’s short explanation in order to help students not to make confusion and get to the right word. Finally, after lots of attempts, and occasional jokes, students came to the final conclusion and the correct meaning for the word they were discussing.

An important feature observed in this scene is the way different students were involved in the discussion to give an appropriate meaning for the word at stake and the way their guesses almost matched the real meaning. Both teacher and students seemed to be in synchrony as the teacher gave the direction through comments and, as the expert, offered feedback whether their guesses were going on the right track. Thus, the negotiation of meaning occurred by letting students use their own knowledge and come to a conclusion.

As Pekarek Doehler (2002) contends, a classroom activity (or the classroom content) takes into account the actual *social situation* in which the task itself occurs. Therefore, what will be very important is how the teacher⁷⁶ and learners respond to the situation “as a social interaction encounter” (Pekarek Doehler: 2002:22). Even the jokes and laughs were relevant in this interactional scene because they show that the reason of the laughter was related to the task (finding a suitable definition to explain the word “e-mail”).

Still, in these more participative situations the classroom remained noisy. But this time, noise was a result of several students trying to talk at the same time during one activity. The next extract is from the same class. This time, however, students were trying to guess the individual meaning for the expression “coffee break”:

⁷⁶ Pekarek Doehler (2002) refers to the terms “learners and experts” relating to collaboration and mediation in sociocultural settings.

Excerpt 36

Fernando: The next expression is COFFEE BREAK.
Alan: It's diner!
Marcelo: ((Marcelo is poked by a student)) Teache:::r, LOOK! Physical aggression here!
Rebeca: Is it "black coffee"?
Mário: hot!
Fabiana: it's about coffee!
Alan: cofee.
Fernando: Let's listen to yout friend over there.
X: It's Black cofee!
((several students are talking at the same time – they all shout the word "coffee"))
((INCOMP))
Fernando: There in the back, Hugo is close to an answer, what did he say?
Hugo: ((repeating his answer)) It's a pause to have a coffee or something.
Alan: ah, I know...
Fernando: Hold on, ((trying to interrupt Alan)). The word "break" can also be used to stop or interrupt something.
X: Black coffee
Tânia: Breaking for coffee ((laughs))
Alan: A stopped coffee ((laughs))
Marcelo: Don't be silly guys.
Tânia: (shouts) O:::o
((Alan and Mário are talking about other topic, not related to the class))
P: So, it's a break, a pause. Your recess is like a coffee break. After three classes, you stop a lit bit. But you don't have any coffee. Do you? (laughs)
Alan: I have at home. The coffee break.
X: I have some water. But teachers have ((referring to coffee))
Alan: That's prejudice (laughs)
((students are talking in the back))

(Classroom recording, phase 2, 05/10/2011)

The excerpt shows another example of how students engaged in the activity, but this time, the noise was a result of the willingness to give the right meaning for the term "coffee break". The interaction was mediated through several hints that allowed students to combine what they knew in order to provide the answer. The term coffee is more evident in the extract, which explains why students suggested words such as "hot" or "black". The hints were offered, for example, by Hugo in his first guess, and by the teacher. And again, with jokes about the topic, students come to understand the expression *coffee break*.

This seventh intervention class was different from the previous ones. As shown in excerpt 36, students were more involved with the task and even the jokes or the talking were related to the activity. The challenge posed in the

exercise was also mentioned in the field notes from that day⁷⁷. Through their interaction illustrated in excerpt 37, it was possible to observe that students were using what they knew in order to progress in the activity towards what they did not know. In other words, progressing in their zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Even if their guesses had nothing to do with the original meaning of the word, no one seemed to be embarrassed by making mistakes. In fact, they laughed and made jokes about it, and were more focused on the task.

Creating possibilities like this was crucial for the intervention, once gaining their trust presented a chance to show that learning English is a possibility and depended not only on them. In addition, their participation was not only seen in terms of solving a problem or carrying out a specific task in the language class, but also as the construction of language learning in an environment where they engaged in the activity, accepted what was proposed, shared the communicative convention (Pekarek Doehler, 2002) and devoted less time to talking about other things. Having the participation of students who initially did not seem to believe in learning English was a good sign in this phase – by the seventh class.

For classroom 09, this class provided first insights to understand that even with their (dis)beliefs, learning English could occur, but it was still necessary to make them aware of that. The use of English words present in their lives provided an activity which motivated them to learn new vocabulary, or to understand better why that word is used in their context as well. From this activity that was mediated by the teacher's hints but also by students' guesses, the group negotiated meaning for the words (in English) they commonly use, according to the rules and conventions entailed in the social activity (Pekarek Doehler, 2002).

4.2.3.2 Learning EFL with music: conflicting students' beliefs

The activity for this class was based on the song *Price Tag*⁷⁸ by British singer Jessie J. and each student received a copy of the lyrics. The activity (see appendix S) was divided in two moments: a) introductory activities that focused on listening exercises (i.e., completing missing words) and vocabulary and b) a discussion about the theme of the song. The choice of a more traditional activity

⁷⁷ See appendix F – entry 14.

⁷⁸ The song was becoming popular at the time the study was conducted, which is why I chose it.

(a listening exercise to fill in the gaps) to start the class was a strategy to make students familiar with the lyrics, rather than just asking them to read silently for some minutes and later make comments.

In the feedback cards they evaluated the class as interesting and enjoyed both the choice of the song and the task. The following feedback cards (Table 13) illustrate different opinions of students who liked this class specifically.

Table 13 – students’ feedback on the class with music

Music class – students’ view	David	<i>“Yeah. I found this class amusing. The activity was nice for covering all aspects in the English language, because everything is important [in the lyrics].”</i>
	Mário	<i>“It was interesting because we learn to know words better. I was able to notice the words that were missing or the ones that has more than one option [referring to the introductory activity]. I think the class got better.”</i>
	Ricardo	<i>“Yes. I think that not only in English classes, but others as well, they should have that [referring to activities with music] to make the class more fun.”</i>
	Alice	<i>“Yes. Very good, because we need to understand better the texts in English.”</i>
	Carlos	<i>“Yeah, I liked the class, through the way we worked with the song and mainly the song, that was what I liked the most.”</i>

(Feedback cards,

05/24/2011)

The excerpts illustrate that students approved the activity and were aware of the benefits of learning English with music. David, for example, found interesting that the activity entailed all aspects, both the vocabulary and the listening (part I) but also the discussion of the content of the song (part II). Mário seems to express that “the class got better” because the activity met their needs as learners.

Ricardo suggested that not only the language classes but other subjects should include music in the classes for a more amusing environment. Alice connected the activity to the importance of understanding texts in the target language, an aspect which was mentioned by Moita Lopes (1996). Another aspect that emerged in Carlos’s card is the empathy with the song that was brought for them, because despite teachers’ efforts to prepare an activity and choose a song, their students do not correspond positively most of the times (see Macowski,

1993; Lima 2011b). When the song was chosen, there was a possibility of rejection either of the singer/genre or the activity itself, but taking a chance was the only way to know how they would respond.

Nevertheless, even with this major approval in classroom 09, during the music class it was also possible to notice a belief mismatch between the way the activity was conducted to the belief of how it should be conducted (according to the students). This mismatch exemplifies Alanen's (2003) characterization of beliefs⁷⁹ as cultural artifacts that mediate students' learning and the idea that beliefs also happen to emerge in the actual context of activity, and in this case, with the song I had brought for them.

Some students did not want to read the lyrics and discuss the possibilities of interpretation; they wanted me to provide a final translation which they could write or copy. A literal translation was not considered when I planned the class for two specific reasons: 1) it takes a lot of time to dictate or make students copy when they want to keep the translation for them and 2) it distracts them from the opportunity to read the lyrics, infer and try to negotiate meaning from it. Evidence of the mismatch was recurrent in this phase, according to my field notes

Excerpt 37

“First, Marcelo interrupted me and said it was better for me to say the translation and they would write. But then I explained to him that if I did that we would spend too much time and they would not think about the meaning, only copy words. They demonstrated some resistance to do that. I noticed they are more interested in the listening activity itself. “

(Field notes, intervention phase, 05/24/2011)

Even with the explanation and the reasons of why the activity would not be like they suggested, the adolescents did not seem to accept it, and, in fact, some preferred to listen to the teacher translating it. They only had the lyrics with them, not the translation. During the class, two situations (Excerpts 38 and 39) showed students asking for the teacher to give them the translation as shown below.

⁷⁹ See chapter 2 for a sociocultural perspective on language learning beliefs.

Excerpt 38

Fernando: Has any of you thought what does this ‘price tag’ have to do with the lyrics? Mariana even said in the beginning of the class about songs with titles that do not have anything to do with the lyrics. Are they related?

Marcelo: Translate for us!

Fernando: No, no translation, I will help you to understand the lyrics.

Rebeca: I think it ((‘price tag’)) has to do with the lyrics.

Fernando: Let’s listen again...

((the music is played for the second time))

Fernando: What about now? Did you get them ((missing words))?

Marcelo: I already got them!

Jéssica: Sort of.

Bento: I didn’t.

Fernando: Then, let’s check, ok?

Marcelo: I did it, but I don’t know if it’s right.

(Classroom recordings , phase 2, 05/24/2011)

The students were asked to answer whether they saw any relation between the words “price tag” and the song (by then, they already knew the meaning). And then, for the first time, Marcelo asked for the translation. However, it was not provided, with the argument that they would be assisted in order to understand the lyrics. The music is played again and Marcelo then focused on the first part of the activity, but later, again asked for the translation instead of discussing it with the group, as shown below:

Excerpt 39

Fernando: *Ok. Now let’s move on to the lyrics.*

Leonardo: *Play it for us again.*

Marcelo: *Say the translation and we copy.*

Fernando: *This translation will take too long, and you just copy, you won’t try to understand.*

Marcelo: *Ah. ((complaining))*

Fernando: *Let’s see if together we are able to understand the lyrics.*

((Several students complain))

Hugo: *We should see the video clip.*

Jéssica: *Yeah.*

Hugo: *Cause the whole song is easier to understand through the video.*

(Classroom recordings , phase 2, 05/24/2011)

Marcelo was the first to complain when they realized that I was not going to write the translation on the board. This was a sign that they were not used to such kind of activity, and probably, as suggested by Marcelo, dictating the translation was a common activity which he enjoyed⁸⁰. However, he was not the only one. Other students complained about the way the activity was carried out and later expressed that even enjoying the activity, it did not meet their beliefs about how the activity should have been conducted in the class.⁸¹.

Excerpt 40 and 41

Rebeca	<i>“Cool. It’s better than translating long lyrics. It would be nice, after we completed the lyrics, to know its “translation”. Then, I think the teacher should give a copy of the lyrics in Portuguese as well, along with the one in English”.</i>
Karen	<i>“It’s nice, but I always get lost when I have to do the exercises. I find word by word translation something cool, but it doesn’t work out because of the talking, which is excessive.”</i>

(Feedback cards – 05/24/2011)

Despite evaluating the class positively, both of them reinforced the preference for a literal translation. While Rebeca said she wanted to have this kind of activity in the class, Karen recognized that such activity was impossible in classroom 09 because of the chattering, and also mentioned her struggle to do the task. Both girls did not cause any conflict or refuse to do the activity because it was not the way they wanted, but still the mismatch between what was done and what they expected emerged.

Beliefs mismatch has been a topic of research in several contexts (Barcelos, 2000, 2003b; Lima, S. 2005; Maitino, 2007). Barcelos (2000), with adult learners, considered the mutual influence that occurs in the learning environment, that is, the way students are influenced by their teachers and vice versa. Lima, S. (2005) and Maitino (2007) in Brazilian public schools noticed the mismatch between what is done in classroom and what students expect. In the first

⁸⁰ It is important to reassure that during the observation period there were no classes with music activities, which possibly suggests that copying the translation of lyrics might come from previous learning experiences.

⁸¹ I believe that Marcelo would possibly address this topic in his card, just like Rebeca and Karen, but unfortunately, that day, he received a card but did not return it.

questionnaire, students did not offer further details about how they expected teachers to use music in their language classes. It was through the classroom experience with the different activity that they came to realize how they wanted it to be carried out.

Students' beliefs emerged in this event both in the recording (in the interactions with students and I) and also in their feedback cards. As a cultural artifact (Alanen, 2003), their beliefs mediated the attempts to make me follow their suggestion, which in turn did not happen. They were not shared by all of students – as shown in the feedback cards – but by the ones who really wanted to receive the translation instead of trying to understand it with the teacher's help.

Despite the conflict or dichotomy that is entailed in teachers' and students' beliefs (Mercer, 2011; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011), a mismatch is also a clear opportunity to unfold the complexity of learning a language in a sociocultural context. Teacher and students should try to understand the causes of the phenomenon when it comes down to conflict. Barcelos (2003b:194) suggests for teachers, first to “gather students' feedback about classroom practices before, during, and at the end of a course. Secondly, they should reflect on their own beliefs about SLA and compare them with those of students’”. This is especially important when students tend to be more evasive in classroom participation. Even if they do not clearly express their disagreement towards the way activities are conducted, that does not mean that their beliefs are not affecting their decisions and actions in the learning environment.

In classroom 09, there was a mismatch between the proposed activity and the way some students believed the activity should be done. As beliefs originate from our experiences, it is possible to infer that this belief about translating lyrics may come from a tradition to use music in language classroom as a way to fill the gaps between lesson plans. Other times, teachers may focus on grammar only (Basso, 1999), instead of on the lyrics. Teachers seem to be aware of the motivational aspects of bringing a song to the classroom (Murphey, 1992). Yet, usually, they end up using songs not as a source for language learning, but only as an extra activity to cheer up a group with motivation decline or to teach grammar and translation.

Even with the activity not following what they expected or believed, it was positively evaluated. They may have struggled with the type of activity (as Karen

did), but still, their beliefs did not cause a direct impact on what was proposed. For instance, the mismatch could have made students refuse to do the task, not engage at all or simply reinforce their stand that the activity should be done the way they believed was better, or at least in a way they felt comfortable with. And that did not occur. Hence, even when the class does not meet students' expectations, a belief mismatch does not always emerge. In this case, there was an initial unfamiliarity of what was proposed in that class, which could be understood as a slight sign of conflict. However, the unfamiliar activity left a good impression on them, as the later positive feedback indicated, and turned out to be a positive way to experience language learning with music. The impact of the activity seemed to be the reason why students did not end up rejecting it in the first place, and highlights the idea that in the classroom, students and teachers should be open to experience different activities.

With this idea in mind, the teacher has to go on with the task and not give up if first signs of students' rejection appear, though teachers should always be open to accept students' feedback. As Woods (2003:218) suggested, it is important to "push the learner to revise some elements of his or her current belief system". In other words, learners are not always aware that of the impact of their own beliefs or that these may create constraints to their learning. Also, they may not be aware of other ways to learn, besides the ones they are used to or believe in, and teachers can help them notice that, by suggesting a different approach to an activity they usually do in class, as I reported in this section.

Since beliefs are part of our identities (Barcelos, 2000, 2003b, 2006), they emanate comfort for people who use them as a compass, which will lead to a "right direction"⁸². And therefore, the rejection due to unfamiliarity is understood. Even so, by trying something out of the ordinary, out of their comfort zone, learners have the chance to discover other ways to improve their learning, and possibly, change beliefs.

⁸² By "right" I refer to the learner's subjective view, which for other people may not be seen similarly.

4.2.3.3 Learning through peer collaboration: beliefs and criticisms

In the thirteenth class, the students had another activity to do in pairs, in which they had to interact with their friends asking personal questions in the target language. However, the indiscipline in classroom 09 hampered this first activity. That is why another try was made closer to the end of the intervention. I assumed that by then, students would be probably more aware and familiar with the classes they were having and tasks they were doing.

Thus, the 13th class was a follow-up activity based on the grammar topic assigned for that unit: the simple past tense (regular verbs). They sat in pairs⁸³ and I explained that in order to complete the task they would have to work together. Each pair received one copy of a text that introduced the characters of the TV series *That 70's show* (see appendix T,U and V for the whole activity). The text was mainly in the past tense and described the characters' profiles, personality traits and leisure activities they enjoyed in the 1970's. Nevertheless, they did not have all the verbs and some of them had to be discovered by doing the exercise.

They also received a word search containing all the verbs. In pairs they would have to check with each other before completing the text and negotiate who would find a specific answer first. Finally, the pair had to complete the text and hand one final version for the duo⁸⁴.

The 29 feedback cards in that day presented two major opinions about this activity: a) the activity was positive because together they shared the responsibility of the task but at the same time counted on each other to solve doubts (24), and b) they enjoyed the activity but believed that by themselves they could have done it the same way (5). Table 14 presents a summary of the first type answers:

Table 14. Students' feedback on pair work (I)

Feedback on peer	Andréia	<i>"Yes, I liked that the activity was in pairs, we could have more exercises to be done like that, they make us think harder."</i>
	Ricardo	<i>"I liked it. It's better together because one helps the other. Another good thing is that the content was well explained which made the activity easier to do."</i>

⁸³ Guk and Kellog (2007) criticize the tendency to study peer collaboration in pairs, as an influence from Psychology studies with infants. However, working in pairs seemed very appropriate with classroom 09, also as a way to be able to assist the pairs once the activity started.

⁸⁴ This was the second evaluation with the group. See appendix T for a complete version of the activity carried out that day.

Gustavo	<i>"It was very cool, I liked it. It's better in pairs because one helps the other. It would be worse to do by yourself. I helped and was helped by my friend. I wish we had more activities in this way."</i>
Karen	<i>"I loved it. I think that when it's in pairs, one can solve the other's doubts, while one looks for the words the other completes. In pairs is much better."</i>
Jéssica	<i>"Cool! I think it was better in pairs because we could solve each other's doubts. I helped Karen and she helped me as well. I think it was way different from the classes I've had."</i>

(Feedback cards – 05/27/2011)

Students enjoyed the activity, suggesting that it should be done in other subjects as well (Andréia) and also acknowledged that in pairs they share the responsibilities and work together (Karen and Gustavo). These positive evaluations corroborate the idea of what has been referred to as effective collaboration in the language classroom (Basso & Lima, 2010; Donato, 1994; Ferreira, 2008; Verenikina, 2003;). As a result of the popularity of the Vygotskian construct of the Zone of Proximal Development (Kinginger, 2002), studies in other fields began studying collaboration and offered new interpretations (cf. Valsiner & van der Veer, 1993).

Donato (1994), in a study with undergraduates observed the mutual benefit of collaboration, in other words, collective scaffolding. When learners are aware of their roles of capable peers to offer and receive assistance, and when they feel motivated to engage in such types of collective tasks, mutual collaboration is more likely to happen. Therefore, as seen in most of the feedback cards (24 out of 30), the assistance that was provided and received was seen as a relevant aspect of the activity they were engaged (Ferreira, 2008; Moll & Greenberg, 1996).

But even with the positive evaluation after the activity happened, organizing the groups in pairs and reminding them to stay focused on the task was not as simple as described in the study with adults, for instance, (Donato, 1994). In fact, with adolescent students, in settings like private or public schools, (Basso & Lima, 2010; Ferreira, 2008; Lima & Basso, 2009) motivating them to participate seemed to be a primary concern, as mentioned in the field notes about that class.

Excerpt 42

“The group demonstrated to be involved in the task. In the beginning it was very complicated to organize them in pairs. We made a deal that if they collaborated (by not making too much noise) I would allow them to choose their peers. Then, they sat together and two students helped me to give out the papers. (...) They seem to be more aware of pair work now than they were in the beginning, in the class I asked them to ask questions for their peers

(Field notes, entry 10, 05/27/2011)

Unlike the activity in the first class which required peer interaction in a speaking task, at this point their involvement seemed to be better than the first attempt in the beginning of phase 2. In order to get students to cooperate, they were in charge of choosing their pair. Even running the risk of disruptive talking occurring because they were with their colleagues, this was better than having them resisting working with someone they did not want to⁸⁵. However, they seem to have enjoyed it more this time. Five students also approved the class and the task they had to do. Notwithstanding, they added the fact that they could have done that by themselves as well, that is, without having their colleagues’ collaboration, as shown in Table 15:

Table 15. Students’ feedback on pair work (II)

Feedback on peer collaboration (I)	Eduardo	<i>“I think it was good, but could have been done by ourselves as well. But I liked it.”</i>
	Leonardo	<i>“It was cool, but for me, in pairs or alone, whatever.”</i>
	Tânia	<i>“Good. Neither help nor were helped, because the both of us knew how to do it.”</i>
	Alice	<i>“Very nice. But I could have done it by myself. It was fun to work with simple past tense verbs.”</i>
	Johnny	<i>“Awesome, I think either ways work out, in pairs or by yourself.”</i>

(Feedback cards – 05/27/2011)

Students emphasized their autonomy to do the activity (Eduardo and Tânia), but even in pairs, some of them enjoyed (Alice), and others believed that either way the activity would work (Leonardo and Johnny). Tudge (1996) pointed out in a study with children that their level of confidence in the task is important.

⁸⁵ Possibly with other groups, making them sit with people they usually do not work with is a good strategy to involve classes and allow them to work with other mates. However, in classroom 09, letting them choose their partners was a strategy to make them more motivated to participate. Since in the first class, the effective participation did not turn out to be as expected, negotiating with them was a good solution at the time.

These five students probably demonstrated enough confidence to carry out the activity by themselves⁸⁶.

According to Tudge (1996), Ferreira (2008) and Basso and Lima (2010), if students do not demonstrate interest in the purpose of the activity, the benefits of engaging them in collaborative activities tend to be limited. The adolescents in classroom 09 believed that the class focusing on pair work was productive and tended to involve students who had not been very participative in other classes, as shown in excerpt 43:

Excerpt 43

Today some students missed the class, a number that was more than usual, around 8 students. Hugo, Mário and João who sit in the back were very fast. They really helped each other and completed the task successfully. By sitting in the back, sometimes I have to call their names out loud in order to ask them to be quiet, but they have really paid attention to the last few classes.

(Field notes - entry 10 - 05/27/2011)

Besides looking at how interaction is constructed between the peers in these activities (Tudge, 1996), in this section, I focused on their perspectives about the activity they were engaged in. All students evaluated this class positively. Asking for students' feedback on planned activities is relevant because even if they do not agree or believe in what is proposed, by experiencing the unknown, they may be able to reinforce or question their own beliefs.

In this phase, I addressed the discussion towards students' opinions and beliefs about the different activities that were proposed throughout the intervention phase. First, I analyzed the resistance to the new, that is, the way they responded to the first classes. Then I described different situations where they evaluated classes according to what they experienced in those specific days. In the following section, I analyze whether their beliefs changed as a result of the intervention phase.

⁸⁶ It is important to mention that none of the students discarded the teacher's assistance in the activity, that is, they would not need another friend to assist but the teacher's role in assisting them in the language class was not addressed in the feedback cards. For the role of the teacher in instruction and assistance for learners in the sociocultural contexts see Gallimore and Tharp (1996) and Basso and Lima (2010).

4.3 Phase 3 – Evaluation

After the last class with the group, I applied the final questionnaire and carried out a focus group with the adolescents. As I described in the methodology chapter, there was not much time available because of a possible strike. Thus, my presence in the context during this period was shorter. The whole group was present and 32 questionnaires were collected. For the focus group, students were invited to participate freely.

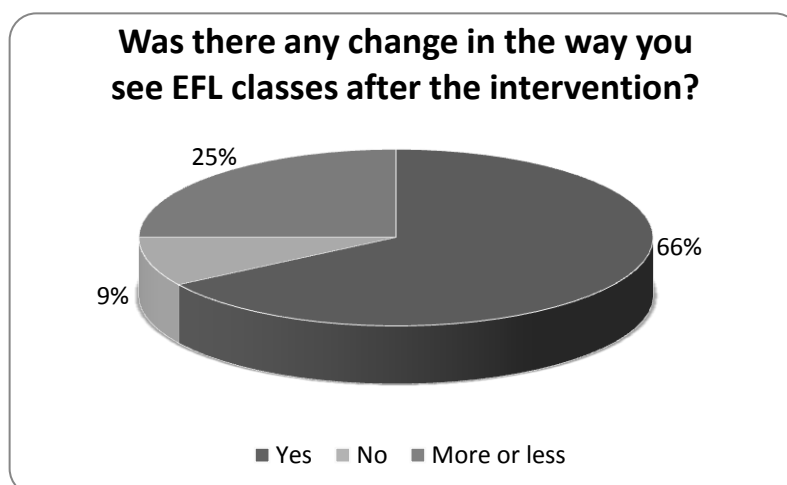
This final section describes the impact of the intervention on students' beliefs that were mapped and described in section 4.2. I start by, first, comparing the (dis)belief observed in phase 1 and their current perspectives in phase 3. The signs of change discussed here entail their beliefs about the English class and the possibility of learning in public school. This is followed by students' views of their own indiscipline and the impact of the classroom activities proposed in the intervention for their learning process and beliefs.

4.3.1 Signs of change in beliefs about the EFL class

In the beginning of the study, most students (78%) had positive opinions about learning English, while half of the group (50%) enjoyed the subject English, followed by a significant portion (40%) who did not like it at all, and surprisingly, 10% of the group who revealed that had never reflected on it, even though they had been having English classes for four years. This was not congruent with the view they expressed about English as a subject. If students demonstrated to be positive about learning another language, it would be expected that more than half of them would be fond of the subject and get more involved in classes, which was not the case.

At the end of the study, the adolescents were asked whether they felt any kind of change in the way they saw their classes after the intervention period. More than half of the students (66%) seemed to view English in a more positive light, indicating change when thinking about phase 3. Graph 6 illustrates the group's different opinions.

Graph 6. Students' views of classes after the intervention



(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

More than half of the students reported some kind of change (66%), followed by 25% of the group that pointed out some sort of change, whereas, 9% of them reported no change. In their explanations for the possible change, students remembered a few problems they faced during intervention but also what they saw as positive, as shown below:

Excerpts 44 and 45

João	<i>“Yes. Because in spite of the indiscipline, the teacher had a nice way to work, there were games like the one about the singers, and I felt more motivated to learn English, after these classes it was easier to learn.”</i>
Karen	<i>“Yes. There was change because in the classes, the activities were developed and the teacher was very nice to the people who had doubts about the content.”</i>

(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

João remembered the problem of indiscipline which bothered him and his friends during some classes. But at the same time he emphasized that, despite this fact, he felt more motivated to learn, he felt things were easier and also mentioned an example of an activity that was probably significant. Karen noticed a change regarding the doubts she could solve in the classes, as well as the attention they received for solving their doubts and inquiries. This opinion was also mentioned by three other students in their questionnaires.

Despite conflicts that may occur on a regular basis with teacher and their adolescent learners, the teacher’s attention is something they value. This need for

the teachers' attention can be seen both in them liking to be helped by the teacher and in their indiscipline, as a way of drawing attention to themselves. In an Indonesian state school, Lamb (2004) carried out a study with adolescent learners about autonomy. He highlighted the teacher as a "central figure" (Lamb, 2004:238). In other words, students count on him or her. As suggested by one of participants in his study, sometimes it does not matter whether the students like their teacher; sometimes a more important aspect is that the teacher likes them. However, this perspective may be different in other contexts where students demonstrate to have lost respect for their teachers, and therefore, caring about what the teacher thinks about them is not a concern.

Unlike the group of Lamb's study (2004), which had an autonomous profile and showed the respect towards their teachers and readiness to cooperate with each other (...)" (Lamb, 2004:242), in classroom 09 this was not a reality (yet). Regarding João's and Karen's feedback pointing out the motivation he felt to learn English and her contentment with solving her doubts, this first step seemed to have been given, that is, to maximize learners' potentials by engaging them in their learning process.

Students who chose more or less, justified this option by opposing their positive experiences with others that somehow influenced and/or restrained them from noticing change. These two extracts exemplify this point:

Excerpt 46-47

Fabiana	<i>"More or Less. With the students talking it wasn't possible to learn a lot, but even so I noticed that the English classes can be hard but cool at the same time."</i>
Carlos	<i>"More or less. Because there were some activities had never been done like the interpretation of the song, but on the other hand I remain not liking English."</i>

(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

Fabiana contrasted her learning to the disruptive talking which did not allow her to learn more, but at the same time, she realized that learning English could be fun, even if her beliefs suggested it was still hard. This sign of change is understood as a result of the experiences she had during the intervention. Despite believing that English for her was yet hard to learn, the new learning experiences provoked another point of view, that English classes could be also cool.

Carlos, just like João, mentioned an activity he recalled as different for him, which he “had never done”. However, the activities did not have the same impact on Carlos as they did on Fabiana. He added that his dislike for English still remained. The new classroom experiences did not seem to be enough to change, for example, his opinion about learning English or the subject he had at school, both of which he did not like at all⁸⁷. And thus, English is just another subject he will have to conclude by the end of the year with a sufficient GPA score.

The ones who did not notice any kind of change reported their reason as well. Rebeca’s and Alice’s point of view is shown as follows.

Excerpts 48-49

Rebeca	<i>“No. With our teacher [Dona Cidinha] students were more silent in the classroom, but with other teacher some students were impolite and didn’t shut up. So, in some classes the teacher had to spend more time calling students’ attention than teaching.”</i>
Alice	<i>“No. I hate English in any situation. I think this is very unnecessary.”</i>

(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

Rebeca did not see significant changes in the way she saw the EFL class. She implied that during the intervention, students were more impolite than they generally were with Dona Cidinha. Students’ indiscipline was also remembered in Rebeca’s criticisms to explain why change did not happen. Alice, similarly to Carlos, mentioned earlier, believed no change happened to her because she still hated English, which she described as something unnecessary.

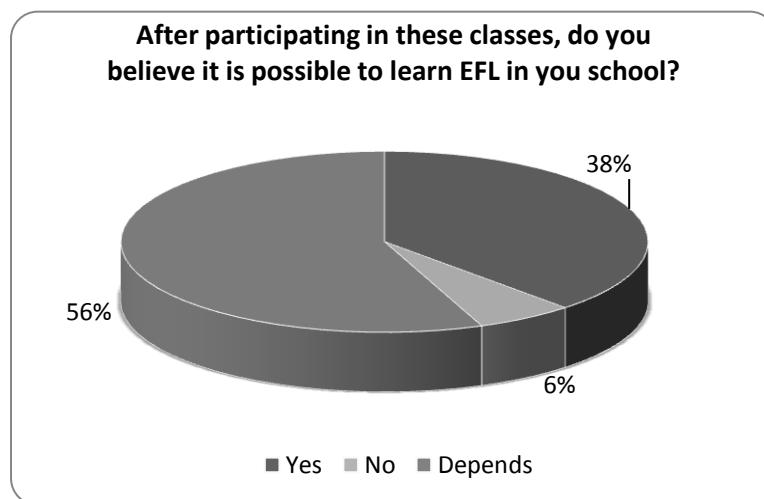
Both Carlos and Alice presented examples that the activities were interesting for them, as a learning experience. Nevertheless, they did not seem to view English differently. Although the activities aimed at helping students to find English learning relevant, their central beliefs prevailed. Woods (2003) suggests that for students to change their beliefs it is necessary to develop their *readiness* for change. And with a large group, such as classroom 09, the intervention did not affect all of them in the same way, but lots of them demonstrated signs of change.

4.3.2 Signs of change in beliefs about the (im)possibility of learning English

⁸⁷ In the initial questionnaire, when asked whether he liked learning English and the English subject, for both answers he chose “no”.

As presented in phase one, forty-seven percent of the students did not believe that it was possible to learn English in their context. The representation of their disbelief was provided based on five aspects from their answers: a) the indiscipline, b) the insufficient number of classes, c) the number of students in the classroom, d) the insufficient materials and e) the lack of a basis they believe they did not have. After the intervention, they were asked again in order to observe if their belief remained the same, strengthened or presented any sign of change. Graph 7 shows indicates how students see the possibility of learning after the intervention.

Graph 7. Belief change about the possibility of learning EFL



(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

The number of students who believe in learning English in school increased from 28% in phase one to 38% percent in phase three. A prominent change is the major decrease from 47% to only 6% of the group. However, the number of in between students remained large. In phase one they had the option “never thought about it” to indicate if they had not really cared about it, and in that moment a quarter of the group (25%) demonstrated this opinion. And after the intervention phase, which aimed at proposing different activities and making them think about it (through feedback cards and later the focus group), “never thought about it” was not an option. Thus, the “depends” alternative replaced it.

The majority of the group demonstrated that their beliefs (38%) changed. In this group, their explanations covered different perspectives, such as the ones presented below:

Excerpts 50-51

Karen	<i>“Yes, because when you have fewer doubts about the contents it is easier to do the exercises.”</i>
Carlos	<i>“Yes. If the student is interested and has the effort to pay attention in classes, he will learn.”</i>

(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

Karen recalled the experiences she had in the intervention (as discussed in section 4.2) to explain her beliefs in the assistance she received during the classes especially with the doubts she had. As I discussed earlier, her positive appraisal concerning the importance of receiving this attention from the teacher engendered a positive reaction, and also the belief that it is possible to learn in this context. Thus, it was created a chance for Karen to *remediate* the relationship of her beliefs and the context of her learning (Yang & Kim, 2011), that is, to start a developmental process of belief change in which more efforts towards learning would be made, instead of being and feeling more limited to learn in her public school context. Carlos offered another point of view. He emphasized the responsibility of the learner in his/her outcomes, that is, the possibility is there, but it is only through the learners’ efforts that the possibility becomes a reality.

Carlos’s explanation is similar to the students who believed in the possibility, but as something that depends on other aspects. The discourse portrays the belief of learners’ responsibility for their learning (see Bandura, 2006; Schunk & Meece, 2006; Pajares, 2006). Nonetheless, as it was pointed out in phase 2, students’ actions did not correspond to their reasoning, showing another contradiction in belief/action (see Negueruela-Azarola, 2011). I chose three examples of explanations in the whole corpus to exemplify the signs of change in the possibility of learning but conditioned to other aspects:

Excerpts 52-54

Alice	<i>“It depends. Because my class is a mess, they don’t know how to listen and do not cooperate. The only thing they know is to keep demanding useless things from the teachers.”</i>
João	<i>“Depends. Because I don’t know if the other classes are as messy as this one here, but despite the indiscipline I was able to learn and interact a lot with the things that were brought.”</i>
Bento	<i>“That depends. Because the indiscipline did not let me learn, but I think I can learn more the subject in the classroom.”</i>

Alice reflected about a contradiction regarding students that explain why the possibility of learning is limited. She emphasized that students do not cooperate; they tend to demand, but do not fulfill their part. Both João and Bento referred to the indiscipline as a constraint; yet, they felt they could learn English, especially in their classroom⁸⁸. Similarly to what was reported in Coelho (2005), the public school context is most of the times the only place for formal learning available to them.

The students who believed that learning English there is still not possible, reinforced their beliefs in the difficulty to learn or the dislike for the subject, a possible sign of a belief stability (Alanen, 2003) as shown in the following excerpts.

Excerpts 55 and 56

Hugo	<i>“No. Well, the subject is really awful.”</i>
Ellen	<i>“No. Because English is very difficult to learn.”</i>

(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

Hugo described the subject as “really awful”. Even participating in classes or giving positive feedback on the class, the impact of the intervention did not seem enough for Hugo to make him fond of the subject. While Ellen once again reinforced her belief that English is “very difficult to learn”. Both students did not provide more opinions about it. Also, during classroom observation (phase 1) and classroom recordings (phase 2), no evidence that could offer more details in this case was found.

Another final aspect that is worth mentioning emerged in a discussion when the focus group was carried out with classroom 09. As registered in several entries of the field notes⁸⁹, the group was known for being complicated to work with, and also the principal had received complaints about them from other teachers, as discussed. Karen was a very participative student in the focus group,

⁸⁸ Through the initial questionnaire, I found out that only one student who studied in a private language course. The other 31 have had only (formal) contact with the subject in the regular schools they have attended. By the end of the intervention, Leonardo had told me he had started to attend an English language course in a city nearby.

⁸⁹ In Appendix F, see, for example, entries 1, 11 among others.

and during one point, while arguing on the conflicts in teacher and student relationship in the classroom she came up with a situation that mattered to her. And her other colleagues confirmed her story, suggesting that they experienced that situation with her. She recalled an episode of a teacher's statement regarding their context and their achievements as public school students, as shown in excerpt 57:

Excerpt 57

Karen: *Yeah, but there is a teacher who say we do not have the capacity to succeed in the entrance exam. She says 'that girl' got it because she studied in a private school.*

Tânia: *She said that we do not have the capacity because we are public school students.*

Karen: *That we won't be able to compete with other people out there, the people in private school, who will be more prepared than us.*

Rebeca: *That only in private school you can get to the university.*

Jéssica: *But my sister studied here and she goes to UFV now.*

(INCOMP)

(Focus Group - 06/07/ 2011)

Students did not infer that this teacher's belief directly affected their own beliefs. However, it was possible to observe that they did not forget this voice that tried to suggest that because they were public school students they would probably not be able to pass in a university entrance exam. The impact of others in peoples' beliefs has been an important consideration from studies based on a bakhtinian perspective. Such sociocultural studies (see Dufva, 2003) rely on the importance of dialogue in human interaction to explain that students and teachers change their beliefs through experiences and contact with these people, as seen in Karen's discussion. The impact of other people in their beliefs was exteriorized as a way to complain and criticize this stereotype that was attributed to them – as

public school students. People, in general, do not like stereotypes, but adolescents are often common targets⁹⁰ for such depreciation.

Besides the other contextual reasons that explained their (dis)belief, this negative experience was also present in their discourse. Considering the importance that some students attribute to how teachers perceive them (see Lamb, 2004), when teachers do not believe in their own students' capacity, they may also see no reason to be challenged or to make efforts to learn, strengthening the stability of the (dis)belief.

Conversely, Dona Cidinha never demonstrated to see their learning as impossible. In phase 1, for example, I presented excerpts from her narrative in which she described her positive expectations towards her adolescents, in the conditions that are available. And in her short participation during the focus group, she corroborated this perspective, and also showed the students that having someone to believe in them is important, but they also have to offer the conditions for teachers to do their job.

In the same way they demonstrated the impact of a negative stereotype (and also their subversion against it), they also indicated signs of openness for change, even if they did not demonstrate total readiness (Woods, 2003) for it, with a hundred percent acceptance from the group. As adolescence has been described as the period of change (Bandura, 2006; Basso, 2008, Basso & Lima, 2010, Jersild, 1969; Macowski, 1993; Schunk & Meece, 2006; Tiba, 1985), or in Vygotsky's terms *transitional age* (1994a, 1994b, 1998a, 1998b), it is also seen an appropriate time for belief change. Even when they do seem resistant or stable (Alanen, 2003; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011), as shown here, there is a chance to negotiate new experiences and try to question or evaluate them.

4.3.3 The consistency of indiscipline in classroom 09: students' evaluation

Since the beginning of this study, indiscipline figured as a major concern for the teacher, the students in classroom 09 and the teacher-researcher. In phase

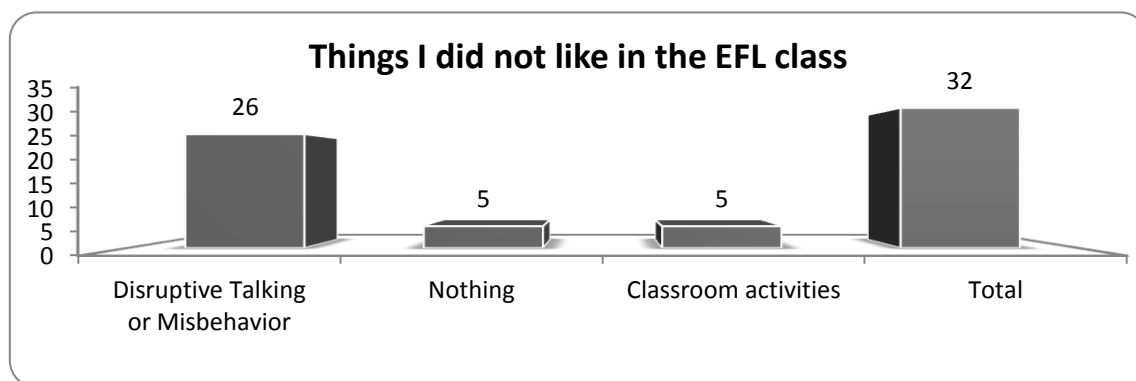
⁹⁰ Besides being a target for stereotyping, Jersild (1969) contends that stereotypes and preconceived ideas are part of the adolescents' life as they participate in social groups, with people alike. The similarity may lead to unfamiliarity of the different, since the equality of the members propitiates comfort for the adolescents who are experiencing the same "existential moment" (Tiba, 1985:58). Nevertheless, the unfamiliarity and preconceived ideas about others become a serious problem when intolerance and hostility are observed in their beliefs, actions and opinions. For a more details discussion regarding prejudice in adolescence, see Jersild (1969:395-403).

one, it was pointed out by students as one of the reasons for not believing in the possibility of learning EFL there. In phase two, it was a challenge mainly in the beginning of the intervention when students were still not used to the activities proposed and demonstrated not to be interested.

In this last section of this chapter, I address the issue of indiscipline from a different perspective than previous sections. Earlier, I tried to understand this phenomenon in classroom 09 through classroom observations (Erikson, 1984; van Lier, 1988) and students' opinions in questionnaires and feedback cards. In this section, I draw insights mainly from the focus group section when I asked them about the problem of indiscipline in their classes. The attempt was to understand the reason why it occurred and how the adolescents explained it. Before I present the results from the focus group, I mention how they talked about indiscipline in their final questionnaires.

In their final questionnaire, indiscipline again was emphasized as the major obstacle, and one of the aspects they did not like as illustrated in Graph 8.

Graph 8. Students' dislikes in the intervention



(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

Twenty six students mentioned the chattering and the misbehavior as things they did not like in phase two. Five students out of thirty two mentioned “nothing” and five did not like some of the classroom activities.

During the focus group, in an attempt to evaluate and recall their learning experiences before, during and after the intervention, some of the students referred to the difficulties they have to talk to some of their teachers and feel heard by them. This topic emerged as they were discussing the difficulties to make changes in their setting.

Since these students were popular for being “a complicated group” as explained in phase 1, they avoided negotiating things (i.e., changing a test date, doing an activity in detriment of another, extending a deadline, etc.) with their teachers, because they believed that they would probably not be heard. Therefore, it was necessary someone or something to mediate this relationship. It was when Tânia expressed an idea she had to improve this conflicting relationship they had with some of their teachers. The following extract presents the discussion:

Excerpt 58

Tânia: *I think we needed a classroom spokesperson, someone to represent us, to talk to the teachers. Because there is a teacher who don't wanna hear what we say.*

Fernando: *I get it, but it also depends on how this conversation is going to be, I mean, this access.*

Rebeca: *I believe she listens to us. But she knows that the student who is unruly, disturbs people and does not pay attention, obviously she won't listen.*

Fernando: *So, you have to think carefully in what you're going to say, be prepared and try to talk. Maybe, you might see no immediate result at first, but at least you're giving it a try.*

(INCOMPLETE)

Mário: *But Fernando, that depends a lot on the teacher, because there are the ones who explain, the people misbehave, after they say “You'll see when it's time for the test”*

Alan: *Then the test is long.*

(Focus Group - 06/07/ 2011)

A spokesperson for the group was an idea Tânia had to solve their problem of not being heard by the teachers. Rebeca disagreed and explained that the teachers in fact heard what they had to say; the problem was that it was generally the noisier ones who tried to negotiate or suggest something and teachers generally did not accept it. In Rebeca's point of view, the teacher did not respond

only when the ones disturbing her⁹¹ class were the ones wanted to say or ask for something.

Interpersonal relationship between teachers and students is one of the important aspects to maintain the harmony in the classroom context. In a sociocultural environment, teachers intervene pedagogically (Oliveira, 1997) to help students develop within their own zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978, 1989a). If the learner does not have a good relationship with the other peers, then their classroom interactions are going to be compromised, and the distance between teacher/student will be increased.

Ur (1999:121) for example, mentions interpersonal relationships along with four other factors such as: classroom management, lesson planning, the methodology and also student motivation. These elements are usually mentioned as evidence of a disciplined classroom. Even when students and teachers have a different perspective on what can be labeled as disturbing or not (Soares, 2007) during the class, a good interpersonal relationship is way to avoid conflict.

Macowski (1993), in the analysis of teacher/adolescent student interactions, observed the *cultural incongruence* that is established in the language classroom. She noticed in two settings the difficulty to engage students in the class, suggesting that in language classes, the adolescents in her study were more *expectators* (Macowski, 1993: 86) than agents of their own learning, similarly to Paulo Freire's (1993) notion of "*banking educational system*". These personal conflicts also hinder the possible moments for interaction that leads to learner development (Vygotsky, 1978). The barrier between students and the teacher is a limitation for any kind of interaction in the sociocultural context. Thus, the English classes become an uncomfortable place to be in, in which beliefs are formed and indiscipline (and apathy) seem to be a response coming from these adolescents.

In excerpt 58, I explained to the group that a first strategy to change (in this case the conflicting relationship with teachers) was firstly to expose their point of view so that their teachers would hear them. If it did not work, at least they would have tried. However, Mário added that his strategy would not be

⁹¹ Students referred to a female teacher they had. It is worth explaining that in this part of the discussion they were not talking about Dona Cidinha. Also, they did not mention names, they just referred to this teacher as "she" during the discussion.

effective with all their teachers. According to him, some of their teachers try to punish them by designing harder tests or threatening them with tests and grades.

When the discussion focused on the genesis of indiscipline in classroom 09, students finally took a stand and presented a very different perspective. The following excerpt captures a part of their discussion:

Excerpt 59

Karen: *But Fernando, this isn't the problem, sometimes it's just one person. Sometimes the group is silent and Alan starts making fun of something, and the class burst into laughter.*

Alan: *But it's not only me. Don't get smart with me.*

Karen: *ah, but you misbehaved.*

Leonardo: *the problem in the classroom is that someone starts talking and everyone wants to talk.*

Fernando: *You're justifying in a way I want to understand better. Let's use Alan, for example. Alan says something funny, everyone burst into laughter and start talking as well, but it's Alan's fault, just because he was the first one who did it?*

Karen.: *Yeah!*

Rebeca: *I think so too.*

Several students: *yeah!*

Johnny: *If he had not started the group would remain quiet.*

(INCOMP)

Karen: *Sometimes the whole classroom is quiet, then he calls someone by a nickname and whatever.*

Alan: *But all the boys call me like that [with a nickname], why can't I call them like that?*

Ricardo: *The girls also talk too much.*

Fernando: *But the idea that there is one to blame, do you agree with that?*

Ricardo: *Of course.*

(INCOMP)

(Focus Group - 06/07/ 2011)

Leonardo and Karen's perspectives complemented each other to understand how they viewed indiscipline in their classroom. The reason for disruptive talking and misbehavior in classroom 09 is because of one student, Alan. As soon as he made his first move (i.e., telling a joke and making students laugh about it) the others felt the right to do the same. However, they did not recognize that as a group they all should feel responsible for the problem, instead,

they chose *a common target*, in this case, an extroverted student, popular for making jokes during class. In short, students seem to use the strategy of avoiding the responsibility of a problem by scapegoating one of their peers to get rid of a major problem, which affects them but, concomitantly, is also caused by them.

Karen exemplified with the use of nicknames. In classroom 09, only the boys had this tendency. In their own “language” (Jersild, 1969; Tiba, 1985), they used nicknames to refer to themselves and girls were not included. But as it is possible to understand in Alan’s reply, he is only responding to stimuli that come from his other peers. He argued that being called by a nickname and not being allowed to respond back was unfair. And in fact, students seemed not to see the other side, that is, indiscipline was established there just because they did not try to stop it, they actually seized that someone had given the first step to talk as well. Actually, they preferred to see it from just one angle. As Tiba (1985:58) contended, “the larger the group, the more complicated is the relationship dynamics among its constituents”. Scholars (Jersild, 1969, Macowski, 1993; Schmuck, 1965; Tiba, 1985) have suggested that in groups, adolescents generally tend to defend each other. This fact relies on their sense of similarity and belonging, comfort and “universalization of problems” (Tiba, 1985:58), in other words, when the problem of one is the problem of everyone.

At the same time, interpersonal relationships among adolescents occur in a complex system and for reasons that may vary. One of them is a system that Jersild (1969:335) described as “power structure”. In a group of adolescents there may be the leaders, the ones who outstand themselves in the classroom, and also the followers, generally the rest of the group. Popularity seems to be an important factor for adolescents. In this transitional age where the cultural context provides interactions with different people (Vygotsky, 1994a, 1994b), the formation of their identity makes them search for things to relate to and believe in, as way to understand themselves. Friendships emerge as a result of underlying reasons, based on interests (in which popularity serves as a suitable example).

In groups, they create conditions for mutual influence (in taste, in beliefs, in opinions, etc.) but mainly they try to “determine how things should be” (Jersild, 1969:336). Generally, it is expected that the leaders will be the ones in control. However, in classroom 09, Alan, who always was seen by others as an extroverted student, known among others for his humor, was actually not the one who led the

group. In this next excerpt, he defends himself against the problem that was exclusively attributed to him:

Excerpt 60

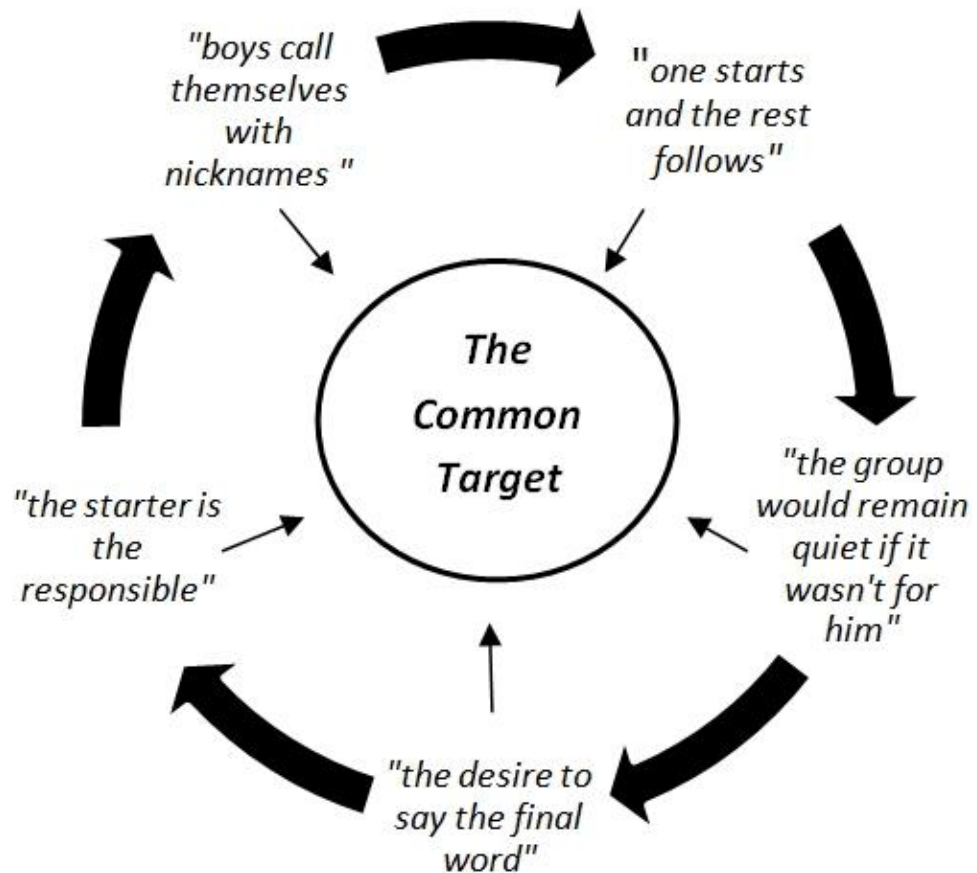
Alan: Sometimes the teacher asks for silence, and I, for example, shout “shut up”, the one in the other corner doesn’t like it, and tells people to be quiet, and then another from the other corner doesn’t like it and asks him to be quiet as well. And no one ever shushes.

(Focus Group - 06/07/ 2011)

He explained that when a teacher asked for silence, for instance, he tried to help by asking the group to be quiet. However, other people feel disturbed to see him asking for silence. This phenomenon happens because since he is one of the boys who like to make funny comments throughout the class, the other students do not feel he had the necessary credit to require other peers to stop talking. Then, someone else feels that he or she has the right to do it, and another person tries to diminish his or her credit in public. And in classroom 09, it was not necessarily noticed any exclusive leader, but in fact, as also suggested in Dona Cidinha’s narrative, there is more than one leader in that classroom.

What happens is a constant attempt to dominate the other, that is, to give the final word. Then a cycle is started. The indiscipline is settled, someone (a student) tries to stop it, and another person tries to diminish his credit among the colleagues. Thus, through this dispute to see who ends up helping to shush the group, the indiscipline increases and the 50 minute class (or even less) gets more and more limited. In the *power structure* (Jersild, 1969) of classroom 09, several people want to develop the role of the leader, and competition among them is the start, as I try to illustrate in figure 5.

Figure 5. Student's attribution to classroom indiscipline



The cycle was formed by several adolescents sticking together (same opinion) towards a common target (in this group, Alan). All opinions corroborated to a final shared view that in fact, disruptive talking occurs due to someone who sets the fire. Therefore, in their view, the one who starts is the guilty one, not the rest who follows. However, it is important to mention that this is probably not the only reason why indiscipline was a problem in classroom 09. This is how the students themselves explained it in the focus group.

Thus, for them, indiscipline is the result of a single person. I noticed that this is an attempt to get rid of a problem that belongs to them. As Tiba (1985) argued, two things that adolescents tend to avoid are a) having a problem or b) feeling incapable of dealing with it. And since the moment of the focus group (and also in the feedback cards, I would add) they realized that they had pointed out indiscipline as a major problem they also became aware that indiscipline comes from them, which is, they are responsible for it. However, while addressing

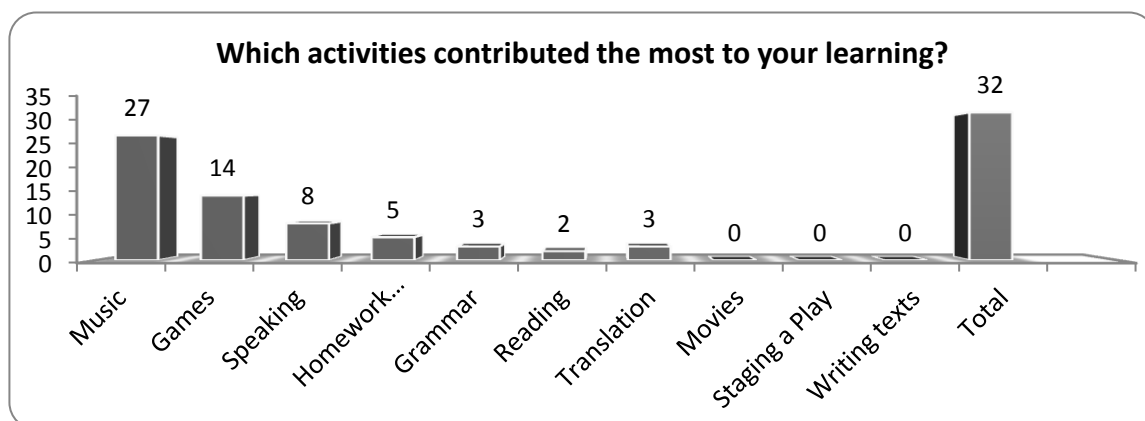
this topic they did not embody the idea that all of them were responsible to maintain the classroom control as well. Together, the group exposed one of the popular students, and suggested him as the reason for the disruptive talking in classroom 09. But again, students did not consider other possibilities for their indiscipline such as the dislike for the discipline or more awareness in their role as learners, agents of their own choices (Bandura, 2006) who are responsible for their learning.

4.3.4 The Role of materials in the signs of belief change

The impact of the materials and classroom activities were already addressed in phase 2, where I focused on the new learning experiences the adolescents had with the suggestions they had made in the initial questionnaire. As mentioned there, the positive experiences that emerged through these classes – even with indiscipline as a constraint – were an evidence for the signs of change that I have reported so far. In this last section, I present a final perspective about the activities carried out in classroom 09 according to their evaluation in the final questionnaire. I discuss how students saw the benefits of the materials used and how they made classes more interesting, according to them.

Despite different options, some activities were pointed out as more popular with adolescents, which generally captured their interest as it was proposed during the classes in the intervention period. Graph 9 depicts the group’s final opinions regarding the activities they believed were more beneficial to their learning.

Graph 9. Activities that contributed to students’ learning



Music was remembered by 27 students as the activity that most contributed to their learning. Other activities mentioned by these students were games (14), oral exercises (8) and homework and tests (5). Grammar (3), Reading exercises (2) and Translation (3) were also cited by a smaller portion of the group. The other activities which none of them checked are the ones which were not focused during the intervention phase.

It is necessary to explain that in the option “games”, students also considered exercises that comprised group or pair work as competition, even if they were not necessarily aiming at it in the first place. In the focus group, they mentioned the activities they enjoyed more and believed that helped them to learn. The excerpt below presents a part of the discussion.

Excerpt 61

Tânia: *I think the activity with the word search was the coolest.*

Fernando: *the one in pairs?*

Hugo: *Yeah!*

Tânia: *Either alone or in pairs, I don't know, it was the curiosity to find out the words and complete in the text.*

Fernando: *Hugo, did you raise your hand?*

Hugo: *I enjoyed the activity with the song.*

Alan: *The classes with games I enjoyed more, because it was a dispute. Makes us more relaxed. You have to guess and the people get more interested.*

Ricardo: *It's because in the game you participate to win. It ((the prize)) can be anything. You go for the win.*

(Focus Group - 06/07/ 2011)

Tânia mentioned the word search activity as the coolest⁹². She emphasized in her comment that what drew her attention to that class was not the fact that the activities were done in pairs, but that she had to find a solution for the problem posed by the activity. Activities that were constantly mentioned by the adolescents in classroom 09 were the ones which presented a challenge that was enough to raise their curiosity as a way to make them involved with the task, corroborating

⁹² A more detailed discussion of this class was provided in section 4.2.2.3

what the literature suggests as reasons for using games in language classes (Wright, Betteridge & Buckby, 1994).

Alan and Ricardo referred to the games they liked to participate. Alan, for example, revealed that the feeling of dispute is what makes the class a more relaxed and comfortable environment. Again, they are driven by the curiosity to find a right answer or score something. Ricardo added that in games you participate to win, explaining that such type of activities require the participants to accept the inherent rules of the game (Hadfield, 2002), which according to him is going “for the win”.

The materials and activities used in classroom 09 demonstrated to be an important source for positive experiences which helped them to re-evaluate some of their beliefs about the possibility of learning. However, my argument here is not to suggest that a prescriptive view of classroom materials (Crawford, 2002) and materials are enough to create conditions for belief change. The idea that only applying techniques prescribed by a resource book for teachers is very narrow, since knowing the group, the teacher is able to know what works and what does not. As Allwright (1981)⁹³ contended, the use of textbooks and other sources of materials are helpful to accomplish the purposes, goals and contents established by teachers, but they do not necessarily always lead to that, they present limitations.

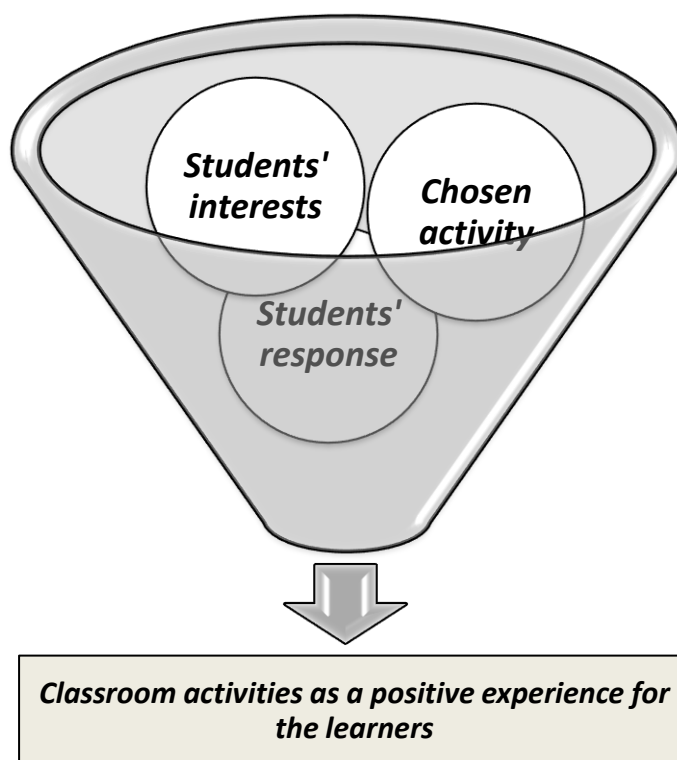
Yang and Kim (2011) suggest that the process of belief change occurs according to the goals that are set in the learning context. I agree with them and understand it from the perspective of the learning materials since they were chosen, planned and proposed bearing in mind a) meeting students’ interests plus the pedagogical plan and b) using them as possible opportunities to experience language learning as a valid experience, or as Pajares suggests for learning in general, as a “transformative experience” (Pajares, 2006:359), which for me relates to belief change.

As shown both in the excerpts in the focus group and students’ opinion in phase 2, it was actually the integration of the activity plus the participants’

⁹³ Allwright (1981) refers to teaching materials discussing mainly the adoption of textbooks for classrooms. I consider the role of textbooks as well, but for materials I will understand the different activities that teachers elaborate for their classes. This may entail: games and extra activities not contemplated in the textbooks, basically the description of the intervention phase I reported earlier in the methodology chapter.

responses to it in the sociocultural context that allowed the games and group activities to provide better experiences and good memories for the students afterwards. This integration entailed the students' participation, when they suggested that in classroom 09 they wanted games to learn English. Thus, it required a search for activities that would combine both the goals and the contents for that specific group (Allwright, 1981) rather than just following the book (Crawford, 2002). This integration is presented in figure 6

Figure 6. The positive impact of classroom activities on students



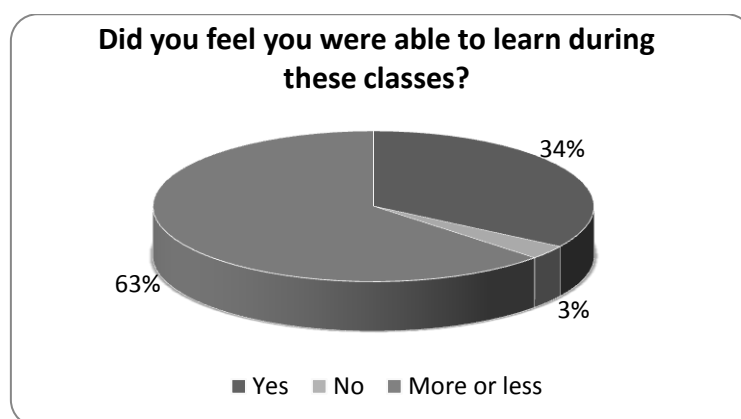
Inside classroom 09, these three aspects turned out to be relevant to understand the experiences they had during the intervention and the possible influences on their beliefs. The activities were chosen and conducted with the group based on their suggestions in phase one. Also, the implementation of these activities was the main features of the intervention, since no other changes were possible (in the quantity of classes, by adopting a new textbook, for instance) and their potential to create conditions for belief change was deeply considered. As

shown previously, not all the activities met their beliefs and expectations about the language class, but still, the positive feedback on the classes is a way to understand the signs of change, as a result of the kind of experiences they had with such classes.

As pictured in figure 6, individually, the elements may not have the same impact on classroom experiences. Sometimes one aspect may be more recurrent than the other. But fused together, they seem to find a way through the funnel (beliefs), resulting in a class with positive feedback. This funnel can be understood as learners' belief system which is embedded in their sociocultural context (Alanen, 2003) and that may attribute new meaning to some learners' beliefs through new experiences. The metaphor of going through this funnel entails some aspects that were recurrent in the intervention, which in the students' view seemed to be relevant for the perceived signs of change. Once students demonstrated not to believe in the possibility of learning EFL, they were asked what ways would help them to do so (i.e. activities, materials, in other words, *students' interests*). Later, this aspect was considered to plan the classes (*activity chosen*), and after classes occurred, students had to offer feedback on activities and how they experienced them in the English class in public school (*students' response*).

Considering students' opinions with the choice of the most suitable activity (regarding the content/goals) helped to understand how students evaluated their learning process throughout these classes, as represented in the following graph. Therefore, aiming at belief change became possible with the integration of these aspects.

Graph 10. Students' views on their learning during intervention⁹⁴



(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

Most of the students indicated that they were having an average learning, that is, they felt they were learning, but still some problems occurred. This was only noticed through their explanations for this question. In fact, as the opinions that are presented below indicate, besides the idea of uncertainty or insecurity that “more or less” can entail, they seemed more optimistic about their learning, as the following excerpts show.

Excerpts 62-64

Tânia	<i>“More or less. I learned a lot, but I had doubts with other stuff, I tried, but I couldn’t learn some things, but I learned most of it.”</i>
Cláudia	<i>“More or less. Learning English is a little difficult and with your colleagues talking all the time, the teacher doesn’t get to speak, it gets even more difficult.”</i>
Gustavo	<i>“More or less. For the fact that time is not enough, English is difficult and students are noisy. But if we had more time and less indiscipline that would work.”</i>

(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

Tânia felt she was able to learn most of what was taught for them in the classes, but still there were some aspects she did not understand, and even so, she acknowledged her own effort of trying to learn. Gustavo and Cláudia, similarly, considered the time which was not enough, the indiscipline and the difficulty to learn. Unlike studies with students in the beginning of secondary school (Lima, S.

⁹⁴ Despite the fact that students were evaluated with a formal test and other activities (see chapter 3), their learning was not quantitatively measured in this study based on such outcomes. This graph focuses on students’ understanding of their learning experiences, in order to perceive whether or not they felt they benefited from the intervention classes.

2005) which showed that students tended to see learning EFL as an easy task, the adolescents here emphasized the difficulty of this subject in several instances.

Part of this group (34%) felt they were able to learn with these classes, even with the known reasons indicated so far (i.e., indiscipline). The following answers explain possible reasons for the feeling that they had learned.

Excerpts 65-66

Marcelo	<i>“Yes. Because despite the chattering I was able to learn some things due to the willingness I had.”</i>
Karen	<i>“Yes. Because all (most of) the doubts I had I solved them, and so I was able to do the exercises the teacher gave us.”</i>
Daniel	<i>“Yes. I felt very motivated in this class; I was very interested to learn the contents.”</i>

(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

Students demonstrated to be motivated and interested in the classes, which is why, according to them, it was possible to learn despite the indiscipline of their colleagues. They acknowledged their willingness and motivation to learn (Marcelo and Daniel) as well as the support they received from the teacher in the learning context (Vygotsky, 1989a), in moments of doubt.

The few students who chose “no” indicated that they did not experience learning. Eduardo, for instance, claimed “No. I only paid attention to the things I had to hand in” (Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011). His attention was driven mainly for tests and homework. Only the activities that converted in the final score of two months seemed to represent some kind of importance to him. The classroom activities and other materials did not seem to provoke the interest to participate, unless it involved grades.

The results here indicate that most of the students in classroom 09 felt positively about the activities they had in the intervention. One main aspect is that their favorite activities seemed to be the ones that captured their attention and increased their curiosity to complete it. The positive evaluation of such activities was suggested as a combination of students’ interests, the choice of an activity that would be relevant and suitable for the group, and also the response in the immediate moment of the activity in their sociocultural context.

As Crawford (2002) claimed, the role of materials in the language classroom depends on balance. Activities tend to be adapted considering aspects

such as: available time, contents, students' personality and behavior, just to name a few. This author explained that "teachers and students will respond according to how well these match their own beliefs and experiences" (Crawford, 2002:84). In this group, specifically, the materials and activities that were used received a positive feedback, and even with the disruptive talking that was not eliminated entirely, most of students were able to feel that in fact they were able to learn.

This chapter comprised the findings and results of the study. I discussed them within each phase of this qualitative inquiry. In phase 1, I presented a description of students' (dis)beliefs about learning English in the public school context and illustrated the reasons that endorsed their (dis)beliefs. Then, phase 2 was focused on the intervention, its impact on students and how they evaluated and experiences the classes. Finally, in phase 3, I analysed students' accounts after the intervention compared to the initial phase of the research pointing out signs of change in their beliefs. Following next, I conclude the study and discuss some implications for research on beliefs and adolescence.

CHAPTER 5

AIMING AT NEW PATHWAYS

This was a study with adolescent language learners in the public school context aiming at belief change which was guided by three main questions introduced in chapter 1. For this final chapter, I return to each question answering them according to the data presented earlier, discuss the limitations of this study and conclude with a few suggestions for future research.

5.1 Answering the research questions

The general aims of the study were the investigation of adolescent language learners' (dis)belief and whether their (dis)belief in learning English at school would change within public school and under which conditions. The results have shown that adolescents' language learning process in this educational context is dialectically characterized as positive and negative, with good experiences and contextual factors that affect their beliefs and actions. The results have also corroborated recent findings on beliefs, pointing out that due to their complexity, they are also variable and open to change, in line with a sociocultural perspective to study beliefs (Alanen, 2003; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011) and other studies that were learner-centered (Conley et al, 2004; Pintrich, Marx & Boyle, 1993; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003; Tanaka, 2004; Taylor, 2009; Tobin et al, 1994; Wilkins & Ma, 2003).

In classroom 09, signs of change were perceived as a result of positive feedback on the classes they had as well as the materials and activities they experienced. In the next paragraphs I address each research question in detail.

5.1.1 Question 1: *How is the language learning and teaching process shaped with (dis)believing adolescents in their public school?*

The results have revealed that trying to characterize the learning process in classroom 09 was not easy because in their sociocultural setting they were seen in

both positive and negative ways. Although this notion of contradiction made it difficult to outline a profile of the group, it allowed a deeper comprehension that teaching and learning EFL with adolescents is a complex socioculturally shaped process. As Negueruela-Azarola (2011) pointed out, contradictions are the core of human nature, and can contribute to the understanding of how students and teachers make sense of social activities such as learning and teaching.

For example, classroom 09 was labeled as a problematic group, that is, different teachers struggled with the students for several reasons. In addition, the group was seen as both *mischievous* and *affectionate/funny*. This representation revealed that in the language classroom, students' attitudes and efforts towards learning were not predictable. Whereas they corresponded positively or treated Dona Cidinha with respect, they also demonstrated disinterest in some activities and lack of involvement in what was planned for them. How they would act in class or react to an activity proposed was not always possible to anticipate, even after getting to know the group for a while.

This is in consonance with perspectives in Psychology and Educational Psychology that rejects the portrayal of adolescence as the *storm and stress* only (Arnett, 1999, 2006; Buchanan et al, 1990; Eccles et al, 1993; Jersild, 1965). Students demonstrated characteristic of adolescence as a stormy phase indeed, but also signs that they were considerate for their teacher and some aspects of their learning. Conflict and change are part of adolescence' life since it is an ephemeral period (Tiba, 1985). Notwithstanding, with classroom observation, it was possible to perceive that the adolescents have periods of conflict and disinterest, but also participation and readiness to cooperate. In this way, on the one hand, accepting that the learners from classroom 09 were just problematic would lead to a narrow and biased conceptualization that jeopardize the aims of the intervention. On the other hand, students also demonstrated potential to overcome this label so common for adolescent learners.

Learning English was an activity that attracted most of the students in this group (78%). But curiously, half of them liked the English language, followed by 40% of the adolescents who disliked the subject. These discrepancies were also noticed in the way these pupils felt in the English classes. In the group of 32, the most recurrent affective states were interested (14); lost (11), calm (9), at ease (9)

and fine (5). Therefore, in the same group of learners, the heterogeneity is evident both in their interests towards language learning and how they felt about it.

In brief, language learning and teaching with (dis)believing adolescents in classroom 09 was shaped by contradictions. As adolescents, at the same time affectionate with their teacher, they did not contribute to every class. As for learning, while most of the group was fond of language learning, almost half of students did not like the English subject. Likewise, the way they felt in class oscillated. Such contradictions suggested that teaching adolescents requires more than acknowledging the *storm and stress*. It is necessary to balance the discrepancies and focus more on the potentials of this phase, such as their abilities to learn and accomplish goals (Bandura, 2006; Pajares, 2006; Schunk & Meece, 2006) as well as imaginative and creative thinking (Vygotsky, 1994a, 1994b, 1998b, 1998d).

5.1.2 Question 2: *What contextual factors influence the beliefs of this group and in which ways?*

According to Alanen (2003), beliefs are embedded in the learners' sociocultural context, which, in my view, comprises aspects inside (teacher/student interaction, materials) and outside the classroom (school staff, conditions of context for teaching, just to name a few). Five factors were identified as the ones that influenced students' disbelief. The most recurrent, according to them, was indiscipline. Within this aspect, students gave explanations as to why they believed they could not learn in that context.

The first explanation was the disruptive behavior, constantly mentioned by adolescents themselves throughout the three phases of this research. The adolescents pointed it as the main reason why they did not learn EFL in school. Oddly enough, this was something caused by themselves. Yet, the way they talked about it, was if, they were not responsible for it. According to them, indiscipline occurred because of an individual who generally *triggered* the other ones. As one person started talking too loud or making fun of people, other students felt the same liberty to talk and thus, disruptive talk and behavior dominated the class. In short, they acknowledged the problem but did not accept responsibility for it, they

attributed it to specific students in the class instead, especially the ones who were more extroverted in class.

The number of students in class, the number of classes per week and the quality of materials were also mentioned by the students as reasons why they did not learn. About the number of students, they argued that with a lot of people, the teacher does not have time to offer assistance for everyone as they wanted. As discussed before, the scanty time of two classes a week was seriously compromised by the problem of indiscipline, that is, when the class was interrupted and students misbehaved. They also believed that they lacked a “basis”, i.e., a basic knowledge of the language they did not have. They argued that they did not learn enough from the classes. However, during classes, it was easy to see they avoided participation by implying they did not know how to do something. But when they actually tried, most of the times they were right. As suggested in chapter 4, these factors seemed to endorse the groups’ (dis)belief in learning EFL in the public school.

As context always plays an important role for humans in the activity they engage in (Vygotsky, 1978, 1989b), such as language learning (Lantolf & Appel, 1994), these five elements seemed to be the most prominent to understand how the (dis)belief in classroom 09 was endorsed. Also, they contributed to the sociocultural understanding of context, not only relevant for fostering people’s interaction and human development, but also by influencing what they think about this process and how they make sense of it. The factors I enumerated here also relate to the characterization of the learning process, as discussed in question 1, once beliefs create a strong impact on students’ attitudes and decisions for learning (Barcelos, 2004, 2007b; Richards & Lockhart, 1996).

5.1.3 Question 3: *How does the process of belief change happen after an intervention period in the adolescent students’ routine?*

The study provided evidence for some signs of change in students’ (dis)belief about learning EFL in the public school, while in others it did not seem to have happened. The signs of change were influenced by their experience with the materials and activities developed in the intervention phase. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of students in phase 1 believed they could learn EFL there while,

by the end of the study, it reached 38% of the adolescents. Also, from the 47% of *disbelievers* in phase 1, only 6% demonstrated to feel that they did not change their beliefs. And the majority (56%) believed that learning EFL there is possible, though it is conditioned to other factors (i.e., solve indiscipline problems, students cooperate to learn).

The experiences during intervention were evaluated mostly as positive by students. The activities proposed and the way topics were covered seemed to have influenced their optimistic view about the classes instead of the (dis)belief that mediated their learning activity. Nonetheless, even with activities they liked, there were also moments when the classes had to be interrupted to call their attention.

The intervention phase had a **bump start**. They did not cooperate with the first activities and classroom management had to become a priority. The adolescents needed to find relevance in the activities in order to participate. Games, pair/ group work and music were alternatives to draw their attention. The challenges that emerged with these activities were important for the feeling of accomplishment (through competition, i.e., games or pair work) as participation increased, even with the eventual time for calling their attention. Thus, *seeing* was important for *believing as* students suggested in the focus group that even with the recurrent indiscipline problems in classroom 09, they felt they were able to learn during the intervention.

By tracing a line from initial phase, going through intervention until evaluation it was possible to observe that their beliefs, as a sociocultural perspective suggested, (Alanen, 2003; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011; Yang & Kim, 2011) were not only stable but also susceptible for change. At first, students did not engage in activities they were unfamiliar with, and then misbehavior and lack of cooperation prevailed over the classes. However, when the classes provided activities from which they saw relevance or felt motivated to participate, the group showed more involvement. Indiscipline was not extinguished, but as data revealed, it was not as intense as reported in the beginning of phase 2. They acknowledged such classes as motivating and suggested that they learned from what was proposed.

The comparison of students who believe in the possibility of learning EFL (20% in phase one and 38% in phase 2) as well as, the difference observed between the number of students who showed a (dis)belief in phase 1 (47%) and

the post-intervention (6%) is related to Negueruela-Azarola's (2011) claim about beliefs having relevance for the social and yet being meaningful for the individual. Despite the fact that most students demonstrated signs of change in their beliefs, some remained with the same beliefs, even when the rest of the group did not share the same opinion. Such examples were presented along different sections⁹⁵, where I pointed out students who remained disliking English for personal reasons or still believed that learning English is difficult. The group showed signs of change in the social level (relevance), but individually there were a few cases in which no signs of change were noticed. In other words, the belief that learning EFL there could occur was not meaningful enough to show signs of change for a few students, but it was, for most of the group. Though not total, the study provided insights that changes in large groups can be desired.

Within a sociocultural view, beliefs have the potential to mediate student learning in specific contexts (Alanen, 2003). And as the results showed, belief change can occur when adolescents have learning experiences that provide them chances to re-evaluate current beliefs. Thus, when they learn EFL in the public context, such signs reveal positive beliefs being nurtured, which can mediate their activity and help them to make more efforts to learn. As students experience EFL teaching as an activity that leads to qualitative changes and extend their levels of development (Vygotsky, 1978, 1989b) they will have more opportunities to recognize the possibility of learning EFL in their context even when discourses in society emphasize the contrary (Algebaile, 2009).

5.2 Limitations of the study

One of the main limitations was the strike that took place in the state of Minas Gerais in 2011. Public schools across the state stopped 133 classes for several days. In this school specifically, teachers decided not to go on a strike (later), but for a few days they did not have classes. And as the intervention was almost over, when I was informed about the possibility of the strike I had to reorganize the schedule for the final phase. With the concern to have classes

⁹⁵ See sections 4.3.1, 4.3.2 for examples in the analysis of students' belief change. See the three sub items of section 4.2.3 for findings about students commenting about the impact of classes on their learning (influences, criticisms), etc.

interrupted, and thus the chance to have my last phase compromised I had to apply the final instruments (final questionnaire and focus group) in the same week. Initially, I had planned to set up a specific time for the focus group and not during their normal class hours. But as the school staff was not sure about the strike, Dona Cidinha helped me by talking to other teachers to allow me to use other classes (besides English) to apply the final questionnaire and conduct the focus group. This also hindered the possibility of conducting a pilot focus group, in which I would have more time to explain how it worked.

5.3 Suggestions for future research

After concluding a qualitative research, in an attempt to understand the reality of a language classroom (van Lier, 1988) there is always a feeling that there is still a lot to be done. A study is concluded, but it sheds light on new insights for future research. In this section I ponder about a few aspects that became prominent in this study. Since they were not on the initial scope, they deserve to be considered for future research in the field of Applied Linguistics. I give 4 suggestions for further research, discussed below.

The first suggestions related to the urge for more intervention studies in belief research. After entering in its third decade of research in Brazil, I truly support the idea that researchers should go beyond the identification and mapping of beliefs. In the contextual approach after 2000, studies have considered the relationship of influence and conflict between students and teachers (Barcelos, 2000, 2003a; Lima, S. 2005), and beliefs and actions. Since then, there has been a considerable amount of studies that has corroborated the influence of contextual factors in peoples' beliefs and how learning opportunities are jeopardized in specific circumstances that learners or teachers do not believe fully in the capacity to learn and/or teach languages. Carrying out an intervention is a chance to shape learners' beliefs and incite learners to change them in circumstances when it is desired or it is clear that it has become an obstacle for learning as a genuine experience of success (Pajares, 2006). Future intervention studies could consider more longitudinal approaches, for instance, the transition from one school year to another. Although it is time consuming, an intervention can provide more

empirical evidence on belief change as the researcher is in contact with the process as it unfolds, and more sources of data also contribute for the description of this process instead of a single source, such as narratives or an interview⁹⁶.

The second suggestion refers to the need for more studies on beliefs under a sociocultural approach: Vygotsky has definitely become a popular reference for studies in different fields. As suggested by Johnson (2006), the sociocultural turn in language teaching and teacher education suggests a more attentive look at social conditions for learning instead of isolated cognition (already popular models in Vygotsky's time). I have already pointed out the recent interest in understanding beliefs based on vygotskian underpinnings, which started with the pioneer study of Alanen (2003) and now with other contributions (Negueruela-Azarola, 2011; Yank & Kim, 2011).

As an emergent trend in a consolidated research agenda that is flexible with different approaches (Barcelos, 2001, 2003a), it is necessary, however, to be cautious when referring to concepts from cultural-historical psychology without paying attention to the original framework where these terms emerged (Lantolf, 2007). Concepts such as mediation or Zone of Proximal Development, should be seen as theoretical constructs that in fact may contribute for language pedagogy (cf. Guk & Kellog, 2007), but not as a formula or tactics to be applied in language classrooms for successful learning. Also, as I discussed in chapter 2, Sociocultural Theory is to be seen as a theoretical framework instead of a methodology for classroom investigation. Researchers seemed to have positively accepted the notion of beliefs as mediational means (Alanen, 2003) which are better understood in actual sociocultural settings. Future studies could relate beliefs to other sociocultural topics such as private speech and other recent topics influenced by Vygotsky's writings such as scaffolding and dynamic assessment.

The third aspect refers to belief change. Current studies have addressed this issue still considering the complexity of this phenomenon, as suggested by researchers in the 1990's, but also considering that within sociocultural contexts and through interactions in social practices, people live new experiences and create conditions for changing or reshaping previous beliefs. I would also like to

⁹⁶ Narrative inquiry has contributed to understand how teachers experience and reflect about the changes along of the years, but further details could be provided through other instruments such as classroom observations, recordings, among others.

emphasize that in Applied Linguistics, current research on belief change has focused more on teachers, while students' belief change is less frequent. A possibility to understand the existence of this difference is because teachers when involved with continuing education programs and other academic opportunities (Barcelos & Coelho, 2010; Johnson & Golombeck, 2002), they tend to experience other possibilities that lead to change either their beliefs or pedagogical actions. Future studies should address this issue with classroom groups, such as the study I reported here but also with study cases. Individual belief change is a possibility to understand how each student interprets and feels the influence of social settings and people they interact with in their own lives. But also, similarly to studies after 2000, which considered mismatch and interaction between teachers' and students' beliefs, belief change could be considered in a similar perspective. As I argued in favor of more intervention inquiries, it would be interesting to understand how a teacher and a classroom would react to changes in their routines, for a later comparison to capture how differently or similarly they experience belief change.

Finally, the fourth aspect relates to the role of adolescence in language learning. Future studies could investigate how adolescents experience language learning, as the role that EFL learning has for both their personal and academic life, as well as their expectations about it. And regarding intervention, studies could focus on designing materials and teaching approaches that comprises the styles and characteristics of this age group.

5.4 Concluding thoughts

The process of belief change demonstrated to be as complex as it has already been argued by several scholars (Barcelos, 2007b, Borg, 2003; Fullan, 2007; Johnson, 1999). Despite this complexity, the adolescent language learners demonstrated openness to think about their prior beliefs as they had positive experiences with activities carried out in their actual context. Learning EFL in the public school context is a process that is influenced by several elements which include peoples' beliefs and contextual factors. Together, such aspects tend to reinforce the belief that learning English in public schools is not possible.

However, data revealed that despite these conditions, signs of change were perceived in the majority of adolescents.

It is important to highlight that these results apply for this group in particular. Other schools with similar contextual struggles could present different results, or the intervention could have been experienced in a different way. Also, other things could have been done to observe whether students changed their beliefs. But this specificity does not disqualify the scientific relevance of this qualitative inquiry for the field of Applied Linguistics. On the contrary, it highlights the social nature of learning a foreign language, a process that entails learners and teachers who deal with specific limitations in public schools and construct their beliefs over time.

Thus, even with the challenges that teachers have to manage on a regular basis and the urge for more resources from the government and national policies for better teaching conditions, (dis)belief change in public school EFL learning can start inside the classroom. While these external changes do not come, teachers can help groups to develop awareness that they can actually learn, and that two classes a week are not going to be wasted. Any attempt is better than none. At a moment when *change* is the main characteristic in the adolescents' life, another change (in their beliefs) is also worth trying. I hope this study may contribute to the understanding of students' belief change, and that despite the limitations, public schools can in fact be an appropriate context for teaching and learning English.

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APPENDICES

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University Campus, Viçosa, MG – Zip code 36570-000 – Telephone/Fax (31) 3899-1583 E-mail: posgradla@ufv.br

Viçosa, March 16th, 2011

Dear principal.

As part of my master’s degree research Project, I intend to carry out a study with a group of adolescents in the public school context. My project had the purpose to observe a classroom routine in the English language classes, aiming at the understanding of students’ beliefs about learning English in this context. And later, I intend to propose an intervention period with the group. I would be glad if you agreed this study to take place in your school.

The participants of this study will be the students of a group selected with the help of teacher Cidinha, who already demonstrated interest to be part of this research. Students’ participation will entail the following steps: (a) answer two questionnaires in the beginning and by the end of the research, (b) answer feedback cards during the intervention classes, (c) participate in a focus group as the final task. Some classes during the intervention will be recorded in audio to complement data collection.

I would like to emphasize, however, that the audio recording will not be released in public under any circumstance, and that it will only be used for research purposes. The names of the school, staff workers and students will remain anonymous in the thesis and future papers regarding this inquiry. The data and the analysis will be available for the participants if they want.

I would like to thank you beforehand for the cooperation in this moment, and whether you are interested to allow this study in your school, please sign the document attached.

Sincerely,

Fernando Silvério de Lima

Tel.: (31)9208-7422

Graduate Student – Master’s Degree in Languages (Applied Linguistics) UFV

e-mail: limafsl@hotmail.com



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1583 E-mail: posgradla@ufv.br

Viçosa, March 16th, 2011

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I am aware that the purpose of this research is to investigate students' beliefs about English language learning in the public school. I was also informed the purpose of this study is not to make any kind of judgment about the school, the students and their teacher.

I authorize the research by *Fernando Silvério de Lima*, graduate student at Universidade Federal de Viçosa, to be carried out in this school with a group selected with teacher Cidinha.

Signature

Place and date

Any questions regarding the study, please contact me

Fernando Silvério de Lima

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Graduate Student – Master's Degree in Languages (Applied Linguistics) UFV

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Viçosa, March 16th, 2011

Dear Dona Cidinha,

As part of my master’s degree research Project, I intend to carry out a study with a group of adolescents in the public school context. My project had the purpose to observe a classroom routine in the English language classes, aiming at the understanding of students’ beliefs about learning English in this context. I would be glad if you agreed this study to take place in one of your classrooms.

The participants will be students of a selected classroom based on your suggestion. Data will be collected and analyzed qualitatively. Your participation in this inquiry will entail the following tasks: (a) write a narrative about your experiences as the teacher of adolescent students, (b) participate in an interview by the end of the research.

In an initial phase I will observe some of your classes in the context of learning and in the intervention phase I will conduct the classes with the group. Students’ participation will entail the following steps: (a) answer two questionnaires in the beginning and by the end of the research, (b) answer feedback cards during the intervention classes, (c) participate in a focus group as the final task. Some classes during the intervention will be recorded in audio to complement data collection.

I would like to emphasize, however, that the audio recording will not be released in public under any circumstance, and that it will only be used for research purposes. The names of the school, staff workers and students will remain anonymous in the thesis and future papers regarding this study. The data and the analysis are available for your access if you want.

I would like to thank you in advance for the cooperation in this moment, and whether you are interested to have this study, please sign the document attached.

Sincerely,

Fernando Silvério de Lima

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INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I am aware that the purpose of this research is to investigate adolescent students' beliefs about English language learning in the public school. I was also informed the purpose of this study is not to make any kind of judgment about the school, the students and their teacher.

I confirm that my participation is voluntary and no form of coercion was used to obtain my consent. I was informed that I can withdraw my consent and end my participation at any phase of this research.

I was informed about the methodological procedures to be used in this project and I am aware that I will be solicited as a participant of this research.

I understand that excerpts of all my answers, written or oral, could be used in the final report or articles about this study anonymously. My real name will not be used, unless I prefer and manifest this preference in a signed term.

I would like to contribute voluntarily to the study as a participant.

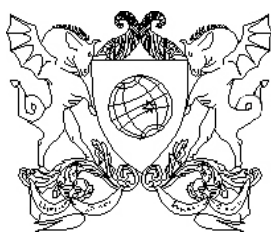
<i>Name</i>	
<i>Telephone</i>	
<i>Address</i>	
<i>E-mail</i>	

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Any questions regarding the study, please contact me

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STUDENT'S INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I am aware that the purpose of this research is to investigate adolescent students' beliefs about English language learning in the public school. I was also informed the purpose of this study is not to make any kind of judgment about the school, the students and their teacher.

I confirm that my participation is voluntary and no form of coercion was used to obtain my consent. I was informed that I can withdraw my consent and end my participation at any phase of this research.

I was informed about the methodological procedures to be used in this project and I understand what will be required from me as a participant of this research.

I understand that excerpts of all my answers, written or oral, could be used in the final report or articles about this study anonymously. My real name will not be used, unless I prefer and manifest this preference in a signed term.

I would like to contribute voluntarily to the study as a participant.

<i>Name</i>	
<i>Telephone</i>	
<i>Address</i>	
<i>E-mail</i>	

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Any questions regarding the study, please contact me

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FIELD NOTES
FIRST CONTACT

ENTRY 1

DATE: March 16th 2011

Today was the first visit to the school.

The school is small and the front doesn't really look like a typical school. It has a traditional home style from the colonial houses in the state of Minas Gerais. It's a calm street, surrounded by houses. There's a trailer beside the school where students buy snacks and soda.

The teacher had talked to the principal before and contacted me to tell the day she would be available to talk to me. I arrived at the school around 9 am and the first person who received me was the principal. She explained the school was under reform since the beginning of the year. I explained her about my interest in carrying the study out in that context due to the teachers' warm reception and interest to receive a researcher in one of her groups. She signed one of the terms and made a photocopy for her. She welcomed me to the school and took me to the teacher's classroom.

I waited until Dona Cidinha finished one of her classes. She introduced me to her two groups from which I will possibly choose one to be the focus of this research. She had talked previously with some students about a master student who would come from the university to watch some classes with them, and later he would teach them for a while.

During the break she introduced me to the other teachers and talked about her schedule in that school. She suggested me the two groups because she believes they can be mature enough to give sincere opinions. In one of the groups, in 2010, she asked them some opinions about the English classes and the teacher. She told they gave their opinions about what they wanted to learn and what kind of activities they like. One interesting fact is an example she mentioned about a student who thought the teacher was too fancy because she wanted to talk in English (so much) during the class.

She described the groups as the typical adolescents. Both can be very respectful but she notices that in one of them there are lots of students who have failed in the previous grades, and then they are repeating all over again. In the other classroom (number 7), she told me there are many students that came from a private school, they are studying there because their parents cannot afford a private school in the closer city where the university is located. She believes these students seem to be uncomfortable to be there and unmotivated due to this environment change (because they came from a private and now are enrolled in a public school). She has been reading my project and thinks these two groups can be suitable for the study.

Her schedule is going to change next week. She will let me know by email what days she has classes with the two groups so I can start classroom observation.

ENTRY 2

DATE: March 25th 2011

The whole group was present (32 students)

They were taking a test this class. Every Friday the classes are 40 minutes long (the other days are 50 minutes), so they have extra minutes (from 10:40 to 11:30) to give tests for the students. Last week they took an English test which was prepared by Dona Cidinha. The subjects for today's test were: Math, Arts and Geography. These tests were established by the school about 5 years ago. The pedagogic staff heard some complaints that there were teachers who didn't evaluate their students, as teacher explained "it seems like they just gave out the score according to the student's face". Then, the school developed this idea, that each Friday, in the sixth class they will take a test. This group has been doing that since fifth grade.

The fifth class teacher is generally the one who stays with them while they take the test. Students complained while taking the test that as teacher Dona Cidinha is not a teacher of the 3 subjects, they can't make questions to solve doubts, and then they try to do what they can.

Previous classes:

They took a test (20 points) and the topic was "food". The teacher gave me a copy of the test. It is basically made up with 4 exercises. They were based on a Pancake recipe. There were open questions and others with alternatives. After the class, Dona Cidinha explained that the supervisor usually checks teachers' tests before making the copies. If the test has only alternative exercises, for example, she talks to teacher in order to diversify the activities. Dona Cidinha says she doesn't have problems with that because her tests usually follow this guideline, but it's good for new teachers and the ones who prefer tests that are easier to correct.

They remained silent during most of the time (doing the test), the ones who were finishing could go home. I didn't collect much information on the group, because they were taking the test, but I had the chance to talk to the teacher about the topics they were studying.

This year they use a book called "Easy Way – the new way to learn English". It was chosen due to its affordable price (around R\$ 15,00) and they bought in 2010 (and studied half of it). The teacher explains that students' parents have financial conditions to afford more expensive books, but they prefer cheaper ones. I registered an interesting opinion she told me:

"They are not needy but it seems like they don't see English as a priority for their kids."

In 2011 the government sent English textbook but the quantity wasn't enough. Thus, students couldn't take it home. The book stays at school and if the teacher wants to use it she borrows them from the school library and by the end of the class she has to take it back. Then more than one group can share the same book. Dona Cidinha complains that this routine is not good, because she can't give homework from the book. Then, she isn't using the textbook, she's using "Easy way" which I believe they will finish until July.

Next class they are supposed to review "Reflexive pronouns" and correct some exercises. They seem to have no problem with me around, some students seem to be indifferent with presence, especially the ones in the back. Next class I'll see them in 'action'.

ENTRY 3

DATE: March 29th 2011

(Before English they were involved in a school project, the room was messy and there were papers on the floor. The English teacher told the students to organize the classroom and so they did).

When I arrived most of the students saluted me in English with a "Good morning!"

The class began with exercise correction, homework from last class. The teacher writes the answers on the board. The exercise presented sentences in Portuguese (using reflexive pronouns) and they had to translate into English. She asks, for some of them to read aloud the sentence in Portuguese and give the respective translation. Some of the students do not answer when she asks.

- *Teacher: "You, read the sentence in Portuguese, and give the translation"*
- *Student: (reads the sentence in Portuguese and stops). "No, I don't know the answer."*

- *Teacher: "Now, you read your answer" (his translation)*
- *Student: "No, I didn't understand it."*

They often say during the class they do not know how to do something but when the teacher asks them to try, the ones who answer are generally correct. In one moment the teacher said: "*Why do you say you can't do? I don't understand.*" (in a louder tone of voice)

Detail: most of the students didn't do the homework.

During the correction there were a lot of chat and noise, and while a student (in the middle) was reading, the teacher stopped her to call the attention of two students in the front who were talking. The two last students of each line (5 in total) talked during almost the entire class. I couldn't hear them talking from where I sat (in the front) but I noticed that they do not pay attention to what happens there in the front.

Then she asked one of the boys who were chatting to read aloud. He says he didn't do and she asks another one. Other students try to read the answer and don't seem to care if they're reading correctly or not.

During another exercise correction a student stands up without asking for permission, and heads to a friend's desk to bring a piece of paper. They start talking and the teacher interrupts the class and asks him to sit back. Then she finishes the correction. She doesn't demonstrate to lose control. She tells them to be quiet, they obey and the class goes on.

For homework she chooses exercises 4, 5 and 6 from page 66. She explains the exercises

Deductively >> *"What do you think you have to do in this exercise?"*

In the end of the unit there is a biblical verse in English. Some students demonstrate to be interested to know the translation, she suggests them to guess, they almost get it right, and finally she explains the exact translation.

In the second part of the class they start a book reading. This time they chose "Lucky Break" by John Escott (Penguin readers). Six students didn't bring the book, so she let them sit with another friend. They start making a lot of noise while they choose which friend to sit with, and then the teacher says:

"While you are talking, time is going by. I won't continue reading carelessly. You need to pay attention"

Then the group stops talking and some students try to guess the story by the pictures on the cover. While reading aloud the teacher control most of the students, but it she stops for a minute, or one of them says something funny, the complete silence disappears. Then she decides some students are going to read.

- *"Who wants to read "*
- *"Mee!"*
- *"Ok, please read!"*
- *"Ah, in English? Noo!" (the girl frowns)*

The teacher stops the reading when she notices that a girl is reading something else (probably a magazine, I couldn't see it closer). While she was reading, she walked around the class and surprised the girl. She immediately hid the magazine and got the book.

And the reading goes on...

While that was happening, two students, far from the teacher were whispering things for each other, and then one of them gives the finger to the other one. He notices I saw, feels embarrassed and hides his face with the book. A group in the back of the class, who didn't have the book, starts to pack their materials while the class is still happening.

The teacher concludes the peer reading didn't work out because they were talking too much. She tells them not to forget the book next class. The bell rings and they leave the classroom.

ENTRY 4

DATE: April 01st 2011

The class started with a homework correction.

The participation comes mainly from students sat in the four first rows of the classroom. From the middle of the class to the bottom the students do not engage in activities, do not respond when she asks, but she controls them. She stopped reading and just looked at some students and they stopped talking. The ones she doesn't look, she just calls

their names and they don't complain.

There are several students doing small talk, the others don't talk, they remain quiet but do not participate. During this class there was a lot of noise, because the school is under reform. The employees were painting and using a machine to prepare to wall for painting, so the teacher had to speak louder. She has a potent voice, which surpasses the students' noise, then, she has the last word. Keeping them quiet is a 'constant exercise of patience' she explains to me. The students in the front engaged more during the reading process, but even when responding to the teacher they made a lot of noise. They all want to talk at the same time.

Taís: "Teacher, read aloud to see if we know..."

Teacher "I'm trying, but with this noise..." (Cidinha frowns)

(on teacher's) Left side of the classroom: two students rearranged their chairs to sit together and talk during the whole activity. They pretend to have the book and to participate, but apparently they were talking about something else.

She assigned exercise 7 for homework. She asked if they had any doubt on the reflexive pronouns (grammar topic).

(Vinícius raises his hand and asks "I didn't understand anything")

"How come you didn't understand a thing? Try to be more specific"

The student explains his idea, sudden his tone of voice changes from strong to weak at the same time. One of the boys imitates the change in tone of voice and the students laugh at him. He feels embarrassed but concludes his question.

Four students were talking while she was trying to explain Vinícius's doubts on the board. She had to interrupt to shut them up.

"You two are disturbing the rest of the group. The people in the back may not hear me", said the teacher.

While saying that, three small groups start talking in different corners of the classroom and at the same time.

P: "What is LITTLE?" S: "Stuart Little!" (students laugh)

And once again a student (Bruno) disturbs the explanation while he drags a chair from one side of the class back to his original place.

ENTRY 5

DATE: April 01st 2011

As usual, every Friday they have 6 classes (40 minutes each) and this Friday they were supposed to be tested in English, History and Math.

The teacher spent 6 minutes to rearrange the rows. In her "exchange system" she asked 5 boys and 3 girls to change places in the classroom in order to maintain the order.

"I am already handing the tests and I won't stay after the class ends to wait for students

to finish their tests." (she goes to bottom of the classroom to explain the test to see if they are silent during explanation)

The students did the test. She gave me a copy of the test she prepared for them.

The group remained silent.

ENTRY 6

DATE: April 05th 2011

In this class the students continued to read the book "Lucky Break"

The reading follow a basic structure: (I) the teacher reads aloud an entire page and (II) asks if they have any doubts. (III) She reads it again and checks if they understood, by saying the translation or asking them what they understood from that page. The students give their opinions mostly based on the pictures, which cover most of the book.

"Hey, you, go on (read)"

"Me? No! Not me! I don't know."

"Ah, you don't know?"

(the student turns her back on the teacher)

During the reading, two boys on my left side asked me about my writings. They wanted to know what I was writing about them, especially about their behavior. I said that was not the focus, I was there to observe how they participate in the class, the things they do and things they don't. They asked me if I the teacher read my notes, and I said she totally allowed to see them if she wanted to.

The case of Push

The teacher was explaining the difference of Push in Portuguese and English (Push and Puxar). The students got interested in those differences, especially when the teacher said that in a bank they should take care with the verb. Sometimes a door they had to "push" and not "pull" it.

- *"But what if someone doesn't know? What does he do?"*
- *"That's why you're here. They won't wait for you. You have to follow them. You need to learn in order to be independent"*

There are some students in the middle of the class who do not participate; they do not say a word and sometimes take notes. The teacher asks specific questions to recruit their participation.

3 students start talking louder in the bottom of the classroom, she approaches them while goes on with the reading. She stops in the middle of the class, in order to observe the group closely.

While that, a boy and a girl in the front are talking. The boy places his arm around her. (Some students told me later that they may have a crush on each other). When the teacher notices that, she stops reading and say: "Why that arm around her?" The students laugh at them, they keep their heads down, separate from each other, and do

not look at each other until the end of the class.

And the reading goes on...

And the reading [activity] goes on. The students make lots of random guess; some of them don't even have the book or are paying attention to reading and even so speak during the activity.

Then she asks the translation of strong. Some students say "brava" and "bonita". But the teacher corrects "Forte"

Soon, two students are stretching their arm muscles to show to each other who is the strongest. They raise their t-shirt sleeve and stretch their arms. I tried not to let them know I observed that in order to intimidate them, but they did not even notice.

One interesting thing that happened is the way she handled a situation with humor, when a student gave a wrong translation.

"What's the translation for 'children's hospital?'"

"Orfanato"

(students laugh out loud)

"Whaaat?"

"Hospital do Câncer"

"No. You are giving quite a translation today" (she laughs)

ENTRY 7

DATE: April 08th 2011

The teacher gave me the entire class to apply the questionnaire.

I explained them again about my research and why I was observing their classes. There were 29 students from the 32. I handled the informed consent form for them, read aloud, asked if they had any doubt and then they signed and gave it back to me.

I passed a copy of the questionnaire for each student and told them not answer before we read together. Even so, some students started to answer it, and then I asked them to hold on. The teacher was also in the classroom with me and the group. They didn't seem to be intimidated by her presence because (I) even though they wrote their names on it (to make it easy for me to know them), they knew that I was the only one who would have access to their answers with their names on it, and (II) the teacher encouraged them to feel free to write the opinion they had. I also explained it wasn't my intention to evaluate the quality of their school, their teacher or themselves as learners, but I was trying to understand

Some of their opinions and beliefs about learning in that group. We read aloud the questions and they answered. We went from question to question, because some of them called me to their desk due to some doubts.

One of the things that got me concerned was the lack of attention and interest (I

suppose) to answer the questionnaire. While I was reading question 2, for example, I could see two or three answering number 5. I tried to ask them to stop and wait for us, but as it was the last class of the day, they thought we would let them go if they finished fast.

One positive aspect was that I combined open and closed questions. They could choose the option they wanted and try to explain it. I didn't have time to see every paper at the same time, but later I noticed that some tried to be as sincere as they could, while others, answered as fast as they could, with answers that would not necessarily meet the needs of the questions. One of my challenges will be talk to them how important it is for the study to have those writing sincere opinions and not only random thoughts only to fill an empty space.

ENTRY 8

DATE: April 12th 2011

The teacher asked me to bring a song to play for the students and I wanted I could bring an exercise for them. I chose the song "Friday" by Rebecca Black due to its instant success and which probably they would know, because it became an overnight sensation, but my mistake! The students had never heard about her.

The students were very agitated. They interrupted most of explanation. I told them the first part would be an oral task, and then they would need to be quiet in order to understand and participate. The teacher was with me, we basically shared the class. She also scolded them because they were making a lot of noise.

Explaining the activity was the longest part. They had to answer four questions about things they liked to do at weekends, while one was responding the rest was chatting very loud. I stopped the explanation, called their attention and went on with the activity.

Later, they had to practice with a friend, this was the hardest part. Whenever I was close to a pair they actually practiced, even with pronunciation mistakes (which they didn't care about making mistakes, probably because they were talking to a partner they chose). But if I went away, they stopped the oral task. They are not used to that kind of activity. The teacher doesn't do that often because she believes it's harder to control them. She recalls previous experiences when group work turned out to be a conflict, with students arguing or fighting. To my view, she holds this belief also because of classroom control. Once students do not seem to be aware with relation to the importance of the task, they do it just to finish soon.

One interesting aspect is that they are not rude. But they seem to have lost their own control. You ask them to be quiet, that what you're doing is important, but minutes later you have to do the same thing. Competing with their tone of voice is another obstacle. The teacher of the group has a very strong tone of voice, but even so she eventually spoke louder in the classroom. Patience and tolerance is crucial because if the teacher is rude at them, they will probably respond in the same way.

The only got quiet when the music was playing. They enjoyed the song and demonstrated to be curious about the lyrics when I told them the reason the song became famous (due to critics to the lyrics and the girl's performance and video clip)

The other part of the activity was to fill the blanks, which they enjoyed to do. Next class (Friday) we are playing the song again and doing the rest of the activities.

ENTRY 9

DATE: April 15th 2011

As usual this as 30 minutes class

The teacher played the song again and again. I didn't help her with this part, she preferred to do it alone, but the translation part she left for me.

The song was played five times. Later she corrected the 09 missing words.

The students were quiet because they wanted to listen to the music. Some of them did very well, because got around 6 or 7 words of the song.

ENTRY 10 – CLASS 1

DATE: April 19th 2011

This was the first intervention class.

It was supposed to a 50 minutes class, but as they would not have class on Friday, the Tuesday classes were shortened in order to have a test at the end.

The first class was aimed to work with an oral activity. The students received a paper, and I started to explain how the activity would work. I had to stop the explanation in order to require silence. I always had to speak louder, and some of them noticed I wasn't feeling comfortable with that. I explained the questions and asked them to repeat.

They really enjoyed repeating because every time I told them to do it faster. They laughed but did it very well.

Then, the last 8 minutes I asked them to practice with a partner. And again, only a few pairs (around 3) were really focused on the activity. Students complained it was the last class of the week; they were really looking forward to the holidays. If I got closer to a pair of students they would do it right, but if I went to another group they stopped.

Classroom control in these conditions is complicated. I conclude they need to be more used to that type of activity before doing it again, thus, in the next classes I shall focus on other types of exercises (reading).

Teaching adolescents is a matter of balance. They seem to want to learn but they need to develop agency to do that. Controlling them was a big challenge. If they seized the moment I had to shout at them, and talk about their noise, classes could be more fruitful, and more things could be done.

Thirty minutes is another obstacle. When we practiced the questions and heard their doubt we only had 8 minutes to do the task.

Next class they are supposed to redo the exercise in the end, I'll observe if the activity will again be constrained by 'parallel chats'

April, 22nd – No class - holiday

April 26th – The final test day (teacher's leave of absence would start next class)

ENTRY 11 – CLASS 2

DATE: April, 29th 2011

Exceptionally in this day the class was supposed to last for 50 minutes once they had already done their final exam.

When I arrived the principal was talking to them about their Grade Point Average (GPA) and their classroom behavior. I noticed that many of their teachers have reported behavior problems, especially continuous talk in the classes. She ended up her scolding by saying they needed to have dreams and make effort to pursue and accomplish them. As I entered, one of the students asked me if I had heard the things she told them. I confirmed and told the group that if they chatted less inside the classroom they would avoid the biggest part of the problem.

They were really agitated this day, especially after the principal's scolding. I introduced the topic of the unit (music). The introductory text gave some examples of music styles and I asked them if they enjoyed and asked for some examples. Many of them talked at the same time, and there were the ones who didn't even have the book.

Fabiana and Mariana, for example, sit in the front and did not bring the book. I let them sit with another friend, but they started talking. I had to stop the class to call their attention. Fernanda raised her voice at me when mentioned her name, complaining that I was only calling her attention, while there were other students who were talking as well. Then, I told her she would be the first, and others just would come along, she didn't need to be concerned, because she was the only one. She was indifferent for the rest of the class. (In the end she came to me and asked if she was going to be punished, I said 'not today', but she needed to consider her attitudes in the class. She didn't seem to care about what I told, and just left the room when the class ended).

The students are used not to bring the book, and they started sitting in pairs without my permission. And as the conversation was excessive. I had to raise my voice and tell them

that next class I would not allow some pairs to work together, because they seize this opportunity to talk during class, and do not participate.

We read the text together and translated the new vocabulary. They didn't seem to be interested in this class, but enjoyed the theme, mainly when I said they would choose the song I would bring in a couple of weeks.

Suddenly, during the reading activity, the school counselor knocked at the door, and when she saw me she said "Oh, you're still in class? The other people have gone. If you want you can let them go now" and she left. The students closed their books and got ready to go when I had to raise the voice again, and forbid them to leave, as I had not finished the class. I explained the homework and then allowed them to go.

Theoretically, I already had 18 minutes left, but since it was Friday and the other classes were taking their final tests (classroom 9 didn't because they took it last Tuesday), the school was already empty, and students were outside waiting for the bus. This totally hampered the last 20 minutes of the class. I was supposed to do the comprehension exercise and then later explain the homework. But that did not happen. The buses in fact arrive a little earlier on Friday, then if we keep them inside the classroom, they might lose it

This is why I've decided to use feedback cards during longer classes (Tuesday). I can also try sending the feedback card home, so they can bring next class. I will give it a try.

*some students brought their feedback cards, some of them 'forgot' to give it to me last class (intentionally because one of the girls, for example, told me she felt too lazy that day to write it down).

** we did not do the oral task again, due to the interruption.

The homework is an exercise with three famous singers, they had to do a research and find out personal information about them.

Students still demonstrate resistance to me and the English class. They start to participate, but only a part of the group. Some of them just stare at me and do not say a word.

ENTRY 12 – CLASS 3

DATE: May, 03rd 2011

This class was based on the homework they were supposed to do at home.

While they were still talking I walked around and wrote down the names of the students who had done the task. 18 students (from 32). Around 12 students did not bring the book and sat in pairs.

Their behavior and participation was much better in this class. We corrected the homework and students completed the information about the singers. The three singers

were: Roberto Carlos (Brazil), Michael Jackson (U.S.A) and John Lennon (England). I brought extra curiosities about them, which they seemed to enjoy. The profiles had a lot of information so most of the class was dedicated to the correction. Another interesting aspect is some of the students who had not brought their books wrote the answers on their notebook, because I had told them in the beginning that this correction would be important in order to their next homework.

Fabiana, again, told me she didn't have a book and she was not going to buy it, and raised her voice at me to say "How will I do this homework then". I explained her she could borrow someone's book and take notes during this class, and then the book would not be necessary for this specific activity. I believe she was expecting me to scold her, and when I explained that, she said ok and copied some of the answers (not all, because I spied on her notebook later).

Tânia, who always seemed to be a good student while I was observing Dona Cidinha's classes, now seems very different. She forgets her book and do not participate as she used to. Since Dona Cidinha is not in the classes, maybe she thinks she can act differently with the new teacher.

In general, this class was much better than the last one. They demonstrated to be interested in the activity, and I was surprised that 18 students had done the homework. As I had observed in some of their classes, most of them forget to do, or use the excuse "I don't have a book" in order not to do it.

After that, I explained their new homework. They had to choose 2 artists they enjoyed and create a similar profile on the notebook, and on Friday I would create a game out of this homework.

Then, I gave them an extra activity. A short biography about Osama Bin Laden (because everyone was talking about him at the time, but students didn't know a lot about it). I gave an extra paper with spaces where they would fill out a profile on his personal life and the reason he became wanted worldwide. I felt they liked the activity, especially because I dared them in the beginning to do it without the use of the dictionary. I told them "to fight" with the text, and try to find the information they could.

Fabiana, surprised me because she was really doing the exercise. She asked me three times to check some information. The problem was the frequent chat, which I warned them it was not good, especially for reading exercises. Compared to the previous class they were more interested and participative, but need to control themselves a little bit more.

Our relationship seems to improve. Today, for example, Rebeca questioned if I remembered her name. They really don't like when a teacher forgets their name. I understand, because name is part of who we are (identity), but as a teacher, this is a big memory challenge. Alan told me that when a teacher remembers his name in classroom he realizes how V.I.P he is (the whole group laughed at him).

While they were doing the reading exercise, I asked Alan to give a feedback card to each student. Every class, we decided that someone different will do that. They want to feel useful, but also walk around the class. Then, I have to choose someone different each class who will help me to give out papers or the feedback cards.

I emphasized again the importance of the feedback cards, and asked them not to give monosyllabic answers, as I noticed the first one (about 6 students did so).

Next class, I told I would bring a list to control their feedback cards (to see if everyone is really commenting on every class). Finally, the bell rang, when I still had 8 minutes left. This seems to be a daily routine.

ENTRY 13 – CLASS 4

DATE: May, 06th 2011

I arrived at school around 10 a.m because I thought they would have shorter classes as usual, but then they told me today they would have normal classes.

So I had to wait outside their classroom. They were having a math class before mine, and I could observe them during a math class. The students behave in the same way they do in the English class, they talk to each other (loud) and some of them do exercises. The teacher had to interrupt them in order to restart the explanation. One of the students shouted very loud (“shut the F*** up”) because the group was exaggerating in the tone of voice. Then the class finished and I got in.

Three students came to talk to me at the door, to ask me about the homework and other one wanted to go out. The other teachers tend not to let them out pretty often, so they believe that I (as the ‘new one’) would let them out. I try not to, otherwise the whole group would want to leave. But once in a while I allow some of them to have some water or go to the bathroom.

I started the class with a comment about their feedback cards. Many students didn’t give it back to me last class, so I reinforced again the importance of their feedback on the classes we were having. From feedback card 1 to 2 I noticed their opinions are becoming less monosyllabic, they are giving more opinions about it. Once it is the first time they’ve been doing it, it’s understandable that they may feel afraid, suspicious or even uninterested to make comments about the classes but I can see they are getting used, because in the beginning of the class some students ask if they will have another piece of paper.

I walked around to check if they had done their homework. Only ten students had done it. Then I reinforced that due to this fact, the game I had told them last class I would do, would be compromised. Luckily, I had an extra list with famous singers’ cards in case they forgot to do their homework.

I explained the game we would do based on the homework. I reviewed with them personal questions they would ask in English in order to obtain a clue, and the one who guessed the artist would get a prize. We reviewed questions such as: What is your full name? Do you have a nickname? What’s your music style? How old are you? Why are you famous for? And etc. The first attempt was frustrated because they had already looked at their friends cards before I started the class. Then I had to use my list with famous people’s cards to do the game. They would ask me questions and I would give

them some clues in order to guess the famous people I had in my card.

It was a very interesting activity, because they liked to ask me questions in English, and sometimes I couldn't answer them (for example, is someone asked me "What's your full name" and I couldn't say because the artist in fact used his or her real name), then they were curious and asked other questions. It was difficult to control them, because everybody wanted to say the answer or ask a question at the same time. Then I changed the dynamics of the activity. I choose (randomly) a classroom number, and the correspondent student had the chance to ask me a question and make a guess. We only had time to do 3 cards because the first one they took too long to guess. They didn't realize that we carried out most of the activity in English, they were asking me in English and I was answering them, I avoided simultaneous translation, just helped them with new vocabulary. When they started talking too loud, I told them I would finish the activity because it wasn't possible to carry on with such noise, and they collaborated more.

The class lasted for 40 minutes, around 11:20 a.m (I would still have 10 minutes left) the bell rang and the students left.

For this class they also had a feedback card, which I told them to take home and bring it answered next class, I will check if this can work out, whether or not they'll remember to bring it back next class. I hope so!

ENTRY 14 – CLASS 5

DATE: May, 10th 2011

This class was based on an activity proposed by their book.

There were some translation exercises related to English words that have been familiarly used in our language (e.g. internet, online, offline, hamburger). Since I knew (based on questionnaire) that they believed translation was a good way to learn English I thought they would be interested in the activity.

Basically, I asked them to (I) define the word, based on the situations they used (e.g. even not knowing the meaning of 'lan' in 'lan house' I asked them to define what a lan house is) and later (II) they checked each vocabulary individually.

This class was audio recorded. Students enjoyed the idea of understanding the literal meaning of the words they generally used, especially because they helped them to associate the translation to the concept they have already developed to the expressions (without knowing the literal meaning).

Some moments I had to stop the class to remind some of the students that they were disturbing the other students who were interested to learn (as it can be seen in the transcription), a student even told me once: "Teach for the ones who want to learn". I can still see that not everybody is interested, but the number of students who are participating more in the classes is increasing, and their 'constant chats' are not as loud as frequent as in the beginning.

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ENTRY 15 – CLASS 6

DATE: May, 13th 2011

Review + Test

Since I was the substitute of the teacher, the school staff asked me to evaluate the students. This Friday was English test (along with Math and History). I chose 2 topics we had been working since the intervention started. (I) personal information and biographies, (II) English words that are common in Portuguese. The test had open and closed questions. I remembered my conversations with Cida when she explained me the way the tests were usually designed. We should not favor only questions with alternatives, we should moderate and balance different types of exercises. I choose the biography of Michael Jackson to do a reading exercise. I also chose a picture of a Brazilian restaurant where the sign “self-service” was spelt incorrectly.

Initially, I had planned to carry on with the intervention classes, but student asked (a lot) for a content review. Then we used the 30 minutes to review the topics and solve final doubts.

The students took the test afterwards, I explained twice and they started doing it. The feedback card was handled 20 minutes after they had started the test. I expected them to give a feedback about the topics we have been studying, whether or not they were learning.

The original idea is not to force them to do the feedback cards, so I always stress the importance of giving a comment, which they can feel to write, and as I have been noticing, most of them are actually writing, but not all of them.

ENTRY 16 – CLASS 7

DATE: May, 17th 2011

In this class I introduced the grammar topic we would study: Past Simple (Regular verbs). This class was also audio recorded.

First they were curious to know if I had corrected their tests, and they wanted to know whether or not they had succeeded.

Students really surprised in this class because they really paid attention while I was explaining. Whenever someone forgot and started talking I stopped and said: “someone’s talking while I’m talking, so I stop and wait!” and then I got their attention back to the explanation. I tried to explain the topic by asking them questions in order to engage them in process of studying a grammar aspect.

They complained it was too difficult, but I assured them it wasn't. I told them to see the grammar rules as clues to remember whenever they thought about the simple past. I gave them homework to practice the grammar. They didn't have a feedback card today; I will give one to them later that comprises all the grammar classes.

ENTRY 17 – CLASS 8

DATE: May, 20th 2011

This class the students were "impossible".

It was Friday, the last class, only 30 minutes, and they were having Portuguese and History test afterwards. I noticed some of them didn't participate in this class because they were studying for the tests.

I started the class by reviewing the rules of the simple past, focusing on regular verbs (ED). Most of them seemed to recall the previous class. Then I assigned them an activity from the book. They had to complete some verbs in the simple past. Only a few of them did the activity, most of them were pretending to do that, they were actually studying for the tests or talking to their peers.

By the end of the class, I told them about it, discussing the importance about seizing these classes, but they seem to get lost between participating or talking to a friend. They realized I wasn't happy with their attitudes in this class, especially because in the previous class I had complimented them for being so participative in a grammar class. Some of them, later, came to me and said they were sorry. The point I see here is that teaching adolescents is an uncertain process, characterized by a bipolar vibe. One day, they are participative, they laugh and do what you propose, but a class later, they don't care about what you're trying to do in the front of the class. Once they were more concerned about the test and going home afterwards, this English class was their least of the morning.

Last class they received a feedback card to do at home, giving their opinion regarding the learning of grammar, and its role in the English language class.

ENTRY 18 – CLASS 9

DATE: May, 24th 2011

This class was based on a music I had promised to bring after their test. The song "Price Tag" by Jessie J is a pop song which discusses the question "can money buy happiness?" According to her, it's not possible, and the song tries to develop this idea.

When I arrived, some students explained me that now some students had to sit in new places due to other teachers' complaints (The history teacher switched their places). The

school principal had already talked to them about their behavior before, but the complaints remained.

To warm up I chose some listening exercises before reading the lyrics. The students enjoyed the listening activities because they feel interested to understand the right words. During the correction, lots of them succeeded in the activity. In some of the stanzas they had to circle the words they heard (with options), other ones they had to re-organize verses in the correct order.

The group was very loud today. I had to interrupt the activity over and over again. Only when they were listening to the song or doing the activity they were quiet. Approximately 6 students were the major noise makers in this class. I called by their names and they stopped but from time to time I had to call their names again.

The students in the bottom of the class were more talkative today. The ones in the front and the middle participated more in the class. Asked questions and did the activity. We had agreed that I wouldn't shout at them. If they were talking I would wait until they finished with their chats.

I had promised to let them see the corrected tests but time wasn't enough. They heard the song three times, we corrected and I tried to discuss the lyrics with them.

First, Marcelo interrupted me and said it was better for me to say the translation and they would write. But then I explained to him that if I did that we would spend too much time and they would not think about the meaning, only copy words. They demonstrated some resistance to do that. I noticed they are more interested in the listening activity itself. Karen, for example, told me she would understand the lyrics better by checking the translation on the internet or watching the video clip on Youtube, then she didn't believe it was necessary to understand the lyrics in the English class, she preferred to listen to it or have a moment to sing.

Tânia was the only student who knew the song. Today she participated more in the class, I believe especially because she enjoyed the music I had brought.

Basically I concluded that they were very receptive to the music, as usually they are. The students enjoyed the listening activity which required more concentration. But the second part of the activity wasn't interesting for most of them. After we finished the listening activity they didn't demonstrate to be as engaged as they were in the previous exercise. As some of them told during the activity, they generally do not do that. They seem to be used to activities that will comprise just the listening aspect. The lyrics and the content are not focus, and when they are, probably someone comes with a translation (which they copy from the board).

We almost finished reading the lyrics and discussing together, but the bell rang and they left the class. The students completed the feedback card about the music class. At a glance, I noticed they enjoyed the music and the class, but the constant chats, yet, was the major problem. The next I'll just check the translation of the last stanza.

ENTRY 19 – CLASS 10

DATE: May, 27th 2011

As usual, the students were very agitated. For this class I prepared a pair activity in order to engage them with peer collaboration.

Students received a text with information about the characters of the TV series *That 70's show* (they will watch an episode soon). In pairs, they had to complete the missing verbs of the story in order to understand the characters' biographies. Each pair received a copy of the text and two word search puzzles which contained the verbs they needed. In pairs they had to complete the text with the right conjugation of the verb and at the same time find it in the word search. To do that, they were supposed to help each other.

The group demonstrated to be involved in the task. In the beginning it was very complicated to organize them in pairs. We made a deal that if they collaborated (by not making too much noise) I would allow them to choose their peers. Then, they sat together and two students helped me to give out the papers.

I carried the recorder with me today, so whenever a pair of students asked for me I recorded their dialogue and the things they said about the activity. As it can be seen in the transcription a lot of pairs asked for help, but most of the time only to check some doubts. They seem to be more aware of pair work now than they were in the beginning, in the class I asked them to ask questions for their peers (CLASS 1).

Today some students missed the class, a number that was more than usual, around 8 students. Hugo, Mário and João who sit in the back were very fast. They really helped each other and completed the task successfully. By sitting in the back, sometimes I have to call their names out loud in order to ask them to be quiet, but they have really paid attention to the last few classes.

David was talking to me about how the other teachers (most of them, according to him) have repeatedly complained about classroom 09 group. They recognize they give a hard time for most of the teachers, but as David told me, their relationship with other teachers is more complicated.

Students are curious about classroom recordings and I promised I would let them hear a recorded class, and show them how noisy they can be (laughs).

We didn't have time to finish the activity, but most of it was done in the class. I allowed them to finish as a homework and bring to me next class. They also took home their feedback cards in order to have more time to make a proper comment regarding the things they did in this class.

ENTRY 20 – CLASS 11

DATE: May, 31th 2011

There was no class today. The teachers stopped their classes in protest. I spoke to the school counselor and she told me that they would not have class that day, but on Friday the classes would be back. Nobody had warned me about it, so I went to school thinking we would have a normal class. I received an email from the English teacher and she

explained me that possibly a strike would start. And then I started to think about the two instruments left for the final data collection: the focus group and the questionnaire. For the intervention there were only two activities left, another text about the video they would watch and the video itself.

ENTRY 21 – CLASS 12

DATE: June, 3rd 2011

Before I entered the class, the teacher had come back but told me she would not watch my class today, because the other English teacher was absent today, then she would replace the teacher, and then no one would be damaged. She also told me not to leave without talking to her firstly; she wanted to explain me something.

The class was based on another group activity. Since there were 32 students, I divided them in 4 groups (8 students per group). Each group received eight different short texts. Each text was a characters' biography from the series *That 70's Show*. Students had to read by themselves, understand it and later explain what he or she understood about it to the group (in Portuguese).

The only constraint was being able to support every student in the group. They had some doubts (vocabulary) and some of their friends were not able to help them, then they counted on me. I noticed some of them are a little lazy to try to infer, then I did not say the translation, I just gave a hint and the student would have to make an inference.

Since this class was shorter, we did not have time to socialize with the whole group, so they just talked to each other inside the groups.

By the end of the class, I talked to the teacher and she explained me that next Wednesday the teachers would stop again, and this time they were confident they would go a longer strike. Then the best option would be rush a little in order to collect their perceptions after the intervention period.

ENTRY 22 – CLASS 14 – FOCUS GROUP

DATE: June, 07th 2011

Then, they have me the questionnaires back and we made a circle in order to start the Focus Group. I explained the "rules" of this activity, what I were my intentions for the research by using such method, and things they could do during the discussion. Even so, as it may be seen in the transcription, some students were talking with each other and not to the group, so I had to call their names once or twice. Also, it was common for me, as the group moderator, to ask them to talk one by one, because many of them wanted to talk at the same time, in order to participate.

The English teacher was also present in this class. But she arrived in the second part of the discussion. In the transcription, for example, it is possible to notice that in the first part (before she arrived) some students mentioned her, which I believe they would not probably feel comfortable to do so with her in the class. She participated twice, she was aware that the focus of the activity was to record students' impressions of the activities. And since she was on a leave of absence she did not watch my classes with the group.

I outlined a script with topics to discuss, but students demonstrated to give their opinions about specific topics, contributing with information I was not expecting (things that other people said to them because they are public school students, for example).

The only problem I noticed was the need to rush this end of the research, because of the possibility of a strike. I could compromise the end if I did not apply the questionnaire and carried out the focus group. If he had more time I would have stayed with them at least one hour more. There were some students who demonstrated to be really aware of the importance of their opinions, thus they participated most of the time.

The bell rang and students left.

Student Questionnaire – Phase I

[] Male [] Female Age: _____
 Grade: _____

1- Do you like learning English?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Never thought about it
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2- Do you like the English language subject?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Never thought about it
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3- Have you ever studied in private language schools?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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4- In the English classes I usually feel...

<input type="checkbox"/> Interested	<input type="checkbox"/> At ease	<input type="checkbox"/> Unmotivated	<input type="checkbox"/> Fine
<input type="checkbox"/> Attentive	<input type="checkbox"/> Intimidated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Disinterested
<input type="checkbox"/> Bored	<input type="checkbox"/> Motivated	<input type="checkbox"/> Lost	<input type="checkbox"/> Calm

Why?

5- Is it possible to learn English in your school?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Never thought about it
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Why?

6- Do you feel that you are learning?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Never thought about it	<input type="checkbox"/> More or less
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Comments:

7- What things don't you like in your English classes?

8- What activity(ies) do you believe that is/are better to learn English (check the ones you want)

<i>Translation</i>	<i>Dictation</i>	<i>Staging a play</i>	<i>Activities with music</i>
<i>Reading Books</i>	<i>Oral activities (dialogues, interviews)</i>	<i>Writing texts</i>	<i>Grammar exercises</i>
<i>Watching movies and videos</i>	<i>Games and dynamics</i>	<i>Other__</i>	<i>Homework and Tests</i>

9- Imagine that a friend of yours, who likes English, is considering changing schools to study with you. However, he asks you if you think your school would be a good place for him to learn, in regard to his willingness. What would you say to him?

10- What abilities would you like to be more focused in your classes?

<i>Reading</i>	<i>Speaking</i>	<i>Listening</i>	<i>Writing</i>
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Thanks a lot for answering! ;)



UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE VIÇOSA
CENTRO DE CIÊNCIAS HUMANAS, LETRAS E ARTES
DEPARTAMENTO DE LETRAS

Viçosa, May, 11th 2011.

Dear Dona Cidinha,

As part of this study, I require your participation for this narrative about language learning and teaching experiences with students in classroom 09. You may report your experiences with this group. The following questions are suggestions for topics to be addressed in the narrative (Feel free to discuss other topics which you find relevant).

Teacher's narrative about EFL teaching with students from classroom 09

MY STUDENTS FROM CLASSROOM 09

1. What were the first impressions you had when you first started teaching them?
2. Currently, how do you see your students during your class (participation, engagement with activities you propose)?
3. How did they react when they saw you in the beginning of this year, assigned to be their teacher for one more year?
4. Did you have any expectation regarding this group? Have you heard other teacher talk about the group?
5. Do you believe is it possible to learn EFL in the work conditions that are available to you?
6. And do you think your students are learning?
7. What are the available conditions to elaborate your classes? Do you believe that this may influence the way they learn English?
8. What is your view on adolescence? Do you enjoy working with this age group? What are the challenges and positive aspects of working with them at that age?

THANK YOU!

Fernando Silvério de Lima
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Graduate Student
Master's Degree in Languages
(Applied Linguistics) - UFV

Feedback cards – Phase II

What did you think about this reading activity? Did you like it? Do you think it could have been different? Did you understand the text? Make comments (suggestions and critics).

Do you like learning English with Grammar? Do you think it is important to learn in the classes? Make comments about this class.

What did you think about the game based on your homework? Make comments.

Give your opinion about this class with music. Did you like the activities? What did you think about the activity focusing more to lyrics comprehension rather than other aspects (i.e., literal translation, grammar topics, completing isolated words)?

What is your opinion about this test? Were you able to do it based on what had been developed in the previous classes? Do you feel you are being able to learn in these classes?

What is your opinion about this activity? Did you like the fact that is done in pairs or do you think it would be better to do it on your own? Did you help or were helped by a friend during the activity? Please, make comments.

Student Questionnaire – Final Phase

[] Male [] Female Age: _____ Grade: _____

1- Was there any change in the way you see your English classes after the intervention?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>More or less</i>
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2- In the English classes I usually feel...

<i>Interested</i>	<i>At ease</i>	<i>Unmotivated</i>	<i>Fine</i>
<i>Attentive</i>	<i>Intimidated</i>		<i>Disinterested</i>
<i>Bored</i>	<i>Motivated</i>	<i>Lost</i>	<i>Calm</i>

Why?

3- After participating in these classes, do you believe in the possibility to learn English in your school?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Depends</i>
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Why?

4- Did you feel you could learn English with the classes?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>More or less</i>
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Comments:

5- Was there anything you did not like in your classes? What factor(s) do you believe that disturbed you while learning?

6- What were the best activities to learn English in your opinion (check the ones you want)

<i>Translation</i>	<i>Dictation</i>	<i>Staging a play</i>	<i>Activities with music</i>
<i>Reading Books</i>	<i>Oral activities (dialogues, interviews)</i>	<i>Writing texts</i>	<i>Grammar exercises</i>
<i>Watching movies and videos</i>	<i>Games and dynamics</i>	<i>Other ___</i>	<i>Homework and Tests</i>

Comments:

7- What abilities would you like to be more focused in your classes?

<i>Reading</i>	<i>Speaking</i>	<i>Listening</i>	<i>Writing</i>
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Explain:

BLANK SPACE

This space is for you to express any comment that was not addressed in these previous questions, any opinion about participating in this research, criticisms, suggestions, etc. Feel free!

**Thank you very much for your participation throughout this research!
Fernando Silvério de Lima**

FOCUS GROUP IN CLASSROOM 09

(I)	Most of the students seem to like English (21). However, in the questionnaire, most of you claimed to no like the English language subject? Let's talk about it?
(II)	And with the changes and activities that were conducted in the last classes, was there any major interest for the subject or do you still sustain the dislike for it?
(III)	Most of the students (15) believe that it is not possible to learn English in this school. (07) believe so and (09) had never thought about it. And some of the reasons for not learning are: a) the indiscipline, b) students' lack of cooperation with the teacher, c) few classes a week, d) lack of materials, e) the difficulty of the contents. What do you think about it?
(IV)	This question is for the students who answered "never thought about it". Do you have any idea why you never stopped to think about it?
(V)	And after the activities and the classes, is this view the same? Did it change?
(VI)	Classroom indiscipline emerged as the main problem that affects the quality of classes. In your opinion, who or what is responsible for it? Why do students make a lot of mess? Don't you think you should change it? How to start this <i>change</i> ?
(VII)	When you were asked whether you felt you were being able to learn English, the results were: (24) chose "more or less", while only (3) said "yes" and (2) marked "no". In this question, the comments changed from question 5 (if it was possible to learn), most of you evaluated the content of the subject as difficult. Learning English is that hard for you? Why? Do you believe English is more difficult than other subjects?
(VIII)	Only two people mentioned they felt they were not learning because they did not pay attention to the class or because they were talking during it. Could this be the problem of more students in this group? What do you think about it?
(IX)	The results for the best activities to learn English were: a) games and dynamics (13), b) Music (12), c) Translation (11), d) movies (8) and grammar (7). What did you think about these classes? (note: comment them separately).
(X)	And now, after these classes with activities mostly suggested by you, do you still think these are the best activities to learn English? Did you change your mind?

TRANSCRIÇÃO DE AULA

Music: Price Tag (by Jessie J)

DATA: 24 .05. 2011

(Fernando = Professor. Os demais pseudônimos representam os alunos da sala 09)

Fernando: Bom, vamos começar né?
Hoje eu trouxe uma atividade diferente pra gente fazer...

Hugo: Ahm (expressando desânimo)

Fernando: Com uma música que tem uma letra bem bacana.

Hugo: É aquela “Friday” de novo?

Karen: Qual que é o nome?

Fernando: O nome da música é ‘Price Tag’

Marcelo: É o que::::?

Fernando: ‘Price tag’

Jessica: de quem que é?

Fernando: Jessie J. E significa (faz gestos referentes às palavras “etiqueta” e “preço”)

Hugo: Etiqueta de preço.

Leonardo: I::::, música de etiqueta de preço?

David: Mas muitas música tem, tem, te::::m

Leonardo: te::::m (risos)

Alan: te::::m (risos)

Tania: Tem nome que não tem nada a ver com a letra.

(INCOMP)

Fernando: Então essa atividade que eu trouxe pra vocês hoje...

Tania: Cala a boca aí (olhando para trás)

Fernando: Nós vamos começar com uma atividade de Listening e depois vamos pra compreensão da letra, mas não vou fazer tradução, ok?

((o professor pede a Jessica que entregue as letras aos alunos e dá instruções de como será a atividade))

Tania: O:: professor, coloca aí logo pra gente ouvir.

((a música é tocada uma vez))

Fernando: Conseguiram fazer tudo já?

((todos/vozes simultâneas)): si:m/aha:m/nã:o

Marcelo: Eu não.

Lais: Quase.

Karen: Coloca de novo.

Ricardo: A segunda parte é mais fácil

(INCOMP)

Fernando: Alguém de vocês já procurou ver o que que esse *price tag* tem a ver na letra da música. A T até comentou agora pouco de músicas que o título não tem nada a ver com a letra, será que tem a ver?

Marcelo: Traduz aí pra gente.

Fernando: Tradução não, eu vou ajudar vocês a entender a letra.

Rebeca: Eu acho que tem a ver com a letra.

Fernando: Let's listen again... ((em inglês))

((música tocada pela segunda vez))

Fernando: E agora, conseguiram?

Marcelo: Eu consegui já!

Jessica: Mais ou menos.

Bento: Eu não.

Fernando: Então vamos ver aí, ok?

Marcelo: Então, eu fiz, mas não sei se tá certo.

Fernando: Na segunda estrofe vocês tinham lá os quatro versos para colocar na ordem. O primeiro verso que vocês ouviram é...

Marcelo: O primeiro mesmo.

Fernando: ISSO, e o segundo?

Mario: É o quarto ((verso)).

Fernando: É o verso que começa com "acting"

Marcelo: Você tá colocando em que ordem professor?

Fernando: Na ordem que aparece ali no papel só que o número entre parênteses.

Marcelo: ah ta:, entendi!

Fernando: Number three?

Mario: You got não sei o que...

Marcelo: E o quatro é a que sobra.

Fernando: Na próxima estrofe. Everybody moves to their...?

Marcelo: a primeira é LEFT

Fernando: E a segunda, moves to their..?

Tania: Right.

Fabiana: acertei tudo, uh::::!

Mariana: Acertei tudo no chute cara.

Fernando: E a última, TONIGHT ou TO NINE?

((as respostas dos alunos se dividem))

Fernando: A primeira ou a segunda?

Fabiana: A segunda!

Fernando: Então vamos ver, quem fez a primeira ergue a mão!

((alunos erguem a mão))

Fernando: Só um, dois, três, cinco, sete. Vou ter que contar de novo ((risos)). Ergue a mão! ((risos))

Marcelo: O bobo lá não fez não.

Fernando: A segunda?

((os alunos erguem a mão))

Mario: E quem não fez? ((risos))

Fernando: Aqui ó (aponta a resposta certa)

((vários alunos comemoram o acerto))

Marcelo: eu acertei! ((comemora))

Fabiana: Chu:::te ((risos))

Fernando: Vocês poderia ter ido pelo significado. TONIGHT significa hoje a

noite e TO NINE seria só “para o nove”.
E na última estrofe?

Marcelo: Ah, eu não sei escrever, eu coloquei “tchuai”

Leonardo: “Tchain”? ((palpite de Leonardo com base na compreensão auditiva))

((o professor escreve a resposta no quadro))

Marcelo: Ó eu sabia, eu só escrevi errado.

Fernando: E a segunda?

Rebeca: Essa aí que eu fiquei com dúvida.

Marcelo: ((para Leonardo)): Dá a borracha Aí meu filho.

Leonardo: A::, pêra aí!

((o professor escreve a resposta no quadro))

Rebeca: Ah professor, eu errei.

Mariana: Ó, eu chutei e acertei TUDO!

Mario: eu só errei na última.

(INCOMP)

Fernando: Ok. Agora vamos ver a letra.

Leonardo: Põe pra gente ouvir de novo.

Marcelo: Faz tradução e a gente copia.

Fernando: Tradução demora mais e vocês só copiam, não tentem entender.

Marcelo: Ah. ((reclamando))

Fernando: Vamos ver se juntos a gente consegue entender a letra da música

((vários alunos reclamam))

Hugo: A gente tinha era que ver o vídeo.

Jessica: É.

Hugo: Porque a música inteira é bem mais fácil de entender pelo vídeo.

Fernando: Ok, mas agora a gente tá sem o vídeo, então vamos tentar entender só pela letra mesmo. “Seems like everybody’s got a price”. O seems like aqui indica parece, e o “everybody’s”?

Karen: todo mundo.

Fernando: “Got a price” ((faz o gesto da cifra de dinheiro))

Tania: Gosta de dinheiro.

Johnny: Tem dinheiro.

Jessica: Gosta!

Fabiana: Tem um...

Marcelo: Preço.

Fernando: “Parece que todo mundo tem um preço”

Leonardo: Professor, qual que é o seu preço? ((risos))

Alan: A:::: ! Ó L, tá vendo. O Hugo vale 70 centavos. O outro vale só 50 centavos ali.

Fernando: Quando você diz que todo mundo tem um preço o que isso significa?

Marcelo: Que todo mundo é uma mercadoria.

Rebeca: Que todo mundo é comprado.

Mario: É vendida! ((risos))

((alunos conversando))

Jessica: O:: cala a BOCA aí!

Mario: Mas pessoa vendida não é P***.
((palavrão omitido))

Fernando: Não nesse sentido. Olha só, uma pessoa vendida pode ser alguém que trai aquilo que ela acredita, que

pode se vender por dinheiro ou por interesses.

((alunos continuam a rir e voltam a conversar))

((sinal bate, mais cedo, e os alunos saem))

APPENDIX M Feedback Cards Sample

Feedback card:

Write down your opinion about this class. Did you like the activities? What did you think about the activity being more focused on lyrics comprehension instead of other aspects (i.e., translation, grammar, etc)?

	Name	Comment
01	<i>Cláudia</i>	I liked it. It was good to know other words besides the song that we didn't know.
02	<i>Paulo</i>	Yeah. Because it's a fun way to learn English.
03	<i>Kelly</i>	The class was cool. I think in this way [with music] you can have a better English learning.
04	<i>Eduardo</i>	Yes. Very nice!
05	<i>João</i>	The song is very cool. I think classes with music get better, and to understand it, you have the activities.
06	<i>Ellen</i>	I really liked [the class]. What I liked more was to complete the missing words, before having to comprehend the lyrics.
07	<i>Micheli</i>	Really nice. Kind of.
08	<i>Karen</i>	It's cool, but I always get lost when it comes to doing the exercises. I think literal translation is cool, but it doesn't work out [in class] because of students' talk which is too much.

09	<i>Jéssica</i>	Yes I did, I thought it was cool.
10	<i>David</i>	Yes. I thought the class was amusing. The activity was interesting for working with different aspects of English language, because everything is important (in the lyrics).
11	<i>Gustavo</i>	I liked it. It was cool, we interacted more with the class.
12	<i>Bento</i>	Very nice. I think it would be cool to keep listening to the song in the English class. Except for some people talking, it was cool.
13	<i>Mário</i>	I thought it was interesting because we come to know new words better. I was able to notice the words that were missing or the ones the ones with more than one option [referring to the activity]. I think the class got better.
14	<i>Laís</i>	I loved it. I think the classes should be always that cool.
15	<i>Ricardo</i>	Yes. I think not only in English classes, but others as well, they should have it [activities with music] to amuse the classroom.
16	<i>Daniel</i>	Yes, because I think it's good to understand the lyrics of the song you're listening to.
17	<i>Rebeca</i>	Cool. It's better than having to translate the immense lyrics. It would
18	<i>Hugo</i>	Yes. I liked it because I think the best classes are the ones with music.
19	<i>Leonardo</i>	I thought the class was nice and profitable
20	<i>Alice</i>	Yes. Very good, because we need to comprehend texts in English much better.
21	<i>Mariana</i>	The class was cool. Yeah! It's good when we learn with a cool class. I could do the whole activity!
22	<i>Valéria</i>	Yes, the class was cool. I liked the activity to complete the words.
23	<i>Suzana</i>	I thought the class was good. I liked it because we learned how to use the words that were in the lyrics.
24	<i>Carlos</i>	Yes, I liked the class, for the way which we worked with the song, and mainly the song, which I liked more.
25	<i>Tânia</i>	Yes. I found it very cool. I guess I learned more.
26	<i>Johnny</i>	Awesome. I didn't see any problem, no.
27	<i>Vinícius</i>	I liked it. If we had more activities like that it would be nice.

Reproduced here in Portuguese, the original language it was written.

– OS MEUS ALUNOS DA SALA “09” –

Em 2010, iniciei os meus trabalhos como professora de Inglês na turma 8º ano 07. Eu não os conhecia, mas havia decidido voltar a ensinar inglês no ensino fundamental, uma vez que quando os alunos chegavam no primeiro ano do Ensino Médio, eu pensava que eles não tinham vindo com a bagagem que precisavam . Eu não sabia quem eram os alunos. A primeira impressão não foi tão boa, pois era muito cansativo para mim as aulas, uma vez que a turma não tinha limites. Os alunos falavam muito alto, conversavam todo o tempo, gritavam, jogavam baralho durante as minhas aulas, respondiam muito mal quando eram chamados atenção... Para eles, andar pela sala, trocar de lugar, responder mal a professora, maltratar os colegas, falar palavrões e gargalhar era muito normal. Não parecia uma turma de estudantes. Parecia mais um encontro de colegas pra farrear!

Para mim, esta turma representava um grande desafio. Não pra ensinar Inglês, mas para dar mesmo noção de Educação. Durante 2010, eu brigava muito com eles, precisava ser muito firme, pois era até perigoso algo de ruim acontecer ali, naquele ambiente. Não só eu, outros professores sentiam também a mesma dificuldade. Até hoje nos conselhos de classe todos os professores reclamam da indisciplina dos alunos. Assim como na aula de Inglês, eles não levam material para as outras aulas, conversam demais, brincam demais e não levam a vida acadêmica a sério. Eles não têm noção da necessidade de estudar, não valorizam os estudos. Parece que eles querem aprender, eles querem estudar, mas eles não têm uma orientação voltada para o sucesso, porque para você obter sucesso você precisa ter um comportamento adequado. E eu não tenho o tempo bastante para convencê-los dessa necessidade. Porque eu precisava conhecê-los mais, para alcançá-los mesmo. E eu pensava que se eu conseguisse fazer com que eles se comportassem como estudantes, já estaria contribuindo e muito. Passei alguns recreios com eles, mandei alguns para a supervisora, às vezes, dava um pontinho extra, valorizando o bom comportamento, elogiava quando percebia uma melhora no comportamento. Muitos foram os caminhos que eu busquei.

Não contente com o desempenho em 2010, escolhi-os como alunos em 2011, uma vez que, sendo a mais antiga na escola, posso, se quiser, escolher as minhas turmas. E assim, em fevereiro de 2011, lá estava eu novamente, trabalhando com eles. Apesar de levados, eles são muito carinhosos e engraçados. Então, isto também fez com que eu os quisesse novamente. É muito agradável estar ao lado de pessoas carinhosas e engraçadas. E eu detectei na turma, os alunos líderes. Então, a minha estratégia foi elevar os líderes positivos e trazer para o positivismo aqueles que eram negativos. Aqueles menos influentes na turma, eu comecei a evidenciar suas habilidades, valorizando-os também.

Eles me receberam bem. Entretanto, havia alguns alunos repetentes agora, na turma 09. Eles eram diferentes do grupo (antiga sala 07). Então, o primeiro bimestre, eu retomei bastante as brigas, os “castigos”, mas, lógico, estavam já bem melhores do que no ano anterior. . Algumas meninas faziam as unhas durante a aula de Inglês, ao serem chamadas atenção elas respondiam muito mal. E os meninos brigavam um com o outro, com xingamentos e até agressões físicas.

Agora, já não tenho lá, problemas de indisciplina, nem “terrorismo” como antes. Eles são capazes de permanecer sentados, falam mais baixo e não respondem mal. Podem até responder, mas com respeito. Não usam mais palavrões, nem agressão física.

Durante as aulas, eles gostam de participar. A turma cá das carteiras da frente, tem muito interesse em aprender. Os que ficam lá atrás, às vezes, percebo que não participam mesmo. Mas, sempre chamo atenção, pois procuro envolver todos nas atividades. Nem sempre consigo, mas tento! Gosto de caminhar entre as carteiras para me certificar de que estão fazendo as atividades. Alguns fazem com má vontade, fazem de qualquer maneira. Mas, há aqueles que capricham, que me pedem ajuda, que dão mesmo o melhor. Nas avaliações, percebo que alguns estudam mesmo para fazê-las bem. Como valorizo o interesse e a vontade de aprender dos meus alunos, posso afirmar que a maioria tem interesse. Houve um crescimento muito grande em relação ao comportamento enquanto estudantes.

Atualmente, é possível já ensinar Inglês na turma. Já aprenderam a ouvir. Já sabem falar quando precisam e calar quando é necessário. Estamos estudando de acordo com as nossas possibilidades, pois um fator que atrapalha bastante é o fato de eu ter 38 aulas por semana e isto me impede de planejar aulas que venham atender de fato as necessidades dos meus meninos. Tenho feito o que posso, mas acho que é pouco. Outra dificuldade é o fato de termos só 2 (duas) aulas por semana. Este tempo é insuficiente para dar o que é preciso. Acabamos dando menos do que é necessário. É possível iniciar os meninos no estudo da Língua Inglesa e incentivá-los a buscar mais. Acho que o tempo que passo com eles é pouco para incentivá-los mais. A respeito da bagunça, é característica deles, eles não bagunçam somente na aula de inglês, eles fazem bagunça inclusive na de matemática e na de português (que inclusive sou eu a professora de português deles). Essa característica é falta de orientação para um comportamento mais atencioso nas aulas, um comportamento mais adequado. O ponto positivo de tudo isso [da bagunça] é o fato de eu me preocupar em preparar aulas mais chamativa ou melhores para a turma. Isto é o que venho fazendo ultimamente, tentando sempre mostrar a eles a importância de aprender Inglês e dando a eles alternativas para buscar a aprendizagem do idioma. Às vezes, eles me pedem algo e infelizmente, preciso ser verdadeira. Infelizmente, não posso. A título de exemplo posso citar os inúmeros pedidos por aulas de reforço e aulas com vídeo (filmes). Uma vez que discordo de aulas de vídeo no horário das aulas, não dou. Eu já ofereci para que viessem à tarde, mas não podem porque a maioria vive na Zona Rural. Assim sendo, não fazemos. Eu ainda não aprendi a trabalhar com vídeos de maneira produtiva, o que ainda quero aprender. Aí, sim,

espero no futuro trabalhar. Mas, colocar o vídeo lá e assistir e nada mais fazer com ele não dá. Recuso-me a fazer isto. O tempo é pouco e precioso, não posso perdê-lo.

De acordo com as colocações acima, vejo sim, possibilidade de meus meninos da sala 09 aprenderem Inglês, mas estão aprendendo menos do que precisam e podem, não porque são limitados, mas porque têm uma professora que trabalha com muitas turmas, não podendo assim, atender as necessidades para uma aprendizagem maior. Também o tempo é inferior às suas necessidades. Gostaria de ressaltar que faço o que posso. Não cruzo os braços!

A adolescência a meu ver é uma fase muito bonita do ser humano. Eles são alegres, amáveis, engraçados... Os meus meninos não me dão trabalho mais. A gente se adaptou e se acomodou... Algumas meninas às vezes, faziam as unhas nas aulas de Inglês, mas agora não fazem mais. Elas já sabem que precisam melhorar a própria vida e que é através da aquisição de conhecimentos, que podem alcançar este objetivo. Eu gosto de trabalhar com adolescentes. O que eles precisam é de orientação. Se a professora sabe fazer isto, torna-se menos doloroso o trabalho, pois muitos se encontram desorientados. É preciso conversar com eles, estar mais perto, não como amigo, porque o adolescente precisa muito é de firmeza, coerência, respeito e amor. Como hoje em dia, os pais saem pra trabalhar e trabalham muito, às vezes, o adolescente não têm muito convívio com eles. Aí, se somos coerentes com as ordens que damos, se somos misericordiosos com eles, mas exigindo responsabilidade por parte deles, alcançamos a confiança dos meninos. E aí, o trabalho fica menos difícil. A gente precisa saber aceitar as limitações deles, porque nós também temos limitações, e muitas...

Então, o aluno adolescente não é o ideal, mas o professor, o sistema educacional, o material didático também estão longe do ideal. E é isto, sigo a minha caminhada fazendo o melhor que posso, mas não fico à procura da turma pronta. É muito bom saber que a melhoria que alcançamos até aqui, tem um pouquinho do meu esforço.

Dona Cidinha, Junho de 2011.

APPENDIX O - Classroom Activity: Speaking – Personal Short Profile

Each student received one of these cards to participate in the activity.

Name: _____
Age: _____
Origin: _____
Live in: _____
Music: _____
Job: _____
Hobbies: _____

Name: _____
Age: _____
Origin: _____
Live in: _____
Music: _____
Job: _____
Hobbies: _____

Name: _____
Age: _____
Origin: _____
Live in: _____
Music: _____
Job: _____
Hobbies: _____

Name: _____
Age: _____
Origin: _____
Live in: _____
Music: _____
Job: _____
Hobbies: _____

APPENDIX P - Classroom Activity: Game – Famous Singers

Cards used for the game in which they had to guess the singer we were talking about.

Name: MICHAEL JACKSON

Age: 50

Origin: INDIANA, U.S

Live in: NEVERLAND RANCH

Music: POP

Job: SINGER, SONGWRITER

Hobbies: SHOPPING, WRITING, TRAVELING, PLAYING WITH HIS KIDS.

Famous for: Records in Music

Name: IVETE SANGALO

Age: 39

Origin: BAHIA, BRAZIL

Live in: SALVADOR, BRAZIL

Music: AXÉ, POP

Job: SINGER, TV HOST

Hobbies: COOKING, SINGING, TRAVELING, SPENDING TIME WITH HER BABY BOY.

Famous for: Best-selling artist from Bahia

Name: JOHN LENNON

Age: 40

Origin: LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND

Live in: LONDON

Music: ROCK, POP, FOLK

Job: SINGER, SONGWRITER

Hobbies: SONGWRITING, READING, PLAYING INSTRUMENTS.

Famous for: BEING ONE OF THE BEATLES, HAD A VERY FAMOUS CHRISTMAS SONG.

Name: ROBERTO CARLOS

Age:

Origin: ESPIRITO SANTO, BRAZIL

Live in: RIO DE J

Music: ROCK, MPB, ROMANTIC

Job: SINGER, SONGWRITER

Hobbies: READING, SONGWRITING

Famous for: THE 'JOVEM GUARDA' MOVEMENT, THE FAMOUS SONGS AND THE TV SHOWS ON CHRISTMAS TIME.

Second Part of the class – Extra Activity

Osama bin Mohammed bin Awad bin Laden (March 10, 1957 – May 2, 2011) was the founder of the jihadist organization al-Qaeda, responsible for the September 11 attacks on the United States and numerous other mass-casualty attacks against civilian and military targets. Bin Laden was on the American Federal Bureau of Investigation's lists of Ten Most Wanted Fugitives and Most Wanted Terrorists for his involvement in the 1998 US embassy bombings. From 2001 to 2011, bin Laden and his organization had been major targets of the War on Terror. On May 1, 2011, U.S. President Barack Obama ordered an attack at bin Laden's suspected location at Abbottabad, Pakistan. The operation was successfully carried out by United States Navy, with intelligence support from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). With his corpse in custody, genetic testing was done to verify that it was indeed bin Laden. Shortly after verifying his identity, he was given a burial at sea. The date and time of bin Laden's death has come under some scrutiny but it is generally believed to be May 2, 2011.

Name: _____
Birth: _____
Death: _____
Age: _____
Occupation: _____
Known for: _____

Where he was buried (enterrado) _____

EVERYDAY EXPRESSIONS

(Adapted from an activity in their textbook)

You probably use some of these words on a regular basis, but do you know their original meaning? Check it out.



Word/expression	It refers to...	Meaning
DELETE		
HAMBURGER		
INTERNET		
E-MAIL		
BIRTHDAY		
HAPPY HOUR		
COFFEE BREAK		
ONLINE		
OFFLINE		
TEST DRIVE		
SELF-SERVICE		
LAN HOUSE		
CHEESEBURGER		



Name: _____ Number: _____ Score: _____

ENGLISH TEST

1) The word LAN, from lan house stands for

- a) Linear Arrange Network b) Light Area Network
- c) Local Arrange Network d) Local Area Network

2) Correct the mistake in this Brazilian restaurant sign:



3) Read the text and complete the questions.

Michael Jackson was born on August 29, 1958, in Gary, Indiana state, an industrial suburb. His mother, Katherine Esther Scruse married Joseph Walter "Joe" Jackson. Jackson had three sisters: Rebbie, La Toya, and Janet, and five brothers: Jackie, Tito, Jermaine, Marlon, and Randy. A sixth brother, Brandon, died shortly after birth. On June 25, 2009, Jackson died in his bed at his rented mansion at 100 North Carolwood Drive in the Holmby Hills district of Los Angeles. Jackson throughout his career transformed the art of the music video and paved the way for modern pop music. *Daily Telegraph* writer Tom Utley described Jackson in 2003 as "extremely important" and a "genius. It is believed that Michael sold more than 750 million albums.

When is Michael's birthday?

Where was he born?

How many albums did he sell?

Why was he famous for?

*What are two good features used by Tom Utley to describe Michael's career?



4) Make pairs to create a new word. NOTE: Some words go together (internet) and some don't (e.g.> hot dog)

Off Hour Love Word Lan Way Birth Liner Drive Ham
Chill Hot Happy Day Out Pain Burger One Line No

\$\$ Price Tag \$\$

Jessie J

Seems like everybody's got a price
I wonder how they sleep at night
When the sale comes first
And the truth comes second
Just stop for a minute and Smile

() Why is everybody so serious?
() And your heels so high
() You got your shades on your eyes
() Acting so damn mysterious
That you can't even have a good Time

Everybody look to their **(left/right)** (yeah)
Everybody look to their **(left/right)** (yeah)
Can you feel that (yeah)
We' ll pay them with love **(tonight/ to nine)**

Chorus:

*It's not about the money, money, money
We don't need your money, money, money
We just wanna make the world dance
Forget about the price tag
Ain't about the (ha) Cha-Ching Cha-Ching
Aint about the (yeah) Ba-Bling Ba-Bling
Wanna make the world dance
Forget about the price tag*

(Okay)

We need to take it back in _____
When music made us all unite
And it wasn't low blows and video hoes
Am I the only one getting... tired?

Why is everybody so obsessed
_____ can't buy us happiness
If we all slow down and enjoy right now
Guarantee we'll be feelin' all right.

\$\$ Price Tag \$\$

Jessie J

Seems like everybody's got a price
I wonder how they sleep at night
When the sale comes first
And the truth comes second
Just stop for a minute and Smile

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Forget about the price tag*

(Okay)

We need to take it back in _____
When music made us all unite
And it wasn't low blows and video hoes
Am I the only one getting... tired?

Why is everybody so obsessed
_____ can't buy us happiness
If we all slow down and enjoy right now
Guarantee we'll be feelin' all right.

Yeah yeah ① Well, keep the price tag ① And take the cash back ① Just give me six
streams and a half stack ① And you can keep the cars ① Leave me the garage ①
And all I, Yes all I need are keys and guitars ① And guess what, in 30 seconds I'm
leaving to mars ① Yes we leaving across these undefinable odds ① Its like this
man, you can't put a price on life ① We do this for the love so we fight and sacrifice
every night ① So we ain't gon' stumble and fall never ① Waiting to see, a sign of
defeat uh uh ① So we gon' keep everyone moving their feet ① So bring back the
beat and then everyone sing ① It's not about...

Getting to know the show...



That '70s Show was an American television comedy show that **(to center)** _____ on the lives of a group of teenage friends who **(to live)** _____ in the fictional suburban town of Point Place, Wisconsin state, from May 17, 1976, to December 31, 1979. The show **(to**

portray) _____ the typical life of teenagers who were discovering life and having new experiences. It **(to debut)** _____ on the Fox television network, first airing on August 23, 1998, running for eight consecutive seasons, and **(to conclude)** _____ with the 200th episode on May 18, 2006. In Brazil, people **(to watch)** _____ this show on TV Bandeirantes.

ERIC FORMAN

Eric was a 17 year-old boy who **(to live)** _____ with his parents. His neighbor Donna was his best friend when they were kids, but one day he **(to notice)** _____ she became a beautiful girl and he **(to love)** _____ Donna. Eric was a smart boy with a sarcastic sense of humor.

DONNA PINCIOTTI

Donna was a beautiful red hair girl. When they were kids, Donna and Eric **(to play)** _____ together all the time, but years later. Donna's parents were **(to name)** _____ Midge and Bob Pinciotti. Donna **(to love)** _____ Eric as well, and **(to try)** _____ to tell him that. Meanwhile, they hang out together as friends.

MICHAEL KELSO

Michael Kelso was Jackie's boyfriend. He was the kind of guy that only **(to care)** _____ about his appearance. Kelso was the kind of boy that the girls **(to die)** _____ for, another reason why Jackie was so jealous. They broke up because she **(to control)** _____ him. He was a funny guy but also dumb, and his friends **(to laugh)** _____ at his stupid comments all the time.

JACKIE BURKHART

Jackie was Kelso's girlfriend. Along with Donna, they were the only girls in the boy's club. She **(to date)** _____ Kelso for 4 years and then they **(to separate)** _____. Kelso broke up with Jackie because of her personality. She **(to talk)** _____ too much and **(to want)** _____ rule Kelso's life. In her free time she **(to enjoy)** _____ dancing.

STEVEN HYDE

Hyde was the 'boy trouble' of the group. He was **(to raise)** _____ by his mom because his father **(to abandon)** _____ his family when he was a little boy. Hyde was the mentor of the group and his friends were very important to him. He **(to like)** _____ rock music and **(to hate)** _____ dancing disco music.

FEZ

Fez is an Exchange student. He was **(to host)** _____ by a religious family in the U.S.A. He **(to experience)** _____ the life of a regular American teenager and **(to adore)** _____ it. He also had a very strong accent. His main characteristics were his sense of humor and the fact that he **(to dance)** _____ like a pro.

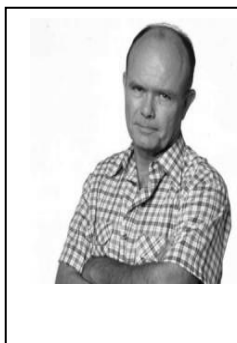
APPENDIX U - Classroom Activity: Grammar – That 70's show (word search)

Activity

U	N	O	T	I	C	E	D	R	O	M	P	R	A	Y	H	O	S	T	E	D	O	T
C	A	R	R	I	E	D	A	N	T	C	O	N	C	L	U	D	E	D	R	A	K	E
E	E	A	Y	S	H	Y	T	E	L	E	R	O	A	M	E	D	E	U	L	N	O	T
N	X	N	E	H	A	T	E	D	O	P	T	R	U	M	P	E	T	S	A	C	N	A
T	P	G	C	A	R	E	D	L	A	N	R	A	L	S	A	T	T	I	U	E	D	B
E	E	E	N	T	U	M	O	R	E	T	A	L	K	E	D	O	R	A	G	D	U	A
R	R	D	W	A	N	T	E	D	A	Y	Y	D	R	E	O	M	I	G	H	U	O	N
E	I	K	E	D	T	A	B	L	A	M	E	D	O	K	R	N	E	T	E	N	E	D
D	E	N	U	N	O	T	L	I	V	E	D	Y	E	D	E	D	O	D	K	N	O	
R	N	O	T	W	H	I	O	S	U	R	V	I	V	E	D	E	N	I	E	D	D	N
O	C	R	U	A	D	O	V	T	C	O	N	T	R	O	L	E	D	P	L	A	E	E
D	E	B	U	T	E	D	E	E	U	Z	B	K	I	S	T	A	R	A	I	S	E	D
Y	D	U	T	C	O	U	D	N	T	B	E	L	I	E	V	E	D	M	N	T	D	S
B	R	R	I	H	G	H	S	E	P	A	R	A	T	E	D	E	V	E	L	O	P	E
C	L	I	K	E	D	Y	S	T	O	P	P	E	D	R	I	V	E	L	O	X	Y	R
P	O	P	A	D	I	E	D	O	P	P	E	D	O	P	L	A	Y	E	D	O	N	K

Answers

	N	O	T	I	C	E	D				P				H	O	S	T	E	D			
C							A			C	O	N	C	L	U	D	E	D		A			
E	E						T				R								L	N			
N	X			H	A	T	E	D			T								A	C		A	
T	P		C	A	R	E	D				R				A				U	E		B	
E	E										T	A	L	K	E	D			R		G	D	A
R	R		W	A	N	T	E	D			Y				O			I		H		N	
E	I										E				R			E		E		D	
D	E						L	I	V	E	D				E			D		D		O	
	N			W			O								D							N	
	C			A			V			C	O	N	T	R	O	L	E	D				E	
D	E	B	U	T	E	D	E											R	A	I	S	E	D
	D						D																
				H			S	E	P	A	R	A	T	E	D								
	L	I	K	E	D																		
				D	I	E	D								P	L	A	Y	E	D			



RED FORMAN & KITTY FOREMAN

Kitty and Red are Eric's parents. Kitty is overprotective about her boy while Red has a very sarcastic way to talk to Eric and make fun of him. He wants his son to become a good man, so he is very strict. In this episode they allow Eric to drive his friends to a party but with a lot of conditions.



BOB & MIDGE PINCIOTTI

Bob and Midge are Donna's parents. They live next to Red and Kitty and they are their favorite neighbors. Bob is suspicious about Kitty and thinks she's cheating on her husband with her son's friend. Bob and Midge will do what they can to help their neighbors.



JACKIE BURKHART

Jackie is Kelso's girlfriend. Along with Donna, they are the only girls in the boy's club. She's crazy about her boyfriend and that is the main reason why they are always breaking up and making up afterwards. Jackie loves dancing but her boyfriend always leaves her alone to dance and party by himself.



DONNA PINCIOTTI

Donna is Bob and Midge's daughter. She lives next to Eric Forman and they grew up together as best friends. But then, she's not a girl anymore, and finds out she has a crush on Eric. He doesn't make any move and she doesn't know how to tell him. In the meantime, they all hang out together as friends, while she tries to share her feelings with Eric. She also likes partying and dancing.



STEVEN HYDE

Steven Hyde is Eric's best friend and the anti-establishment member of the group. Although rebellious, he is also smart, and the other group members often ask for his advice. Hyde's father abandoned his family when he was a kid, and he was raised by a single mother who later abandons when he's seventeen. These life experiences made Hyde strong young men, a little rebellious but who knows the importance of a real friendship. Unlike most people in the group he can't dance, but along the episode will have some 'private lessons'.



ERIC FORMAN

Eric is Red and Kitty's younger kid. His basement is the place for the group reunions. His best friends are Kelso, Hyde and Fez. He's known Donna since they were kids, and always considered her one his best friends, until the day he realized he had a crush on her. He struggles with his mom's super protection and dad's strictness while trying to do what a normal teenager wants to do, hang around with his peers.



FEZ

Fez is a foreign exchange student but people don't really know where he comes from. His accent is one of his main characteristics. Always in a good mood, he tries to understand what is like to be an American teenager. He's single and would like to date girls like Jackie and Donna, but they see him just as a friend. Another feature is that he's a really good dancer and has a golden heart.



MICHAEL KELSO

Michael Kelso is Jackie's boyfriend. He's very vain but also naive, and basically the typical guy who cares a lot about his appearance. Kelso is the kind of boy that the girls would die for, another reason why Jackie is so jealous. The couple is always breaking up and making up due to Kelso's carefreeness (and also dumbness) and Jackie's bossy way to control her boyfriend's life.

APPENDIX X - Excerpts in the original language

All the excerpts presented in chapter 4

Excerpt 1 (the full version of the narrative is available in Appendix N)

“E assim, em fevereiro de 2011, lá estava eu novamente, trabalhando com eles. Apesar de levados, eles são muito carinhosos e engraçados. Então, isto também fez com que eu os quisesse novamente. É muito agradável estar ao lado de pessoas carinhosas e engraçadas.” (Teacher’s narrative – 06/2011)

Excerpt 2 (originally written in English. For the complete field notes, see Appendix F)

Excerpt 3

Alan	<i>“Inglês é violento. Eu só estudo porque é obrigatório. Se não fosse obrigado eu nunca estudava essa língua chata”</i>
------	--

Table 9

STUDENTS’ PERSPECTIVE	Mariana	<i>“Eu me sinto muito interessada porque a matéria é legal. Intimidada é porque eu tenho medo de falar e falar errado e me zoarem (por isso). Perdido é porque eu quero aprender, mas tem hora que eu não consigo. E bem é porque a professora é muito legal.”</i>
	Laís	<i>“Eu fico tentando entender e não consigo, aí fico perdida, então acaba sendo chato.”</i>
	Cláudia	<i>“[Perdida]. Não entendo nada, não presto atenção e me disperso com outras coisas, com as pessoas que ficam do nosso lado e acabo não entendendo.”</i>
	Rebeca	<i>“Assim, como nas aulas de inglês, como nas outras matérias eu me sinto tranquila, interessada e a vontade porque eu tenho facilidade em aprender. E também porque a matéria é bem legal.”</i>
	Marcelo	<i>“Interessado porque eu tenho vontade de aprender, falar e entender o inglês. Tranquilo porque eu não fico nervoso com as minhas dificuldades e dúvidas.”</i>
	Vinícius	<i>“Desmotivado, porque eu quero aprender mas eu não entendo nada.”</i>

(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

Table 10

Students	Excerpts
Carlos	<i>“Eu já tive vários amigos que conseguiram aprender inglês nessa escola.”</i>
Fabiana	<i>“Porque os professores ensinam muito bem.”</i>
May	<i>“Porque aqui temos capacidade para aprender bem o inglês.”</i>
David	<i>“Porque temos condições pra isso.”</i>
Ricardo	<i>“Porque o que vale para aprender é o aluno. Depende da gente e do nosso interesse.”</i>
Ellen	<i>“Acho que quando estiver no terceiro ano vou sair com uma base boa.”</i>

(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

Excerpts 4-6

Karen	<i>“Porque eu nunca parei pra pensar sobre isso mesmo.”</i>
Gisele	<i>“Sabe que isso nunca me passou pela cabeça.”</i>
Kelly	<i>“Nunca parei pra pensar no assunto.”</i>

(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

Excerpt 7-8

Mariana	<i>“A professora tenta ensinar mas outras pessoas (os alunos) não deixam ela explicar nada, as vezes até deixam mas na maioria das aulas levam tudo na brincadeira.”</i>
João	<i>“Porque os professores tentam explicar, mas todos ficam na maior bagunça e os interessados acabam sendo prejudicados.”</i>

Excerpt 8 and 9 (originally written in English)**Excerpt 10**

“Eles me receberam bem. Entretanto, havia alguns alunos repetentes agora, na turma 09. Eles eram diferentes do grupo (antiga sala 07). Então, o primeiro bimestre, eu retomei bastante as brigas, os “castigos”, mas, lógico, estavam já bem melhores do que no ano anterior.

(Teacher’s narrative, 06/2011)

Excerpts 11-12

Gustavo	<i>“Porque são apenas duas aulas por semana, só com isso não aprendemos o suficiente pra passar num concurso, viajar, etc. E os</i>
---------	---

	<i>alunos também não colaboram com o professor.”</i>
Rebeca	<i>“Porque são só duas aulas por semana, a matéria é boa, dá pra pegar alguma coisa, entender um pouco, mas aprender “aprender” mesmo realmente não.”</i>

(Initial Questionnaire – 01/08/2011)

Excerpt 13

“Outra dificuldade é o fato de termos só 2 (duas) aulas por semana. Este tempo é insuficiente para dar o que é preciso. Acabamos dando menos do que é necessário. É possível iniciar os meninos no estudo da Língua Inglesa e incentivá-los a buscar mais (...) Isto é o que venho fazendo ultimamente, tentando sempre mostrar a eles a importância de aprender Inglês e dando a eles alternativas para buscar a aprendizagem do idioma. Às vezes, eles me pedem algo e infelizmente, preciso ser verdadeira. Infelizmente, não posso. A título de exemplo posso citar os inúmeros pedidos por aulas de reforço e aulas com vídeo (filmes).”

(Teacher’s narrative, 06/2011)

Excerpt 14

Fernando: *O que você disse Marcelo?*

Marcelo: *Eu acho que duas aulas de inglês é pouco.*

Tânia: *É pouco, e ainda tem dia que a gente não tem.*

Alan: *Por que é que português tem que ser quatro e inglês só duas?*

Marcelo: *Matemática tem cinco.*

Jéssica: *É, matemática tem um monte.*

(INCOMP) vários começam a falar ao mesmo tempo

Fernando: *A Rebeca repetiu aqui que às vezes tem dia que não tem aula de inglês (feriado, recesso). Na sexta feira, vocês têm uma aula de 30 minutos.*

Ricardo: *30 minutos e olha lá.*

(Focus Group - 06/07/ 2011)

Excerpts 15-16

Alan	<i>“É complicado porque a gente não tem muita base, e por causa da bagunça a gente não aprende direito.”</i>
Leonardo	<i>“Porque eu acho que a gente não recebe a base necessária para trabalhar ou para sair do país.”</i>

(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

Excerpts 17-18

Bento	<i>“Because when I finish [school] I don’t know whether I will succeed in learning English.”</i>
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Walleison	<i>“Because my school does not have a good learning level”</i>
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(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

Excerpt 19 (Originally written in English)

Excerpt 20

“Vejo sim, possibilidade de meus meninos da sala 09 aprenderem Inglês, mas estão aprendendo menos do que precisam e podem, não porque são limitados, mas porque têm uma professora que trabalha com muitas turmas, não podendo assim, atender as necessidades para uma aprendizagem maior..”

(Teacher’s narrative – 06/2011)

Excerpt 21

Jéssica	<i>“Porque tem muitos alunos, a professora não pode dar atenção só para um, aí não dá pra aprender direito, e tem vez que pra aprender direito tem que ter mais atenção, quando se tem dificuldade.”</i>
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(Initial Questionnaire – 01/08/2011)

Excerpt 22

“A primeira impressão não foi tão boa, pois era muito cansativo para mim as aulas, uma vez que a turma não tinha limites.”

(Teacher’s narrative, 06/2011)

Excerpt 23 (Originally written in English)

Excerpt 24

Marcelo	<i>“Não que a escola seja ruim, mas as aulas são poucas e não tem material suficiente e adequado.”</i>
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(Initial Questionnaire – 04/08/2011)

Excerpt 25, 26, 27 and 28 (Originally written in English)

Excerpt 29

Fernando: *Então as poucas aulas são um problema, e a “falta de materiais”, o que vocês queriam dizer com isso?*

Mário: *o livro né? Ninguém tem quase.*

Fernando: *O livro, vocês acham que vocês deveriam comprar ou vocês ganhar?*

Alan: *o governo tinha que fornecer essa B***. ((omissão do palavrão))*

Dona Cidinha: *na verdade o governo mandou poucos livros. Não dá pra atingir a escola inteira. Então se der pra uma turma nós vamos estar privando os outros. Então, não podia uns ficarem com e outros sem. (...). Agora, a questão da aula de trinta minutos, toda sexta-feira aqui vocês perdem a de inglês, mas as outras turmas, tem umas que perdem de português, outras de matemática. Não é uma questão só da aula de inglês.*

(Focus group – 06/07/2011)

Table 11

		<i>Students' opinion</i>
ACTIVITIES	Music	<i>“Todos gostam da música então além de aprender as aulas ficam interessantes e menos chatas.” (Laís).</i>
		<i>“Porque é mais fácil fazer essas atividades pra que a aprendizagem seja melhor” (Karen)</i>
	Games	<i>“Jogos, porque assim a aula ficaria mais descontraída e nós teríamos mais entusiasmo.” (Marcelo).</i>
		<i>“Porque com jogos você descontraí e fica mais fácil aprender..” (Gustavo)</i>
	Translato	<i>“É interessante traduzir os textos. Ficamos mais ligados nas palavras sabendo o significado delas em Português e vice-versa.” (Rebeca).</i>
		<i>“Tradução. Porque traduzindo o texto você conhece as palavras e pode observar como certas frases são escritas.” (Carlos)</i>

(Initial Questionnaire – 01/08/2011)

Excerpt 30 (Originally written in English)

Table 12

	Student	Comment
Grammar	Bento	<i>“Eu gosto. Hoje conversaram bem menos, mas mesmo assim tem um povo que ficou falando e acabaram perdendo a oportunidade de aprender a matéria.”</i>
	Suzana	<i>“Gosto sim. Os meninos me atrapalharam um pouco com a conversa e eu me perdi um pouco.”</i>
	Kelly	<i>“Gosto sim. As aulas são legais, só que alguns colegas tiram a minha concentração, fizeram bagunça.”</i>

Speaking	Carlos	<i>“Achei uma aula muito interessante em que os alunos aprendem de um jeito mais legal. Mas tem aluno que nem assim se interessa pela aula e atrapalha toda a turma.”</i>
	Karen	<i>“Eu achei muito legal, foi um jeito diferente de aprender, mas eu acho que se a turma prestasse mais atenção quando o professor fala, nós poderíamos ter aproveitado melhor a aula.”</i>
Music	Bento	<i>“Muito Legal. Acho que seria muito legal continuar escutando a música na aula de inglês. Tirando a bagunça de alguns, foi legal.”</i>
Reading	Marcelo	<i>“ Bacana. Acho que está ótimo, só na conversa que o pessoal tinha que manear. Eles atrapalham.”</i>
	Andréia	<i>“ A aula foi ótima mas alguns alunos me atrapalharam.”</i>

Excerpts 32 and 33

<p>((O grupo de alunos ao lado do gravador – 4 meninos- conversa e o professor para a explicação e olha para o grupo)) Fernando: Acabou a conversa ai? ((olhando para o grupo)) Marcelo: Pô, sacanagem, tem gente aqui querendo aprender.((Olhando para o grupo também)) ((a conversa cessa))</p> <p>(Classroom recording, phase 2, 05/10/2011)</p>	<p>((O professor bate o apagador no quadro))</p> <p>Marcelo: O::gente, pelo amor de Deus, colabora!!! Fernando: Eu vou esperar vocês então. Tânia: Cala a boca gente! Fabiana: O:: gente! Fernando: Você tem que aprender a se controlar sozinhos (Classroom recording, phase 2, 05/10/2011)</p>
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Excerpt 35

<p>Fernando: <i>A próxima palavra, vamos ver se alguém sabe essa aqui.</i> ((escreve “e-mail” no quadro)) Tânia: <i>Eu sei!</i> Ellen: <i>É eletrônico...</i> Tânia: <i>Correio!</i> Alan: <i>É correio eletrônico...</i> Fernando: <i>Ok. Mas e só “MAIL”?</i> ((os alunos acenam dizendo que não sabem e Fernando continua)) Fernando: <i>“Mail” sozinho significa correspondência.</i> Laís: <i>E correio?</i> Fernando: <i>Correio é outra palavra, a instituição. Por que, por exemplo, chega uma carta pra você na sua casa, e ninguém fala “chegou correio pra você hoje”.</i> X: <i>Sedex</i> Mário: <i>Então é uma correspondência eletrônica?</i> Fernando: <i>Isso, e o “E” vai ser de...?</i> Alan: <i>Eletrônico. (INCOMP)</i> Lais: <i>Eletroshop</i> Alan: ((risos)) <i>Eu ia falar isso.</i></p>

Excerpt 36

Fernando: *E a próxima expressão é COFFEE BREAK.*
 Alan: *É lanchonete!*
 Mário: ((um aluno dá um cutucão em Mário)) *O professo::r, olha a agressão física aqui!*
 Rebeca: *É café preto?*
 Mario: *Quente!*
 Fabiana: *Tem café!*
 Alan: *café*
 Fernando: *vamos ouvir o colega ali*
 X: *é café preto!*
 ((vários alunos respondendo ao mesmo tempo – todos gritam café))
 (INCOMP)
 Fernando: *Lá no fundo, o Hugo tá no caminho, o que que é que ele falou?*
 Hugo: ((repetindo)) *Pausa para o café.*
 Alan: *ah, eu sei...*
 Fernando: *Espera aí, ((tentando interromper A)). “Break” também pode ser parar ou frear.*
 X: *Café preto.*
 Tânia: *Freada para o café ((risos))*
 Alan: *Café parado ((risos))*
 Marcelo: *larga de ser besta gente.*
 Tânia: ((grita)) *O:::o*
 ((Alan e Mário conversam fora do assunto da aula))
 Fernando: *É o intervalo, uma pausa. O recreio de vocês pode ser um coffee break. Depois de três aulas, vocês param um pouco e tal. Mas vocês nem tomam café né? ((risos))*
 Alan: *Eu tomo em casa. O intervalo do café*
 X: *Eu tomo água. Os professores tomam*
 Alan: *Isso é preconceito ((risos))*
 ((conversas ao fundo))

Table 13

Music class – students' view	David	<i>“Sim. Achei a aula divertida. A atividade foi legal por trabalhar todos os sentidos da língua inglesa, porque tudo é importante [na letra da música]”</i>
	Mário	<i>“Achei bem interessante porque a gente aprende a conhecer melhor as palavras. Eu consegui perceber as palavras que estavam faltando ou aquelas em que tinha mais de uma opção [a atividade feita em sala]. Achei que a aula ficou melhor.”</i>
	Ricardo	<i>“Sim. Acho que não só nas aulas de inglês, mas nas outras deviam ter isso [atividades com música] pra divertir a aula.”</i>
	Alice	<i>“Sim. Muito boa, porque precisamos compreender melhor os textos em inglês.”</i>
	Carlos	<i>“Sim, eu gostei da aula, pela forma com que trabalhamos com a música e principalmente da música, foi o que gostei mais.”</i>

(Feedback cards, 05/24/2011)

Excerpt 37 (Originally written in English)

Excerpt 38

Fernando: *Alguém de vocês já procurou ver o que esse price tag tem a ver na letra da música. A Thais até comentou agora pouco de músicas que o título não tem nada a ver com a letra, será que tem a ver?*

Marcelo: *Traduz aí pra gente.*

Fernando: *Tradução não, eu vou ajudar vocês a entender a letra.*

Rebeca: *Eu acho que tem a ver com a letra.*

Fernando: *Let's listen again...*

((música tocada pela segunda vez))

Fernando: *E agora, conseguiram?*

Marcelo: *Eu consegui já!*

Jessica: *Mais ou menos.*

Bento: *Eu não.*

Fernando: *Então vamos ver aí, ok?*

Marcelo: *Então, eu fiz, mas não sei se tá certo.*

(Classroom recordings , phase 2, 05/24/2011)

Excerpt 39

Fernando: *Ok. Agora vamos ver a letra.*

Leonardo: *Põe pra gente ouvir de novo.*

Marcelo: *Faz tradução e a gente copia.*

Fernando: *Tradução demora mais e vocês só copiam, não tentem entender.*

Marcelo: *Ah:: ((reclamando))*

Fernando: *Vamos ver se juntos a gente consegue entender a letra da música*

((vários alunos reclamam))

Hugo: *A gente tinha era que ver o vídeo.*

Jéssica: *É.*

Hugo: *Porque a música inteira é bem mais fácil de entender pelo vídeo.*

(Classroom recordings , phase 2, 05/24/2011)

Excerpt 40 and 41

Rebeca	<i>“Legal. É melhor do que ter que traduzir uma música imensa. Seria legal depois de a gente completar a música, saber a “tradução” dela. Então acho que o professor devia dar uma cópia da letra em Português também, junto com a de inglês.”</i>
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Karen	<i>“É legal, mas eu sempre me perco na hora de fazer os exercícios. Acho que a tradução literal é muito legal, mas não dá muito certo por causa da conversa [dos alunos] que é demais.”</i>
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Table 14.

Feedback on peer collaboration (I)	Andréia	<i>“Sim, gostei da atividade ter sido em dupla, poderia dar mais exercícios para serem feitos assim, fazem a gente ter que pensar mais.”</i>
	Ricardo	<i>“Gostei. É melhor fazer junto porque um ajuda o outro. O bom é que a matéria do conteúdo foi bem explicada o que facilitou pra fazer a atividade.”</i>
	Gustavo	<i>“Foi bem legal, gostei. Bem melhor em dupla porque um ajuda o outro. E seria pior ter que fazer sozinho. Eu ajudei e fui ajudado pelo meu colega. Gostei, podia ter mais atividades assim.”</i>
	Karen	<i>“Eu adorei. Eu acho que quando é em dupla um pode tirar a dúvida do outro, enquanto um procura as palavras o outro pode ir escrevendo, em dupla é bem melhor.”</i>
	Jéssica	<i>Legal! Achei que foi melhor em dupla porque podíamos tirar as dúvidas um com o outro. Eu ajudei a Karen e ela me ajudou também. Achei que foi bem diferente das aulas que eu já tive.”</i>

(Feedback cards – 05/27/2011)

Excerpt 42 (Originally written in English)

Table 15

Feedback on peer collaboration (I)	Eduardo	<i>“Achei muito boa, mas poderia ter sido feita sozinho também. Mas eu gostei.”</i>
	Leonardo	<i>“Foi legal, mas pra mim tanto faz em dupla ou sozinho.”</i>
	Tânia	<i>“Boa, em dupla é melhor. Não ajudei e nem fui ajudada porque nós duas sabíamos fazer.”</i>
	Alice	<i>“Muito legal. Mas eu poderia ter feito sozinha. Foi divertido fazer os verbos no passado.”</i>
	Johnny	<i>“Maneira, acho que das duas formas dá certo, sozinho em dupla.”</i>

(Feedback cards – 05/27/2011)

Excerpt 43 (Originally written in English)

Excerpts 44 and 45

João	<i>“Sim. Porque apesar da bagunça o professor teve um modo legal de trabalhar, teve a brincadeira com os cantores, e também me senti bem mais motivado para aprender o inglês, depois dessas aulas ficou mais fácil de aprender.”</i>
Karen	<i>“Sim. Houve mudança porque nas aulas as atividades foram mais trabalhadas e o professor foi bem legal com as pessoas que tinham dúvidas na matéria.”</i>

Excerpt 46-47

Fabiana	<i>“Mais ou menos. Pois com a conversa dos alunos não deu para aprender muito, mas mesmo assim eu percebi que as aulas de inglês podem ser difíceis mas legais</i>
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	<i>ao mesmo tempo”</i>
Carlos	<i>“Mais ou menos. Porque tinha exercícios que nunca foram feitos nas aulas antigamente como a interpretação da música, mas por outro lado continuo não gostando de inglês.”</i>

(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

Excerpts 48-49

Rebeca	<i>“Com a outra professora os alunos ficavam mais quietos em sala, já com o professor, alguns alunos sem educação não calavam a boca. Então em algumas aulas o professor passava mais tempo chamando atenção do que ensinando.”</i>
Alice	<i>“Não. Eu odeio ingles de qualquer jeito. Acho muito desnecessário.”</i>

Excerpt 50-51

Karen	<i>“Sim, porque quando você tem menos dúvidas sobre o conteúdo fica mais fácil fazer os exercícios.”</i>
Carlos	<i>“Sim. Se os alunos forem interessados e se esforçarem pra prestar atenção, aprende.”</i>

(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

Excerpts 52-54

Alice	<i>“Depende, porque a minha classe é uma bagunça, eles não sabem escutar e não colaboram. A única coisa que fazer é ficarem cobrando coisas inúteis do professor.”</i>
João	<i>“Depende. Porque eu não sei se nas outras salas a bagunça é tão grande quanto aqui, mas apesar da bagunça eu consegui aprender e interagir muito com o inglês que foi trabalhado.”</i>
Bento	<i>“Depende, porque a bagunça não deixava eu aprender, mas eu acho que eu consigo aprender mais a matéria na sala de aula.”</i>

(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

Excerpts 55 and 56

Hugo	<i>“Não. Bom, a disciplina é muito ruim.”</i>
Ellen	<i>“Não. Porque o inglês é muito difícil de aprender.”</i>

(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

Excerpt 57

Karen: *É, mas tem professor que fala que a gente não tem capacidade de passar no vestibular. Fala que fulana conseguiu porque estudou em escola particular.*
Tânia: *Falou que a gente não tem capacidade porque a gente é aluno de escola pública.*
Karen: *que a gente não vai conseguir competir com o pessoal lá fora, o pessoal de escola particular, que vão estar muito mais preparados do que vocês.*
Rebeca: *que só na particular é que consegue passar pra ir pra universidade.*
Jessica: *Mas a minha irmã estudou aqui e tá na UFV uai.*

Excerpt 58

Tânia: *Eu acho que a gente precisava de um representante de classe, alguém pra falar em nome da turma, pra conversar com os professores. Porque tem professora que não quer escutar o que a gente fala.*

Fernando: *Entendo, mas também depende da maneira como vai se dar essa conversa, esse acesso.*

Rebeca: *Acho que ela escuta sim. Mas se ela sabe que o aluno faz bagunça, atrapalha e não presta atenção é lógico que ela não ouve.*

Fernando: *Então aí é só ter cuidado pra pensar no que vai falar, se preparar e tentar conversar. Talvez, pode não dar resultado logo de cara, mas vocês estão tentando.*

(INCOMP)

Mário: *Ô Fernando, mas isso depende muito do professor, porque tem uns que explicam, o povo fica bagunçando, depois eles falam “vocês vão ver na hora do teste”.*

Alan: *Aí a prova é demorada.*

(Focus Group - 06/07/ 2011)

Excerpt 59

Karen: *O Fernando, mas o problema não é isso, às vezes, a pessoa fala de uma pessoa só. Às vezes a sala tá calada e o Alan começa com uma gracinha, aí a sala toda cai na risada.*

Alan: *Nem sou só eu não, nem vem!*

Karen: *ah, mas faz bagunça.*

Leonardo: *O problema na sala é que um começa a conversar aí todos querem conversar,*

Fernando: *vocês estão usando uma justificativa que eu quero entender melhor. Vamos usar o Alan como exemplo. O Alan faz uma gracinha, todo mundo ri e começa a conversar, mas a culpa é do Alan, só porque ele foi o primeiro?*

Karen: *É ué!*

Rebeca: *Também acho*

Vários alunos: *é*

Johnny: *Se ele não tivesse começado a sala continuaria quieta.*

(...)

Karen: *As vezes a sala toda tá quieta, aí ele vai lá na frente e começa a chamar fulano de apelido e não sei o que.*

Alan: *Mas os meninos todos me chamam assim porque eu não posso chamar eles?*

Ricardo: *As meninas também conversam demais.*

Fernando: *Mas a ideia então é de que a culpa é de um só*

Ricardo: *Lógico.*

(Focus Group - 06/07/ 2011)

Excerpt 60

Alan: Às vezes o professor pede silêncio, eu pego, por exemplo, e grito “Faz silêncio” o outro de lá acha ruim e manda fazer silêncio, aí um outro de lá acha ruim e manda ele também fazer silêncio. Aí ninguém cala a boca.

(Focus Group - 06/07/ 2011)

Excerpt 61

Tânia: Eu acho que a atividades que envolvia o caça-palavras foi a mais legal.

Fernando: Aquela que era em dupla né?

Hugo: É

Tânia: mesmo sendo sozinho ou em dupla, sei lá, eu ficava na curiosidade pra descobrir as palavras e completar no texto.

Fernando: Luís, você tinha erguido a mão?

Hugo: Eu gostei da atividade da música.

Alan: Eu gostei mais das aulas que tinha jogo, porque tipo era uma disputa.

Descontraí. Você tem que tentar acertar, e o pessoal fica mais interessado.

Ricardo: é que no jogo você participa pra ganhar, pode ser qualquer coisa. Vai pra ganhar

(Focus Group - 06/07/ 2011)

Excerpts 62-64

Tânia	<i>“Mais ou menos, aprendi muita coisa, mas fiquei com dúvidas em outras, eu tentei, mas não consegui aprender algumas coisas, mas aprendi a maioria.”</i>
Cláudia	<i>“Mais ou menos, aprender inglês é um pouco difícil e com os colegas falando o tempo todo, sem deixar o professor falar fica mais difícil.”</i>
Gustavo	<i>“Mais ou menos. Pelo fato de ser pouco tempo e o inglês ser difícil e a bagunça dos colegas. Mas se tiver mais tempo e menos bagunça dá.”</i>

Excerpts 65-66

Marcelo	<i>“Sim. Pois apesar das conversas eu consegui aprender algumas coisas pela vontade que eu tive.”</i>
Karen	<i>“Sim. Porque todas (a maioria) das dúvidas que eu tinha eu tirei, e assim eu consegui fazer os exercícios que o professor dava.”</i>
Daniel	<i>“Sim. Eu me senti bem motivado na matéria, eu estava bem interessando em aprender a matéria.”</i>

(Final Questionnaire – 06/07/2011)

GRUPO FOCAL – Transcrição Original

DATA 07.06.2011

Marcelo: Não vai poder falar besteira que ele vai cobrar.

Fernando: A participação de vocês aqui é tão importante quanto a que vocês expressaram no questionário. Não se sintam obrigados a opinar, fiquem a vontade.

Marcelo: O gente...

Fernando: Mas eu vou precisar de silêncio (alunos ainda conversando)

Maycon: Já tá gravando?

Fernando: Já.

(vários alunos começam a gritar o apelido de Maycon pelo fato do gravador estar ligado)

Fernando: Agora acabou, vamos começar então.

Alan: Cala a boca aí!

Daniel: É cala boca mesmo.

Fernando: A maioria das perguntas aqui são baseadas nos resultados daquele primeiro questionário, eu trouxe as respostas e queria saber um pouco mais sobre cada coisa. Vocês se lembram que naquele questionário que vocês responderam tinha duas perguntas, uma pra saber se vocês gostavam de aprender inglês...

Tânia: Não!

Fernando: e outra pra saber se vocês gostavam da disciplina de inglês.

??: Eu não gosto não.

Fernando: 21 alunos disseram que gostam de aprender inglês. No entanto, no questionário, a maioria de vocês, 14 alunos, revelou não gostar da disciplina de inglês, (11) gostam e quatro nunca pensaram sobre o assunto. Por que esse desinteresse pela disciplina? Vocês vêem algum problema no formato dela? O que acontece?

Daniel: A professora!

Rebeca: Não é a professora, Fernando, é assim, a professora explica bem, ai quem quer escutar escuta, quem não quer, aí, ééé, os meninos que fazem bagunça, que não ficam escutando.

Marcelo: eu concordo com você tá Rebeca.

(Paulo vaia o comentário de Rebeca)

(INCOMP) vários falando ao mesmo tempo

Fernando: A pergunta é, por que o desinteresse na aula de inglês?

Mário: Ah, porque o povo fica conversando.

Rebeca: (INCOMP)

Marcelo: É por causa da conversa mesmo.

Rebeca: Eu acho que o problema é o Alex.

Fernando: Mas só por isso? E as outras opiniões?

Ricardo: Pô, porque é uma matéria difícil

(INCOMP)

Rebeca: Deixa eu falar?

Fernando: Fale. Então prestem atenção na Rebeca aqui.

Rebeca: Igual, as pessoas fazem bagunça, igual agora com esse negócio do apelido. Ou até em dia de prova. Quando um fala, todo mundo acha engraçado e começa a rir, ninguém presta atenção na aula, fica só brincando com isso.

Fernando: Então, a Renata falou “Ah, alguém faz gracinha!”. É engraçado? Às vezes é, às vezes não. A pessoa ri e faz um comentário, ok? Mas e por que esse desinteresse, esse “não gosto da aula de inglês”?

Vinicius: É porque é muito difícil.

Alan: Eu concordo com a Rebeca (risos). É só isso.

Fernando: Engraçadinho né? Mas então, o Vinicius falou aqui do desinteresse porque acha a disciplina muito difícil. E aí?

(silêncio de 7 segundos)

Cláudia: Ué, agora todo mundo calou a boca?

Rebeca: Hã?

Fernando: A maioria dos alunos gosta de aprender inglês, mas assim como o Vittor, acham a matéria muito difícil. Bom, então, mesmo bom a bagunça a gente começou as aulas e fez algumas mudanças. E com as mudanças nas atividades feitas ao longo das últimas aulas, houve algum interesse maior pela disciplina ou vocês continuam não gostando muito dela?

Claudia: Eu gostei.

Mário: Achei mais fácil.

(INCOMP) muitos ao mesmo tempo

Fernando: Ok, então vamos um de cada vez senão fica difícil entender o que cada um quer dizer. Então, houve mais interesse ou continua sendo a disciplina que vocês ainda não gostam, difícil e tal...

David: E achei que ficou mais legal.

Rebeca: Igual, aquela atividade com os verbos lá, aquela do passado com ED, que tinha que descobrir, do caça-palavras, foi muito legal de fazer.

Mário: Eu prefiro a da música.

Alan: É a da música foi legal.

Mário: Teve a do jogo com o chiclete também, né?

Fernando: Então, a proposta era trazer atividades com base no que vocês disseram no questionário, as coisas que vocês achavam melhores para aprender inglês.

Jéssica: Eu achei que a gente aprendeu inglês de outro jeito.

Fernando: E alguém continuou desinteressado? Pode falar, sem problemas.

Rebeca: aí, pode falar Alex, é a sua hora!

Alan: Eu não, até que fiquei interessado.

Fernando: Podem falar, sem problemas.

Eduardo: Pode falar mal de você? (risos) brincadeira.

Fernando: (risos). Pode dar sua opinião a vontade, só cuidado pra ofender o colega, ou eu. (risos)

Fernando: A maior parte de vocês (15) acredita que não dá para aprender inglês aqui na escola. (07) acreditam que sim e (09) nunca pensaram no assunto. E naquela pergunta eu não queria só saber se vocês acreditavam ou não, mas que vocês me dessem motivos para aquilo que vocês acredita. Vocês deram várias justificativas, muito interessantes, aliás, E eu queria discutir algumas delas aqui. Bom, alguns dos motivos que impedem para não aprender foram a) a indisciplina/bagunça da turma b) falta de colaboração/interesse dos alunos. Vocês percebem que os dois primeiros motivos estão relacionados com vocês mesmos, ou seja, vocês falando dos colegas. c) poucas aulas por semana, não dá tempo, etc d) falta de materiais, as vezes é só o livro didático

Cláudia: Nem livro didático!

Fernando: Depois e) dificuldade do conteúdo. O que vocês acham disso?

Alan: Não, parece que veio livros pra gente, só que muito poucos.

Fernando: É, mas esse livro que vocês estão usando esse ano. Vocês já tinham comprado ano passado. Uns tinham e traziam, outros tinham e não traziam, e aqueles que não tinham.

Alan: e não traziam.

Fernando: Daqui a pouco a gente volta na indisciplina. Poucas aulas por semana e falta de materiais são problemas que atrapalham a aprendizagem de vocês?

Alan: São.

Fernando: O que você disse Wellington?

Marcelo: Eu acho que duas aulas de inglês é pouco.

Tania: É pouco, e ainda tem dia que a gente não tem.

Alan: Por que é que português tem que ser quatro e inglês só duas?

Marcelo: matemática tem cinco.

Jessica: É, matemática tem um monte.

(INCOMP) vários começam a falar ao mesmo tempo

Fernando: A Renata repetiu aqui que às vezes tem dia que não tem aula de inglês (feriado, recesso). Na sexta feira, vocês têm uma aula de 30 minutos.

Ricardo: 30 minutos e olha lá.

Fernando: Então, sem contar que às vezes a prova tinha que começar mais cedo, porque era muito grande e não ia dar tempo de fazer. E outro fator também, até controlar uma turma bastante agitada como vocês, vai tempo. Mais de cinco minutos às vezes.

Alan: Passou no jornal nacional esse negócio de aula e turma bagunceira.

Valéria: O professor gasta 17 minutos pra fazer uma chamada.

Fernando: É, vocês poderiam experimentar um dia cronometrar a aula, pra vocês verem como o tempo voa, e quantas vezes a professora chama atenção de vocês. Eu contei em uma das aulas com vocês que eu gravei, acho que uma média de oito, foram às vezes que eu tive que parar a aula para chamar atenção, pra falar “pessoal, vamos prestar atenção”, “fulano, fica quieto”. O que deu pelo menos uns 15 minutos de “bronca”.

Mário: Nossa!

Fernando: Quem ouve de fora essa aula, pode pensar que há alguém desesperado ali na frente, tentando parar todo mundo, quando desesperado, deveriam ser vocês, mas desesperados para aprender.

(os alunos riem)

Fernando: Então as poucas aulas são um problema, e a falta de materiais, o que vocês queriam dizer com isso?

Mário: o livro né? Ninguém tem quase

Fernando: O livro, vocês acham que vocês deveriam comprar ou vocês ganhar?

Alan: o governo tinha que fornecer essa b***.

Professora: na verdade o governo mandou poucos livros. Não dá pra atingir a escola inteira. Então se der pra uma turma nós vamos estar privando os outros. Então, não podia uns ficarem

com e outros sem. E como não tinha terminado o livro do ano passado, eu estou terminando, ainda que estivessem com o livro do nono ano, eu não ia passar pro seguinte sem terminar o do oitavo ano. Agora, assim que eu terminar o livro do oitavo ano, nós vamos resolver isso, porque sem livro didático não vai ter como, ou vocês vão comprar, ou vocês vão tirar Xerox das atividades que eu programar, porque não vai ter condição mesmo. Agora, a questão da aula de trinta minutos, toda sexta-feira aqui vocês perdem a de inglês, mas as outras turmas perdem de português, outras de matemática. Não é uma questão só da aula de inglês.

Karen: Mas inglês já tem poucas aulas por semana.

Alan: Mas de Matemática e Português a gente tem um monte por semana. Se perder uma não faz muita falta, agora inglês são só duas, aí a gente já perde uma.

(INCOMP)

Fernando: Na questão dos materiais vocês apontaram alguns fatores também.

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Professora: E eu não vou colocar aluno sem livro pra fora, porque vocês mesmos disseram, é pouco tempo.

Fernando: Muitas das atividades eu trouxe pra você por conta própria. Quando um professor traz um texto xerocado, ele espera que vocês usem. Muitas vezes ele traz do próprio bolso. Nas nossas aulas, eu trouxe bastante material extra, vi que alguns de vocês colaram tudo no caderno. Só que eu

tenho um diferencial, eu dava aula só para vocês. Uma turma só. Imaginem se eu tivesse que financiar do próprio bolso material para todas as outras turmas. A escola não tem condições de me liberar cópias pra todas as turmas.

Professora: A escola não pode, porque o estado não libera. Não tem verba pra isso. Eles sabem disso.

Karen: Eu sei, mas eles que não liberam verba pra cá. Porque verba quando tem nunca é mandada pra cá, eles gastam com outras coisas.

(INCOMP) vários falando ao mesmo tempo

Fernando: Então, uma sugestão pra vocês. A próxima vez que uma dessas autoridades aparecer por aqui (prefeito, superior de secretaria de educação, etc) uma vez ou outra eles sempre acabam aparecendo nas escolas, vocês podem aproveitar e apresentar essas queixas.

Karen: Eles nunca vêm aqui não.

Fernando: Mas uma hora ainda pode acabar aparecendo. Mas uma das coisas que vocês têm que pensar é o seguinte. Quando a gente não está contente com uma situação, você sempre tem algumas opções. Vocês podem aceitar e viver com isso, “Eu nunca vou aprender inglês aqui” só que vai estudar da quinta até o terceiro ano, e não vai tentar fazer nada por isso, ou tentar pelo menos um esforço pra aprender? “Ah, o governo não faz nada”. E como estudante, será que não tem nada que eu posso fazer?

Alan: A gente tem que reclamar. Vamo fazer greve? (risos)

Fernando: Às vezes há a vontade de mudar, mas falta um pouco de ação. Então por exemplo, qual foi a ideia das aulas aqui com vocês, quando cheguei e vi pelo questionário que a turma reclamava que tinha muita bagunça, desinteresse pela disciplina, e tudo mais, uns participavam e faziam, outros não. Então a ideia foi, será que se a gente trazer um pouco daquilo que eles querem e acreditam, será que eles vão cooperar e querer fazer? Deu pra perceber ao longo das aulas que alguns de vocês foram participando desde o começo das aulas, outros foram mais resistentes em termos de conversa, bagunça, e depois participaram mais, então assim, a mudança vem de uma forma muito diferente. Então, se houver uma oportunidade de mudança, tentem sim, façam por valer os direitos de vocês. Como aconteceu aqui, e vocês reclamavam, que alguns professores na prova de sexta exageravam na quantidade de exercícios, sendo que vocês precisam dar contas de três provas. Vocês podiam tentar uma conversa com eles, e não pensar “ah, não vou dar conta de fazer” e deixar a conversa morrer.

Tânia: eu acho que a gente precisava de um representante de classe, alguém pra falar em nome da turma, pra conversar com os professores. Porque tem professora que não quer escutar o que a gente fala.

Fernando: entendo, mas também depende da maneira como vai se dar essa conversa, esse acesso.

Rebeca: Acho que ela escuta sim. Mas se ela sabe que o aluno faz bagunça, atrapalha e não presta atenção é lógico que ela não ouve.

Fernando: então aí é só ter cuidado pra pensar no que vai falar, se preparar e tentar conversar. Talvez, pode não dar resultado logo de cara, mas vocês estão tentando.

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Mário: Ô Fernando, mas isso depende muito do professor, porque têm uns que explicam, o povo fica bagunçando, depois eles falam “vocês vão ver na hora do teste”.

Alan: Aí a prova é demorada.

Fernando: E vocês também sabem que até vocês se acalmarem e se organizarem pra prova demora um tempo também.

Alan: A gente tem 50 minutos pra fazer 3 provas, e as vezes tem professor que dá um teste imenso.

Rebeca: Claro, se prestasse atenção na aula.

(INCOMP)

Cláudia: Se todo mundo prestasse atenção na explicação dela saberia fazer.

Fernando: Olha, se vocês observarem há uma relação de causa e efeito. Vocês colaboram nas aulas?

Claudia: Não! Nem todo mundo.

Fernando: Pra aprender o conteúdo.

David: Não.

Fernando: E na hora da prova, dá conta de fazer?

David: Não.

Fernando: aí vocês acham que o professor castiga, dá exercícios a mais e tal. E se vocês tentarem uma mudança. Do tipo, vamos participar mais da aula, vamos fazer o que é proposto. Aí quem sabe, na prova, o resultado é melhor, e a reação com o professor também.

(INCOMP)

Professora: O Wellington aqui não entendeu o que você quis dizer.

Fernando: É que como professor eu não quero te prejudicar. Vir aqui só pra ensinar algo que eu não quero que você aprenda, ou punir você na prova.

Professora: O professor não vem aqui pra isso, o professor vem aqui pra te ajudar. Pra fazer você entender.

Karen: É, mas tem professor que fala que a gente não tem capacidade de passar no vestibular. Fala que fulana conseguiu porque estudou em escola particular.

Tânia: Falou que a gente não tem capacidade porque a gente é aluno de escola pública.

Karen: que a gente não vai conseguir competir com o pessoal lá fora, o pessoal de escola particular, que vão estar muito mais preparados do que vocês.

Rebeca: que só na particular é que consegue passar pra ir pra universidade.

Jessica: Mas a minha irmã estudou aqui e tá na UFV uai.

(INCOMP)

Professora: Olha, não me interessa o que os outros falam de vocês, prestem atenção no que eu falo pra vocês. Eu

acho que vocês são capazes de aprender inglês, que tem capacidade para passar no vestibular, vocês são capazes de serem bem sucedidos. Depende de que?

Ricardo: De nós!

Alan: Do esforço de nós mesmos.

Marcelo: é isso que a senhora falou mesmo.

(INCOMP)

Professora: Vocês têm capacidade para passar, agora depende de quem, de vocês. Se vocês se esforçam, fazem a tarefa, se dedicam. Agora, gente que só conversa, que não se esforça vai construir alguma coisa na vida?

Vinícius: é difícil né?

Fernando: Acho que por mais que digam pra vocês, que escola pública é isso ou aquilo, que vai conseguir ou não. Vocês têm que pensar em metas, e tentar mesmo, meter a cara. Pode ter certeza, não vai faltar gente em volta de vocês pra falar isso,

(A professora comenta que acredita na capacidade da escola, até porque sua filha também é aluna ali)

Professora: Agora, se você vem para a escola pública, se você não traz o material, não fica calado, não presta atenção. O que que você vai conseguir aprender? Você pode até ir para uma particular. Em qualquer lugar que você for, fazendo isso, você não consegue dar conta.

Fernando: Toda aula vocês lembram que eu entregava um pedaço de papel em que vocês faziam comentários sobre

a aula. Na aula 01, que eu trouxe aquela atividade pra falar e fazer em dupla, eu lembro que a maioria reclamou da bagunça, enquanto uns tentavam fazer outros se perdiam e ficavam conversando e atrapalhando os colegas. A indisciplina é apontada como o principal problema que afeta a qualidade das aulas de vocês. Quem é o responsável por ela? Vocês não acham que vocês deveriam mudar isso? Como começar essa mudança?

Ricardo: os alunos

Rebeca: Nem todos.

Johnny: Não acho que todos são responsáveis pela bagunça. É geralmente um que bagunça, aí ele começa e os outros vão atrás.

Fernando: Mas os que compartilham dessa gracinha, também acabam atrapalhando. Vocês são 32 contra um só, às vezes eu tinha que erguer a voz pra competir com alguns de vocês. As vezes vocês dizem que é um só o problema, mas se um só fizesse bagunça aqui, essa pessoa seria tida como louca enquanto as outras prestam atenção.

Alan: Mas a Karen é louca mesmo.

Fernando: a bagunça de vocês aqui é social, ela é compartilhada. Se uma pessoa bagunça sozinha, e vocês não compactuarem com isso, ela vai se sentir intimidada, uma hora ou outra.

Karen: O Fernando, mas o problema não é isso, às vezes, a pessoa fala de uma pessoa só. Às vezes a sala tá calada e o Alan começa com uma gracinha, aí a sala toda cai na risada.

Alan: Nem sou só eu não, nem vem!

Karen: ah, mas faz bagunça.

Leonardo: O problema na sala é que um começa a conversar aí todos querem conversar,

Fernando: vocês estão usando uma justificativa que eu quero entender melhor. Vamos usar o Alex como exemplo. O Alex faz uma gracinha, TODO MUNDO ri e começa a conversar, mas a culpa é do Alex, só porque ele foi o primeiro?

Karen: É ué!

Rebeca: Também acho

Vários alunos: é

Johnny: Se ele não tivesse começado a sala continuaria quieta.

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Karen: As vezes a sala toda tá quieta, aí ele vai lá na frente e começa a chamar fulano de apelido e não sei o que.

Alan: Mas os meninos todos me chamam assim porque eu não posso chamar eles?

Ricardo: As meninas também conversam demais.

Fernando: Mas a ideia então é de que a culpa é de um só

Ricardo: Lógico.

(INCOMP)

Fernando: Pois é, vocês reclamam da bagunça, mas vocês podem controlá-la. Olha a Taís quer falar

Tânia: Tipo assim, alguém começa falando e faz uma gracinha. Alguém faz um comentário aí todo mundo tem que

criticar o comentário da pessoa. Aí todo mundo começa a conversar um com o outro, falando sobre o comentário. Aí gera mais bagunça.

Fernando: Pois é, tem muito aluno que acha que controlar a bagunça é papel do professor, imaginem um barril com 32 furos, e uma pessoa só para tapar os buracos enquanto jogam água. Um só é difícil de dar conta. Você controla aqui e perde lá,

Karen: É que assim, um vai e chama o outro de apelido. Aí o outro que nem tá na conversa usa apelido pra se intrometer também na bagunça. Aí todo mundo começa a conversar ao mesmo tempo.

Alan: Às vezes o professor pede silêncio, eu pego por exemplo e grito "Faz silêncio" o outro de lá acha ruim e manda fazer silêncio, aí um outro de lá acha ruim e manda ele também fazer silêncio. Aí ninguém cala a boca.

Marcelo: aí tem que ser no grito.

Ricardo: É

Fernando: E das atividades que a gente fez, o que vocês gostariam de comentar sobre elas. Lembrando que as mais votadas foram: a) jogos e brincadeiras (13), que a gente fez numa aula b) Música (12), que nós trabalhamos, c) tradução (11), naquela aula dos estrangeirismos, que agora todo mundo sabe como escrever self-service d) filmes (8) e) gramática (7), que foi o que me chamou mais atenção, e nós trabalhamos com o passado. O que vocês acharam das aulas que tiveram essas atividades, realmente elas são melhores para aprender?

Tânia: Eu acho que a atividades que envolvia o caça-palavras foi a mais legal.

Fernando: Aquela que era em dupla né?

Hugo: É

Tânia: mesmo sendo sozinho ou em dupla, sei lá, eu ficava na curiosidade pra descobrir as palavras e completar no texto.

Fernando: Hugo, você tinha erguido a mão?

Hugo: Eu gostei da atividade da música.

Alan: Eu gostei mais das aulas que tinha jogo, porque tipo era uma disputa. Descontrai. Você tem que tentar acertar, e o pessoal fica mais interessado.

Rebeca: depende muito de quem é sua dupla, de quem você escolheu.

Mário: Depende da dupla

Marcelo: Eu gostei das aulas com música, porque assim, a gente tem aula a manhã toda, aí chega na aula de inglês, tem música, que é diferente, a gente fica mais relaxado, a gente vai escutando, faz exercício, tenta entender a letra.

Ricardo: É, a gente aprende a tradução.

Karen: E acaba prestando mais atenção na aula, pra você acompanhar a letra, ouvir a música e tal.

Marcelo: Dá pra aprender a pronunciar melhor as palavras.

(Sinal bate e os alunos saem)

Ricardo: é que no jogo você participa pra ganhar, pode ser qualquer coisa. Vai pra ganhar.

Fernando: Tem que saber jogar também.

Mário: Eu gostei da atividade do Roberto Carlos, que a gente teve que pesquisar e descobrir sobre a vida dos cantores.

Anderson: Aquela do caça-palavras eu gostei, mas preferia ter feito sozinho porque as vezes um só quer fazer tudo e o outro sai perdendo.

Jessica: Nem sempre.