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How can Problem Posing Pedagogy help to enhance ninth grade EFL students' interests and language needs?

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Abstract

This action research aimed to explore how Problem Posing Pedagogy can enhance ninth graders' interests and language needs. The participants were 37 students at a private school in Bello, Colombia. The pedagogical actions followed six stages: Describe the code, Define the problem, Personalize the problem, Analyze the root causes of the problem, Strategize possible responses, and Application. Data collection instruments included student surveys, student journals, and the teacher journal. Findings suggest that implementing Problem Posing helped promote students' interest and engagement in the English class, and boost their interaction during classroom activities. Nevertheless, the application of this pedagogy may also face some resistance on the part of students, preventing them from enjoying the project, and experiencing a more significant learning.

Key words: Classroom interaction, EFL teaching, meaningful learning, Problem Posing Pedagogy

Requirement Page

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Preface

This text presents the results of an action research project carried out in my experience as a service teacher in a private school, Colegio Parroquial San Buenaventura in Bello, Colombia. The purpose of this project was to explore how Problem Posing Pedagogy can enhance ninth grade EFL students' interests and language needs. The participants were a group of 37 students whose ages ranged from 13 to 16. In general, they were disciplined, had different learning styles, such as visual, auditory and kinetic, and preferred to work in groups or pairs, develop activities that involve movements, talk to each other and create things. Nevertheless, some students were not comfortable with the English class since their actions in the classroom showed a negative attitude towards the language, which prevented them from participating and diminished their interest although most of them had expressed that they liked English.

Therefore, I implemented a unit based on Problem Posing Pedagogy, which helped me incorporate students' different learning styles and respond to their interest and needs. To explore the benefit of such implementation, I used three data collection instruments: digital teacher journal, students' journals, three surveys and some students' classwork. From the data analysis, it was possible to see that through the implementation Problem Posing Pedagogy, students' interest changed, the classes responded to the students' language needs and at the same time that their speaking skills and their self-confidence increased, which caused a positive impact on their English learning process.

Description of the Context

In this section, I will present information about the school, the EFL curriculum, and the participants in this Project.

Colegio Parroquial San Buenaventura (CPSB)

CPSB is a private catholic primary-secondary school belonging to the Congregation of Archdiocesan Schools of Medellin. It is a middle-sized school with 1,480 students and 47 teachers. It is located in the north-west area of the city in Bello. Many students reside in the nearby low-high to middle-high socioeconomic neighborhoods of Cabañas, Florencia, Santa Ana, Paris, and 12 de Octubre. These neighborhoods are residential and commercial, and have had problems with theft, drug use and violence. Students belong to diverse religious denominations (i.e., Anglican, Evangelical, and Jewish), and have cultural diversity as they come from different parts of Colombia.

EFL Curriculum

As schools in Colombia must follow the policies of the Ministry of Education regarding EFL teaching, specifically Guia 22 – Estándares Básicos de Aprendizaje and Basic Learning Rights, English teachers at CPSB were given autonomy to design their own EFL curriculum. Their curriculum has a list of standards for the four skills, and the content consists of grammar items. It also includes a list of performance indicators related to the three components: know, do, and be. Recently, the school has purchased the EFL textbook series ‘Here We Go’ for the primary grades and ‘Hit the Road’ for the secondary grades. Yet, teachers have not integrated these textbooks in their lesson planning.

The Grade 9 English Class

The participants in this action research project included myself as the pre-service teacher, a cooperating teacher (CT), and our students. Regarding myself, I started working as an EFL teacher at CPSB school in 2013 and also began my degree program. I am a dedicated teacher who tries to do her best. I am friendly and respectful with students, but also disciplined and demanding. My CT is a young woman who studied ESL at Suffolk County Community College in Riverhead, New York, and obtained an undergraduate degree in EFL teaching from Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana in Medellín. As for my students, they are 37, 20 girls and 17 boys, whose ages range from 13 to 16, and who show a high use of English and enjoy it. In general, they have good manners, and they are disciplined and obedient. They have different learning styles such as visual, auditory and kinetic, and prefer to work in groups or pairs, develop activities that involve movements, talk to each other and create things.

My Approach to Teaching English

On one hand, my methodologies vary according to the activities, and although I do not follow a specific method, I take resources or aids from approaches or methods that can help me as communicative, TPR, Audio lingual, translation and others, depending on the topic I must teach. Accordingly, I could consider myself an eclectic teacher as I make use of diverse techniques and activities which come from a range of language teaching approaches and methodologies. Besides, my classes must follow the institutional policies based mainly on grammar, traditional education, ICFES requirements and the Presentation/Practice/Production model, yet there is a prevalence of grammar instruction.

Statement of the Problem

Worldwide, governments are increasingly aware of the importance of learning a second or foreign language in all levels of education. In Colombia, foreign language education has been a priority for the Ministry of Education (MEN) and many official, public schools. Yet, while recognizing that EFL teachers try to do their best, it is not uncommon that teaching and learning continues to be based on learning grammar. This focus on form is not only used in schools with diverse contexts and educational goals, but also with students having diverse interests and needs. Although curricular guidelines and principles for EFL instruction, and resources are provided by the MEN, a focus on learning grammar is given a priority without any skill integration.

During the 6 years I have been working at my school, this problem has been part of my regular teaching process: emphasizing grammar over other aspects of language. Thus, although Malla Curricular indicates the language knowledge and skills that should be taught, I feel pressured to focus on grammar items when I plan lessons, which forces me to continue teaching grammar. Hence, I have usually designed my lessons by introducing or reviewing grammar items, and then providing further explanation of them, so my students can copy them in their notebooks. Later, I would give students activities, such as fill-in-the-blanks, and writing and translating sentences, among others. Although this may help students learn English grammar, they have no chance to use it meaningfully, thus becoming dissatisfied with my lessons which did not really meet their interests and needs.

Consequently, I realized that I needed to move from an emphasis on grammar towards a more interactive and meaningful way of teaching English. Accordingly, I found that a Problem Posing Pedagogy, a teaching strategy suggested by the MEN for secondary school, could offer an opportunity to achieve this purpose. In doing so, I would consider not only the Malla Curricular

and MEN standards when planning lessons, but also students' learning styles and needs, giving them opportunities to learn English through meaningful contents related to their lives and interaction.

Theoretical Background

In this section, I will provide a definition of Problem Posing Pedagogy, several of its characteristics, the main stages in its implementation, and some benefits and difficulties with its use in EFL classroom practices.

What is Problem Posing Pedagogy?

Problem Posing Pedagogy (PPP) is a term coined by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, and has several definitions; for example, Hough and Cerezo (2004), following Torp and Sage, defines it as “a process of learning where a case problem is presented to students who are asked to apply reasoning, questioning, researching, and thinking to find a solution to the problem” (p.1). Wallerstein and Auerbach (2004) state that PPP is “a group process that draws on personal experience to create social connectedness and mutual responsibility for change” (p. 7). Also, Nixon-Ponder (1994) suggests that with PPP actions can start as small changes from within the classroom (e.g., new teacher-student relations, students' choice of content, new interaction formats, students can make decisions, etc.).

Characteristics of Problem Posing Pedagogy

As mentioned before, one of the main characteristics of the PPP is that it is centered on students and teachers have to work and be engaged in dialoguing with students during the teaching-learning experiences. As the lessons promote active student learning, they become more autonomous learners, capable of making decisions and suggesting solutions to real-life problems.

Also, students apart from developing language abilities, they interact with each other as they try to solve problems.

Stages of Problem Posing Pedagogy

Auerback (as cited in Nixon-Ponder, 1994) and Freeman and Freeman (1998) propose six stages to develop PPP effectively. These stages are framed within three main concepts or skills: listening, dialogue, and actions. With respect to listening, the teacher initially listens to the students and identifies a concern to problem-solve through the stages. As per dialoguing takes place in each step with opportunities for teacher to students or students to student discussion. Finally, actions are often considered as the final goal of PPP. The PPP stages are 1) Describe the code, 2) Define the problem, 3) Personalize the problem, 4) Analyze the root causes of the problem, 5) Strategize possible responses (Finding solutions to the problem), and 6) Application.

Benefits and difficulties to use Problem Posing

Authors such as Nixon-Ponder (1994) and Schleppegrell and Bowman (1994) have found several pros and cons in using PPP, which focus on the roles of students and teachers. One of the most important benefits is that it allows to renew the curriculum as it is not teacher-centered, that is, non-traditional teaching and learning. Another benefit is the role of the student as they are the center of the teaching-learning process, being an active part in their own knowledge construction because they are interested and motivated in their courses. Also, students can think, make decisions, discuss and evaluate learning. In this way, teachers can engage students to participate, interact, and be more conscious of their process; thus, students' motivation is always up.

Nevertheless, PPP supposes some cons to students and teachers. To start with, students are not used to being asked for their opinions. They felt insecure due to the fact that they are not used to a different class structure and they are mere recipients of knowledge or, as Brown (2004)

claims, they are immersed in a form of banking education. Besides, teachers do not have time to complete the whole tasks because of Standard-based limits teachers' autonomy and creativity fossilizing their educational practices. According to Nixon-Ponder (1994), the teacher has the pressure of the school in terms of good results and high percentages in the different tests that students must present, which are a direct responsibility of the teacher. However, factors such as class hours, interruptions, school requirements and the fulfillment of the curriculum, among others, may cause the teacher to fall into the usual social requirements: the teacher as the transmitter of knowledge and the student banking education- knowledge concept.

Research Question

How can Problem Posing Pedagogy help to enhance ninth grade EFL students' interests and language needs?

Objectives

General Objective

To explore how Problem Posing Pedagogy can enhance ninth grade EFL students' interests and language needs.

Specific Objectives

- To include students' shared experiences and background knowledge during classes.
- To promote group work with heterogeneous levels of students.
- To identify language needs of students from the class activities during the Problem Posing stages.
- To encourage students to reflect on their learning experience by self-assessing what they learn.

Action Plan

To answer the above research question, I planned to carry out an action research project at my workplace with a group of ninth graders. In the project I would first learn about students' interests and needs through an initial survey. Taking this into account, I would then design and implement an instructions unit, based on Problem- Posing Pedagogy, around the topic of the proper use of the school uniform with the purpose of raising students' awareness about this topic through class discussions. Also, to examine the effects of this intervention on the interest and language needs of this grupo of students I planned to collect data from student surveys, students journal, and my own teacher journal.

Development of Actions

To achieve the above-mentioned objective, I designed and implemented pedagogical actions through the six stages of PPP as follows. In stage 1, *Describe the code*, I first introduced students to PPP, its benefits, and got their opinions. Then, I guided students in exploring a school problem, wearing a school uniform. Lastly, we had discussions about the use of uniforms in professions, and also about the importance of collaborative work during the project. In stage 2, *Identifying the problem*, we defined the problem, learnt about it through games, pictures, questions and other activities such as labelling images of the school uniform for boys and girls. I also administered a student survey to learn about their attitudes towards the school uniform. The third stage, *Personalize the problem*, consisted of a series of questions I made to the class and an activity in which students completed a graphic organizer with a personal (or another student's) experience with the school uniform. In stage 4, *Analyze the root causes of the problem*, we played a memory game with the school uniform vocabulary introduced before. Students also answered more questions related to school uniforms with think-pair-share. Then they Completed

a true and false table about the school's Manual de Convivencia. We also do readings in favor and against the use of the school uniform, which we later socialized in class.

In the fifth stage, *Strategize possible responses* (i.e., finding solutions to the problem), I made some questions related to the last class work, answering questions with think-pair-share, and then socialized ideas about the previous readings. Then, in small groups, students shared and discussed their ideas about possible solutions, which they later reported. At the end of this stage I did a second student survey about their attitudes towards the school uniform. Finally, the sixth stage, *Application*, was developed in two moments: language phase and application phase. In the first phase, we focused on language and worked in the following topic and activities: incomplete dialogues about the school uniform, connecting two parts of a sentence, writing sentences with 'because' clauses, agree or disagree with the opinions, verb conjugations, organizing words into sentences, and modals verbs. After completing this phase, I did a student survey about these lessons focused on grammar. In the second phase, we carried out activities based on cartoons including, for example, reading cartoons examples, and elaborating a comic about the use of the school uniform. Finally, students socialized their comics.

To answer the research question, I used the following data collection instruments. First, I used a digital journal during this process to record my observations and reflections. Second, I arranged for my CT to observe some of my classes and complete an observation form. Third, I used my students' journals, which they wrote at the end of the day. Fourth, I used three surveys based on Tindall (2015): one at the beginning of the project, another at the end of each PPP stage, and a last one at the end of the whole project. Finally, I gathered some students' classwork with the activities and their final products, their comics, in which they captured their class

experiences, their perceptions on the use of the uniform and where they applied the learning acquired through PPP (see Appendix B - Data Collection Chart).

To analyze the data, I used the stages suggested by Burns (1999): assembling, reading, coding, creating categories, and finding relationships between data sources. First, I reread my journal entries and those of my students. Second, I reread the general comments on my TC, and my advisor's observations and I underline ideas or possible themes based on recurring patterns in the data. Third, I coded relevant information that could help me answer my research question, created a data collection chart in which I put the summarized and categorized information (see Appendix C - Data Analysis Chart), thus generating in this way three main categories: Students' Interests and Engagement in the English Classroom Activities, Promoting Students' Classroom Interaction, and Students' Resistance toward Problem Posing Pedagogy.

Findings and Interpretation

The purpose of this action research project was to explore how Problem Posing Pedagogy can enhance ninth grade EFL students' interests and language needs. After analyzing the data, four categories emerged: raising students' interests and engagement in the English classroom activities, promoting students' classroom interaction, improving the English classes methodology, and negative feelings and emotions toward PPP.

Students' Interests and Engagement in the English Classroom Activities

The data show that Problem Posing Pedagogy was helpful in enhancing students' interests and engagement in the English classroom activities. Although students were initially reluctant to work on the proposed classroom project about wearing the school uniform, most of them eventually became interested in exploring this issue. Indeed, implementing Problem Posing Pedagogy helped students engage with controversial topics related to their own context, in this

case, the use of a school uniform. For instance, one of the students stated that the teacher presented them “a very interesting project about school uniforms, something that torments me and many classmates” (week 31st, Student Journal: Katherine). As can be seen in Katherine’s journal entry, the topic of wearing the school uniform was a critical and debatable issue among students, which helped raise their interest in the project. Besides, when asked about how relevant the topic of school uniforms was for them, 28 students out of 36 answered that it was very relevant. For example, Miguel stated that “it helped gain more awareness about the use of the school uniform” (Questionnaire 1). These examples show that implementing Problem Posing Pedagogy was useful in raising students' interest in exploring a controversial issue.

Furthermore, students were engaged in the development of the project and contributed ideas for solving the problem related to the use of the school uniform through its different stages. Not only were students more interested in the classroom activities as shown above, but they also showed a higher level of responsibility in carrying out the tasks in each session. For example, during some sessions, I noticed that students arrived to the class on time, they usually developed the assigned workshops, readings, and the project worksheets and they became more connected with the English classes (1st entry teacher journal, September 20). Similarly, some students revealed that they showed more responsibility for their class assignments:

These classes guide us to deep in the correct use of the language. Also we started to be more responsible, that is, we handed the homeworks on time, which did not happen before. We usually sat down to do the English tasks like the workshops and readings that the teacher left us; since we were excited to get to class and share our ideas with others. This was a great experience for us in many ways. (Questionnaire 2).

This evidence shows not only how the project of the use of the school uniform through the Problem Posing pedagogy aroused their interest, but also how it improved the level of responsibility of the students. Students' attention was also evident in each class. This was observed when they wanted to go to the board to clarify doubts, help a classmate who did not understand the topic or even correct the teacher. For example, in a class when working on the description, it was necessary to remember that the main element of this was the use of the verb to be. To the surprise of those present, a student who rarely participates stood up and corrected the teacher who had made a mistake in the order of the adjectives in the example written on the board. He spoke with great propriety of the subject, asked permission to go out on the board and correct the sentence (1st entry teacher Journal Sept. 19-20). His classmates applauded him and this fact motivated him not only to continue participating in the classes but also encouraged many other classmates.

Promoting Students' Classroom Interaction

The data indicate that Problem Posing Pedagogy was also helpful in promoting students' classroom interaction. Indeed, raising students' interests and engagement in the project greatly favored the creation of spaces for interaction among each other and with the teacher. The activities proposed in each stage of the project generated spaces not only for the production and application of previous grammar knowledge, but also for the discussion about the project topic about the School Uniform Use. For instance, students began to ask for more spaces to share answers among themselves, listen to each other, and reach some agreements, as well as recognizing that the proposed activities and workshops contributed to enhancing their previous knowledge by providing them with opportunities to put it into practice in the classroom. In one of the first lessons, a student stated that "it was important to socialize these activities even if it would take 5 minutes or less. It was important for me to listen to my classmates. we needed to listen to the others,

participate, give our ideas, understand and communicate in English” (1st entry teacher journal, September 20). Also, when asked about how much they enjoyed those lessons, 25 students out of 36 answered that they enjoyed much because they can participate actively in each class (Questionnaire 2). Additionally, Valentina said that “it is good to put yourself research a little and knows about the mentality of other people facing something as universal as uniforms use” (week 31st, Student Journal: Valentina), and other 25 students stated that the project gave them tools to argue, express ideas and opinions and clarify doubts about other topics already worked (Questionnaire 2).

Moreover, many of the students expressed in their Journals that the interaction and participation spaces between them helped them have more confidence to use English in class. This could be seen when students felt more confident to participate, highlighting the fact that the teacher took into account their opinions on the subject, their likes and dislikes in the face of it, and reaching agreements. For example, they stated that they could “express our opinions, and that teacher would take them into account, express our likes and dislikes freely about the uniform” (week 32nd, Student Journal: Miguel), and they also enhanced that

Thanks to this project, I can listen other, learn about my mates, knowing their points of views about the uniform and be listen my opinions. The most important that teacher listen us and taking into account our opinions, it was good. (week 34th, Student Journal: Paula).

Similarly, another student stated that “I felt very good with this project because, in English, I had the opportunity to participate more and be more active in my classes with a very controversial topic” (week 32nd, Student Journal: Laura). Due to these spaces of participation, being heard by their teacher, being able to express themselves freely without fear of being

penalized, and the simple fact of being taken into account in the execution of a project, significantly increased the students' confidence in themselves, in their knowledge of the subject of English and their knowledge of the world. The work done such as workshops, exams, writings, and readings were of higher quality and they were done paying more attention to every detail, not only for completing an activity.

In sum, the Project of Problem Posing helped students interact more in the classes applying not only the topics proposed by the Project but also their previous knowledge. In the different activities, they were able to give their opinions, get to know the opinions of others, express their feelings and create spaces for discussion in which they shared ideas, solutions to the problem of wearing the uniform, and practiced the language. It was a different space that provided students with significant elements in their process.

Students' resistance toward Problem Posing Pedagogy

The data also show that not all the students had a positive attitude toward Problem Posing Pedagogy since it somehow placed some of them outside their comfort zone. Two of them, Valeria and Paulina, stated that their level of English was very low and they did not feel at the same level of others; they sometimes could not produce even orally or write a single word. The following excerpt taken from Valeria's journal shows this attitude towards English.

I felt frustrated because I can help more in the project activities. The project helped me a little and I did not see anything that I have contributed to it, but I could not contribute much in knowledge words, or give answers because I did not know how to do it since my English level is horrible, I understand it, but I don't know how to use it. In many activities I was getting so frustrated and angry because I did not know how to answered

something, I could not produce any word. I did not get very well, English is so difficult to me.”(week 34th, Student Journal: Valeria).

Similarly, Paulina expressed her resistance to learn English as can be seen in the excerpt below.

This project for me was very difficult and bored because my English level is low and i couldn't enjoy the activities because I didn't understand them quickly and my teacher and classmates explained to me a lot of times and I blocked myself. Many times i could not end any activity or pronounce any word due to i could not understand nothing.” (week 34th, Student Journal: Paulina).

Although classroom actions were taken to overcome this situation, such as putting students with a higher level of English and patience to help those who had difficulties, Valeria, Paulina and also Felipe did not welcome the help, keeping their resistance toward English. Particularly, Felipe did not feel comfortable working in a team, much less receiving help from his peers. For example, he stated

I could not enjoyed more because my English level was very low. Many times, I could understand well and my partners and teacher explain to me but it was so difficult, I felt very frustrated and stressed. Also and most complicated to me, it was I had to work in team and I don't like that because I am not good making friends, getting the people helps or worse still, receiving orders from my peers, who are equal to me. I prefer the traditional method using in the school where each person works alone and nobody cares about your opinion. (week 35th, Student Journal: Felipe)

Furthermore, Paulina and another student, Tomás, felt indifferent to the theme of the project since they stated that they had no problems with wearing the uniform and did not

understand why they had been chosen to carry out the project. This could be seen in the excerpt below taken from Paulina's journal.

This project carried and ever the last few weeks did not help me to understand or no make very clear to me the objective with which it was done, that is, I am not 100% clear why this project was carried out in my classroom or why it was done in my grade. One of the questions that arises myself according to the project is whether 9°C has anything to do or change with this, why my teacher wanted to do the project here and it's not another classroom? I think it is to learn to solve problems. (week 35th, Student Journal: Paulina).

Even with these reported difficulties, it was observed that two students, Kevin and Juan Pablo, responded to the proposed activities and even asked the teacher for advice. Nevertheless, when they developed the different activities, they worked more slowly taking more time to process the information than their other classmates, which generated frustration, stress and blockage. This then led them to say that their English level was low and that they did not enjoy the activities. These two students eventually changed their attitude and tried hard in each class, which paid off and, as I noted down in my journal, one of them, Kevin, even publicly stated

Teacher I want to thank you for choosing us for your project and not another group. In addition, because it has helped me a lot to take off and improve my English level, I already risk writing and speaking in English, even my parents are surprised and very happy because I have improved my English a lot. (4th entry teacher journal: Kevin).

This comment was unexpected but satisfying because it means that they could be motivated and engaged in the class, which responded in some way to their needs and interests, showing that

students who might be initially resistant to learn English can eventually change their attitude if collaborative activities and constant encouragement are provided.

All in all, the implementation of Problem Posing Pedagogy was useful to enhance students' interest and engagement in the English class and also promote student interaction. However, this did not happen with some difficulties as few students who could see the importance of the project were resistant to participate in class, work in teams, and accept their classmates' help.

Conclusions

The objective of this action research was to explore how Problem Posing Pedagogy can enhance ninth grade EFL students' interests and language needs. The results suggest that there was a significant improvement in students' attitudes towards English and their engagement in class activities. They also showed a greater understanding of the topics we worked on, and a more meaningful use of the language in contextualized tasks, thus achieving the objective of this project. Besides, the topic of wearing a school uniform proved to be interesting and relevant for students since they explore it by moving from a global level to a local level and then to a personal level. To help students learn and apply the vocabulary for this topic, find the causes, solutions, pros, and cons of wearing a school uniform, various strategies were used: readings about wearing a uniform, even from other countries, role-plays, games, workshops, surveys, listening activities, writing activities (e.g., completing sentences, creating sentences, expressing their opinion), debates, a comic, and cooperative work that helped students in the exploration and understanding of the topic.

Indeed, the main impact of implementing Problem Posing Pedagogy was observed on the English classroom methodology. Students at San Buenaventura School were used to the traditional Grammar-Translation teaching method, in which they were limited to solving

completion and translation activities, and receiving grammar explanations. This situation did not allow students to demonstrate or develop their language skills, which generated little interest in the classes. In contrast, with the Problem Posing methodology, the students manifest that they are now more motivated to learn and participate in class. Through the variety of activities, they could learn more vocabulary, reinforce topics already seen and clarify doubts about certain grammatical topics since classes were more open, participatory and recursive. This also made it possible to respond to the language needs of students, to supply needs in the face of the development, improvement, and reinforcement of the different language skills.

However, although the Problem Posing methodology was positive, there were some limitations with the implementation of this project. First, besides time constraints, some lessons were not as effective as they could have been due to the constant interruptions of the coordinators after each break reminding students of their duty to keep a proper behavior and discipline in the classroom, or providing information for their parents. Thus, we had fewer hours with gaps between the lessons that affected their development and student learning. Secondly, I would have liked to have more understanding and support from the school to develop the project since at the end of October they began to ask for evidence of the traditional classes to which they were accustomed, thus affecting the attitude, motivation, and disposition of students, even my own, making them feel saturated and stressed. Yet, I will always keep in mind those five weeks of class where the students could be themselves, make themselves heard and demonstrate that if they know English, they just need different spaces that motivate them to learn, and teachers who care about students' needs.

Overall, Problem Posing pedagogy is a useful teaching-learning approach through which students can explore their intellectual capacities, be more autonomous in their learning, be aware

of their knowledge, apply their previous knowledge, and evaluate their own learning process without being bound to the teacher's criteria. In PPP the teacher is a guide and facilitator in the process of building knowledge in which both students and teachers learn from each other. Here, collaborative work and observation of the real-life context play a very important role, making the classroom move to wherever the student goes, and where the teacher and his field of action and knowledge is himself, that is, the world. This vision of PPP makes students enjoy learning, be motivated to learn, and want to learn not only a language but any area of knowledge, aware of their limitations, needs, and achievements.

Twenty-first century teachers are called to use this methodology since it allows the student to be the main actor in their learning process and not where the teacher continues to be the center of “transmission” of them. In addition, this PPP methodology greatly promotes the interest, motivation, and autonomy of students in front of the class, in front of the world. For this reason, preservice and in-service teachers who may be interested in using PPP in their classes must take into account the attitudes, interest, needs, and tastes of the students because, from there, the results will go beyond the expected and we will have not only excellent academic results but also more humane and better-trained professionals because significant learning transcends the classroom.

Finally, there are still several aspects to explore the implementation of Problem Posing Pedagogy in similar contexts. For instance, we need to learn more about how this approach can be implemented throughout the school year and not only during a few weeks. In this project, students worked on the topic of school uniforms. It would be interesting to examine other topics and see how students respond to them and work on them from various areas, giving rise to the transversality of knowledge. It could also be even more interesting if this approach be adopted by

an institution as to its pedagogical model. Currently, we must seek the decentralization of knowledge, and who better than the same curiosity and rebellion of children and young people to lead to the transformation of the classrooms.

Reflection

Teaching is not an easy task, even more these days where the media and technology can play for or against the educational system, teachers, parents, and students themselves. Educating has always meant great personal and social challenges, great sacrifices, and sleeplessness that only have one reward, the smile of our students, and the satisfaction of the duty accomplished, although sometimes this means breaking social or one's own schemes.

In my case, this project was a lifesaver to my vocation, it allowed me to rethink, change, break patterns, find that inner teacher that I thought was lost, being aware that sometimes it is good to break schemes, but in others, it does not work as one expects. Similarly, we need to show the human side that we have as teachers, which raises confidence in students and brings them closer to the subject, generating interest and significant learning since they feel understood and understand that they respond to your needs. Also, it is necessary to see how the different teacher methodologies strategies, however minimal, leave their mark on the children, developing values such as autonomy, trust, and responsibility in them. The most important of all these experiences is that what is not always planned is what can be executed; there are multiple factors that change the rhythm of your life leaving great lessons in yourself.

Finally, I can say that many of the things that happen to us in the classroom surprised us as teachers because, more than knowledge, children and young people need to be prepared for life, to face a future society. Many of such things are not told at the university. Well, Piaget, Brown, Freeman, Rousseau, Freire, and many other pedagogues could never show us the realities that we can live in the classrooms. They only support their theories in the observations of few cases in particular, but none of them tells that you will laugh, you will cry, you will suffer, you will enjoy the triumphs of your students or, better yet, that you will see them as your own

children, who despite remorse, teach you more than any book, teacher or university. This project helped me to rediscover the true sense of educating and see that grammar is necessary, but it is not indispensable; it is more important to encourage, have confidence in your students, and believe in them and the rest shall be added unto you.

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Appendix A

Sample of Lesson Plan

COLEGIO PARROQUIAL SAN BUENAVENTURA

“vivir, amar y aprender”

DOCENTE: YULIETH CAROLINA GÓMEZ.

ÁREA: HUMANIDADES ASIGNATURA: INGLÉS GRADO: 9 PERÍODO: 4º

EJE CONCEPTUAL: Exploring Perspectives about the School Uniform as a Social Issue

UNIT GOAL: To help students be more conscious and reflective about the use of school uniforms nowadays.

STANDARDS:

- Identifico puntos a favor y en contra en un texto sobre temas con los que estoy familiarizado.
- Hago exposiciones ensayadas y breves sobre algún tema académico de mi interés.

My principles:

I want classes where:

- Students (Ss) are the center of attention. They are involved and motivated with the lessons.
- Ss are empowered to use the foreign language (English, no Spanglish) in order to address social or personal problems.
- Ss are encouraged to share information about situations of their daily lives.
- Ss learn in a meaningful way. Ss are given the opportunity to become more aware (social consciousness) about a social issue.

WEEK 1: PROBLEM-POSING PHASE (Describing the Code, Identifying the Problem, Personalizing the Problem Thurs. Sept. 12 (5:10-6:40), Thurs. Sept. 19 (3:10-4:00, 6:00-6:45 p.m.)

Lesson 1: Thursday, September 12

1. OPENING (5 min. 5:10-5:15, whole class)

- Administrative requirement (Institutional prayer in L2; Reminder of class rules in L1)

2. WARM-UP (5 min. 5:15-5:20, individual, whole class)

Oral Instructions/ on board: “Write as many ‘professions with uniforms’ as you can in English and Spanish. You have 1 minute.”

Wrap up: “Who has the most professions? (count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.)” “Student X, Please read your professions.” “Other Students, listen and cross out the professions you hear.”

3. INTRODUCE THE UNIT TOPIC (30 min., 5:15-5:50, whole class)

Show students 3 images of students wearing their school uniforms. (**Annex 1**)

and ask a few questions:

✓ **What do you see?**

I see 2 students (ask the next question when they say school uniform)

✓ **Do you know the school for image 1? Image 2? Image 3?**

The school for image 1 is (e.g. San Francisco, La Salle, Buenaventura)

✓ **Can you describe your school uniform?**

Give students a handout with the girls’ and boy’s school uniform at their school. (**Annex 2**)

Instructions (on board): a) Individually, write words/phrases(sentences) to describe your

uniforms. For example, She is wearing a jumper. He is wearing a white shirt. b) Share with a

classmate. c) Share with the class.

✓ **What is the topic of our unit?**

Girls	Boys	adjectives
<p>-to <u>wear a school jumper</u></p> <p>-to wear a blouse</p> <p>-to wear a (school) blazer (with the school logo)</p> <p>-to wear socks and shoes</p> <p>-to <u>carry a schoolbag</u></p> <p>-to wear shorts under the jumper</p>	<p>-to wear a shirt (or polo shirt with the school logo)</p> <p>-to wear pants (with the school logo)</p> <p>-to wear a belt</p> <p>-to wear a school blazer (with the school logo)</p> <p>-to wear socks and shoes</p> <p>- to carry a schoolbag</p> <p>-to wear shorts</p>	<p>Color: dark-blue, white, red, black</p> <p>Length: short/long</p> <p>Style (jumper): pleated jumper</p> <p>Material: cloth polyester pants</p> <p>Others: formal/casual; new/ old; expensive/inexpensive or cheap; ugly or unattractive/attractive</p>

Appendix B

Data Collection Chart

Research question: How can adapting classroom practices with problem-posing pedagogy be more responsive to ninth-grade EFL students' interests and needs?			
Data	Data Collection Techniques	Where and From Whom	When and How Often
<p>1. Students' Performance During Class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Were students interested with the lesson? Explain → What were <u>students able to do</u> during the lesson? (What helped them?) → What <u>were n't students able to do</u>? (Difficulties? What didn't help them?) → What needs do they have? (content language) <p>Future: What changes are needed for the next lessons (teaching and learning process)?</p>	<p>Participant Observation (Pre-Service Teacher)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <u>Class observation (1)</u> → <u>Student's work (1)</u> → <u>Teacher journal reflections (2)</u> <p>NonParticipant Observation (Advisor)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <u>Class observation notes</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → a) and b) in the classroom, from all students participating in the project → c) after classes → a) During the Causes Stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → During and after each step/stage of problem posing, and the subsequent two phases (language practice phase, application phase). → Two class periods
<p>2. Students' Perceptions about learning English with Problem-Posing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Are students interested and enjoying the lessons? Why? → What have they learned (and learned to do)? What helped them? → What difficulties have they had? → What needs do they have? → What changes would they like to see? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <u>Student questionnaire (3)</u> → <u>Student Journal (4)</u> (possible small sample of students) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → a) in the classroom, all students participating in the project → b) at home, all students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → a) After each step of problem posing, and the subsequent two phases (language practice phase, application phase). → b) on the weekend/middle and at the end

Appendix C

Data Analysis Chart

Ss Journals ¹ N° Ss = 30 [□]	Tch journal [□]	Questionnaire ¹ N° Ss = 32 [□]	Questionnaire ² N° Ss = 32 [□]	Questionnaire ³ N° Ss = 30 [□]	Claims [□]
<p><u>Eight</u> students do not write in their journals any word about the project during its 3 steps, they just reflect about their emotions and feelings generates the <u>Presion</u> of the school calendar.</p> <p><u>Week 31st</u></p> <p>-We started the Project proposed by my teacher, Problem Posing. We did a survey named: <u>consentimient</u> <u>o informado</u> and other to know our interest and doubts...</p> <p>This week's classes were super "cheveres".</p>	<p>1st entry J6 Sept.19-20 PPP</p> <p>This week I was finally able to start the unit of my project (Problem Posing School Uniforms), although I wasn't scared like during the first semester.</p> <p>For every beginning, I have my expectations, fears and stress</p> <p>... ss have a lot questions about the project answered their questions emphasizing the fact that varying the methodolog</p>	<p>A. How interested were you during those lessons?</p> <p>1) 20 3(4)12.5% 2) 4(16) 50% 3) 5(12) 37.5%</p> <p>Very interested (28ss)</p> <p>Ss can be more awareness about the use of the school uniform (9ss)</p> <p>Ss can resolve some doubts (3ss)</p> <p>Classes were something different more ludic other methodology (4)</p> <p>The classes were entertaining and creative they leave out</p>	<p>A. How interested were you during this/those lessons?</p> <p>1. 2 (1, 3.1%), 3 (3, 9.3%), 4 (15, 46.8%), 5 (13, 40.6%)</p> <p>Interesting Topic</p> <p>Very interested we can be awarening about my mistakes and correct them (26ss)</p> <p>I win a big learning like to continue with this kinds of projects</p> <p>Ss can understand the School's rules;</p>	<p>A. How interested were you during those lessons writing comics?</p> <p>1. 2 (3, 10%), 3 (15, 50%), 4 (12, 40%)</p> <p>it was very fun due to the way we learned with the comic (we have never done this before)</p> <p>I was very interested in creating the comic as I could put into practice my artistic capabilities and my language abilities in English. (st 6)</p> <p>I was very interested in this project because of the</p>	<p>Data show that Problem Posing Pedagogy was helpful in awakening students' interests and raising students' engagement in the English classroom activities.</p> <p>Data show that Problem Posing Pedagogy was helpful in promoting students' classroom interaction.</p> <p>Data also show that Problem Posing Pedagogy</p>