Artículo de Reflexión

Promoting ethical values and coexistence practices in tenth-grade students of a public school in Caquetá-Colombia

Promoción de valores éticos y prácticas de convivencia en estudiantes de décimo grado de una escuela pública del Caquetá-Colombia

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Abstract

This article results from a pedagical intervention that aimed to collect students' reflections on ethical values and coexistence practices through the module *Democracy and Peace*: Duties, which is part of the document entitled Suggested Curriculum, proposed by the Ministry of Education (2016) for the EFL (English as a foreign language) class. We conducted the intervention study at a public school in Puerto Rico – Caquetá, with a population of 29 participants, from 14 to 18 years old. Two main concerns underlying this initiative are the lack of research related to the effect of the module on ten graders and the influence of the module on students' reflections on ethical values and coexistence practices in an EFL context. The class teacher collected data through student diaries, teacher's field notes, and students' artifacts (posters and dramatizations). Among the salient results are the students' critical reflections highlighting the importance of questioning their ethical values and coexistence practices inside and outside the classroom in favor of a positive transformation. Additionally, the student's commitment to learning English was strengthened, and their linguistic interaction, motivation, and self-awareness improved. The pedagogical approach adopted - project-based learning- proved to be an approach that enabled us to work meaningfully during the pedagogical intervention.

Key word: ethical values, coexistence practices, Module Democracy and Peace: Duties, students' reflections, language learning engagement.

Resumen

Este artículo es el resultado de una intervención pedagógica que tuvo como objetivo recoger las reflexiones de los estudiantes sobre los valores éticos y las prácticas de convivencia a través del módulo

Democracia y Paz: Deberes, que hace parte del documento titulado Currículo Sugerido, propuesto por el Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2016) para la clase de ILE (Inglés como Lengua Extranjera). Realizamos el estudio de intervención en una escuela pública de Puerto Rico - Caquetá, con una población de 29 participantes, de 14 a 18 años. Dos preocupaciones principales que subyacen a esta iniciativa son la falta de investigación relacionada con el efecto del módulo en estudiantes de décimo grado y la influencia del módulo en las reflexiones de los estudiantes sobre los valores éticos y las prácticas de convivencia en un contexto ILE. El docente de la clase recogió los datos a través de los diarios de los alumnos, las notas de campo del profesor y los artefactos de los alumnos (carteles y dramatizaciones). Entre los resultados más destacados se encuentran las reflexiones críticas de los estudiantes que resaltan la importancia de cuestionar sus valores éticos y prácticas de convivencia dentro y fuera del aula en favor de una transformación positiva. Además, se fortaleció el compromiso de los estudiantes con el aprendizaje del inglés y mejoró su interacción lingüística, motivación y autoconciencia. El enfoque pedagógico adoptado - aprendizaje basado en proyectos- demostró ser un enfoque que nos permitió trabajar de manera significativa durante la intervención pedagógica.

 Palabras clave: valores éticos, prácticas de convivencia, Módulo Democracia y Paz: Deberes, reflexiones de los alumnos, compromiso en el aprendizaje de idioma.

Introduction

Ethical values and coexistence practices are two closely related notions that support and affect one another and have progressively become important in research in the educational field. The interest in studying both concepts is because more and more teachers perceive the need to address these two issues based on what is currently being found in schools, as is the case of this study.

The question of how the foreign language classroom may promote students' reflections on social issues, such as lack of ethical values and coexistence practices, is increasingly permeating the field of language teaching. On account of this increased interest in social problems that meed to be addressed by all the agents in the educational system, language teachers, as mediators, can enhance ethical values in their pedagogical practices, with a learner-centered approach, in which students can enrich the components of their learning process with values that they can use in their interactions with others in the EFL context (Ramirez, 2007).

In this regard, in Colombia, the Ministry of National Education (2016)- from now on, MEN- presented the document Suggested *English Curriculum*. It is a proposal encompassed by themes derived from suggested areas that children should study at school, highlighting the institutional autonomy to make decisions for its implementation. The suggested curriculum is made up of four modules based on some transversal axes that are worked on at all levels. One of the modules suggested by the document is "Democracy and peace, duties," which covers topics related to a healthy and peaceful coexistence at school and in the classroom.

Based on the lack of opportunities for students to reflect on social issues through the English class and the analysis of students' behavior inside and outside the classroom, this qualitative study attempts to delve into students' reflections about ethical values and coexistence practices, two problematic issues that were identified in tenth-grade students of Acevedo y Gómez school. On that account, the class teacher chose the module Democracy and Peace: Duties as the medium to make a pedagogical implementation, in which the students had the possibility of tackling their real

school and classroom issues associated with ethical values and coexistence practices while practicing the Foreign Language (FL).

Among the outstanding findings, we identified that the students' reflections emphasized the need to demonstrate ethical values and appropriate coexistence practices in their classroom and school. Specifically, students expressed that reflecting on ethical values and coexistence practices helped them build upon their interactions at school and contributed to their personal lives to act and behave better in the social and academic context. Results also revealed that the different interacting activities helped the participants to improve their FL proficiency and engagement, as well as their cooperative learning and self-awareness skills. Lastly, the Project Based Learning approach allowed us to work meaningfully, through which we resort to students' previous experiences and real social issues (ethical values and coexistence practices) to enhance reflection and transformation.

Understanding Ethical Values, and Coexistence Practices

The concept of values generally involves the word behavior regarding the principles or moralities that influence human behavior. For Álvarez, Parra, & Forero (2022), the mission of ethical values is "to decrease or eliminate behaviors that are detrimental to the formation of the person" (P, 1.405). Sari (2013) adds that "values are the rules by which we make decisions about right and wrong, should and should not, good and bad" (p. 152), and the things that are important and useful in life.

Ethical Values in English Language Teaching ELT

According to the Office for Standards in Education's framework, "values are scrutinized as the way schools help to develop pupils' attitudes, behavior, and personal development" (p. 91). In like manner, Johnston (2003) declares that English language teaching is not merely a matter of training students in some skills; rather, the occupation of ELT is profoundly permeated with values, and these values are complex and driven with dilemmas and conflict. These previous claims ratify the importance of considering the foreign language class as a means to give the students the necessary conditions to scrutinize their values and practices through social and controversial issues that enhance meaningful learning. In this respect, Ghaye (2011) points out that values are not static; they tend to move around and become modified as you gain more experience and understanding and as your surroundings change. Values permit more than thinking about social issues; they may improve students' performance in the whole school context.

Ethical values are seen as excellent resources when planning and proposing changes in teaching practices since they transform settings where educational contexts affect their school life. Then, ethical values in English language teaching support the purpose of providing students opportunities to examine their social and school issues within their reflection lenses for exploring possibilities of transformation.

In the same line of thought, Ramirez (2007) refers to some aspects to consider when addressing values in the English as a Foreign language class:

It is the inclusion of pedagogical practices that call upon reflection on the school and English classroom realities that not only engage learners in the subject but also engage learners in their realities to become active agents. Therefore, what is needed is a contextualized curriculum that considers the social context as a significant variable when addressing values in the classroom. (p. 108).

As stated by the author, when teachers want to include work with values as part of their class objectives, examining, analyzing, and considering the students' social context and reality is necessary. Such context analysis will give teachers the information necessary for designing a contextualized curriculum that would be more meaningful for students' learning process.

Let us finish with Johnston's vision of values in language learning:

The beliefs which help a person decide what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong. Beliefs are both individual and social. They are individual in that all values are expressed by and through particular people […] but strong social forces affect individual beliefs. As a result, values only become interesting when they are put into practice in social settings - when our inner beliefs are converted into actions that affect others. (Johnston, 2003, p. 6)

Coexistence Practices in School

Coexistence can be defined as a factor that guarantees good relations between people in different life scenarios (Álvarez et al., 2022). Among the aspects related to social issues in educational contexts, we can find some authors who highlight the value of coexistence practices in the classroom. For example, Lopez and Garcia (2006) speak of "positive coexistence" in schools in order to achieve responsible and competent individuals who contribute to an active society. For their part, Rocha et al. (2019) state that coexistence contributes to explaining how students should work and interact with peers and professionals through interpersonal skills in a supportive and safe environment. This idea adds significance to the alternative practices in the teaching-learning process. Therefore, the work with coexistence practices allows learners to take the foreign language beyond the mere linguistic concerns and raise critical reflections about typical constraints affecting the school context.

Closely connected with the term coexistence practices is the notion of school climate, which has become essential in-school performances and refers to the climate or environment the academic community expects to find in a school. About that López et al. (2014) assert that school problems have become proactive and reactive resources to ensure the emotional, academic and social well-being of students and state that an appropriate school climate has become pivotal to school performance.

In the same way, authors such as Lopez and Garcia (2006) developed school climate initiatives that focus on the notion of coexistence, stating that it should be part of the core teachings in educational institutions. For these authors to call for coexistence practices is to go beyond the linguistic level. From this perspective, working on social concerns that affect learners' realities is a way of going beyond arranged classroom programs that perpetuate poor literacies; on the contrary, tackling coexistence practices in the EFL class would take social issues that affect students as part of scenarios used in class, and that can be used to promote reflection, using the target language.

Methodological Design

Research approach

To gain insights into the students' reflections about ethical values and coexistence practices in the school, we chose the qualitative research approach, following Creswell (2012), who stated the following: "Qualitative research is best suited to address a research problem in which you do not know the variables and need to explore. The literature might yield little information about the phenomenon of study, and you need to learn more from participants through exploration" (p. 16).

Type of study

This research study was developed through action research, as this method designs are qualitative procedures that support students to make their reflection in the language learning process. Richards & Farrell (2005) state that action research "refers to a systematic approach to carry out investigations and collecting information that is designed to illuminate an issue or problem and to improve classroom practice." (P. 172). Action research refers to practical action in the classroom and involves a cycle of activities in a problem or issues identified. That cycle starts by "collecting information about the issue, devising a strategy to address the issue, trying out the strategy, and observing its effect" (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.171).

Data Collection Procedure

The following data-gathering procedure for qualitative studies was designed based on Creswell (2014)
1. Selection of participants
2. Type of data to be collected
3. Defining the type of instruments
4. Gathering Data

Participants

The first step alludes to selecting the participants and the setting that best helps us understand the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2014). The participants were 29 tenth graders, 15 females and 14 males, whose ages ranged from fourteen to eighteen years old. These students from a lower middle socioeconomic status had been studying English 4 hours per week for four years.

This study has a homogeneous sample, which, according to Creswell (2012), consists of selecting participants whose personal characteristics or attributes vary very little. Thus, the population consisted of a homogeneous group of students with similar socioeconomic status, academic grades, ages, individual classroom behaviors, and language learning experiences.

Instruments

The instruments chosen to answer the research question are:

Students' journals.
Brown (2001) defines journals as a "very informal diary about your feelings and thoughts as you study English. It is easy to write a journal and will help you to be a better student" (p.53). Correspondingly, the students' journals' general structure explores the students' reflections on ethical values, coexistence practices, and language learning engagement. Students had to write two journals, consisting of ten open-ended questions and three items intending to guide students' journals' writing during the first cycle experience. The teacher also invited the participants to reflect upon the journal's experiences at the end of each pedagogical cycle.

Teacher's' field notes.
The teacher's field notes were used during all the classes of the two cycles of the pedagogical intervention to enrich our understanding of the phenomenon under study. Namely, the teacher's field notes aimed at collecting reported information regarding students' attitudes, interactions, and reactions during the pedagogical intervention and their reflections on ethical values and coexistence practices.

Students Artifacts.
Students were involved in some exchange sessions with classmates, where they had to develop some tasks revolving around ethical values and coexistence practices, such as drawings, writing future advice, working with quotes, listening to a psychologist, and others that led to the final products: a poster and a dramatization. At the end of each cycle, participants had to share their final products with their peers. They followed the teachers' rubrics when presenting the posters, and their dramatizations and the dramas were recorded.

Instructional Design

Instructional objectives

The instructional objectives of this intervention were: a) To provide opportunities for students to reflect on ethical values and coexistence practices, using English as a means of interaction, within the module *Democracy and Peace: Duties.* b) To foster in students the appropriation of ethical values and coexistence practices that lead to understanding behaviors and transformation in students, and c) To encourage language learning engagement by addressing meaningful topics.

The *Suggested English Curriculum* proposed by MEN (2016) sets out "areas that children must learn in school [...] transversally in all grades. In each grade, four modules related to health, democracy and

peace, sustainability and globalization are developed" (p. 14). On that account, this curricular proposal suggests activities framed within situations similar to reality and significant for the students (Suggested Curriculum Structure, 2016).

Therefore, we decided to use the module for tenth grade, which addresses social concerns that affect students' realities, to go beyond grammar or test-oriented classes that perpetuate negative issues at school and in the classroom. In like manner, following the recommendations of the MEN, in terms of the approach that can be followed to tackle the module *Democracy and Peace: Duties*, we used project-based learning (PBL). This approach allowed us to explore students' performance and participation during the EFL classes.

The instructional design comprised two cycles, with thirteen sessions developed in seven weeks. Taking Grant's (2014) approach, the intervention encompasses seven instructional stages, as illustrated in Table 1:

Tabla 1
Instructional Design for each cycle

Stages	Pedagogical Objectives
1. Introduction	To be aware of the social values and coexistence practices carried out at school.
2. Task	To select a social value and coexistence practice for the project. To identify the content to be included in the project, in narrative, descriptive, oral and written texts
3. Resources	To select the resources, they will need for the project. To create the material for the final presentations
4. Process	To write a first and second draft of their final product
5. Guidance and Scaffolding	To follow the teacher's guidance during the process. To practice in groups
6. Cooperative Learning	To prepare their final presentations in groups To practice in groups To present the final products orally
7. Reflection	To reflect on the sessions for each cycle, through discussions and the journals

Findings

Table 2 below portrays the categories and subcategories that emerged from the data analysis:

Tabla 2
Categories and subcategories

Research Question	Objectives	Categories	Subcategories
How do tenth graders at public school reflect on ethical values through the module Democracy and peace: Duties in an EFL context?	To examine the influence of the module Democracy and Peace: Duties on students' reflections about the ethical values and coexistence practices	The influence of the Module on students' reflections about the ethical values and coexistence practices	Critical reflections upon ethical values and coexistence practices at school
			Learners attitudes towards the EFL classes

Research Question	Objectives	Categories	Subcategories
Sub-questions			
How do students engage in the learning of the language as they work with the module?	To describe how the module Democracy and Peace: Duties intervenes in language learning engagement.	Democracy and Peace: Duties module as a means for students' language learning engagement (LLE)	Language students' interaction as they work with the module
			LLE: as an integrated component of the classroom experience
How can the module Democracy and peace Duties be approached in a meaningful way?	To draw some pedagogical implications for teachers when using the module Democracy and Peace: Duties.	Addressing the module Democracy and Peace: Duties, in a meaningful way	PBL as a pedagogical approach when using the module
			The experience of posters and dramatizations in LLE

The influence of the Module on students' reflections about ethical values and coexistence practices

As indicated in Table 2, the following subcategories emerged when considering the Module's influence on students' reflections on ethical values and coexistence practices in relation to their lived experiences inside and outside the English classroom.

Critical reflections upon ethical values and coexistence practices at school

This subcategory focuses on students' critical reflections regarding the work with ethical values and coexistence practices during the pedagogical intervention. During various moments of the intervention, the class teacher asked participants to express their perceptions regarding what they had experienced in the classroom and how these experiences related to ethical values or coexistence practices.

The responses given by the students through the journals and the teacher's field notes revealed that students felt that the ethical values had helped them to improve their interactions at school and that they had gained this from their learning experiences in the classroom and the different pedagogical strategies. The excerpts below are examples of critical analysis they make of their behavior in regard to some values:

"I have learnt the ethical value of transparency: when I cut in line or made cheat. So, I am not being a transparent person with my classmates. That's why we should reflect and change to be correct human beings" (Student's Journal 1, Q9, Jhon).
"Through these classes I have practiced the honesty: it means if I am wrong I asked for apologies. Besides, respect: to respect the students behind me when they are on the restaurant line." (Students' Journal 1, Q9, Jacqueline)
"Before the presentations, I practiced bullying. Maybe, I offended my classmates. Now, I know we should not do it. Also I learned we should behave well in every place to be better persons" (Students' Journal 2, Q7, Fabian).

In that sense, the participants' interventions capture some of their critical reflections on ethical values and how they can apply them to change their behavior at school positively. It means that values

were represented in behaviors; as Muhammed (1994) refers, values are the significance of behavior. In the different students' artifacts, we could learn that students acknowledged the interwoven connection between values such as transparency, punctuality, peace, honesty, and respect with their coexistence practices; they declare that these values should be reflected in good actions in and out of the school. In this vein, authors such as Álvarez, Parra & Forero (2022) suggest that the crisis of values is among the factors affecting coexistence.

The previous ideas concurred with Ramirez's findings (2007) when she affirmed, "The students at the middle school level were aware of the values that both the family and school promoted […], and students were able to distinguish the things that society expects from them in terms of values" (p. 36). In that sense, the analysis of the instruments has provided information to describe how students are starting to make critical reflections on their ethical values. This is the first step of transformation that mediates the relation between the ethical values and practices in the EFL class.

We can conclude that the subcategory *critical reflections upon ethical values and coexistence practices at school* is one of the most important findings, not only because it has the most associated evidence (data) but also because it reveals the positive effect of the pedagogical intervention. Most of the students reported and reflected through the research tools that the cycles implemented went beyond learning the language and made them reflect on their own values and coexistence practices in and out of the classroom in such a way that everything results in their transformation. In this regard, Knapp (1992) asserts: "In the reflection process, the learner is becoming aware of exploring and transforming parts of an experience to produce a new understanding or appreciation of the world" (p. 102).

Finally, our findings support the objectives pursued by the Ministry of Education with the suggested curriculum (MEN, 2016) in terms of addressing social issues and enhancing social transformation through the use of the book in the foreign language class.

Learners' attitudes towards the EFL classes

Once students embark on reflective practices in their English classes, they find more meaning and show more interest in their classes. Therefore, their attitude tends to change. On that account, the module also influenced participants' attitudes in the EFL class throughout the pedagogical intervention. This subcategory presents some of the students' attitudes in English as a foreign language class.

Another significant finding is the positive change in the learners' attitudes toward the EFL classes. Namely, these findings evoke how participants conceived the English language before and after the intervention in the EFL classes. Firstly, during the first cycle, some participants expressed frustration due to their poor command of English; nevertheless, at the end of the second cycle, the same participants evidenced a different perception and stated in the journals that they had improved their performance in the class. The journal entries below illustrate the mentioned change of attitude:

> *"At the beginning, I felt little confused because I do not know very well the words´ pronunciation, but at the end I liked it" (Journal 1, Q1, Sergio).*
> *"Well, the dramatizations helped my pronunciation a lot. Also, it helped me to be less shy and put into practice each ethical value in the classes" (Journal 2, Q1, Sergio)*

Besides, during the cooperative encounter, the class teacher registered in the fields notes some students' language improvement that supported this idea. Students showed signs of language learning empowerment after the last encounters.

Apart from the change of attitude towards the EFL class, students also reflected an awareness of the importance of their ethical values to behave better

in class. The previous statement goes in line with the fact that English teaching and learning in Colombia has been gradually moving towards a more relaxed environment in which both teachers and students discover a real incentive to learn a foreign language.(Ministerio de Educación Nacional[MEN], 2004).

Therefore, *self-awareness,* which is a state of heightened awareness, was a key code derived from the data analysis, in the sense that the change in attitude is also a result of their new understanding of how they have improved English and the relevance of the topics worked and how they result in good practices. In this vein, Ursula and Jan (2004) state that it is essential to provide support to students "in developing a better awareness and understanding of themselves as learners" (p. 459). In other words, teachers might support students in developing a meta-learning capacity.

The change of attitude also reflects that students are now *more empowered* during the language learning process. Since they feel more empowered, they feel more confident participating in the different activities developed. Ferris and Tag (1996) state that students must be empowered in specific language areas and skills to cope with academic demands (Ferris and Tagg, 1996). Thus, one thing leads to the other, students' participation in the pedagogical intervention resulted in greater self-awareness and translated into greater confidence and empowerment.

Democracy and Peace: Duties Module as a Means for Students' language learning engagement

This second research category deals with the findings regarding the Module's effectiveness in engaging the students in the language learning process by including social issues, such as ethical values and coexistence practices. The subcategories emerging from this analysis include *Language students' interaction as they work with the Module and LLE: as an integrated component of the classroom experience.*

Language students' interaction as they work with the Module

A diversity of variables intervene in the pursuit of students' engagement in language learning; one of them is the degree of students' interaction in the foreign language. The data revealed the positive effect of the activities that implied students' interaction in English during the pedagogical intervention process. First, when the teacher asked the students to write a second journal about language learning engagement, we identified that they referred to the fact that having the possibility to interact and use the English language led to improved English skills. It was also stated in the teacher's field notes, as in the example bellow evidence:

> *"Most of the students were interacting during the project's tasks, and after they wrote on their notebooks, two students asked in English for clarification about the homework, and some others were interested in what they had to do in the next encounter"* (October 2019, FN7).

Thus, the data that emerged from the students through the journals, the artifacts, and those that resulted from the teacher's field notes were a clear example of the benefits of using interaction activities as a means for engaging the students in the English learning process, something that is not new for teachers and academics; what is essential to highlight here is the fact that this specific population took the time to reflect about their learning process during the pedagogical intervention and reached the conclusion that all the interactive activities contributed to their improvement. Therefore, as said before, they now have more self-awareness of those aspects that benefit their learning process.

Finally, we must recognize that through the different interactive activities carried out by the learners, they reinforce other skills, such as cooperative learning and social skills. They had the chance to socialize with their friends cooperatively. This last aspect was also remarked on by Gómez et

al. (2013) since one of the conclusions of his study revealed the school as a place to build upon their social values since students interact with their classmates.

Language Learning Engagement- LLE: as an integrated component of the classroom experience

This subcategory is closely connected to the previous section, as it presents findings illustrating the effect of language learning engagement within this pedagogical intervention. Ball and Perry (2011) state: "Engagement is defined as students' involvement in activities and conditions that is likely to generate high-quality learning" (p. 14). In this sense, engagement refers to the vehicle of learning while reflecting, acting, and making meaning of the language. The participants' journal entries evidenced how the different activities developed during the cycles enhanced such language learning engagement while improving their level of English:

"During the classes we have learned to speak English, the pronunciation. Also, we have important things such as put into practice the ethical values that society are losing constantly" (Student´s Journal 2, Q4, Laura)

Additionally, in the following field note, the teacher reported how students appeared motivated and engaged in the pedagogical sessions.

"The class started at 6:11 a.m. the students were practicing the activities they had to do and present. Most of them showed a very positive attitude, two students asked for some correct words' pronunciation. While they were practicing the pronunciation, some others were practicing their final presentations" (October 2019, FN7).

Motivation is then a concept that goes hand in hand with engagement; students were engaged in the class when they seemed to be motivated. For instance, when writing the scripts for dramatization, students were eager to learn vocabulary and expressions and to clarify grammatical aspects to write a good script.

Participation was another indication of students' engagement in that they were constantly participating and inquiring about language, especially in terms of grammar and pronunciation. This supports what Coates, H. (2007) states concerning language learning engagement.

"Student engagement is concerned with the point of intersection between individuals and things that are critical for their learning. Fundamentally, it is based on the constructivist assumption that learning is influenced by how an individual participates in educationally purposeful activities" p.17).

Another code that emerged from the observations and students' artifacts and is part of this category is what we called challenges. When the teacher asked about the work developed during the pedagogical intervention, they mentioned some of the challenges they faced and how they could overcome them through their engagement with the activities:

"I made a big effort with both projects, I practice a lot to learn things that are important and that help us in the life and the language" (Student´s Journal 2, Q5, Jacqueline).

Addressing the Module Democracy and Peace: Duties in a meaningful way

Asubel (1963), the proponent of meaningful learning, states that the most significant element influencing education is what the learner already knows. On that account, meaningful learning occurs when humans relate new concepts to pre-existing and familiar ones. "Then changes are produced in our cognitive structure, concepts are modified, and new links are created. It is a useful tool because it enables real learning, it generates greater retention and it facilitates transferences to other real situations" (Vallori, 2014, p. 199). That is what we intended with this pedagogical intervention: to use real social issues and situations to enhance reflection and transformation while learning English. Thus, the following subcategories arise:

PBL as a pedagogical approach when using the Module

According to Thomas (2000), Project Based Learning (PBL) focuses on learning involving students in investigations, problem-solving, and other meaningful task activities; it allows students to work autonomously in constructing their knowledge and reaches the peak of producing authentic products. Thus, this study's findings regarding the role of the PBL approach in enhancing students' language learning demonstrated that students should engage in English language learning while following a specific path (in this case, PBL) to achieve their language learning objectives.

Considering problem-solving and real-life tasks that can be framed within this pedagogical approach, the following field note is an example of activities they were involved in and the action they followed to solve the problem.

"Some students did not know the meaning of the coexistence practice in the classroom or how it could be illustrated. That is, they were asking questions to decide which one to choose. At the end of the class, the students searched for information about the different practices to come to a decision. Later, at home, they asked their families about examples of that coexistence practice" (September 2019, Fn2).

For the development of the projects, the class teacher offered students real and contextualized situations involving their families, which proved beneficial and meaningful, not only for boosting language learning engagement but for the reconstruction of their values. That is consistent with the findings of some research, such as that of Gómez et al. (2013), who reveal that students recognize the importance of family and school to build their social values, or Contreras and Chapeton (2016), who raise the need to implement methodologies and familiar topics to students so that they feel identified in their learning process.

In like manner, these activities represent one of the English Suggested Curriculum's principles proposed by the MEN (2016) "Project-based learning as a proposal in which students actively participate in the planning and development" (p. 21), and that is what the students did during the interventions, cooperatively, they decided the values and coexistence practices they were going to work on and how they were going to illustrate them. In other words, they participated in reflection and problem-solving activities which were more meaningful than the test-focused classes they used to have. In this respect, Aguirre (2018) highlights the relevance of enhancing reflection in class as associated with thinking and problem-solving.

The experience of posters and dramatizations in LLE

This last subcategory is closely associated with the previous subcategory regarding the effect of PBL, in the sense that the posters and dramatizations were the class products selected to share the process they had been developing during the first and second cycles.

Participants' viewpoints acknowledged posters and dramatizations as strategies that offer many benefits. The first benefit is the fact that the use of posters and dramatizations served as a way to enhance their engagement in the projects. The students were very motivated in class and were willing to participate in the design and presentations of their products. The above coincides with Mark's findings (2000) since the author reported that students' engagement implied affective and behavioral participation in their learning experience.

Secondly, we identified that participants emphasized the importance of group work as an engaging way to pursue their goals cooperatively. As a third benefit, there is the fact that they recognized the use of posters and dramatizations in the EFL class as a space to handle real social situations in the school. And lastly, participants consider the use of posters and dramatizations as

helpful to improve their English and their confidence to speak in front of others and as a medium to present their ideas and thoughts in the target language, as can be inferred from the following entry:

> *"I liked the posters because in that way we could speak certain social issues at the time we learn English"* (Student's Journal 1, Q1, Gissela)

Authors like Mohammad (2010) have emphasized the benefits of dramatizations for students' language learning engagement since it allows them to use language meaningfully and appropriately. For the author, "using drama and drama activities has clear advantages for language learning. It encourages students to speak. It gives them the chance to communicate, even with limited language, using non-verbal communication, such as body movements and facial expression" (p.3).

To conclude, the Project Based Learning approach allowed us to work meaningfully, through which we resort to students' previous experiences and real social issues (ethical values and coexistence practices) to enhance reflection and transfor-mation.

Conclusions

This section will answer each research question to exhibit this study's salient findings.

How do tenth graders at a public school reflect on ethical values and coexistence practices through the Module Democracy and Peace: Duties in the EFL class?

In general terms, students' reflections evidence that having worked on ethical values and coexistence practices made them realize the importance of a healthy coexistence in their classroom and school. Specifically, students expressed that ethical values helped them build upon their interactions at school and helped them in their personal lives to act and behave better in the social and academic context.

In this sense, we can affirm that this subcategory is one of the most salient findings, not only because it is the one with the most semantic foundation (associated evidence-data) but also because it reveals the positive effect of the pedagogical intervention, seeing it from both personal and academic lenses. It also demonstrates the importance of enhancing reflective models to construct knowledge through social interactions.

As stated in the results section, most students expressed that the cycles implemented went beyond learning the language and made them reflect on their values and coexistence practices in and out of the classroom to ensure that everything results in their transformation. Different authors (Contreras & Chapetón, 2016; Heredia et al., 2014; Gómez et al.,2013; Bello, 2012 and Knapp, 1992) have emphasized the need for EFL classes that go beyond the mere teaching of content and linguistic aspects to include strategies that enhance reflection and social transformation. It is also an objective of the MEN with the suggested curriculum document.

As part of the influence of the module on the students' reflection, we identified that during the two cycles, the students reflected a significant change in attitude towards the EFL class. That is, comparing the attitudes they demonstrated at the beginning of the pedagogical implementation and the end, we observed a positive change in attitudes as students reflected greater self-awareness not only in terms of their English skills but of the importance of questioning and transforming their ethical values and consequently their coexistence practices.

Self-awareness is another crucial term in this study since self-awareness allows people to understand others. Having awareness creates the opportunity to change behaviors and beliefs. Namely, participants demonstrated more self-awareness of their proficiency improvement, the relevance of the topics addressed in the cycles, and how such topics influence their daily practices.

Achieving appropriate attitudes also shows that students are now more empowered and have more control over their language learning, which increases their confidence and self-esteem. In other words, students' participation in the pedagogical intervention resulted in greater self-awareness, translating into greater confidence and empowerment and, therefore, better attitudes towards the EFL class.

Sub question, N°1: How do students engage in the learning of the foreign language as they work in the module?

One of the ways to determine that students are engaged in the class activities is the extent to which they participate in interacting activities and, most importantly, how willing they are to interact and work on those activities. In this sense, students' language interaction was built as they worked with the module. All of the activities proposed in this pedagogical intervention involved cooperative learning, which on its part demands interaction among the members of the group. Therefore, one might say the interaction was implicit in the proposed activities.

The data showed that the interacting activities helped learners to improve their FL skills. However, more than the fact that interaction was an echo of students' engagement and improvement, what is important to highlight here is that this specific population took the time to reflect on their own learning process during the pedagogical intervention and concluded that all the interactive activities contributed to their improvement; they are now self-ware of what works and doesn't work during their English learning process, and the activities they prefer to develop in class.

On this vein, we can also affirm that through the different interactive activities students reinforced not only cooperative learning skills, but also social skills, as they had the chance to socialize with their friends in a cooperative way. This supports the idea of the school as a place to build upon their own social values since students interact with their classmates (Gómez et al. 2013).

Another way to demonstrate that students are engaged in their language classes is by their level of motivation. During the different phases of both cycles, the students appeared to be motivated and actively participated. A clear example of the perceived motivation was when writing the scripts for the dramatization, the students were eager to learn vocabulary and expressions and to clarify grammatical aspects to be able to write a good script. Therefore, participation was another evidence of the students' engagement, in the sense that they were continuously participating and inquiring about the language.

And lastly, the development of the projects represented a challenge for students in many fronts, reason way the notion of challenge became another relevant code that comes to light. Students engagement is closely connected with the concept of challenge, since when an individual assumes a challenge and faces it, he gets engaged to taking it to a successful end.

Thus, when students were asked about the work they did during the pedagogical intervention, they mentioned some of the challenges they had to face, and how they could overcome them through their engagement with the activities. Particularly, tenth grade students made reference to challenges related to their limited language proficiency, which in turn resulted in lack of confidence to talk in front of their classmates. Nevertheless, despite all the students' struggles in their language proficiency, they faced them as a challenge rather than a barrier to continue their EFL learning process with the guide of the teacher; in short, their limited language proficiency was not a motive for students' disengagement of this pedagogical intervention.

Sub question, N°2: How can the module Democracy and Peace Duties be approached in a meaningful way?

The selected approach that allowed us to work meaningfully was Project Based Learning, in which we resort to students' experiences and real social issues revolving around ethical values and

coexistence practices to enhance reflection and transformation, and also considering that it is the methodology proposed by the Ministry of Education for addressing the Suggested Curriculum (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2016).

In general terms, Project Based Learning involves presenting an authentic and meaningful problematic situation to students, who can provide their services to conduct an investigation and inquiry (Mihardi, 2013). Consistent with this, the excerpts from the journals and field notes referred to some visible and positive students' perceptions about using PBL, as the appropriate approach to achieve their language learning goals while using the module meaningfully.

When examining the outcomes of the projects, namely posters, and dramatizations, participants' viewpoints recognized them as strategies that offer many benefits. The first benefit is that the use of posters and dramatizations served as a way to enhance students' engagement in the projects students carried out throughout this intervention. Secondly, these activities promoted group work as a valuable and productive way to pursue their goals cooperatively. Lastly, posters and dramatizations were a helpful way to improve students' English and confidence to speak in front of others and as a medium to present their reflections, ideas, and thoughts in the target language.

Lastly, It is imperative for national policies, curriculum stakeholders, and all the educative agents to enhance the implementation of initiatives (be it a program, a module, or an innovation) that help students understand the relevance of ethical values and coexistence practices in today's world, as a foundation for responsible choices in their daily life and their interaction within their social and school environment.

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