



Teaching Values Through Literature

Master's Degree Final Project

Category 4: Actions through Cross-curricular topics

University Master's Degree for Secondary Education, Vocational
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Speciality - Language, Literature and Foreign Language Teaching: English.

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SUMMARY

The Master's Degree Final Project I present here is encompassed within the *category 4: Actions through Cross-curricular topics* and it consists of *Teaching Values Through Literature*. The content of this work is a proposal of two action plans to be implemented through the English subject and designed for students in the 4th course of secondary education.

This project is the result of my analysis about the way cross-curricular topics are tackled in the English classroom nowadays. During my working experience with the Practicum I could check that teachers deal with these topics very limitedly and English textbooks address them in an inadequate and insufficient way.

Moreover, I could observe that most of the students were interested and enjoyed activities and tasks when they included a more active and participative learning.

This way, I decided to create what I called *action plans*, each one focused on a particular cross-curricular topic and including activities following a task-based approach. I also chose to do it through literature, since I considered it is already an advantage in the field of value learning as literature exemplifies the essential dignity and worth of individual human beings

Therefore, this is a proposal that could be understood as a way to improve the teaching-learning process and motivate students to obtain from them a more favorable attitude towards the English subject and literature, always having in mind the importance of transmitting values. The action plans are activities adapted to get closer to a more active and constructive methodology, in which I expect students would have a greater participation. Nevertheless, I have to point out that I have not had the opportunity to implement it in the classroom and see the results.

Accordingly, the main objectives we try to achieve with this proposal of final project are the following:

- To offer classroom **resources to deal with cross-curricular topics** in the 4th year of secondary education that can be adapted to other educational contexts.
- To encourage the **education across the curriculum**. Learning a foreign language transcends the framework of the linguistic learning and contributes to the formation of the student from an integral perspective.
- To **teach values in the English classroom**. With this project, I want to transmit values required for the self-fulfillment and the integration in the society: honesty, goodness, simplicity and tolerance. And priority values: respect for people, environment and things, responsibility and solidarity.
- To **promote tolerance and acceptance**, increase interest towards different social and cultural realities and facilitate communication. Through interaction, students learn how to participate, express their own ideas and listen to others. They develop the skill to construct dialogs, negotiate meanings, make decisions while valuing contributions from their classmates and reach agreements.

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INTRODUCTION

I would like to start this work with a quote by Vijaya Bharathy which says:

“If values are woven into the very concept of education, where is the need for separate value education?”

For this project, I have decided to write under the **category 4: Actions through Cross-curricular topics**. The content of this work is two action plans designed for students in the 4th course of secondary education in Spain trying to teach values through literature. This is a proposal of two action plans that could be used during the English classes for this purpose, but I want to point out that they have not been in the classroom. I have designed these action plans to be introduced during the English classes (one of them could be created and introduced each semester, for example) lasting two classes each. They can be considered as additional learning both for the English subject and for the students' understanding the importance of values acquisition. I have chosen this subject since I firmly believe it is important to teach values in the classroom to encourage young people's awareness of having values and their corresponding relationship to the world in which they live. According to the Council of Europe:

Education plays an essential role in the promotion of the core values of the Council of Europe: democracy, human rights and the rule of law, as well as in the prevention of human rights violations. More generally, education is increasingly seen as a defence against the rise of violence, racism, extremism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance.

This growing awareness is reflected in the adoption of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education in the framework of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7, which states that:

In all areas of education, member states should promote educational approaches and teaching methods which aim at learning to live together in a democratic and multicultural society and at enabling learners to acquire the knowledge and skills to promote social cohesion, value diversity and equality, appreciate differences – particularly between different faith and ethnic groups – and settle disagreements and conflicts in a non-violent manner with respect for each others' rights, as well as to combat all forms of discrimination and violence, especially bullying and harassment.

To elaborate this project, I have also taken into account the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) philosophy. «CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content, and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language». (Marsh, 2000)

This approach involves learning subjects such as natural sciences, history, geography or other, through an additional language. In this project, this approach plays also a relevant role

like the teaching of values, as we can be, for example, transmitting the value of the importance of protecting the environment to students at the same time that we are teaching them natural sciences. Also, CLIL «can be very successful in enhancing the learning of languages and other subjects, and developing in the youngsters a positive ‘can do’ attitude towards themselves as language learners». (Marsh, 2000)

On the other hand, to create the action plans, I have also examined the curriculum for secondary education, established by the Regional Department of Education in Valencia. I have reviewed the objectives the students have to achieve and I have prepared the activities trying to cover some of the objectives.

Therefore, taking all these aspects into consideration, I have written this document starting with a summary, which details the objectives and main results and conclusions of the project.

Following, we can find the content of the project. In the first part of the project, I have dealt with the rationale, where I justify the choice of this topic for my project, and the main objectives I want to attain with this work. I have also included an explanation of the Task-based approach, in which are focused the kind of activities that will be presented. This point also includes the main features of this method, the objectives of my action plan, and its phases.

The second part of the project comprises the action plans I have elaborated to work on cross-curricular topics in the classroom. The two examples of action plans I propose are focused on environmental education and peace education, and they consist of an introduction, a list of competences acquired with the activities, a development of the activities proposed, an evaluation and an appendix.

Finally, we can find the conclusion and personal evaluation of the project and the bibliography references used to develop this work.

PART I – REFLECTION ABOUT THE PROJECT

1. RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

After looking through some English textbooks for the 4th course of secondary education in Spain, I realized they tackle cross-curricular topics in an inadequate, insufficient or non-systematic way.

I could also check through my working experience during the Practicum that in the English classroom teachers deal with these topics very limitedly and I believe it should be considered.

For the last years, values education is being the reason for a permanent debate in numerous educational forums, nationally and internationally. The objectives of the UNESCO's interdisciplinary project are to promote in all the secondary education curricula of the member countries education for tolerance, harmony and solidarity, rejection of violence and gender discrimination, intercultural dialogue, respect for the environment and other contents related to human rights.

All these are, among others, basic objectives from the educational curricula that, in my opinion, should be tackled from different areas, even when there are specific curricular subjects that deal with them.

This aspect must change and that is why, with this project, I want to show that it is possible to educate in values through any subject in secondary education.

Moreover, and confirming value teaching is important for every educational institution, the Ministry of Education in Spain (1993) brings up examples to develop lesson plans related to cross-curricular topics. One of its proposals is to elaborate lesson plans articulated around a cross-curricular topic. For example: "take care of yourself" (health education).

In this project I present two examples of action plans focused on two curricular-topics with the objective of educating in values through the English subject, more precisely through English literature. Besides, I must say that learning a foreign language entails a cultural burden that makes the education in values particularly significant.

On the other hand, as regards literature, I consider it is already an advantage in the field of value learning as literature exemplifies the essential dignity and worth of individual human beings. It can interpret the conditions of democracy in human relationships. And it also reveals the diversity of a nation's culture, racial inheritance and sectional differences. Literature gives the student a means of self-expression and stimulates his very life. The formation of one's own philosophy of life is a significant task that can be developed through the use of quickened senses, sincere feelings, tolerant sympathies and the power of thought.

Many things have been said about the use of literature in the ESL classroom. Although there is many authors who consider literature must be used in the ESL curriculum, there are also arguments against using it.

Today with the current focus in English on meeting the particular academic and occupational needs of the students, it is easy to view any attention to literature as unnecessary.

Critics of the use of literature maintain that to the extent that literary texts reflect a particular cultural perspective, contain too much difficult vocabulary to the students, difficult language structures and that there are some themes students are unfamiliar with; they may be

difficult for ESL students to read. Students feel immediately unmotivated towards reading. Clearly, this can be a problem.

The key to success in using literature in the ESL class seems to me to rest in the literary works that are selected. A text that is extremely difficult on either a linguistic or cultural level will have few benefits. However, if we select texts that are stylistically uncomplicated and themes with which the students can identify themselves and are relevant to them, they will feel more comfortable and motivated to read them. Yet, selecting the text is only the first step. An equally important issue is how to deal with such texts in the classroom. It makes a great difference if, instead of just making students read a text, we propose them tasks and activities about it that invite them to use imagination and creativity, to get involved personally and actively in the process, and to develop their oral and written production abilities.

Also, literature can be approached to students through poem listening and storytelling. With this option, students can improve their fluency, intonation and pronunciation; enrich their English vocabulary and grammar, as with any project aimed at promoting the oral production.

Povey (1972: 18), in summarizing the aims of using literature in ESL classes, argues that "literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, and complex and exact syntax"

Yet the advantage of using literature in the classroom is that literature presents language in discourse in which the parameters of the setting and role relationship are defined. Language that illustrates a particular register or dialect is embedded within a social context, and thus, there is a basis for determining why a particular form is used. As such, literature is ideal for developing an awareness of language use.

Besides, the motivation that literature awakens -if used in the right way- creates a cheerful and free from tension work atmosphere. Literature arouses students' curiosity and interest, at the same time that it stimulates its imagination. The pleasure that literature provides makes a favorable impact in the work atmosphere in the classroom, especially when the material selected appeal to universal topics students can be identified with and the narrative sequence is clear. Also, the literary context allows students to develop the critical thinking through the several mental operations required when analyzing the text.

Literature is indeed important to be used in the ESL curriculum. For many students, literature can provide a key to motivating them to read in English. For all students, literature is an ideal vehicle for illustrating language use and for introducing cultural assumptions. Our success in using literature, of course, greatly depends upon a selection of texts that will not be overly difficult on either a linguistic or conceptual level and on how we deal with them in the classroom.

The objectives of the work presented here have been:

- a) First of all, to offer classroom resources to deal with cross-curricular topics in the 4th year of secondary education that can be adapted to other educational contexts.
- b) To encourage the education across the curriculum. This work is aimed as a resource for an across the curriculum planning approach to linking values into the English curriculum. The teaching-learning process of the English language can perfectly contribute to the formation of our student's values. The idea is to connect the whole notion of values to the traditional English curriculum. Further, we can find this concept in the curriculum of secondary education in relation to the foreign languages: "...learning a foreign language transcends the framework of the linguistic learning, it goes beyond of learning to use it in a communicative context. Its knowledge contributes to the formation of the student from an integral perspective, as it encourages respect, interest and communication with speakers of other languages, it develops the intercultural awareness. It is a vehicle to the understanding of global subjects and problems and the acquisition of diverse learning strategies".
- c) To teach values in the English classroom. With this project, I want to transmit values related to the human rights, such as: freedom, equality, justice, solidarity, tolerance, responsibility. Values required for the self-fulfillment and the integration in the society: honesty, goodness, simplicity, tolerance. And priority values: respect for people, environment and things, responsibility and solidarity. All these are universal values that build character, which produces behavior that is beneficial for the individual, others and the community. They enhance the wellbeing of all; prevent harm to both the individual and society; are the essence of healthy relationships and are essential for the conduct and preservation of a democratic society.
- d) To promote tolerance and acceptance, increase interest towards different social and cultural realities and facilitate communication, since students work on texts from different periods and situations in time. In this point it is especially relevant to work in pairs and groups and, through these interactions students learn how to participate, express their own ideas and listen to others. They develop the skill to construct dialogs, negotiate meanings, make decisions while valuing contributions from their classmates, reach agreements and, in short, it is promoted to learn from and with the others.

2. THE TASK-BASED APPROACH AS CLASSROOM WORK PROPOSAL

When I started to do research and selection of documents in English to deal with every cross-curricular topic, I decided the best way to introduce it in the English classroom of the 4th course of secondary education was by a task-based language learning method.

Task-based learning offers the student an opportunity to do something in the English class that they would do in everyday life using their own language. This approach focuses on the use of authentic language and on asking students to do meaningful tasks using the target language. Such tasks can include visiting a doctor, conducting an interview, or calling customer service for help. This method encourages meaningful communication and is student-centered.

Its main features are:

- Students are encouraged to use language creatively and spontaneously through tasks and problem solving
- Students focus on a relationship that is comparable to real world activities
- The conveyance of some sort of meaning is central to this method
- Assessment is primarily based on task outcome
- TBL is student-centered

In this method, the primary focus of classroom activity is the task and language is the instrument that the students use to complete it. The task is an activity in which students use language to achieve a specific outcome. The activity reflects real life and learners focus on the meaning. Playing a game, solving a problem or sharing information or experiences, can all be considered as relevant and authentic tasks. In TBL an activity in which students are given a list of words to use cannot be considered as a genuine task. Nor can a normal role-play if it does not contain a problem-solving element or where students are not given a goal to reach. In many role-plays students simply act out their restricted role. For instance, a role-play where students have to act out roles as company directors but must come to an agreement or find the right solution within the given time limit can be considered a genuine task in TBL.

In the task-based lessons the aim is to create a need to learn and use language. The tasks will generate their own language and create an opportunity for language acquisition. If we can take the focus away from form and structures we can develop our students' ability to do things in English. That is not to say that there will be no attention paid to accuracy, work on language is included in each task and feedback and language focus have their places in the lesson plans. We feel that teachers have a responsibility to enrich their students' language when they see it is necessary but students should be given the opportunity to use English in the classroom as they use their own languages in everyday life

If we can make language in the classroom meaningful therefore memorable, students can process language that is being learned or recycled more naturally.

Unlike traditional methodologies, in which contents are taught following linguistic, structural or functional criteria, and where teaching activities respond to prearranged contents, the task-based teaching method conceives the educational program as an organizational system of the learning contents. Assessment is primarily based on task outcome (in other words the appropriate completion of real world tasks) rather than on accuracy of prescribed language forms. This makes Task-Based Language Learning especially popular for developing target language fluency and student confidence. Action and development of the

Unit are planned depending on how the learners are achieving the agreed communication objectives.

From this perspective, the content/activities program is only approximate; it is a working document. The definitive program version is only reached when the Final Task is finished and assessed.

I decided the best way to design my action plans was to base them on the Task-Based Approach since, for all what I explained before, I believe it is the best method to get to the students and introduce values in the classroom in a dynamic way.

Then, I assume an Action Plan based on Tasks must be:

- I) Representative of communication processes of real life.
- II) Identifiable as a work and activity unit for a class
- III) Addressed, intentionally, towards the acquisition of attitudes, processes (inference of meanings, negotiation, manipulation of these meanings, etc.) and concepts related to the contents of the blocks presented in the curriculum of the subject, English in this case, and to the contents of the cross-curricular topics.
- IV) Designed with coherent objectives, structure and sequence of activities, in a way that after its completion, students can accomplish the Final Task in autonomously.

PHASES OF THE ACTION PLAN

Based on the task-based teaching, the action plan can be designed in three or four phases, following the model below:

Phase I: Introduction of the topic, motivation, proposal-negotiation of the Final Task and identification of existing knowledge.

Once the topic is agreed, students are proposed the elaboration of a Final Task, which can be done alone or in groups. The task is negotiated and agreements are made.

In this phase, the main goal of the materials and activities selected is to motivate students towards the completion of the task.

Phase II: Completion of the teaching/learning activities to be able to develop the Final Task autonomously.

The activities planned for this phase are of varied types, since they are intended to prepare students to be able to develop the final task autonomously. Accordingly, the nature of the activities selected is procedural, attitudinal and conceptual and they cover contents of every area of the English curriculum. In this case, as we work on a cross-curricular topic, we give priority to attitudinal contents. The common denominator of these activities is that they have to be interactive and facilitate communication, collaboration attitudes and reflection and the development of learning strategies.

Phase III: Development of the Final Task and learning assessment.

The Final Task is carried out in this phase, which constitutes the assessment key tool of what has been learned. Moreover, here we also assess the design and development of the lesson plan, the intervention of every participant and the material used.

The results achieved on the final assessment plus the information obtained from the continuous assessment during the development of the lesson plan can provide meaningful data.

PART II – ACTION PLANS TO WORK ON CROSS-CURRICULAR TOPICS

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION
2. COMPETENCES
3. PROPOSAL OF ACTIVITIES
4. EVALUATION
5. APPENDIX

1. INTRODUCTION

Both European institutions and the education systems of the countries constituting Europe promote environmental education among its basic goals; since they are aware of the importance of dealing with a question whose special features make it a global more than a local problem.

Our task here must be, firstly, to inform about the values of nature and the environmental problems that threaten it and, secondly, to sensitize present and future generations to the respect and conservation of the environment, encouraging them to adopt a sensitive and committed attitude.

With the action plan proposed to deal with this cross-curricular topic, we will work on the famous letter the Chief Seattle's sent in 1850 to the President of the United States in defence of his lands, in which he shares the feeling of the Indian people for the natural habitat they live in. He expresses himself in a way that moves a consumer and complex society that has forgotten the value of natural and simple things.

I have chosen this text as an example of literature as it is an *informal letter* that uses many literary devices that can be introduced to the students: metaphors, exigence, ethos, pathos, antitheses, imagery, personification, simile, alliteration, etc.

Since it is an informal letter, it can be easier to understand for the students, as it doesn't contain too much difficult vocabulary, the language structures are not too complicated and it deals with a topic that is familiar to them. All these makes the students more motivated towards reading in English. Moreover, this kind of text leads us to introduce different types of textual genres: formal and informal letters, poems, essays, articles, etc. that students will also have to produce in one of the tasks and, as a Final Task, they will have to write a letter of complaint, with which they will be able to identify the similarities and differences between a formal and an informal letter.

2. COMPETENCES

Become aware of the importance of protecting our environment.

Understand and produce oral and written messages related to environment.

Reflect on formal aspects of the language when writing letters.

Promotion of cooperative work

Vocabulary related to nature and the procedures threatening the environment.

Development of independent strategies: decision-making, information research, use of dictionaries, classification of contents, self-assessment, etc.

3. PROPOSAL OF ACTIVITIES

To develop this cross-curricular topic, I propose the following action plan called:

Living in Balance with Nature: the Letter by Chief Seattle.

The base material for this action plan is the letter sent by Chief Seattle to the President of the United States in 1850 which is enclosed as appendix at the end of the activities.

It is recommended to use a native speaker to record the letter. If it is not possible to obtain this tape, the teacher can read it in class.

In the first place, and according to the *Phase I*, I propose a listening and several activities to check understanding and reinforce the learning of new vocabulary: create a family tree and a "web of life". The contribution of the students in this last activity should be included in a poster as a reference dictionary to be used to complete the next tasks.

They will also be asked to identify some literary devices in the text. The teacher will explain and give examples of the literary devices the students do not know.

Secondly, and also in relation to *Phase II*, a research work is proposed. For this activity it will be necessary, before giving the appropriate instructions, to remind the different strategies used for the research of information to the students. Ideally, students would have the possibility to access to several resources in order to obtain the information. But if this is not possible in the class, I suggest providing the essential material.

The teacher will show with examples the different kind of texts they can produce and the main features of these texts, so the students can choose one option. The intention is that every student has the freedom to choose the format he/she wants to hand in the work once the information is gathered, bearing in mind their interests and capacities.

And finally, *Phase III* (Development of the Final Task and learning assessment). Regarding the final task, it consists of transferring what has been learnt to a new situation closer to their cultural context.

Before the students start their task, it would be necessary to go through formal aspects and the kind of language they will probably need to write a letter of complaint. The teacher will discuss with the students the differences between a formal and an informal letter.

STUDENT'S ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1:

- Read the letter in silence at the same time as you listen to a recording that the teacher is going to play.
- Now, read it again and take down notes about all the ancestors Chief Seattle mentions and their opinions about nature. This information will help you do the next task.

ACTIVITY 2:

- Work in pairs to build a family tree of Chief Seattle and write under each one of his ancestors the most important messages that they transmitted him.

ACTIVITY 3:

- Now, it is time to learn some vocabulary about the topic. Help the teacher build a huge "web of life" with the vocabulary related to nature that appears in the text.

ACTIVITY 4:

- Can you find in the text one example for each of these literary devices? You can check in the dictionary the meaning of the ones you don't know: metaphor, ethos, pathos, antitheses, imagery, personification, simile and alliteration.

ACTIVITY 5:

- Do some research work and identify important facts about the political situation of the American Indians at that time and the characteristics of their culture in order to prepare, with this information, a short written report. The structure of it may vary according to your interests, capacities, abilities or level of English of the members of your group. It could be a comic, an article for the school magazine, a poster, an essay, etc. Before you start, negotiate with the members of your group what appearance your work is going to have, where you are going to look for the information, what your roles are, etc.

FINAL TASK

- In Castellón, people love nature, too. Nevertheless, we are always listening or reading about threats that affect the environment in our region. Gather some of them and, working in pairs, choose one topic and write a letter of complaint addressed to the institution responsible for the problem.

But before you start writing, you are going to revise the grammar you may need with the help of the teacher. Will your kind of writing have to be different from Chief Seattle's letter? Why?

4. EVALUATION

Phase I

ACTIVITY 2. Working in pairs for the creation of a family tree. This activity will serve to check understanding of the text.

Evaluation: The students, working in pairs, will put in common the information they have gathered and they will compare the names of the ancestors they have included and their opinions. Then, they will exchange the list they have created with another pair of classmates, and they will evaluate each other in pairs, checking they have included all names of the ancestors and at least one opinion of each one.

ACTIVITY 3: Creation of a "WEB OF LIFE". Participation of all students. This activity reinforces the learning of new vocabulary.

Evaluation: The teacher will ask each student to contribute with one word related to nature that appears in the text, and will create a poster with all the vocabulary as a reference dictionary to be used to complete the next tasks.

ACTIVITY 4: Finding literary devices in the text. The teacher will explain and give examples before of the literary devices the students do not know.

Evaluation: Students will have to find at least one example for each of the eight literary devices: metaphor, ethos, pathos, antitheses, imagery, personification, simile and alliteration. The teacher will evaluate every student from 1 to 8 depending on the number of literary devices found.

Phase II

ACTIVITY 5: Research work and short written report in groups (comic, article, poster, essay..).

Evaluation: This activity will be used to check the ability of negotiation within the group, interaction, collaboration attitude and reflection. Also, the level of English of the group, and the structure and coherence of the text produced.

Phase III

FINAL TASK: Writing a letter of complain, in pairs.

Evaluation: The teacher will evaluate if the students have properly transferred what has been learnt to a new situation. Aspects to be evaluated: vocabulary, general content and intention of the letter, structure of a formal letter, coherence, level of English...

Furthermore, in a task-based approach, assessment is conceived, particularly, in a qualitative way, that is, as a means of generating, mainly, procedural and attitudinal learning. In the task-based approach, the Final Task is the key tool for the assessment of what has been learnt. Additionally, we can also evaluate with it the design and development of the unit, the behavior of each participant and the materials used.

Besides, for these particular tasks, we could use the assessment tool to dedicate 5 minutes of every class to write specific reflections about the previous class, with concrete entries, agreed among the class members. Other tools used for this purpose, in addition to the Final Task, could be group discussions during the course of the class, any oral and written activity of the ones they have to do, or personal questionnaires, open or close-ended, as the one I present next (which can be used with any other units prepared for the students).

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the evaluation should also have the purpose to measure knowledge, ways of working, level of interest, role-play and the effectiveness of the materials used.

The results obtained in the final evaluation together with the information obtained in the continuous assessment during the development of the unit (notes taken by the teachers and students in their personal diaries and products or activities done during the Phase II) will provide all the relevant information for the evaluation.

PERSONAL QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME _____ CLASS _____

TOPIC _____

1. Interest in the topic

- High
- Normal
- Low
- No interest

2. Linguistic difficulty of the activities

- Very difficult
- Quite difficult
- Acceptable
- Easy

3. Use of what you have learnt in your daily life

- High
- Normal
- Low
- No use

Name an specific example _____

4. Was this topic useful for you to improve your English knowledge? Name a concrete example.

Area	A lot	Enough	Little	Nothing
Written communication				
Oral communication				
Vocabulary				
Grammar				
Socio-cultural aspects				

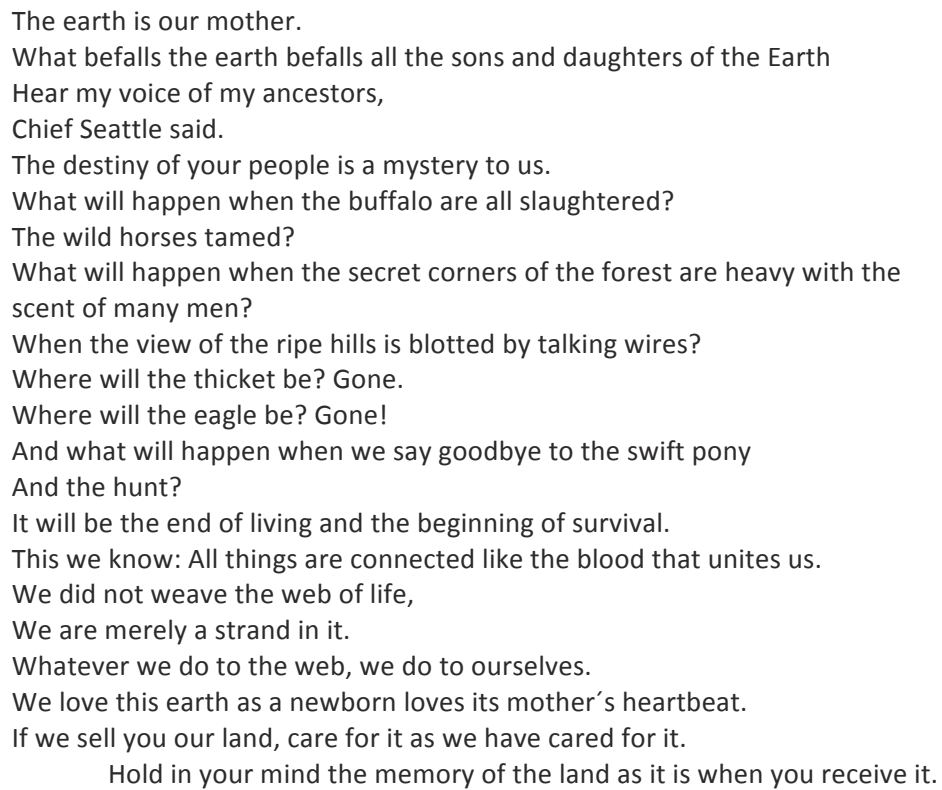
Mention some examples of what you have learnt _____

5. APPENDIX

CHIEF SEATTLE'S LETTER

How can you buy the sky?
How can you own the rain and the wind?
My mother told me,
Every part of this earth is sacred to our people
Every pine needle. Every sandy shore.
Every mist in the dark woods.
Every meadow and humming insect
My father said to me,
I know the sap that courses through the trees
As I know the blood that flows in my veins.
We are part of the earth and it is part of us.
The perfumed flowers are our sisters.
The bear, the deer, the great eagle, these are our brothers.
The rocky crests, the meadows,
The ponies, all belong to the same family.
The voice of my ancestors said to me,
The shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is
Not simply water, but the blood of your grandfather's grandfather.
Each ghostly reflection in the clear waters of the lakes tells
The water's murmur is the voice of your great-great-grandmother.
The rivers are our brothers. They quench our thirst.
They carry our canoes and feed our children.
You must give to the rivers the kindness you would give to any brother.
The voice of my grandmother said to me,
The air is precious. It shares its spirit with all
The life it supports. The wind that gave me my first
Breath also received my last sigh.
You must keep the land and air apart and sacred,
As a place where one can go to taste the wind that
Is sweetened by the meadow flowers

When the last Red Man and Woman have vanished with their wilderness,
And their memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across
The prairie, will the shores and forest still be there?
Will there be any of the spirit of my people left?
My ancestors said to me,
This we know: The earth does not belong to us.
We belong to the earth.
The voice of my grandfather said to me,
Teach your children what you have been taught.



The earth is our mother.
What befalls the earth befalls all the sons and daughters of the Earth
Hear my voice of my ancestors,
Chief Seattle said.
The destiny of your people is a mystery to us.
What will happen when the buffalo are all slaughtered?
The wild horses tamed?
What will happen when the secret corners of the forest are heavy with the
scent of many men?
When the view of the ripe hills is blotted by talking wires?
Where will the thicket be? Gone.
Where will the eagle be? Gone!
And what will happen when we say goodbye to the swift pony
And the hunt?
It will be the end of living and the beginning of survival.
This we know: All things are connected like the blood that unites us.
We did not weave the web of life,
We are merely a strand in it.
Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.
We love this earth as a newborn loves its mother's heartbeat.
If we sell you our land, care for it as we have cared for it.
Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you receive it.

PEACE EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION
2. COMPETENCES
3. PROPOSAL OF ACTIVITIES
4. EVALUATION
5. APPENDIX

1. INTRODUCTION

Our responsibility as educators is to prevent and modify violent behaviour and prepare our students to be able to face in a positive way those consubstantial processes to the human existence called conflicts and to know how to reach when faced with them in an appropriate and non-violent way.

This is, we should encourage our students to have a critical attitude based on values such as justice, solidarity, tolerance and compromise like it is recommended in the curricula objectives from the Secondary Education in our region: “Acquire and develop attitudes and behaviours of respect, discipline, cooperation, solidarity and tolerance within the relationship with the others and maintain a critical attitude to eliminate prejudices and discriminating practices as regards sex, race, believes, culture and personal and social features”.

For the activities proposed to deal with this cross-curricular topic, we will work on an extract from the poetry collection “Leaves of Grass”¹ by the American poet Walt Whitman.

I have chosen this poem since I consider it deals with two of the social and personal topics in which students are particularly interested: Freedom and Racism. Both topics are related to the cross-curricular topic of *Peace Education*. In my opinion, it is a poem that impacts when read for the first time and, without any doubt, once the meaning is understood, it is moving. It is a poem of unparalleled beauty and power.

¹ I have used the edition from Editorial Lumen. Barcelona 1991.

2. COMPETENCES

Promote values such as solidarity, tolerance, respect to diversity, as well as the capacity to have a dialogue and participate.

Relate to other people and participate in group activities with supportive and tolerant attitudes.

Vocabulary related to violent behaviour, racism, war, peace and freedom.

Reflect on formal aspects of the language when writing letters.

Acquisition of a critical spirit towards racism.

Development of independent strategies: decision-making, information research, use of dictionaries, classification of contents, self-assessment, etc.

3. PROPOSAL OF ACTIVITIES

To develop this cross-curricular topic, I propose the following action plan called:

Tolerance for freedom

The base material for this action plan is an extract from the poetry collection “Leaves of Grass” by the American poet Walt Whitman, which is enclosed as appendix at the end of the activities.

In the first place, and according to the Phase I, I propose to contextualize the poem. Some materials will be offered to the students to be used as an introduction of the topic that will be tackled afterwards through the poem. These materials can be of different kind, for example a movie clip (e.g. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*) or a short historical or literary text (e.g. an extract from *Roots*). With this activity we will achieve the students to be exposed and interested by the poem’s topic. After this, and following this introduction of the topic, the teacher will make some questions to the students related to the poem’s thematic content that the students will have to answer in pairs. This way, apart from awakening student’s curiosity, we will get the students to share their knowledge about the topic.

Once we have on the students the need to read the poem, we will ask them to highlight the words they already know, for example “slave”, “flag”, “horse”, “ear”, “dog”, “violently”, etc. Through this task we will try the students to lose their fear to the evident complexity of the poem when they realize there are some linguistic elements (structures, words in this case) they already know. Next, we will ask them to hand the teacher a list with the words or expressions they don’t know. Once we have the list, we will ask them to work in pairs to guess the possible meanings of them.

Secondly, and also in relation to Phase II, a research work is proposed. This activity will be carried out in groups of four people. From the list of unknown words of the previous activity, the teacher will select and write in the blackboard the ones that have been difficult to most of the students. Then, the teacher will distribute monolingual dictionaries to all groups and will ask them to find and write in a paper the best definition for each selected word. This way, we try that the students get used to solve their problems at the same timetaht they learn how to use a monolingual dictionary. Possible examples are: “hounded”, “leans”, “fence”, “sweat”, “bullets”, “bite”, “despair”. With another activity, we will also try that the students become aware of some of the ways to connect sentences in English: coordination (and, or), subordination (that) and juxtaposition (comma). With this objective, students will create three columns in which they will include the nexus and the line where they found the connector as I show in this example:

Coordination: Or (line 5) Subordination: that (line 1) Juxtaposition: comma (line 6)

This activity is effective for the student to realize that the poet has used very frequently the juxtaposition. Then, the teacher will make the following question that the students will have to discuss in groups: “*What is the author's main purpose when he uses juxtaposition?*”. Possible answer: “the author tries to convey the agony and lack of breath of the slave who is running to save his life”. This activity offers the opportunity to the student to develop de linguistic conscience of the poem when he finds out that the figures of speech are not a simple ornamental element but they play an essential role when transmitting meanings and playing with the reader feelings. After this, we will make the students to recite the poem

trying to give it an appropriate intonation, for example expressing the slave's despair.

And finally, Phase III (Development of the Final Task and Learning Assessment). Regarding the Final Task, it consists of a "follow-up" for the students to implement what they have learnt. They will have to choose amongst three options to use their creativity and imagination to transfer the knowledge they have acquired during the action plan and finish the story of the poem. The first one will be to write the personal diary of the slave; the second one, to write a short poem reflecting the feelings of this person; and the last one, to write a dialogue in which the slave talks to another slave about his try to scape and his subsequent capture.

STUDENT'S ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1:

- Read the poem and, in pairs, give an answer to the following questions:
 - What do you know about the lives of those slaves?
 - What happened to those slaves who tried to run away?

ACTIVITY 2:

- Highlight all the words from the poem you already know. Make a list with the words and expressions you don't know and hand it to the teacher. Now, in pairs, try to guess the meaning of them.

ACTIVITY 3:

- Create groups of four students. Look in the dictionary for the list of unknown words written in the blackboard. Write in a paper the best definition of each word.

ACTIVITY 4:

- Find in the poem examples of how the author connects sentences in English. Create three columns for: Coordination (or)/ Subordination (that) / Juxtaposition (comma), and include the nexus and the line where you have found them.
 - *"What is the author's main purpose when he uses juxtaposition?"* Discuss it in groups.

ACTIVITY 5:

- Recite the poem giving an appropriate intonation (for example, expressing the slave's restlessness).

FINAL TASK

- You have to finish the story. You will have to invent an end choosing from the following options:
 - a) Write the personal diary of the slave (what happened the next day? Did he manage to escape?)
 - b) Write a short poem reflecting the feelings of this person.
 - c) Write a dialogue in which the slave talks to another slave about his try to scape and his subsequent capture.

4. EVALUATION

Phase I

ACTIVITY 1. Working in pairs to answer some questions. This activity will serve to check understanding of the text and the history behind.

Evaluation: The students, working in pairs, will put in common the information they have understood and gathered about the slaves. Then, they will all exchange in class this information. The teacher will evaluate the participation, the content and the expression of the answers offered by each pair of students

ACTIVITY 2: Guessing the meaning of words. Working in pairs. This activity reinforces the learning of new vocabulary.

Evaluation: The students, in pairs, will put in common the words they don't know and will try to guess their meaning. The teacher will ask each student to contribute with one word and its meaning to create a list with all of the contributions. Participation, creativity and intuition will be assessed.

ACTIVITY 4: Finding connectors in the poem. Peer assessment.

Evaluation: Students will have to find at least three examples for each type of connector: coordination, subordination and juxtaposition. Then, the work will be evaluated by a classmate. Guidelines will be fixed in the classroom together with the teacher.

Phase II

ACTIVITY 4: Answer question. In groups.

This activity will be used to check the ability of negotiation within the group, interaction, collaboration attitude and reflection. Also, the level of English of the group, and the structure and coherence of the text produced.

Phase III

FINAL TASK: Writing.

Evaluation: The teacher will evaluate if the students have properly transferred what has been learnt to a new situation. Aspects to be evaluated: vocabulary, general content and intention of the writing, structure of apoem, coherence, level of English...

And also, as I mentioned for the previous action plan and that is applicable to any action plan we prepare following this guidelines, in a task-based approach, assessment is conceived, particularly, in a qualitative way, that is, as a means of generating, mainly, procedural and attitudinal learning.

In the task-based approach, the Final Task is the key tool for the assessment of what has been learnt. Additionally, we can also evaluate with it the design and development of the unit, the behavior or each participant and the materials used.

Besides, for these particular tasks, we could use the assessment tool to dedicate 5 minutes of every class to write specific reflections about the previous class, with concrete entries, agreed among the class members. Other tools used for this purpose, in addition to the

Final Task, could be group discussions during the course of the class, any oral and written activity of the ones they have to do, or personal questionnaires, open or close-ended, as the one I presented in the previous action plan (which can be used with any other units prepared for the students).

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the evaluation should also have the purpose to measure knowledge, ways of working, level of interest, role-play and the effectiveness of the materials used.

The results obtained in the final evaluation together with the information obtained in the continuous assessment during the development of the unit (notes taken by the teachers and students in their personal diaries and products or activities done during the Phase II) will provide all the relevant information for the evaluation.

5. APPENDIX

POEM FROM "LEAVES OF GRASS" BY WALT WHITMAN

The hounded slave that flags in the race, leans by the fence, blow- ing, cover'd with sweat,
The twinges that sting like needles his legs and neck, the mur- derous buckshot and the bullets,
All these I feel or am.

I am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of the dogs,
Hell and despair are upon me, crack and again crack the marks- men,
I clutch the rails of the fence, my gore dribs, thinn'd with the ooze of my skin,
I fall on the weeds and stones,
The riders spur their unwilling horses, haul close,
Taunt my dizzy ears and beat me violently over the head with whip-stocks.

CONCLUSIONS AND PERSONAL EVALUATION

Through my working experience during the Practicum I realized that, in the English classroom, cross-curricular topics were tackled in a very limited way. Moreover, although the teaching methodology was predominantly traditional, the teacher developed some active and participative activities. With this, I could observe that most of the students were interested and enjoyed these activities and tasks. Thus, this was the starting point of my project, with these two ideas in mind to try to teach values in the classroom but improving the learning process and keeping student's motivation through participation. I also decided to do it through literature, since I considered it is already an advantage in the field of value learning as literature exemplifies the essential dignity and worth of individual human beings.

This way, I decided to design what I called *action plans*, each one focused on a particular cross-curricular topic and including activities following a task-based approach. I introduced activities such as a "web of life", research works and debates, always trying to deal with interesting topics for the students, so they can exchange different points of view and develop their argumentative ability and critical thinking. A larger participation of the students or the analysis of their own involvement with the related information research, will tell us we are reaching the objectives of learning improvement. Overall, it is probably fair to say that through these research activities we are capable to offer a vast response to all kind of students and we can deal better with diversity.

Furthermore, another relevant aspect to highlight, although closely related to what has previously being said, is the insertion of more varied activities that allow more involvement, such as group activities, which are a considerable improvement in the teaching and learning process. Interaction with and amongst students is also important. Socialization, as regards the development of sociable living and tolerance values, are to be achieved either through a more individual interaction, with debates or brainstorming, or through working in groups, where peer interaction can produce great constructive effects. This way we can introduce the value of effort to attain the proposed objectives within the activities, and makes evident the need for research, the contrast of ideas, the value of observation and argumentation, together with the capacity to express and communicate ideas, hence the importance of activities in group to be able to develop these competences.

Additionally, as mentioned before, the encouragement to reading is understood like a major objective to transmit seen as an essential tool for the information research and as a source of knowledge, being these two the pillars for the development of a critical thinking and to allow motivations and curiosity.

My intention and wish with this proposal is that the examples of action plans I have designed contribute to educate students, not only in theoretical and practical knowledge, but also in civic values and coexistence with their classmates, so they are part of a society in permanent construction that requires values of effort, tolerance and respect, rigour in information, adaptation capacities and collaboration, and a necessary reflection. The action plans designed on this project are aimed at showing that it is possible to educate in values through any subject in secondary education.

Finally, I would like to mention that the last part of any project is its implementation. This way, the present proposal would need to be implemented for its evaluation in context. It can be understood that experimenting in teaching is the best complement to any proposal, always bearing in mind the context, the timing and the availability of space and materials.

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