

The Book Of My Life– An Exploration Of The Student

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Abstract

Educational innovations require time, discipline, dedication, and above all the desire to create a better and more productive scholar environment. Schools need to think and reinvent their curricula taking as a consideration, changes a phenomenon like the pandemic brought upon our lives. This study aims at analyzing the impact of a workshop developed with primary students that aimed at giving them a chance to rediscover themselves after a period of change and uncertainty. This project is a report on a class dynamic that gave a chance to explore students' perceptions of themselves, their families, and their friends as they rediscover aspects of their personality and lives that were lost due to the pandemic. Students developed a workshop with exercises related to their identities, and the groups they identify themselves to. The information of the results was analyzed using the descriptive analysis approach. This study shows the importance of analyzing oneself in different moments, and understand the roots a person has, so they can be better people every day.

Keywords: Changes, Community, Family, Individual, Pandemic, Personality, Society.

Resumen

Las innovaciones educativas requieren tiempo, disciplina, dedicación, y sobre todo, el deseo de crear un ambiente escolar mejor y más productivo. Las escuelas necesitan pensar y reinventar sus currículos tomando como consideración, cambios que un fenómeno como una pandemia trajo a nuestras vidas. Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar el impacto de un taller desarrollado con estudiantes de primaria, dándoles la oportunidad de redescubrirse a ellos mismos, después de un periodo de cambio e incertidumbre. Este proyecto es un reporte de una dinámica de clase que dio la oportunidad de explorar las percepciones de los estudiantes sobre ellos mismos, sus familias, y sus amigos al ver como redescubren aspectos de su personalidad, y de sus vidas que se habían perdido debido a la pandemia. Los estudiantes desarrollaron un taller con ejercicios relacionados con sus identidades y a los grupos con los que se identifican. La información de los resultados fue analizada usando el enfoque de análisis descriptivo. Este estudio muestra la importancia de analizar a la propia persona en diferentes momentos, y entender las raíces que cada persona tiene, para que se pueda ser mejor persona cada día.

Palabras clave: Cambios, Comunidad, Familia, Individuo, Personalidad, Pandemia, Sociedad.

1. Introduction.

The world sowed the seeds of a generation of people that never expected the changes that occurred in recent times: (Pandemic, social distancing, face mask and more...), a generation with the opportunity to create a new profile of person that aims at trying to make things differently. Families, schools, and society have strived to make the transition between a pre and post pandemic as smooth as possible. Nevertheless, there are changes that have shaped this generation as a unique ideal subject of research, from science, to language, and even from the point of view of human and social studies. Recent studies suggest that there are a lot of changes in this coming emerging society that are to be explored (Ford et al., 2021; Panchal et al., 2021; Viner et al., 2021). All this analysis made me reflect as a teacher (in this case in Ethics area) upon the need to explore the emotional consequences and ideas that this time had in students, where they have a lot of thoughts to express, dreams to fulfill, and expectations for the future that will make them unique individuals, and people that will be forever changed by unexpected phenomena (changes in the way the live with their families and others, they dress, they study etc..). This article is a class experience report of the project entitled “The book of my life” in a private school in Bogotá-Colombia, a project of the primary section of the school.

This project comes as a cornerstone in the way to giving more tools to the Ethics area, and the school to know about students’ perceptions about the world,

what they consider is important for them in their lives, having a space to communicate fluidly, with no moral walls that they create for themselves. In the first part, there will be a theoretical introduction to the project, the most important theories, and concepts that were the foundation of the project, and the constructs that helped establishing the project. Then, there will be a further explanation of the context of the project, the type of students that participated, the materials, and more characteristics of the implementation. Furthermore, there will be a part dedicated to the findings of the application, according to the experiences in the classroom. To end, there will be conclusions of the experiences as a teacher, and as a researcher, further research to be done, and the influences it can have in future activities that may be essential for the development of different social skills.

2. Theoretical framework.

Firstly, there will be an explanation of the concepts that based the intervention of the project, and the importance of those in terms of the educational point of view of the institution. Then there will be an interpretation of all the concepts that will be used to define the intervention in the project.

2.1 Person

Initially, the concept of a person involves the idea of a living rational being that is involved in a different social group that make him/her unique. To talk about the

individual characteristics Aghaosa and Isanbor (2021) show the need of continuously learn and be aware of everything that happens around the world. This helps to understand the idea of adapting and being in the search of knowledge about the world. It is to analyze the fact that a person lives in a society that demands constant social interactions; in this regard, the relational developmental systems perspective (Lerner & Lerner, 2018) shows how people live various relationships that affect their lives, and the world has millions of stimuli that affect someone's thoughts, actions, and development as an individual. To complement and taking as cornerstone the idea of Attoe and Chimakonam (2020) of the need of asking for life's meaning after such a traumatic, and difficult period of people lives, there is a must for people to self-assess their present and future. Taking as reference the population of the project (children and teenagers) the conception of person comes as the human being that explores the world, learns about the relationship between all these phenomena according to their ages, and desire to have more knowledge every day.

2.2 Family

The second concept that established a base of development of the project is family, being the way members of a group that share experiences, and a life together. All the relationships between the members of the family, and other people are the idea that Umberson and Thomeer, (2020) consider to be essential in the development of a "family biography" which helps them to have a structure of a person with a clear background, and idea of life. Now, the concept of family was highly influenced by the phenomena of the Covid 19 pandemic, as there were new dynamics triggered by this historic situation, and the notion of boundaries and interactions changed the way many families continued, transformed, or changed themselves completely after this pandemic (Lebow, 2020). The idea of family for the institution involved in the project is modified in the way the interactions and decisions every person made had influence in the personality, and opinions about the world. The analysis of family dynamics and relationships among themselves after the COVID 19 pandemic is an aspect that Rudolph and Zacher (2021) say that should have more research since there was a very radical change in the world and, with that, the concept of family was affected by it.

2.3 Community

For students at the ages of the ones for the implementation (5 to 12 years old) one of the most influential communities they have in their environment, it is the school, they spend a lot of time in it, interacting with peers, teachers, and other people that guide them through their growing and learning process. Now, the idea of community comes in the way students live in different social groups and interact among them, also knowing how those affect their personality, and understanding of the world. Authors that mention this idea are Dvorsky et al., (2021), who mention the fact that these communities contribute to nurturing a person's personality, that is why the need of having a group where they can interact with other people is the basis of an integral development of a person. One of the inevitable changes that the Covid 19 pandemic brought was the creation of new paradigms where students and their families had to create new conditions to live and interact with others, Bartlett and Vivrette (2020) explore the concept of resilience as the way students can face the changes that this new reality brought, and the importance it has for different communities. For this text, the ideas of these two authors give a perspective for the project of having a community to develop a personality, interact with others, and being resilient to the changes that the society is having, and still lives through.

3. Development

3.1 Context and implementation

The institution where the project was developed is a bilingual school located in Bogotá, Colombia, it is a mixed school with a general population of 1200 students, but it was applied only in the primary section of the school, so there were 430 students as part of the implementation. In addition, there are 2 coordinators for the section (one coordinator for first, second, and third grade, and another coordinator for fourth and fifth grade). My area, Ethics, took the lead in the creation and development of the project, being an opportunity to help students express their opinions on the life they are living, and the way they have understood the changes this time has brought upon them. Another idea of the project is related to how students understand their

own reality, and are willing to express what they like, do not like, and would prefer to see in a different way.

The Ethics area is based on three conceptions: The idea of individual; giving special emphasis on the concept of the self- integrity, the idea of the other (community and the whole world), and the truth as a source of empowerment for the others. After these initial considerations, the influence of the implementation of the project comes in the way students can explore the three dimensions of their lives (personal, familiar and the school), it gives a strengthening to the analysis of the three conceptions of the program previously mentioned. The class does not have grades, as in the school's point of view, the concept of studying ethics, is not for a grade, but to shape and think about a life project in

a fruitful manner. Every grade has a weekly- one hour class, where contents related to the conception of the person, the way a person lives in the world, the current situations that affect different social groups, resilience as a strategy to shape and help develop their life projects, an analysis of the historical and cultural factors that determine the way the world lives now, and the use of critical thinking to analyze, create hypotheses, and evaluate the world help to shape a person committed to helping his/her community, being tolerant, respectful, and honest in every action he/she does .

With the context of the project, and the concepts that are referenced for it, the timeline for the creation and development of the project is in Table 1 below:

Tabla 1. Timeline of the implementation of the project

Date	Procedure
January 14th, 2022	Establishment of the project, and the initial conditions to develop it
January 27th, 2022	Presentation of the project to the two coordinators of the primary section
January 28th, 2022	Initial comments and modifications of the project. Presentation of the second version of the project with the suggestions that the two coordinations gave
February 3rd, 2022	Creation of the final draft of the project
February 7th, 2022	Final presentation and conditions to develop the implementation (Acceptance of the implementation.
From February 14th 2022 to February 28th, 2022	Development of the project

Now, some of the characteristics of the intervention were:

1. It should be developed in two sessions of work and aim at no interruptions to other classes to give continuity.
2. Students needed to have the opportunity to interact and not only complete information, so they could have the opportunity to demonstrate different skills in the development of the project.
3. Students were free to decide if they shared any information of the project with their partners.
4. The material needed to be connected to the to-

pics studied, so there could be continuity with the contents. The material for the project is in appendix A.

With all the conditions fulfilled, the implementation of the project was developed, and the finding of it will be mentioned in the section below.

4. Findings

After the application of the project, there were some preliminary findings after a characterization of the different experiences, answers, and debates that

came during, and after the development of the project. The categories for analysis are:

4.1 The person

The aim of building a person came upon two moments: during and after the implementation. During this process, students understood the idea of expressing themselves as the way to say the things they do, but not the feelings, emotions, and what they could give to contribute to the world. After input from the teacher, with help in the way they should start understanding themselves as people with abilities, feelings, skills for life, and more. In the section where students needed to express their capacities, they related the information more in terms of technology, and videogames (how to pass a level in a particular game, or a skill needed to overcome obstacles in the same way). All of this demonstrated the influence of technology, and how the type of life participants had to endure while being quarantined at home is related to the use of technology (Fontenelle-Tereshchuk, 2021; Goldschmidt, 2020; Limone, & Toto, 2021). Students understood their own representation in the world as beings that are technologically influenced in their perceptions, so as the recognition of themselves being people that “pass levels of games” or are good to perform a skill in a video game or virtual application. Students also expressed the difficulty in finding words about themselves since they did not usually think about their strengths and difficulties in structured exercises.

4.2 The family

In the section of the family, as the information was gathered, there was a recurring commonality among participants, the idea of company and shelter in family. It comes as an aspect to reflect since students were a long time with their families as the pandemic passed by, and they expressed they developed a closer relationship with their relatives. In the guide for the implementation of the project, there was a specific exercise (See appendix A) where students had the opportunity to express a dream they had with their families for the future, and many of the answers involved travelling, or going to other places as they say their families want to be in different places that do not involve their house as they were there for a long time. There was also an exercise related to activities they liked to do, and the answers were most of them based on family board games or

reading time which helps to reinforce the idea that family time was meaningful, and families are aiming at giving students the best physical and emotional conditions for them to succeed in life.

4.3 The community

Students had the chance to express their ideas upon two categories that show and exemplify their lives at school: their relationships with friends, and their teachers. In the first category, students saw their friends as people that helped them to have fun, learn about the good and bad experiences, helping them to bond closer as a community. Students also expressed the fact that their favorite games with friends came whether at school or at home, as they spent a lot of time in a virtual environment facing life with friends in a screen, they manifested how much they missed playing games that require to be in the presence of their friends, and that coming back to school was a very positive experience for them as they could have face to face interactions with their friends, and retake social interactions again. In their relationship with teachers, Students expressed their favorite class, and favorite teacher as the one that has given them more lessons, and that has contributed to give them a warm and nice experience in their time at school (See appendix A). These two points also showed the love students have over their school, and the empathy teachers and students have developed over the years.

5. Conclusions

After the process of implementation, and analysis of the information gathered, the conclusions came in two ways, the first one being the way the project helped giving an insight into the current students' emotional condition, and the influence the project has in the current state of the Ethics class. Then, there is a section on future research and opportunities for improvement

5.1 Students' current state after the pandemic

Students have clearly showed their happiness and willingness to continue their lives as they work in face-to-face activities again, since they felt tiredness of a virtual environment, and the idea of sharing a close environment, and having games, and activities pre-pandemic time is exciting for them. Students demonstrated

a closer bond among them as friends, and with their families as a unit that helps them to go around the world learning about it. Students need to continue defining themselves as a person, due to the big influence technology had upon them, and need to re shape their sense of identity because of the return to traditions from the pre-pandemic time. Students need to rediscover their free time, and activities that are apart from the virtual world that gives them the opportunity to know about their own lives again. About families and schools, families have become a more joint unity and schools need to transform their programs, especially in the socio-emotional side to adapt themselves to the new reality the world requires for students in school environments.

5.2 Future research and opportunities

To complement, this project gives a lot of insight in terms of opportunities to continue researching about the topic, and opportunities to improve. Firstly, the influence of technology in the negative or positive perception of the individual was an aspect to highlight, and research upon, to know the impact a situation like

























the pandemic had in students' lives. Also, considering the family, and friends' components of the project, it will be essential to continue researching on the role students give to these two components of their lives in their decisions and personality. Secondly, in the opportunities to improve the project, a time frame should be longer since there was a need to expand the time of the development of the project (Students needed more time than it was originally required to develop the project due to the time to complete the exercises, and external factors of the school that took time away from the classes). There needs to be more specific guides according to each specific grade, considering the ages of students. In the coming implementation for the next academic year, there will be a lot more focus on generating specific guides for every class and getting more information about their socio-emotional performance during the post pandemic time, so as a clearer guide to define the profile of the student that can be updated to these times. It is a challenge for the teacher-researcher to continue giving more strategies for students to be able to express more about themselves and the importance it has in their lives.

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Appendix A: Worksheet used in the project: "The book of my life"

Page 1

 <p>THE BOOK OF MY LIFE</p> <p><small>Ethics- 2021/2022</small></p>  <p>Welcome to our new adventure in Ethics</p> 	 <p>Let's start with a picture of you.</p> <p>Let's complete:</p> <p>I AM AWESOME AT</p>  <p>LANGUAGES</p> <table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>CIENCIA</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>SAINS</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>WISSENSCHAFT</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>SKILLS</p> <table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> 		CIENCIA			SAINS			WISSENSCHAFT				
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Let's see your family.



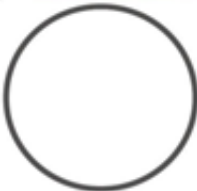
Three words about my family


What we like to do

My last vacation time trip with my family


A moment to dream

Draw a dream you have with your family





Favorite class




Favorite teacher- Why?

Best memory so far

What you like about Ethics class

Three words about my friends

MY FRIENDS



Our favorite games.

