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Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación

Title: “Having an inquiring mind: a strategy that contributes to better learning processes and perhaps better results”.

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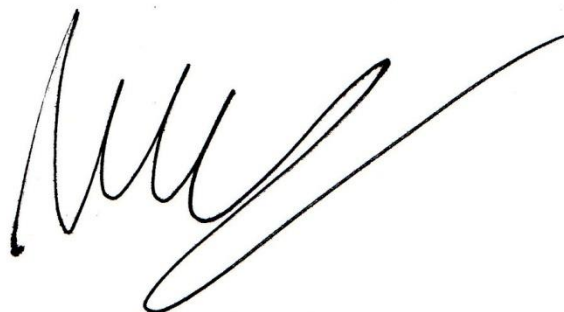
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Firma del Autor

Salta, de diciembre de 2015

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To my dearest husband Hugo and my dearest mother for their support, patience and love. To Chicho, Ñata, to my friends and to those that eagerly help me whenever I am in need for support, guidance and advice.

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To God allowing me this life opportunity to make a dream come true.

ABSTRACT

This proposal intends to inform the Néstor Oscar Palacios school authorities and community in general that their students usually have difficulties to formulate questions and that those difficulties might be one of the factors that affect their learning processes and performance. This justifies the recommendation of the need to have an institutional policy that aims at the development of “inquiring minds with a questioning pedagogy” (Faundez, A & Freire, P., 2013 [2010]). It should also contemplate the relevance of the implementation of an institutional project encouraging all teachers to engage their students in communicative situations where they need to reflect upon and formulate questions because their learners might eventually work more attentively and be better-motivated to participate more actively in the different classes answering, commenting as well as reflecting on and formulating suitable questions to others. Moreover, this inquiring ability could be applied to obtain information which is relevant to develop different tasks related to the topics being dealt with in the different school subjects. By

doing so, the necessary “frequency of exposure (PETITTO, Laura-Ann and DUNBAR, Kevin (2004) to the practice of questioning structures” can be guaranteed to contribute to these learners’ successful learning, creativity, thoughtfulness and better educational results.

KEY WORDS

Questions, a learning strategy, inquiring minds, an institutional project.

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THEME

Asking questions: Its importance and uses.

TITLE

"Having an inquiring mind: a strategy that may contribute to better learning processes and perhaps better results".

RATIONALE

Teachers, school authorities as well as other educational authorities belonging to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Province of Salta have been concerned about the weak performance and the low scores that the learners usually have in the different tests given to them both in the public and in the private schools of the province. Accordingly, the different institutional meetings that teachers have been attending, esp. since 2012, for example, in the context of “Programa Nacional de Formación Permanente” and others, have always intended to encourage educators to have more active participation in the school decisions to help solve the various problems that affect their schools. Teachers are also being asked to suggest courses of action, to foster collaborative team work, and, - *especially during the last meeting held last October 31st in all public schools of Salta* - , the institutions and their teachers were invited to make a critical analysis of their teaching processes, practices, choices and outcomes, thinking of ways to improve and guarantee successful educational results to all our students. Participants were also urged to reflect upon various topics, and the importance of being more tolerant and flexible, having a less traditional view of the use of space and time in these institutions, was one of them

As a result, I started working harder trying to find solutions to my learners’ difficulties. For example, after applying different strategies and techniques to guarantee that my students learn and apply communicatively the question forms, it actually surprised me their eagerness and ability to answer the questions and their difficulty and, *at times*, impossibility to use the question form structures due to their lack of creativity to formulate a question esp. when teachers do not tell them what, how or when to ask. Despite these learners’ good intentions, hard work and effort to improve their low performance and low scores, regardless of the amount of practice the target structures had been given both in the classrooms and / or outside them, these learners’ questioning difficulty continued being the same in Néstor O. Palacios school.

At first, it seemed that these educational difficulties and failures, especially among responsible and hard working students, had resulted from my own inadequate methodological, material and resource choices or from the different factors and components that normally benefit or prevent successful educational processes from taking place. However, during some conversations held with peer teachers and other colleagues about this pedagogical problem in particular, we learnt that this experience was being common core among the other teachers of English of Néstor O. Palacios school as well, and that many Language, Ethics, Geography, History and Physics teachers working at the same school claimed that they also share this negative reality. They also claimed to have given up on this cause because *if they continued devoting much time to their students' difficulties to formulate questions* - , they would not be able to cover the rest of the topics of the syllabuses that they have to teach.

Most learners studying at Nestor O. Palacios Public Secondary School do not usually perform as well as expected in those activities where they are demanded to ask questions. This claim is based on the results of **questionnaires** given to the students themselves, to the school authorities and also to most teachers working at this school, as well as on the analysis of the **scores** that these learners got both in regular and make-up tests with activities where they were supposed to formulate questions. Unfortunately this situation is present despite the application of various teachers' strategies, methodologies and techniques used to guarantee that these students learn and apply the "question forms" successfully in different classroom situations. What is more, when teachers ask them to think and to formulate questions in Spanish to work on a given task related to the topics that they are working with either orally or in writing, individually, in pairs or groupally, learners also tend to have difficulties with "question forms". Consequently, this inability to ask questions appears to be present in many of the school subjects taught in this public secondary school.

Take for instance the case of the teachers teaching English at Néstor O. Palacios school, they usually devote at least the same length of time teaching

question forms as the time devoted to teaching the affirmative and / or the negative structures of the different topics that they are supposed to teach. However, their students often do better with affirmative and negative statements than they do with the question forms. Furthermore, when these students have, - just to give an example - , to work in pairs or in groups improvising a conversation on a given topic, they are usually able to ask only such questions as “*What’s your name?*”, “*Where are you from?*”, “*How are you...?*”, “*Do you like....?*”; *Have you ever....?*”, and the like in French, because students usually forget or cannot ask all the other questions they had been practising with their teachers and / or studied at home.

The school authorities are actually concerned about improving the results of the different processes of this educational community and they usually welcome suggestions, opinions and ideas to better off the school practices. Accordingly, they have joined **IMESA** (Implementación de Mejora en Escuelas Secundarias Argentinas), which is a program intended to assess and evaluate the performance of the Secondary Schools of the North of Argentina. These schools are free to join the program, and Néstor O. Palacios decided to be part of it. In fact, this school scores are improving if we compare this year’s results to the first ones that the school got when joining the program. The school authorities also invest time and are willing to provide financial support for tutorials given to students with low performance and marks in the different school subjects. They are also paying the wages of a team of professionals who provide the students in need with weekly psychological and/ or pedagogical help and orientation because the authorities of the Ministry of Education claim that they do not have resources to suffice this need. Finally, financial support is given to the design and printing of booklets, other material and resources that the school staff consider necessary for more successful and meaningful experiences as well as better learning processes.

Being a teacher of English teaching secondary school adolescents in different state schools of the capital city of Salta where the inclusion and maintenance of most students in the school system with high quality of practices and meaningful learning experiences is a must, I am actually concerned about

and committed to changing the low rates, difficulties and failure in my students' performance. As the students from Néstor Oscar Palacios school do have difficulties to formulate questions and because these difficulties may affect their learning processes and performance, this **proposal** appears to be a good opportunity to attain personal goals, contemplating the school interests and needs apart from considering the school's strengths and weaknesses, the authorities' invitation to participate more actively, and also taking into consideration the fact that no-one regards the absence of an inquiring mind as a problem that might affect our learners' school results. In addition, this project and proposal also intends to cooperate by recommending the adoption of an institutional policy to foster "**the development of inquiring minds**" as well as the implementation of an **institutional project** to encourage these students' creativity, thoughtfulness, active participation, responsibility and commitment to their own learning processes and education at Néstor Oscar Palacios School.

AIMS

➤ **General Aim:**

-To shed light on the importance of encouraging the development of inquiring minds as a strategy to contribute to the improvement of the educational results at Néstor Oscar Palacios public secondary school N° 5020, an institution where students do not usually ask and/ or reflect upon topics they are expected to.

-To propose the implementation of an institutional project at Néstor O. Palacios School.

➤ **Specific Aim:**

- To raise awareness of the importance of having an inquiring mind as a factor that might contribute to the improvement of these learners' performance and results.

-To learn and reflect upon the possible reasons for this difficulty in this school, also introducing the concept of "developmental stages / sequences".

-To present and recommend the feasibility of the implementation of *the project* "**The Importance of Questions**" -, to foster these students' creativity, thoughtfulness, active participation, responsibility and commitment to their own learning processes and education.

HYPOTHESIS

The students from Néstor Oscar Palacios Public Secondary school N° 5020 do not perform as well as expected due to different factors affecting most students from Argentina. However, a remarkable factor appears to be their difficulty to think of and to formulate questions communicatively. Having an intensive institutional practice encouraging inquiring minds may benefit their learning processes, performance and outcomes.

METHODOLOGY and RESEARCH TOOLS

To guarantee the suitability, feasibility and sufficiency of this proposal, this research will apply an eclectic method in order to make a cause-effect and interventionist corpus, being basically analytical and interpretative of the evidence collected from the observed and documented units of analysis (library books, internet web articles, students' tests and students and teachers' questionnaires with open and closed questions as well as interactionist and interpretative of the transcription of units of analysis (from the interviews to teachers, students and other school members to have their opinion about the project implementation). There will be a quantitative as well as qualitative type of analysis of the collected data. The quantitative one will be used to work with and make the statistical report on the percentages of: a) students with difficulties and preferences when asking questions (deriving from the learners' test results on the exercises dealing specifically with questions; or deriving from the results of the questionnaires). And the qualitative one will deal with the analytical interpretation of the questionnaire results, interviews, etc. The collected data/ evidence will be kept in files both in a

folder as well as in a computer file. The recordings of the interviews will be kept inside a computer and their transcription, will be saved as a Word file.

After analyzing, comparing and contrasting these data, a **report** on the research conclusions will be written down including possible reasons for these students' difficulties and/ or weak performances when using question forms. Reference will be made to whether these difficulties affect these learners' performance and learning results or not. Based on this report, a permission letter addressed to the school authorities will be written down recommending the implementation of the institutional project: "The importance of questions" and of an institutional policy to encourage inquiring minds among the students. The project will be explained to the whole school staff during an institutional meeting to be held at due time whenever and wherever the school authorities decide to hold this meeting. Finally, after the implementation of the project, another questionnaire will be delivered asking the school community about the impact of the project activities. The intention of using this questionnaire is to assess the viability of recommending a more frequent implementation of the project in the years to come.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to achieve the pedagogical aim of helping the students learn, use and integrate the target forms to previous knowledge communicatively, committed professional teachers and educators might resort to the most different methodologies, strategies and techniques that they consider suitable to attain their objectives. Here, the findings of **Applied Linguistics**, esp. in terms of Second Language learning and acquisition can shed light encouraging teachers to consider the different components of language learning that might affect output and variability. Likewise, **Neuroscience** in general, and **Petitto's findings** (2004) in particular, can be of great help to provide the students with further opportunities to learn "the different question forms" that they are being taught in the classrooms. These findings can also clarify teachers' doubts related to the difficulties students

may face along the processes, how the brain works, what the necessary conditions for learning to take place are, and so on.

After reading **Paulo Freire, Antonio Faundez'** s views, it is obvious that apart from the tangible pedagogical and biological factors that might prevent successful learning from taking place in most classrooms of Néstor Oscar Palacios school, ideology and political decisions are also crucial factors contributing to these pedagogical difficulties inside the English classes and also present in the other school subjects as well. As Freire and Faundez claim, "our learners have usually been brought up within an **"expository tradition"** and there is a need for a new pedagogy which encourages students to think and ask all the questions that they have because these questions are necessary for them to clarify their minds and to learn. When a person thinks, he usually needs to formulate questions to get the information that might help him/ her clarify his/ her doubts, learn, make suitable decisions, and participate. Of course, this "new pedagogy" may contribute to fostering committed citizens who participate more actively in the processes that they are involved in, including their learning and education. This new pedagogy opposes the practice of labeling students as "troublesome or difficult learners" only for daring ask questions about the different topics that they are being taught or for daring express their minds aloud, because this pedagogy encourages dialogue, curiosity, questions and participation.

SECTION 1: EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH: "NEUROSCIENCE: Implications, Students' Difficulties to learn (possible reasons); the hold-back practice; Errors, Anomalies" Techniques (*whole section designed with quotations taken from the bibliography provided by teacher* Clara María Lucía Filippini, (2015). Mar del Plata, "Educational Research", Universidad FASTA, Online: <http://petitto.gallaudet.edu/~dunbarlab/pubpdfs/pettitodunbarIP.pdf>. last access: 06/09/2012)

"Educational Neuroscience (EN) is an exciting and timely unique, interdisciplinary new discipline. It provides education with the most relevant level of analysis for **resolving today's core problems**. It brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds: including cognitive brain scientists, learning scientists, medical and clinical practitioners, and those in educational policy and teaching. It

draws its empirical strength from **Cognitive Neuroscience (CN)**, which combines decades of experimental advances from *cognitive, perceptual, and developmental psychology* with a variety of contemporary *technologies* for exploring the neural basis of human knowledge over the life span” (PETITTO, Laura-Ann and DUNBAR, Kevin (2004).

“Second language acquisition and learning is not new. Second language learning began to gain standing as an independent field during the 1970’s. Work had been done in L2 learning via linguistics or first language acquisition research (Cook 1998). From that moment, Second Language Learning research has increased dramatically, and has branched out into many subfields. **Educational Neuroscience**, for instance, is a new discipline committed to solving prevailing problems in the lives of developing children, as well as to understanding the human learning capabilities over the life span both in brain and in behavior, (Petitto, 2004), among other goals of course. Consequently, it can be of great help impacting the prevailing methods of instruction and the curricula in language and science, as it can provide educators with suggestions, examples, and the theoretical background that contribute to the understanding of such topic areas as rate and route of acquisition, timing, sequencing what students are learning and when or why they have difficulties in learning linguistic or scientific content areas, and what might be the advisable new forms of instruction that can aid learning” (PETITTO, Laura-Ann and DUNBAR, Kevin (2004).

“ **The teaching of the different question forms**”, for instance, has become a pedagogical concern for the teachers of English working at Néstor O. Palacios Secondary School. This concern owes to two main factors: firstly, to their students’ difficulties to learn and apply their knowledge of how to formulate and use questions communicatively and, secondly, to the negative results among the average students’ performance in the classrooms despite these teachers commitment and effort to make their students learn, use and integrate the question forms to previous knowledge.

Full mastery of the new (later-exposed) language needs to occur in highly systematic and multiple contexts that are richly varied involving both home and community settings because it cannot be achieved through **classroom instruction** alone. In the real world, **childhood bilingualism** is not frequently simultaneous and balanced, and normal population migration, as well as socio-political conditions worldwide, often cause large groups of children from outside the language community to enter schools at varying stages of life, even well into the teenage years (PETITTO, Laura-Ann and DUNBAR, Kevin (2004).

“Children **benefit** when teachers are educated in the field of **brain research** because this knowledge changes the educator’s perspective of the learner, and stresses the demand for new teaching methods. For instance, Hardiman, and Bridge Denckla, suggest in their article “***The Science of Education, Findings***”, that “**ADHD Symptoms** may represent **developmental delay** rather than damage in the brain, and that any neural circuitry with such protracted development may be exquisitely sensitive to environmental and experiential influences, which may also alter brain structures”. As a result, teachers who are aware of these findings may change the climate of their classrooms providing their learners with better learning experiences resulting from more conscientiously planned practices. For example, they may contemplate that **ADHD students** do not function well in a classroom environment where visual aids are all consuming and that these students may be kinesthetic learners, i.e. having a fuller learning experience when they are given the opportunity to physically carry out the activity rather than listening to a lecture” (PETITTO, Laura-Ann and DUNBAR, Kevin (2004).

In PETITTO, Laura-Ann and DUNBAR, Kevin’s views, so far Educational Neuroscience has already yielded remarkable advances in:

-The understanding of particular developmental disorders with a whole host of more appropriate assessment tools, treatment and educational intervention for children with: attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders, Asperger syndrome, and autism; children with atypical language development (dyslexia), and specific language impairment.

-The identification of “**sensitive periods**” in development has yielded insights into **when learning of key content** is especially optimal, impacting the educational curricula (e.g. new insights regarding: when in the CURRICULA to introduce foreign languages (FL); whether phonetic vs. whole-word reading instruction methods are the most optimal; how phonological awareness teaching activities can improve good and atypical readers (dyslexics), and the **developmental sequence** underlying the learning of Maths and Science.

-Behavioral and brain scanning technologies (Fmri, NIRS) to understand **what students are learning, when, why** they have difficulties in learning these CONTENT AREAS and what can be the **new forms of instruction** that can aid learning.

-Studies on key ages of brain myelinization and maturation (ages 3, 5, 7, 9) including: the optimal age of 1st bilingual language exposure; how long it takes for bilingual children to achieve mastery in a new language depending on the age of 1st bilingual language exposure and the type of language learning environment(home, community, classroom); the typical/normal stages of bilingual language development, to help **teachers** identify **when a bilingual child is truly delayed** due to a language impairment vs. simply undergoing **the normal typical sequence** of bilingual language development, and the impact of the introduction of a new language on a child’s L1, which addresses the important educational question of **language attrition: does learning a new language harm the old one?**

-Ways of Reading Mastery in all young bilinguals can be improved, even involving those children who had bilingual language exposure at older ages:

- ✓ **Type of bilingual instruction** also has a significant impact in educational policy implications: children from monolingual homes in bilingual schools were better readers than language/age-matched monolingual children in monolingual schools. These results can serve as an important **assessment tool** by which teachers can situate the young bilingual reader developmentally relative to monolingual peers (early bilinguals can be expected to have reading performance comparable to that of monolinguals).

Whereas later exposed bilinguals (ages 3-6) may have lower reading performance in their new language ***due largely to the incomplete acquisition of the new language and not to reading disability***)

-Cognitive neuroscientists have identified the **major brain sites** involved in **memory, learning, attention, and reasoning**; consequently, it is now possible to understand the types of cognitive and neural changes that occur in educationally relevant learning.

-The research bears on the nation's educational priorities, policy and practice, regarding the education of bilingual children, esp. "**holding-back**" views. Both in **behavioral and brain-imaging studies** it was found that **the age of first bilingual language exposure** has a significant impact on children's dual language mastery. It directly and seriously impacts children's ability to achieve linguistic fluency and reading in the new (later-exposed) language, as well as the neural processing of this newer language in the brain. Consequently, a **hold-back** educational policy that flies in the face of biology needs not be so:

-Early-age bilingual exposure has a positive impact on multiple aspects of a child's development: linguistic, cognitive and reading. Children who experience early, extensive and systematic exposure to both of their languages, quickly grasp the fundamentals of both of their languages and in a manner virtually identical to that of monolingual language learners. As adults, these bilingual individuals, in addition to their good behavioral performance on language tasks, also show that their brains are processing their two languages in a similar manner, and virtually identical to monolingual adults. The field raised concerns that early bilinguals may be linguistically, cognitively and academically disadvantaged. Findings suggest that early bilingualism offers no disadvantages. Young bilinguals may be afforded a linguistic and cognitive advantage: Early dual language exposure is also key to **skilled reading acquisition**. Moreover, learning to read in two languages may afford an advantage to children from monolingual homes in **key phoneme awareness skills** vital to reading success.

-Later-age bilingual exposure has little consequence on a child's ability to master the said language and thus the brain has little to do with later-bilingual and L2 learning.

“However helpful brain research is, it is useless on its own. It can empower teachers to do their job better, but the teaching methods alone make no significant difference in the **students' results**. Whenever the results were correlated with the teacher, researchers found that **good teachers were getting good results no matter which method they used because it was the teacher who made the difference**”(Filippini, 2015).

➤ **WHY ARE SOME CONCEPTS SO DIFFICULT TO LEARN?**

Based on PETITTO and DUNBAR, (2004), a key issue for science education is to determine **why conceptual change is so hard to achieve**. Numerous studies indicate that scientific knowledge can be unstable and hard to achieve. Delineating how the mind/brain represents knowledge and how learning changes this underlying knowledge is central to designing and implementing educational practice (Baker & Dunbar, 2001). A primary concern of recent research has been to determine the reasons for this difficulty because despite intensive behaviorist, cognitivist and social constructivist approaches to learning science, students are still **failing to grasp key concepts** in science. The results of the fMRI experiments indicate that despite students giving correct responses, their knowledge may not have undergone the type of conceptual change that many educators have assumed is taking place when students learn science. These results have important **implications** for many types of educational interventions and for theories of what happens when we educate our students.

For example, one area where important barriers to effective learning of science occur is in the domain of Physics. Many physics concepts are very difficult for

students to acquire. It is now known that **students possess some knowledge** of physics concepts that is quite different from that knowledge being taught in physics courses, and that **students tenaciously hold on to their original views despite empirical demonstrations and theoretical expositions of the correct views.** Analyses of students' conceptions, using interviews, verbal protocols, and behavioral outcome measures, indicate that **large-scale changes in students' concepts** can occur in physics education (and *perhaps also in other subjects*), but with *great difficulty and with extensive learning (which justifies the need for institutional projects and/ or policy to be implemented and/or adopted, as recommended in my proposal).*

Following Kuhn (1972), researchers have also noted that students' **changing conceptions** are similar to **sequences of conceptual changes** that have occurred in the history of science. **Theories of conceptual shifts** focus on two main types of shifts; firstly, the **minor conceptual shifts**, which are relatively easy to acquire and do not demand an underlying restructuring of the representations of scientific knowledge. And the 2nd type of conceptual shift is known as "**radical conceptual change**". Here, it is necessary for a new conceptual system to be acquired that organizes knowledge, and results in a very different conceptual structure. This change is necessary for acquiring many new concepts in science in general and in Physics in particular. **Failure to achieve this conceptual shift is regarded as the major source of difficulty for students.** And it is only after **extensive learning**, that we see a conceptual shift.

The main untested assumption in much of contemporary science education trying to explain and understand this scientific difficulty is that **students' naive theories can be eliminated through presenting them with anomalies.** Students will realize that their **naive theory** is incorrect and will then reorganize (restructure) their knowledge, eventually arriving at the "correct theory". ***Through INTENSIVE TEACHING using ANOMALIES, it is thought that naive theories are eliminated.*** The use of "anomalies" has therefore been a cornerstone of

constructivist education: it is thought that when students display a clear understanding of correct concepts, a reorganization of knowledge has occurred.

However, there is also a research on “**Anomalies, the brain, and conceptual change in science education**” that uses fMRI to investigate changes in scientific concepts that students find (im)plausible or (in)consistent with their theories. Its results show that as presenting students with “**anomalies**” results in inhibition rather than in restructuring of knowledge, it has proved to be an **ineffective teaching strategy** in science education, contrary to what is currently thought to be. The main hypothesis was that **data that were inconsistent with a plausible or preferred theory would be ignored and/ or inhibited and not result in even minor changes in a concept. Whereas data which are consistent with a plausible theory, would be successfully integrated with a given concept and** changes in concepts would be achieved through STANDARD LEARNING STRUCTURES. Thus, merely presenting students with anomalous data does not produce learning. Instead, the research results indicate that **prior belief in a theory influences the interpretation of data in a highly specific way** treating the anomalies as **ERRORS and also INHIBITING** the information, which can make **new concepts extremely difficult to acquire** (PETITTO and DUNBAR, (2004).

The experiment results provide scientists and educators with a clearer picture of the mental processes that take place when students learn new scientific concepts. **Inhibitory mechanisms** are a **great stumbling block to acquiring new concepts** because **when conceptual change appears to have taken place, students still have access to the old naive theories and are inhibiting their old theories in the course of processing the new ones.** Secondly, “***students activate inhibitory networks when they encounter data that are inconsistent with a plausible theory***”. These findings *shed new light on why it is so difficult for students to adopt new theories they may be encumbered by having to inhibit information inconsistent with the current representation.* These results also indicate that students enter science education with strong **theories**,

particularly in physics that may **never completely go away, but instead be held in check** (PETITTO, Laura-Ann and DUNBAR, Kevin (2004)).

Finally, Petitto and Dunbar claim that perhaps students hold on to erroneous conceptions so tenaciously because they have acquired considerable **success** with using a **partially correct theory** and because by the time students are formally educated in Physics, the **incorrect theories** are so deeply ingrained that they cannot be modified, they can only be inhibited. If this is the case, then the educational practice to **hold-back** physics education in young children until they are older may **not be ideal to optimal learning of scientific concepts**. One possible solution would be to teach physics concepts at a **younger age, before** students' concepts become firmly entrenched and to teach English at a younger age in our public schools, taking advantage of our learners' brain plasticity in order to provide them with a greater chance for exposure to the target language. Alternatively, it may be the case that **erroneous conceptions in physics tap into core knowledge** (Carey, 1991); Carey & Spelke, 1996) that **can never be replaced or reorganized, but can be inhibited**.

SECTION 2: APPLIED LINGUISTICS: The Main Components of Language Learning: Learners' Differences, Input, Output, Error Correction, Types of Instruction, Learning and Studying Strategies (Questions) and Techniques (*whole section designed with quotations taken from the bibliography provided by teacher MORGAVI, S. (2014). "Applied Linguistics". Universidad FASTA, (Parts 1 & 2).*)

❖ **THE MAIN COMPONENTS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING**

➤ **LEARNER DIFFERENCES:**

In contrast with situational factors and input, which are external to the learner; **learners' differences** is an important construct that interacts with input and learner processes, in the attempt to explain the striking variation in **LEARNING OUTCOMES**, esp., with **RATE OF LEARNING** and **LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT**.

Individual factors (qualities like aptitude or motivation) or **clusters of behavior**, which cannot be directly observed, interact with one another affecting **language learning**. These factors can be **personal** and **general**, and both types of **factors** have the following aspects present in different degrees: a) **social** (concerning the relationship a learner has with Native Speakers of the target language and with speakers of his L1), b) **cognitive** (related to the problem-solving strategies used by the learner), c) **affective** (emotional responses caused by the learning processes).

Among the **Personal Factors** which are highly idiosyncratic features of each individual's approach to learning, we can mention: a) **Group Dynamics** (related to competitiveness and anxiety. Bailey presents a model on how **self-image** is affected by comparison with other students', resulting in a (un)successful/ positive or negative self-image facilitating anxiety and impairing SLA, or debilitating anxiety, trying to improve SLA), b) **Attitudes to the teacher and course materials** (Ellis's different views as to what makes **a good teacher**: predictable/structured methodology vs. free teaching plan; course books, etc), c) **Individual learning techniques** (different students make use of a wide variety of learning techniques for studying L2, such as, ***preparing and memorizing vocabulary lists, learning words in context, reading to reinforce learning, obtaining L2 input***).

The **General factors** that have received most attention in SLA are: a) **Personality**(crucial variable in the acquisition of communicative competence and in success in language learning. The effect of extroversion/ introversion may be situation-dependent), b) **Intelligence and aptitude** (Both have great influence on L2 learning studied in context of classroom learning. **Intelligence** refers to a general reasoning ability which underlies our use of academic skills and which is not a major determinant in L1 acquisition and probably not so important in SLA naturalistic contexts. It may influence the acquisition of such skills as ***reading, grammar, vocabulary, free writing*** of instructed contexts. The influence of intelligence is restricted to the **RATE AND SUCCESS OF SLA**. On the other hand, **Language Aptitude**, refers to the specific cognitive qualities needed for SLA: 1) **Phonemic Coding Ability** (ability to code foreign sounds, spell and handle

sound –symbol relationships) , 2) **Grammatical Sensitivity** (ability to recognize the grammatical function of words in sentences), 3) **Inductive Language Learning Ability** (ability to identify patterns of correspondence and relationships between FORM and MEANING), 4) **Rote Learning Ability** (ability to form and remember associations between stimuli) , c) **Cognitive and Learning styles** (different learning styles may be equally valid and advantageous to make contributions to different domains. Learners may adapt their styles to meet the needs of particular situations. **Cognitive Styles** are the ways in which people perceive, conceptualize, organize and recall information; it is the students' predisposition to process information in a characteristic manner. Here there is a difference between Field (In)Dependence, preferring to study alone or with others. **Learning Style** is the typical preference for approaching learning in general, related to all aspects of learning. There are four **perceptual learning modalities** : 1) **Visual** (reading and studying charts), 2) **Auditory** (listening preference), 3) **Kinaesthetic** (involving physical response), 4) **Tactile** (using hands to build something) , d) **Motivation** (it is a powerful factor in SLA, whose effects can be seen in the **RATE and SUCCESS** of L2 learning, an accurate but not directly observable predictor of L2 success, inferred from people's behavior. It's the **direction and magnitude** of human behavior and choice of a particular action; it's the persistence and effort made for it, responsibly for why, how long and how hard they are going to pursue it.), e) **Age** (is the most considered individual factor in SLA. In a NATURALISTIC context, early starters tend to attain high levels of language competence, and those learners that start after adolescence, show great variability in their levels of linguistic attainment).

Regarding the EFFECTS OF AGE, all normal children succeed in acquiring their L1, while most adults who try, do not succeed in developing a mastery of single foreign language. Influential biological explanations are found in **the CRITICAL PERIOD HYPOTHESIS**, Language acquisition must occur before the onset of puberty in order for language to develop fully. There is a neurological mechanism which might be responsible for the change in learning abilities: once the brain has achieved adult values by puberty, it loses the plasticity needed for

language acquisition. There is a sharp decline in the ability to acquire L1; however, L1 acquisition by post-pubescent learners is not impossible. Consequently, human beings appear to have a special capacity for acquiring language in childhood, regardless of whether is their L1 or L2. There is a gradual decline from about age 7 on until adulthood, with a marked drop around puberty. After puberty, performance does not continue to decline with increasing age, but showed individual differences. Consequently, learning L2 after puberty is not impossible, in spite of some deficiencies. For adult learners, age is not a predictor of performance.

Research on whether experiential or attitudinal factors can affect the effects obtained for AGE of acquisition shows at regarding the “**experiential variable**”, length of exposure did not alter performance significantly the first few years of exposure (in an immersion context). Attitudinal factors, such as motivation, identification and self-consciousness were also unable to explain away the effects of age. Johnson and Newport’s work seems to prove that the CRITICAL PERIOD does exist although as a SENSITIVE PERIOD, and it applies to L1 and L2. The existence of this CRITICAL PERIOD does not rule out the benefits *of exercise, allowing for the possibility of language acquisition after puberty.*

Children, adolescents and adults follow the same stages of development, irrespective of their age. Rate and success appear to be strongly influenced by the maturational factor, according to Ellis, who gives a summary of the EFFECTS OF AGE: 1) Starting age does not affect the ROUTE of SLA (*the differences in the acquisitional order are not a result of age*). 2) Starting age affects the RATE of SLA (*adolescent learners do better in grammar and vocabulary than children and adults, when the length of exposure is held constant*). 3) Number of years of exposure and Starting Age affect the level of success (*the number of years contributes greatly to the overall communication fluency of the learners, but starting age determines the levels of accuracy achieved, particularly in pronunciation*).

➤ INPUT

Situational factors go hand in hand with **Input**, which is of vital importance in SLA, as learning depends directly on it, but we do not know its amount of responsibility as opposed to the internal mechanisms.

Input is the (spoken or written) language which the learner is exposed to in the environment (Lightbown and Spada). This positive evidence serves as the data which the learner uses to learn the target language or topic. **Not all the input results in intake** (i.e. *the input that is understood and attended to*). **Not all input is processed by the learner**, as it may have not been understood or attended to. It is **INTAKE** that leads to **LEARNING**.

The **negotiation of meaning** that can be focused on form or on meaning, is influenced by social setting, i.e., conversations involving interlocutors in trying to **overcome communication problems** (*by selecting salient topics, topic shifting, checking of comprehension, requests for clarification, slower pace, repetition, etc*). **Low-proficiency level learners** tend not to negotiate meaning with higher-proficiency level ones, who are *not usually willing to offer explanations*. There is more negotiation when the lower- proficiency level ones are the senders of the messages. **“Social relationships between learners”** strongly impact **key cognitive processes** involved in the negotiation of meaning. Social settings also make an impact on **learner’s language production** since learners **adjust** their IL to the forms used by their interlocutors depending on whether there is identification with the interlocutors or not. It is clearly seen in **naturalistic settings** and explored by the **Accommodation Theory**. In the “**socio-cultural** theory”, new IL forms originate in **collaborative dialogue** in a relaxed setting with supportive others and gradually get internalized in a process called “**scaffolding**”.

Regarding the effects of **“simplified input like Motherese or Caretaker speech** (*child-directed speech adapted to be made more comprehensible, and it changes according to the developmental stages of the learners*). It concentrates on the **social appropriateness and meaning rather than on correction**. It contains shorter utterances, few subordinate and co-ordinate constructions, tutorial questions and high level of redundancy, as well as adjustments in pitch, intonation

and rhythm), **the route of acquisition** (transitional states learners go through while acquiring L1/2) is not altered by differences in the linguistic environment. But the way mothers talk to children has effects on the **rate of learning** (speed at which L1/2 proficiency is developed). Its key features are rather interactional than formal, ie, the mother's **choice of discourse function** (e.g. ***commands rather than questions***) and the **devices** she uses to sustain the conversation (requests for clarifications, expansions, acknowledgements), which provide the right kind of data to foster development. In the sphere of SLA, "**Modified Input**" is present both in natural (1)**foreigner talk**: a dynamic and grammatically simplified way used by Native Speakers to address Non-Native Speakers, which changes according to situational factors like age, topic and the proficiency levels, 2) **the discourse** involving conversations between Native Speakers and Non-Native Speakers and **in instructed settings**.

In classroom settings, teachers also use "**teacher talk**", and these types of **distorted input** may ***not be conducive to language learning in all levels***, as it does not give learners experience in how to initiate a conversation, for instance. Ellis reports **4 types of language use or discourse identified in the classrooms**: 1) **mechanical** (*no exchange of meaning is involved*), 2) **meaningful** (*language use is contextualized, not conveying real info*), 3) **pseudo-communicative** (*info is exchanged in a way which is unlikely to occur outside the classroom*),4) **real communication** (*consisting of spontaneous natural speech*).

➤ **Error correction**

It is always **value-laden**, so noticing a mistake does not always result in **uptake**, since the **corrector** (native speaker, teacher or peer) has to **be accepted** by the learner as having the **right** to give the correction. ***Disregard for an interlocutor who is less socially dominant or significant to the learner*** may also cause a learner **to ignore or discount that interlocutor's corrective feedback on their L2 form**. Because "error detection" does not depend only on **psycholinguistic factors** (***attention***), but also on the **social context** (the

accuracy demand of the tasks, who the **listeners** are, whether there is an audience, etc).

L2 Knowledge (According to Ellis, **Interlanguage** is a **natural language system** which is independent from L1 and L2. It is systematic because learners operate according to an **internalized mental grammar** at all stages of development, showing some features of the L1 which are very general and tend to occur in most IL systems.

The concept of **Interlanguage** was developed in 1960's as researchers found out that **learner's errors** were systematic, not random. It is not an impoverished version of L2 but a **language on its own**. Learners follow similar **routes** in their acquisition, irrespective of factors such as their L1, age, learning situations, individual differences, although there are minor differences as regards the **order** in which some features are learnt. **IL are very dynamic and evolve as learners receive input and revise their hypotheses and make their L2 system more and more complex.**

The **Analysis of Learners' errors** shows the existence of **developmental errors** reflecting the existence of predictable **developmental sequences**. Learners may use **language forms** that are typical of **various stages**. A **stage** can be characterized by the emergence and increasing frequency of a particular form. However, a learner may slip back to an earlier stage in a communicative interaction when he undergoes conditions of stress and complexity. According to Ellis, and based on his study on the Acquisition of negation, the **developmental sequences focused on the Acquisition of grammatical features** (External negation – internal negation – negative attachment to modal verbs- L2 rule is reached, marked for tense and number), are gradual with overlaps and variability since some learners take longer to pass certain stages, for example. Besides, **learning settings** may affect the **rate of development** (e.g. language instruction may accelerate the speed with which some learners pass through some stages).

Research on **developmental sequences** has concentrated only on a few structures and the results suggest that ***the sequence of acquisition may be built-in in the learner's mind***. In Littlewood's views, "the internal syllabus often overrides the external syllabus which the teacher or the course book tries to impose even in the spontaneous speech of classrooms" as some structures may be governed by psycholinguistic processing constraints, so that the achievement of one stage is a prerequisite for achieving the next". "One form is more likely to be learnt if it is supported by transfer" and "a form may be acquired more rapidly if it is more frequent or more salient in the input".

Although there may be a natural **route for language acquisition**, the interplay between INPUT and INTERACTION can affect it in several ways, in Ellis views. For example, by providing learners with **formulaic speech, ready-made chunks and routinised interactions**, which may serve **immediate communication purposes** and also being raw material for analysis into component parts, vital part in learning process. **Frequency of occurrence** may also affect the route of acquisition. Learners learn first those items they are frequently exposed to. Finally, regarding the **availability of comprehensible input**, *Krashen* stated in his **INPUT HYPOTHESIS**, ***learners need to receive input that contains samples of the language which, according to the natural order, are due to be acquired next***. It is called I+1. For learners to understand input, it is a prerequisite that **they are focused on meaning, not on form**.

- The **OUTPUT HYPOTHESIS** developed by Swain (1995),

It is in direct opposition to Krashen's view, and claims that *producing language serves Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in several ways. Output makes learners process language more deeply, and play a more active role in their learning process as well. Learners may move from the semantic processing typical of comprehension to the grammar processing needed for accurate production. The role of OUTPUT fostering the development of Syntax and Morphology underlies the three **functions** ascribed to it by the Output Hypothesis: 1) **Noticing** (*it is a consciousness-raising function about the linguistic problems learners may**

*encounter producing the target language, raising awareness of the language item(s) they need to learn and / or consolidate), 2) **Hypothesis Testing*** (errors in learners' IL reveal hypotheses they hold about the target language. When learners engage in communication and need to negotiate meaning, over 1/3 of their utterances are semantical, syntactical or morphologically modified, and *this process contributes to acquisition as this "modified output" may be considered the leading-edge of the learner's Interlanguage (IL), 3) **Conscious Reflection*** (it is a metalinguistic function of output, which consists of *using language to reflect on it by means of tasks that, while being communicative, focus on language form*. This function also creates the necessary conditions for the other two functions to take place. E.g. collaborative work, in which learners are led to reflect on their production as they attempt to create meaning.). Krashen's **Input Hypothesis** claims that the only positive role for OUTPUT is *to allow learners to get more input*. It can be taken as the *external manifestation of a learner's Interlanguage* since OUTPUT and IL are inextricably linked and they have a common characteristic which is VARIABILITY.

From the **teacher's point of view**, OUTPUT is more than the external realization of the learner's Interlanguage. It is also a means for language development. Output may serve as a starting point for further work, as it provides teachers with data to work on.

From the **learner's point of view**, it is also necessary to understand the nature of their production so as to avoid the anxiety that may be brought about by their errors, which may result in their losing motivation. It is also important for learners to be able to detect changes in their output, and to become aware of their development. Provided learners are conscious of their linguistic production, output measures their achievement and provides them with opportunities for further development.

➤ **Types of Instruction**

a) Focus on Forms Approach(a type of instruction based on a structural syllabus which teaches and tests language items one by one as the main objective is the learning of those forms. It is counter-productive. It is likely to **succeed** if rules are explicit and supported by examples, and if the instruction is directed to establishing form-meaning connections during comprehension and to developing explicit knowledge through consciousness-raising activities).

b) Focus on Form Approach (it is when learners' conscious attention is directed towards a certain language feature during the input processing due to direct intervention of the teacher or because the learner notices a feature. It is when a teacher gives corrective feedback during a communicative task while focusing on a formal property at the same time. It results in faster learning and higher levels of proficiency. Students acquire a language best when they have focused on it because they need it, or they have come across a **meaning-focused communicative task** and they have notice language which is relevant to them. This kind of **acquisition** is superior to asking students to focus on a series of pre-determined forms).

Implicit vs. Explicit Instruction: The type of instruction treatment may depend on the type of **linguistic material** to be learnt, and also to the **individual characteristics** of the learners. **Formal instruction** can be **implicit** (learners must induce rules from the examples given) or **explicit** (learners are given the rules to practice later). **Practice** (aims at developing implicit knowledge and it is beneficial only if it takes place under realistic operating conditions giving the learners the opportunity to produce a target structure in similar circumstances to those of the normal communication). **Consciousness –raising Activities** (only require the learners to understand the target structure, not to produce it. It aims at producing explicit knowledge). **Explicit knowledge** may affect implicit knowledge through monitoring, improving the accuracy of communicative output, and it will facilitate learning and the comparison of input with the learners' IL, which may foster acquisition.

Long added that “input is rendered comprehensible by the fact that learners use the **(extra)linguistic contexts and their general knowledge** to interpret the language which they do not actually know. Besides, some **adjustments** are usually made in interactions to aid comprehension. And if these conditions are met, **acquisition** will proceed automatically. However, when we watch TV or read, there are no interactional modifications and also, interactional modifications do not always result in comprehensive input.

The only role *Krashen* gives to **OUTPUT** is that of generator of more input. As **intake** is the necessary condition for **SLA** and as not all input is intake, it is believed that the factors that may mould intake are: **MOTIVATION, THE INTERNAL PROCESSING MECHANISMS, and FEATURES OF INPUT.** According to Ellis, as Input may also affect the RATE OF ACQUISITION, the following features are likely to aid rapid development: 1) **A high quantity of input** (*directed at the learner*), 2) **The learner’s perceived need to communicate in L2**, 3) **Independent control of the propositional content by the learner** (*e.g. Topic choice*), 4) **Adherence to the here and now principle** (*at least initially*), 5) **The performance of range of speech acts by Native Speakers/Teacher and the Learner** (*learner’s opportunity to listen to and produce functional language*), 6) **Exposure to high quantity of directives**, 7) **Exposure to a high quantity of “extending utterances** (*requests for clarification and confirmation, paraphrases and expansions*), 8) **Opportunities for uninhibited practice** (*to experiment using new forms*).

➤ **STUDYING TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES**

(www.studygs.net/shared/studying.ht)

While **social interaction** may give the learner the **BEST DATA** to work with, **the brain**, in turn, must work out ***a fitting and relevant model of that input.***

✓ **CLARIFYING CONCEPTS**

Strategy [C]: a particular plan for gaining success in a particular activity or for personal advantage (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, New Edition, page 1045), e.g. a strategy for dealing with this situation i.e. low scores, weak performance, bad/ unexpected results, difficulties or inability to ask questions communicatively.

Technique [C/U]: (a) method of doing something that needs skill, esp., in art, music, literature, etc.

e.g. If you want to learn to ask questions, study your teacher's explanations and practise them thinking of other examples of your own.

e.g. If you want to improve your overall learning performance and results, I suggest that you go through the following list of "**Learning and studying techniques**":

✓ **LEARNING**

Learning a language, we follow the advice that **practice** makes it perfect, and **patience** a helpful virtue:

Learning to learn, Succeeding in continuing education, Visual/spatial learning, (Learning, for visual-spatial learners, takes place all at once), **Learning as a student-athlete or student-performer** (Indicators of a "kinesthetic intelligence" or body smarts), Learning with ADHD(attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder), Active learning (experiential, mindful, and engaging), Action learning (a learning and problem-solving strategy for organizations), **Considering Multiple Intelligences** and their main characteristics.

✓ **LEARNING WITH OTHERS**

Collaborative/cooperative learning (a team process where members support and rely on each other),

Group projects(Learning and working in groups involves shared and/or learned values),

Active and Effective Listening (a habit, as well as the foundation of effective communication),

Peer mediation(a program and a process where students of the same age-group facilitate resolving disputes),

Tutoring guidelines (providing expertise, experience, and encouragement instead of "answers"),

✓ **STUDYING**

- **EFFECTIVE STUDYING HABITS** -Assessing study skills (You can prepare yourself to succeed in your studies. Try to develop and appreciate the following habits):

A.S.P.I.R.E. - a study system (Approach | Select | Piece | Investigate | Re-evaluate | Evaluate/Explore).

Index - a study system that gives you an accurate perception of how well you know the material, and forces you to think about it, rather than just look over it.

Create, & study with, flashcards (this simple study technique has proved to be one of the most effective study strategies for memorizing).

Studying with multiple sources (Course information can be delivered through a variety of formats).

Finding the right study space (changing where you study may help a lot).

Problem- based learning(PBL) (an exciting alternative where your teacher presents you with a problem, not lectures or assignments or exercises).

Using guided notes (teacher-prepared hand-outs that outline or map lectures, but leave "blank" space for key concepts, facts and definitions).

- **YOUR CLASSROOM PREPARATION STRATEGY** (for example, considering the following techniques and / or rules):

Paying attention, Classroom Discussions (at the appropriate time, do not be afraid to voice your opinions), taking notes (develop a note-taking system), etc.,

(Retrieved from <http://www.studygs.net/shared/studying.ht>.)

- **ASKING QUESTIONS**

Listening to others' questions, volunteering to participate/ ask, not being afraid to voice questions, rephrasing questions when not able to get the requested information, practising the formulation of questions in different contexts and / or circumstances).

SECTION 3: "DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES /SEQUENCES"*(whole section designed quoting from **DOMAN, Evelyn** (2012). Online submission. "Further Evidence for the **Developmental Stages of Language Learning and Processability**". US-China Education Review A9 (2012) 813-825 (Retrieved October 10th, 2015)*

According to Evelyn Doman (2012), research suggests overwhelmingly that language learning is a developmental process, which cannot be consciously controlled or predicted by teachers or learners (J. Willis & D. Willis, 2001, p. 179). The grammar and syntax of second languages seem to develop in stages which are compatible to first language acquisition order. Although grammar is but one component of language learning, it is a fundamental one.

Contributions to the notion that language learning is systematic have come from research conducted in various fields, such as speech processing, SLA, the

study of language change and variation, and the study of pidgin and Creole languages. While these studies showed that some amount of variation occurred in language learning, they strongly pointed to the idea that language is learned in sequences, which have been defined by Johnston (1985) as “**Developmental stages**”.

According to the definition of “Developmental Stages”, it follows that new linguistic information can only be acquired if the prerequisites have been met beforehand. Such linguistic information focuses primarily on grammatical knowledge, with word order forming only one part of such knowledge. In short, language is a series of building blocks. They are steps that lead to the acquisition of a particular structure.

When studying developmental sequences, learners’ errors are analyzed to understand the process of SLA. They show how L2 learners pass through certain sequences of development which are similar to the ones that children go through when they are learning their L1. Research reveals the existence of developmental errors which reflect the learners’ internalized grammar of the target language as well as the existence of predictable developmental sequences.

After German as L2 stages had been established, developmental stages for ESL were proposed on the basis of Johnston’s (1985) study of ESL development and variation. He claimed to have established SIX developmental stages for English, which are detailed as follows:

- ✓ In **Stage 1**: single words, short strings and formulae, lemma access (=the meaning of a word plus its syntactic information) is activated in the lexicon. At this point it is impossible for a learner to create phrases and no matching of features (e.g. SV agreement) is possible.

- ✓ In **Stage 2**: they can organize these words into clauses and form simple sentences using the canonical order SVO. Here, **morphology** is also introduced into learners’ interlanguages (including free and bound

morphemes). Each lemma can be associated with categorical information (noun, verb, etc.). At this stage, learners may map words directly from conceptual structure. The result is that all strings follow canonical word order. At this stage, the processability theory can only operate on elements within a single phrasal category, since nothing else is available. For instance, featural information can be exchanged regarding plurals and possessive pronouns.

- ✓ At **Stage 3: agreement** between words in a noun phrase is noticed. Possessive “s” and plural “s” are introduced at this time. The **syntax** of the clause begins to develop in the fronting of words e.g. adverb and do fronting. The category information stored with each lemma (e.g. noun) can serve as the head to a phrasal category (e.g. noun phrase). There is now enough space to perform only those operations which affect structures at the beginnings and ends of sentences, as these positions are salient and universal, i.e., they require no language specific processing and therefore, little memory space. At this state, phrases are available for the exchange of featural information, so that an adverb or other element (e.g. auxiliary) can be moved to the beginning of a sentence.

- ✓ At **Stage 4**: learners are able to move beyond SVO structures and can form **questions with VS word order**. This stage introduces sentence-internal operations. However, only operations that are “anchored” by initial or final positions will be possible, due to working memory limitations. Morphological marking may be present for the 1st time at this stage. But it must be local (within a phrase), e.g. articles may be present, but agreement marking will not, and word order should be target-like.

- ✓ At **Stage 5**: wh-questions and negations are acquired. As SV agreement is developed, the acquisition of 3rd person singular nouns is possible. Complete sentence-internal operations are possible now. In fact, linguistic processing has become automatized enough to provide plenty of working memory space for all necessary operations to take place, including those

that operate between phrases. At this stage, all morphological marking should be present, even when it requires relations between phrases, as agreement does marking.

- ✓ At the **6th and Final stages**: learners can produce inversion, which enables them to use statement word order in subordinate clauses. A procedure that operates differently cross-linguistically is added and applies only to subordinate clauses. In English, it operates on wh-noun clauses. Because this procedure requires “cancelling”, a procedure acquired earlier, it is thought to be particularly difficult for learners. (Being at the final stage implies that all the other stages have been passed through, i.e. there is no way to miss a step or backtrack).

Drawing upon evidence from the L1 (English), Pienemann (1995) posited **canonical order** the word order of sentences in a language, such as SVO (Subject + Verb + Object) for English. He then hypothesized that L2 learners develop through gradual and increasingly complex modifications of these principles, also consider that once a learner’s stage has been determined, teaching is possible and productive. Instruction will be **beneficial** if it focuses on structures from “**the next stage**” (Input+1) (Pienemann, 1998, p. 25). In such assumptions, Pienemann (1998) defined not only **what** should be taught, but also **when** it should be taught.

This proposal is not uncontroversial. Some researchers have argued that the order of acquisition for a variety of languages fails to follow the predicted hierarchy. For instance, Alhawary (2003) demonstrated that the acquisition of noun-adjective agreement and the acquisition of SV agreement by English-speaking learners of Arabic do not follow the order of development predicted by this Processability Theory. Similarly, Farley and McCollam (2004) argued that learners of Spanish produce forms in a somewhat different order than that predicted by the theory. Dewaele and Veronique (2001) also argued that this Processability Theory is not adequate to account for the acquisition of gender in learners of French. Their study shows that intra-clausal gender marking is not

acquired earlier than inter-clausal gender marking, contradicting the theory. Another issue raised by researchers is that this Processability Theory, while making generally correct predictions, may still be inadequate to account for many aspects of acquisition (Glahn et al. (2001) like discourse and conceptual factors. Despite this controversy, it can be claimed that an understanding of the developmental stages provides invaluable knowledge into how languages are learned and how to gear materials to the levels of learners when they are better equipped to accept new language patterns into their Interlanguage.

Consequently, the concept of “developmental stages” is worth mentioning in this literature review as it can provide suitable explanations of the reasons why many learners of Néstor O. Palacios School usually have difficulties to ask questions and make predictable or unpredictable mistakes.

❖ **SECTION 4: DEVELOPING “INQUIRING MINDS”**

In “*Por Una Pedagogía de la Pregunta”, Crítica a una Educación basada en Respuestas a Preguntas Inexistentes*”, Antonio Faundez and Paulo Freire criticize the type of Education based on ready-made answers given to questions that have never been asked. In the book, Faundez posits that the “**expository pedagogy based on answers**”, which is used by our school system nowadays, is a type of pedagogy based on the adaptation of all practices to the existing answers that teachers usually bring to their classrooms without the intention of fostering creativity, curiosity, innovation, etc. This type of pedagogy tends to suffocate the power to ask questions that each person has and to castrate his / her curiosity. Apparently these authoritarian teachers that apply this traditional pedagogy only intend to preserve order and discipline in the classrooms and to disguise the fears that they usually have and they silence their students’ questions because those questions are often regarded as insolent, silly, naive, a waste of time or out of place. The author also refers to “**the bureaucratism of questions**”, which he relates to the adaptation and modification of the school system and its practices so as to have reduced levels of **risk and surprise, without the**

presence of questions. Faundez believes that “when risks are neglected, human existence is also denied or neglected and that every intellectual work we do both in theory and in practice tends to have a better understanding of reality in order to transform it when possible”. Accordingly, he posits the need of a different type of pedagogy that might contribute to a better understanding of and to the transformation of our reality, of our world. He introduces the concept of “**a questioning pedagogy**”, which is a type of democratic and participative pedagogy that welcomes and respects differences as opportunities to change, learn and grow. This necessary new type of Education must be considered as a democratic process of continual change, renovation, transformation and dialogue, where learning to ask and fostering the use of questions is an element of key importance for learners and teachers. All type of **knowledge** always begins with a **question** because **curiosity** itself is a question, in his view. Unfortunately, today’s educational system and knowledge are related to answers and not to questions. To improve the quality and results of the different educational processes, it is necessary to learn once and again how to ask essential questions because they are the only ones that generate essential answers. Faundez claims that **teachers should know and teach their students how to ask** relevant questions and that the only way to **improve teaching is by learning and by facing challenges and risky opportunities** to grow and improve. Consequently, he recommends a new type of pedagogy where errors and mistakes are seen as positive elements or signals leading to successful learning and knowledge. This pedagogy is based on the encouragement of freedom to ask to develop and bring about our learners’ creativity, curiosity and surprise in order to be able to sort out the essential and life or knowledge-related problems that students must face every day. Of course, “**dialogue**” is fundamental for this pedagogy which considers **Knowledge and reality** as **processes** that can be reached only through dialogue. Finally, the author refers to the fact that the present traditional school system might view a teacher’s humbleness, **modesty and dialogue** as a signal of weakness and ignorance. However, in his views, a teacher’s strength is shown precisely when he dares accept that he is not the

owner of **the truth**, that he may have a part of the truth or the knowledge that students seek and that the rest is in them; consequently, they should look for it together.

On the other hand, Paulo Freire claims that should **important questions** not be as neglected as they are, we could all contribute to more democratic participation, decisions and better outcomes when trying to solve existing problems. Besides, as people's incompetence is taken for granted, the first questions, those fundamental ones that might provide us with essential information are not being asked anymore because they are considered to be not worth asking anymore. Accordingly, the dominant groups or classes usually impose their preferences, choices and decisions. Unfortunately, **authoritarianism** is an obstacle for the educational practices and experiences that inhibits and represses the development and expression of our inquiring minds. It usually regards the challenging nature of questions as an unacceptable attack to the classroom order and to his/ her authority. As a result, people do not usually feel comfortable when they have to, dare or ask a question (as expressed by students when answering the questionnaire. See the report on the students' questionnaire). In Freire's views, teachers should welcome their students' questions as opportunities to think of the topics that they are teaching differently. Questions are always good opportunities to learn, to motivate and to develop curiosity and creativity. According to the author, questions should never be criticized or regarded as silly or naïve but taken as good opportunities to teach something new, such as a better way to reformulate the same question.

TIME SCALE

<u>Literature Review, Theoretical background Elaboration:</u>	4 months
<u>Research Tools Elaboration and Collection, Observation and Register, Results analysis and interpretation:</u>	2 months
<u>Final Conclusions, Thesis Writing:</u>	1 month

FINAL WORDS

We are all teachers and educators living in a globalised and constantly changing world. As such, we share the interests, problems, needs and the demands of the present times. Nowadays there is a bigger demand for the educational systems to foster thinking, questioning, independent, democratic, creative and highly committed citizens who are willing to participate and to cooperate in whatever possible way they can in order to meet the needs of this changing wave. As citizens we also need to have a better grasp of reality and of the characteristics of the era of Science, Technology and Communication revolution in times of severe moral, family, institutional, value and faith crises affecting the world as a whole and, of course, our country, our homes and families, the educational system, and eventually our teaching practices and their results.

Quoting from teacher Silvia Morgavi's presentation notes, "*Language is a very pervasive entity and unfortunately, there is little awareness of its magnitude among its users. There is not a single aspect of human life where language is not present*", and in my humble opinion, all teachers should have a brain education or at least read about "Neuroscience" and "Applied Linguistics": their findings and their implications. Related to the former, take for instance the case of teachers with an understanding of **brain plasticity**: *they will never label or categorize their students' learning capacity. Instead they usually have a wider view of the learner, and this can change the learners' **experiences** because with **practice and remedial lessons**, it will be possible for the students to get a fuller understanding of the concepts.* On the other hand, while reading or studying "Applied Linguistics", teachers become familiar with cognitive and biological explanations related to such topics as what the components of language acquisition are, the learners' differences and learning styles, and different types of instruction among other topics. And reading about both subjects, teachers can read and understand the fundamentals of developmental sequences or stages, which can also provide the school communities with plausible and suitable explanations for the learners of

Néstor O. Palacios Secondary School difficulties to learn and apply question forms, just to mention a possible application of this type of knowledge.

To accomplish the goal of living and not just surviving in this world, we need active, creative and practical citizens who are able to solve the different problems that life constantly offers to each of us. Progress and success might be better attained if problems are regarded as “opportunities” to grow and to transform the negative aspects of reality into something (more) positive. Accordingly, this proposal intends to suggest a possible solution to one of the biggest problems affecting the learners of Néstor O. Palacios school and their school performance and academic results; namely, these learners’ difficulty to ask questions in order to get the information they need to do the different assignments or to show their curiosity, interest and to voice their minds. Its implementation can also be one of the means to reach that intended institutional progress, considering the positive and negative aspects of the school reality as well as its weaknesses and its strengths.

This proposal introduces a project work specifically designed for Néstor O. Palacios School to use questions intensively during the period of time allowed for the implementation of the present project in the year 2016. The intention is to develop, motivate and encourage “inquiring minds”, especially among the learners whose academic performance and school results need to be improved in most school subjects in this school community. The idea is also to make sure that the teachers of this school know how, teach and do elicit questions from their learners in order to help them learn and exercise their inquiring ability as a strategy to have better overall performance with better school results and marks. Nonetheless, whether this project proves to be as useful as expected, i.e. - *whether developing or encouraging inquiring minds in the learners of Néstor O. Palacios School is a useful strategy to improve learning results and learners’ performance* - , are data that will only be available after this project’s implementation and assessment in the year 2016 (See that there is a specific questionnaire which I have designed to assess the impact of this project in this school community).

Evidence for the importance of the implementation of a different type of pedagogy that fosters “inquiring minds” is given by Faundez and Freire. Together with their criticism on the “expository pedagogy” that characterizes our present educational system, these authors posit the relevance of adopting “an inquiring pedagogy” in our classrooms. Data about what a question is, its types and uses have been taken from the 2010 edition of the Royal Spanish Academy Dictionary, and data about the Néstor O. Palacios School authorities, teachers and learners’ opinion, preferences and difficulties when having to ask / elicit questions are provided by the different questionnaires and reports addressed to the school authorities. Last, evidence for the possible reasons why these learners do not learn how to ask or do not use questions communicatively also integrating them to previous knowledge is quoted from the information presented in the compulsory bibliography chosen by the teachers of “**Applied Linguistics**” and “**Educational Research**”. Applied Linguistics and Educational Research are subjects that I studied at FASTA University while attending Licenciatura en Inglés classes together with subjects like **E.S.P.** *preparing me to write this work*; **PIVU**, *organizing my way through it*; **Semiotics, Linguistics and Educational Research**, *contributing to my better understanding of language teaching and its peculiarities*; **Fundamental Ethics** and **Theological Anthropology**, *creating the right atmosphere and spirit to dare do this project work*; **Methodology**, *helping me choose the research topic for this work* and **Final Research Project**, *engaging me in this great venture*.

Of course, people may think of many possible reasons, - *different from the ones suggested in this work* - , for the learners of Néstor O. Palacios School to be having a weak performance and low scores in their tests and learning results (see the Literature Review). Perhaps some people might also claim that these learners’ difficulty to ask questions is not one of the main problems to face and solve in this school right now, and perhaps learning to ask, and/ or daring ask questions aloud or in writing does not have the expected impact either. However, I believe that the present school situation needs not only to reflect upon and to discuss topics but also to do something to change the present situation as soon as possible.

Accordingly, the development of “inquiring minds” may turn out to be a useful strategy since it is a project specifically designed to try to change the current state of things of this school. Finally, I believe that all the teachers working at Néstor O. Palacios School should join this project accepting an opportunity to participate more actively in the school decisions and life. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

To conclude, the following words summarize the main intention that has guided this project’s design. They are the lyrics of the song: “**The Impossible Dream**” (**Man of La Mancha**) which teacher Juan Gabriel Ravasi shared with his learners, during the presentation of his subject: **Fundamental Ethics**. These lyrics may be a wonderful source of inspiration for both learners and educators and for all of us:

The Impossible Dream

To dream, the impossible dream to fight the unbeatable foe.
To bear with unbearable sorrow. To run where the brave dare not go.
To right the unrightable wrong. To be better far than you are.
To try when your arms are too weary to reach the unreachable star.

Oh this is my quest... To follow that star... no matter how hopeless.
No matter how far...to fight for the right...**without question**(*to me, only acceptable in this context*) or pause.

To be willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause.
And all I know...If I’ll only be true. To this glorious quest.
Then my heart will lie peaceful and calm when I’m laid to my rest.
And the world will be better for this.
That one man scorned and covered with scars.
Still strove with his last ounce of courage to reach the unreachable star.

Salta, 16th March, 2016

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Graciela F. Onaga

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APPENDIX A: THE INSTITUTIONAL PROJECT: THE IMPORTANCE OF QUESTIONS

NESTOR OSCAR PALACIOS PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL N° 5020

N°	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	METHODOLOGY	RESOURCES	
				Human	Financial/ materi
1	The 1 st School Meeting	<p>-To inform the school authorities about the project and ask for permission to have some time available during the 1st or any school meeting and to have access to statistical and other school information (staff, students' results, N.A.P., syllabuses, etc.).</p>	<p>a) BEFORE PERMISSION</p> <p>School Authorities</p> <p>-Letter (see Appendix B) with a copy of the project and a report on the results of the questionnaires to justify the need to propose this intervention project.</p> <p>-Ask for permission to use different school resources (overhead projector, computers, sound equipment, coordinators, technicians, etc) and to be part of the school PMI (the</p>	<p>This project author.</p> <p>The school authorities including the school supervisor.</p>	<p>Letter copies</p> <p>A copy of the proj</p> <p>Financial support offer a coffee brea</p> <p>Financial support pay for the copies</p>

		<p>-To make sure that the Project has all the necessary support to guarantee the project's viability, relevance and successful implementation.</p>	<p>institutional project to improve the school management) having the necessary financial support to pay for any professional advice and materials: copies, coffee break, etc. - Agree on the meeting date and on the time assigned for the project presentation. - Ask for permission to have a meeting with the different coordinators to inform them about the project and to ask for their help during the meeting.</p>		
		<p>-To inform the school coordinators about the project and to give them the meeting layout.</p>	<p>School Coordinators</p> <p>A meeting to: -inform them of the project, -to ask them for</p>	<p>This project author. The school authorities. The different coordinators.</p>	<p>Meeting layout copies(1 per coordinator)</p>

		<p>-To encourage and have their support and participation.</p> <p>-To ensure this activity's success.</p>	<p>cooperation: <u>giving them a copy of the meeting layout with activities that they should develop before, during and after the meeting.</u></p> <p>(see Appendix B)</p>		
		<p>-To inform the school technicians about the project.</p> <p>-To encourage and have their support and participation.</p> <p>-To prevent unnecessary risks and / or mistakes.</p>	<p><u>School Technicians</u></p> <p>-Agree on everything necessary for the meeting: equipment(computers, powerpoint presentations, microphone, overhead projector, etc), date and time, desks, chairs, etc.</p>	<p>This project author.</p> <p>The school authorities.</p> <p>The computer technicians</p>	<p>A list of the elements that will be necessary.</p>
			<p>b) <u>DURING</u></p>		
		<p>-To inform the staff about the interview results and what the commonest difficulties we</p>	<p>-Have the equipment, desks, chairs, copies, pendrive, CDs, etc, ready for the presentation.</p>	<p>This project author.</p> <p>The computer technicians.</p> <p>People in</p>	<p>Chairs,</p> <p>Powerpoint presentations</p> <p>Computers</p> <p>Overhead projector</p> <p>Microphone,</p>

		<p>are all having related to our students and their results, esp., referring to the <u>lack of inquiring minds.</u></p> <p>-To refresh the info we might have about questions (structures, types, uses, the types of questions students are expected to ask and actually ask).</p> <p>-To reflect upon the importance of being able to ask questions communicatively in whatever context /situation you are.</p>		<p>charge of cleaning the premises and organizing chairs, desks, preparing breakfast, washing, etc.</p> <p>The school staff.</p>	<p>Breakfast Cups, plates,</p>
		With all the Staff			
			<p>-Share the interview results,</p> <p>-Talk about questions and suggest considering it a <i>“useful learning strategy”</i> to be dealt with as part of the school PMI.</p> <p>(see Appendix B)</p> <p>-Coffee break</p>	<p>The school authorities. The school staff including the coordinators and the author of this project.</p> <p>People in charge of buying, preparing and serving breakfast</p>	<p>Chairs, Powerpoint presentations Computers Overhead project Microphone,</p> <p>Breakfast, Cups, plates, Kettles, Cleaning elements etc</p>

		-To propose considering them as a useful learning strategy that should be encouraged in our students in order to have better learning processes and outcomes in this school.		The staff	
			With the Peers/ Per Area/ Per Subject		
		-To share ideas, strategies, activities, suggestions to encourage inquiring minds in the different classrooms and in the different subjects. -To revise the basic content each course	-Discuss about and make a list of: * the relevant questions they expect their students to ask, *how to elicit those questions (activities, strategies, games, etc.) *where to leave the list available for whoever wants to use	Coordinators Peer teachers	List of NAPs Syllabuses, The meeting layout The chart that have to fill in (appendix B)

		<p>should deal with (NAP) .</p> <p>-To make a list of the expected / relevant questions that teachers should elicit / encourage from students.</p>	<p>it (should it be a “booklet”?, Who will design it? When?).</p> <p>*when and how to implement the use of the list.</p> <p>(see Appendix B)</p>		
			<p>With all the Staff</p>		
		<p>-To share experiences and the product of the different group work.</p> <p>-To invite to and suggest making “<u>The School question booklet</u>”, an institutional learning tool to help improve school processes.</p> <p>-To inform the staff that there</p>	<p>-Share the group’s experience collecting the lists and sharing views.</p> <p>-Give the school authorities a copy of the lists of questions made by the different groups of teachers.</p> <p>-Suggesting the convenience of gathering all lists in a “booklet” (it could have all the school subjects lists together separated per subject or each department</p>	<p>The whole staff.</p>	<p>The list of questions</p> <p>Microphone Chairs</p>

		will be a <u>date</u> <u>when</u> <u>the</u> <u>whole</u> <u>community will</u> <u>be</u> <u>communicating</u> <u>through</u> <u>questions</u> to apply what we have worked with today which is this project's 2 nd activity	could work on a "department booklet" gathering all questions and activities per school year and/ or per topic (NAP). -Inform the staff about the implementation of Activity 2 (rules, aims, date).		
<u>2</u>	A day communicating only through questions	-To remind and/ or inform the community about the activity so as to agree on every detail necessary to guarantee the success of the activity.	a) BEFORE -Remind the school community that on a pre-established date, the whole community will communicate only through questions. -Encourage everyone to join the activity in a playful way. It will be like a game. Its rule is to say whatever you say and even to reply with a question. -Agree on the best	Coordinators School authorities and the author of this project	Notice boards Libros de actas Cuadernos departament

			<p>punishment to those who do not follow the rule and on a prize for the courses that participated more eagerly.</p> <p>-Encourage teachers to prepare activities using questions: eliciting information, presenting topics, evaluating, etc., through questions.</p>		
			b) <u>DURING</u>		
			-Everybody communicates using questions or else they will be punished.	The whole school community	
			c) <u>AFTER</u>		
			<p>-Deliver questionnaires to find out about the impact of Activity 2 and / or about the usefulness of the booklets .</p> <p>(see Appendix B)</p>	<p>Coordinators This project author The whole school community</p>	<p>Computer to v reports. Questionnaire cop Recorder</p>

			<p>-Write a report of the results of these questionnaires.</p> <p>-Inform the school authorities about the results of the activities.</p> <p>-Recommend the convenience or not of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * implementing a "Question Day" frequently, * encouraging the use of the booklets and their constant improvement, edition, etc. *assessing the impact of this project in the school results. 		
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APPENDIX B:

1.- LETTERS TO THE SCHOOL AUTHORITIES ASKING FOR PERMISSION.

1A) PERMISSION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

Salta, 24 de marzo de 2016.

Personal Directivo

U.E. N° 5020

Prof. Néstor O. Palacios

S / D

Estimados Profesores:

Me dirijo a ustedes y a través de su intermedio a quien corresponda, a fin de presentarles el proyecto "**La importancia de las preguntas**", cuya copia se adjunta a la presente, y para solicitar su autorización y apoyo para incorporarlo al PMI de la unidad educativa N° 5020 "Profesor Néstor Oscar Palacios" y para poder implementarlo durante el próximo año lectivo.

Motiva este pedido la necesidad de hacer una propuesta de intervención para armar mi trabajo de tesis de la materia Final Research Project, última materia de la Licenciatura de Inglés que estoy cursando en la Universidad FASTA, desde el año pasado.

Con la intención de contribuir a la mejora de los resultados escolares de la institución que ustedes conducen, y respondiendo a vuestra invitación efectuada a todo el personal docente durante la Jornada Institucional del pasado 31 de Agosto para participar más activamente en la toma de decisiones y procura de soluciones a las diversas problemáticas del Secundario Néstor O. Palacios, decidí

proponer la puesta en marcha del proyecto “**La Importancia de las Preguntas**” que está pensado como *proyecto institucional* debido a su relevancia para esta institución. Con el mismo pretendo sumarme al trabajo iniciado por el Departamento de Ciencias Sociales tendiente a implementar acciones para ayudar al alumnado a **mejorar su rendimiento escolar y resultados académicos** mediante la presentación de las **técnicas de estudio** más empleadas en dichas materias y aplicables a las otras áreas.

Como considero que saber y atreverse a efectuar interrogantes puede convertirse en una herramienta y técnica de estudio útil para el alumnado; como el alumnado de esta institución presenta dificultades al momento de formular preguntas y obtener información pertinente para su utilización en diversas tareas según lo demuestra el informe de los resultados de la encuesta que efectué al personal docente y a alumnos de esta institución (ver Anexo B) entre los meses de Agosto y Noviembre, y como la cartilla que los docentes de sociales armaron no incluye el estudio de “interrogantes”, será sumamente útil para esta comunidad educativa la puesta en marcha de este proyecto para lo cual preciso poder contar con vuestra autorización para poder acceder a la información que eventualmente pudiese precisarse, para poder implementar las acciones del proyecto contando con la colaboración del personal de los distintos departamentos de la institución, incluyendo el grupo de técnicos y con el apoyo financiero del PMI para cubrir gastos tales como: desayuno de trabajo, fotocopias, diseño y armado de cartillas y honorario de algún profesional que pudiese precisarse.

Sin otro particular, me despido esperando obtener una respuesta favorable a mi pedido y quedando a vuestra disposición para ampliar y / o aclarar cualquier información referente al proyecto que ustedes estimen pertinente.

Saluda a ustedes muy atentamente,

Graciela F. Onaga

Prof. de Inglés

**2.-REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF “Prof. Néstor O. Palacios School”
TEACHERS’ QUESTIONNAIRES in Spanish (for the school authorities) and in
English.**

Un total de 62 docentes pertenecientes a 19 espacios curriculares fueron encuestados entre los días 31 de agosto y 1º de setiembre en las instalaciones de esta institución educativa en el marco de la jornada institucional.

La cantidad de encuestados, los espacios curriculares en los que se desempeñan y su antigüedad en la docencia consta en el siguiente cuadro

Nº	Espacio Curricular en que se desempeñan los docentes	Nº de docentes encuestados por espacio curricular	Antigüedad en la docencia de estos docentes
1	Lengua y Literatura	3	Entre 7 y 28 años
2	Tecnología y Física	2	Entre 9 y 15 años
3	Historia/ Historia del Pensamiento	3	Entre 4 y 18 años
4	Ética	4	Entre 8 y 20 años
5	Educación Física	4	Entre 6 y 30 años
6	Lengua Extranjera Inglés	6	Entre 8 y 18 años
7	Lengua Extranjera Francés	3	Entre 5 y 23 años
8	Comunicación y Sociedad	2	Entre 5 y 11 años
9	Geografía	3	Entre 5 y 25 años
10	Artística	3	Entre 11 y 31 años
11	Matemática	5	Entre 7 y 34 años
12	Preceptores	3	Entre 5 y 15 años
13	Química	5	Entre 3 y 11 años
14	Biología	5	Entre 4 y 31 años

15	Profesor Enseñanza Primaria	2	Entre 15 y 28 años
16	Filosofía	2	Entre 10 y 16 años
17	Música	2	Entre 7 y 15 años
18	Ciencias Políticas	3	Entre 10 y 12 años
19	Física	2	Entre 7 y 34 años

1.- Al ser interrogados sobre su **desempeño profesional**, los resultados arrojados fueron que:

- 21 % trabajó o trabaja en escuelas primarias, el 98 % trabaja en el nivel secundario, el 29% trabaja o trabajó en superior; 100 % trabaja en escuelas estatales y el 44% trabajó o trabaja en instituciones privadas.

2.- Ante el interrogante de si “**alguna vez les resultó difícil lograr que sus alumnos aprendieran y aplicasen comunicativamente algún(os) de los temas listados**” entre las siguientes opciones:

a.- fundamentar sus respuestas coherentemente,

b.- obtener información haciendo preguntas abiertas y/ o cerradas a docente y / u otros,

c.- otras dificultad(es),

- Los resultados obtenidos fueron que el 63 % considera que sus alumnos manifiestan dificultades para fundamentar sus respuestas coherentemente; el 60 % considera que sus alumnos manifiestan dificultades al tener que obtener información haciendo preguntas abiertas y/ o cerradas a docente y / u otros; y el 40 % manifiesta que sus alumnos presentan dificultades tales como problemas de lecto-escritura, falta de atención y de hábitos de estudio, problemas de expresión oral y de comprensión de textos, mala predisposición al trabajo en el aula, falta de interés, de vocabulario, de práctica de lectura, y problemas de motricidad al ejecutar lo aprendido. Asimismo, manifiestan problemáticas asociadas al tipo de

vínculo establecido con los docentes que les permite o dificulta animarse a preguntar.

3.- Al ser interrogados sobre los **“comentarios que estos docentes pueden hacer con sus pares en charlas acerca de estas dificultades de sus alumnos”**,

- ninguno considera que es algo que sólo le sucede a sí mismo, el 97% considera que son problemas que enfrentan la mayoría de los docentes y un 1 % considera que esto sólo le sucede a una minoría.

4.- Basándose en la experiencia profesional de los encuestados y limitando la encuesta a uno de los tópicos listados en el inciso 2), ante el interrogante de **“dónde suelen manifestar mayores dificultades sus alumnos”**, y habiendo sido dadas las opciones:

a.- al momento de responder preguntas,

b.- cuando ellos deben formular sus propios interrogantes,

- Un 44 % de los encuestados consideran que sus alumnos presentan mayores dificultades al momento de responder preguntas y un 44 % considera que cuando ellos deben formular sus propios interrogantes.

5.- Finalmente, al ser interrogados respecto de las **causas de estas dificultades**, al tener que elegir entre las opciones dadas, el 36% considera que obedecen a una inadecuada selección de recursos, estrategias y / o metodología; el 36 % considera que se deben a un tipo de práctica insuficiente e/ o inadecuada sobre cómo formular interrogantes en el aula; el 66 % considera que se deben a falta de fluidez, de comprensión, de estudio y de práctica en los alumnos, el 66 %

considera que obedecen a la falta de motivación , tiempo y estudio en los alumnos; y el 30 % considera que se deben a cuestiones de personalidad y demás factores que pueden afectar negativamente el desempeño del alumnado. Así mismo, al momento de proponer otros factores que los encuestados consideran importantes, surgió la falta de estrategias para la adquisición del conocimiento por parte de los alumnos y falta de profesores con estrategias innovadoras para que el contenido les llegue y que los alumnos puedan asimilarlos.

Graciela F. Onaga

2b) REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Last August 31st and September 1st, 2015, a total number of 62 teachers teaching 19 school subjects in the different courses of the morning, afternoon and evening shifts of Néstor O. Palacios School N° 5020 answered this questionnaire while attending the institutional meetings held at the school premises.

The following chart provides the information about the number of teachers answering this questionnaire, the school subject(s) they teach at Néstor O Palacios school and their working seniority from the moment they joined the educational system as teachers:

Nº	School Subject	Nº of teachers of this subject answering the questionnaire	These teachers' working seniority (antigüedad)
1	Language	3	7 to 28 years of school work
2	Technology and Physics	2	9 to 15 years of school work
3	History/ History of Thought.	3	4 to 18 years of school work

4	Ethics	4	8 to 20 years of school work
5	Physical Education	4	6 to 30 years of school work
6	Foreign Language: English	6	8 to 18 years of school work
7	Foreign Language: French	3	5 to 23 years of school work
8	Communication and Society	2	5 to 11 years of school work
9	Geography	3	5 to 25 years of school work
10	Art	3	11 to 31 years of school work
11	Mathematics	5	7 to 34 years of school work
12	School Prefects	3	5 to 15 years of school work
13	Chemistry	5	3 to 11 years of school work
14	Biology	5	4 to 31 years of school work
15	Primary School Teacher	2	15 to 28 years of school work
16	Philosophy	2	10 to 16 years of school work
17	Music	2	7 to 15 years of school work
18	Political Sciences	3	10 to 12 years of school work
19	Physics	2	7 to 34 years of school work

When answering the 1st question about “their professional life”, their answers were that:

- 21 % either taught or is teaching at primary school level, 98 % is teaching at Secondary School level, 29% taught or is teaching at University level; 100 % is teaching at Public Schools and 44% taught or is teaching at Private institutions.

When answering the 2nd question about “**the difficulties that they have to make their students learn and apply a given topic communicatively**”,

- 63 % considers that their students have serious difficulties to justify their answers;

-60 % considers that their students have serious difficulties when they need to ask yes-no or wh- questions to get any information either by asking their teachers or any other interlocutor;

-40 % considers that their students have such difficulties as reading comprehension, writing problems, attention disorders, lack of studying techniques and /or studying habits; speaking problems, a bad disposition to working in the classrooms, lack of interest and motivation, lexical poverty or weakness, lack of reading practice or habit, movement problems present when they have to copy, write or perform other tasks applying what they are learning. Besides the type of relation that students may have with the different teachers can encourage or become an obstacle that usually discourages our students' questioning (inquiring minds). The teachers of English agree on **an absolute lack of interest in the subject from the part of a big majority**, which is usual with adolescents but not at University level, they claim.

When answering the 3rd question about "**comments that these teachers usually make when talking with peer teachers and colleagues about the difficulties that their students have**",

- no-one considers that he/ she is the only one facing this problem,
- 97% considers that most teachers have these types of problems,
- 1 % considers that this is a problem affecting a reduced number of teachers.

Based on their professional experience, when answering question 4) about "**what specific difficulties their students have**"

- 44 % considers that their students have more difficulties when they answer questions,
- 44 % considers that their students have more difficulties when they have to think of and ask a question.

Finally, when answering the 5th question related to the possible **causes or reasons for these difficulties to take place**, their answers were as follows:

-36% considers that they happen due to an inadequate resource, strategy and methodological choice;

-36 % considers that they are due to an insufficient and / or inadequate type of practice about how to ask questions given in the classrooms;

-66 % considers that they are due to our students' lack of fluency, understanding, study and practice,

-66 % considers that they happen due to our students' lack of motivation, time and study;

-30 % considers that they are due to personality and to whatever other type of factor(s) that usually affect adolescents' performance.

-Among the other factors that these teachers consider worth mentioning are that our students are not familiar with studying techniques and the need of teachers varying their strategies to ensure that they actually teach successfully and that their learners do grasp the different contents they are being exposed to. Moreover, the teachers of English agree that in general, the classroom atmosphere in this school is good but motivation is scarce except from the part of small groups who take some good profit.

Graciela F. Onaga

3.-QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TEACHERS:

3a) For Teachers of Subjects different from English (in Spanish)

CUESTIONARIO para DOCENTES

A) Por favor lee y responde las siguientes preguntas:

1.- ¿Eres docente? ¿Qué materia(s) enseñas?

2.- ¿Hace cuánto que enseñas esta(s) materia(s)?

B) Coloca un TILDE a la opción u opciones que consideres que mejor responde(n) a los siguientes interrogantes. Siéntete con total libertad para incluir o sugerir la(s) opciones que, - a tu criterio - , también debieran tenerse en cuenta.

1.- ¿Estás trabajando o alguna vez trabajaste para:

- a) escuelas primarias?
- b) el nivel secundario?
- c) el nivel terciario y/o universitario?
- d) instituciones estatales?
- e) instituciones privadas?

2.- Según tu experiencia y pese a todo tu esfuerzo y dedicación para obtener mejores resultados, ¿te resultó alguna vez difícil que tus alumnos aprendan y que luego apliquen comunicativamente alguno(s) de los temas que listo debajo? Si no tuviste esta experiencia, ¿escuchaste alguna vez a tus colegas quejándose del mal desempeño de sus alumnos en la aplicación de alguno(s) de estos temas pese a su mejor esfuerzo por hacerles:

- a) fundamentar sus respuestas coherentemente?
- b) interpretar y desarrollar las consignas?
- c) obtener información haciendo preguntas abiertas y/ o cerradas a docentes y/u otros?
- d) ¿Otra(s) dificultad(es)? ¿Cuál(es)?

3.- Cuando reflexionas y/ o comentas sobre estas dificultades con tus colegas y / u otras personas, ¿consideran que esto (te / les) ocurre:

- a) solo a vos?
- b) aparentemente a la mayoría de los docentes ?
- c) a un grupo reducido de docentes?

4.- Según tu experiencia, y tomando un tópico en consideración, ¿dónde suelen tener los alumnos mayor dificultad:

- a) al momento de responder preguntas?
- b) cuando tienen que formular ellos sus propios interrogantes?

5.- ¿Piensas que estas dificultades suelen aparecer debido a:

- a) una inadecuada selección de recursos, estrategias y/o metodología?
- b) un tipo de práctica insuficiente e /o inadecuada sobre cómo formular interrogantes en el aula?
- c) falta de fluidez, de comprensión, de estudio y de práctica en los alumnos?

-
- d) la falta de motivación, tiempo y estudio de los alumnos?
- e) cuestiones de personalidad y demás factores que pueden afectar negativamente el desempeño del alumnado?
- f) otros factor(es)? ¿Cuál(es)?
-

3b) For Teachers of English

QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for accepting to help me. Your cooperation will be of vital importance to my research.

A) Please read and answer the following questions:

1.- Are you a teacher of English?

2.- How long have you been teaching English?

B) Tick the option(s) you consider best answers the following questions. Feel free to include/ suggest the one(s), (in your opinion), I should also take into account :

1.- Are you working or have you worked at.....?

- a) Primary School level
- b) Secondary School level
-

- c) University and/ or Tertiary level
- d) State schools
- e) Private institutions

2.- In your experience and despite all your efforts to have better results, have you ever found it difficult or practically impossible to have your students learning and using accurately and communicatively any of the following topics? If not, have you ever heard your colleagues complaining about their students' performance in:

- a) The list of irregular Verbs?
- b) Count or Uncount Nouns?
- c) To obtain information asking (Wh- /Yes-No) Questions to teachers, peers, etc?
- d) Others? Which one(s)?

3.- Perhaps you reflect and/ or comment about these difficulties with your peers. Do you think they happen:

- a) only to you?
- b) to most teachers?
- c) only to some teachers?
- d) apparently to most teachers?

4.- Do you think they usually happen due to:

- a) wrong choice of resources, strategies, techniques?
- b) insufficient and perhaps inadequate practice?

- c) students' lack of study, time and / or motivation?
- d) other factor(s)? Which one(s)?

5.- In your experience and considering just one of the above topics at random, do you think it is more difficult for students to learn:

- a) statements, i.e. to answer questions?
- b) to ask questions?

6.- Why do you think it is like this? Perhaps due to:

- a) the type of input and the learning practice students receive?
- b) personality traits and personal problems affecting performance?
- c) lack of fluency, lack of study and insufficient practice.
- d) lack of knowledge and/ or understanding (perhaps of the rubrics)
- e) other factor(s)? Which one(s)?

4.- QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

CUESTIONARIO

A) Por favor lee y responde las siguientes preguntas:

1.- ¿Eres estudiante?

2.- ¿En qué institución escolar estudias?

3.- ¿Qué edad tienes?

4.- ¿A qué curso asistes?

B) Coloca un TILDE a la opción u opciones que consideres que mejor responde(n) a los siguientes interrogantes. Siéntete con total libertad para incluir o sugerir la(s) opciones que, - a tu criterio - , también se deberían tener en cuenta.

1.- ¿Sueles atender y participar activamente en clases?

- a) Sí.
- b) No.
- c) A veces.
- d) Depende (Si
eliges esta opción, aclara de qué depende:
.....)

2.- Cuando participas en clases y en otros ámbitos de tu vida, ¿Prefieres?

- a) Responder a preguntas que hacen tus profesores u otros sobre lo que están explicando
- b) Que respondan a las preguntas que se hacen sobre los temas estudiados y otros y / u otros temas
- c) Formular las preguntas vos mismo
- d) Que otros formulen las preguntas y escuchar.
- e) Expresar tus interrogantes en voz alta
- f) Expresar tus preguntas en forma escrita
- g) Callar tus interrogantes e inquietudes

✓ **Por favor explica brevemente ¿por qué lo prefieres?**

.....

3.- ¿QUÉ NECESITAS para poder FORMULAR PREGUNTAS sobre los temas que se están desarrollando?

- a) Más estudio y ejercitación.
- b) Comprenderlo(s).
- c) Saber **qué** se puede preguntar.
- d) Saber y practicar **cómo** debemos formular preguntas.
- e) Que nuestros interlocutores no se enojen con nuestras preguntas.
- f) (Más) tiempo para pensar y poder formular las preguntas.
- g) Otros factores.

✓ **Por favor explica brevemente ¿ qué otros elementos o condiciones necesitas para animarte a preguntar?**

.....

5.- REPORT on STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

5 A) Spanish versión (for school authorities)

Este cuestionario fue respondido por 123 alumnos de las distintas divisiones de los cursos 1º a 5º año de los turnos mañana, tarde y vespertino de la Unidad Educativa N° 5020 “Profesor Néstor O. Palacios”, cuyas edades oscilan entre 13 y 18 años.

1) A la pregunta: ¿ **Sueles atender y participar activamente en clases?**

El 42% eligió la opción “**SI**”; el 11% respondió que “**NO**”; el 58% responde que “**A veces**”; y un 6% eligió la opción “**DEPENDE**”, aclarando que depende de si se trata de algo difícil ó fácil. Es decir, que **atienden si es difícil y participan, si es fácil.**

2) Al responder la pregunta: **Cuando participas en clases y en otros ámbitos de tu vida ¿Prefieres.....?**

Las opciones dadas fueron elegidas de la siguiente manera:

-El 37% prefiere la opción a) “**Responder a preguntas que hacen sus profesores u otros sobre lo que están explicando**”, porque “sé lo que se está explicando y quiero mostrarlo”; “me siento cómodo”; “para asegurarme que está bien lo que entendí”; “porque escucho la explicación y quiero que el profe lo sepa”; “me gusta”; “es importante”; “porque sí”.

-El 16% prefiere la opción b) “**Que otros respondan a las preguntas que se hacen sobre los temas estudiados y otros y / u otros temas**”, porque “es lo importante”; “me gusta así”; “siempre prefiero que respondan los demás”.

-Nadie eligió la opción c) “**Formular las preguntas vos mismo**”.

-El 47% prefiere la opción d) “**Que otros formulen las preguntas y escuchar**”, porque “es lo que importa”; “no me gusta hablar en público”; “para poder escuchar a otros”; “al saber comprenderlo, puedo hacer preguntas”; “no me gusta preguntar para no hacerlo mal”; “estudié y lo sé, listo”.

-El 26% prefiere la opción e) “**Expresar tus interrogantes en voz alta**”, porque “así se puede corregir algún aspecto”; “me gusta expresarme”; “para mostrarle que estudié”.

-El 11% prefiere la opción f) “**Expresar tus preguntas en forma escrita**”, porque “no me gusta preguntar”; “me siento más cómodo cuando escribo”.

-El 11% prefiere la opción g) “**Callar tus interrogantes e inquietudes**”, porque “no me gusta preguntar y equivocarme”; “no me gusta hablar frente a los otros y que me miren”.

3) La pregunta, **¿QUÉ NECESITAS para poder FORMULAR PREGUNTAS sobre los temas que se están desarrollando?** Las respuestas se dieron del siguiente modo:

-El 47% eligió la opción a) **Más estudio y ejercitación.**

-El 58% eligió la opción b) **Comprenderlo(s).**

- El 16% eligió la opción c) **Saber qué se puede preguntar.**
- El 21% eligió la opción d) **Saber y practicar cómo debemos formular preguntas**
- Nadie eligió la opción e) **Que nuestros interlocutores no se enojen con nuestras preguntas.**
- Nadie eligió la opción f) **(Más) tiempo para pensar y poder formular las preguntas.**
- Nadie eligió la opción g) **Otros factores.**

Graciela F. Onaga

Prof. de Inglés

5B) REPORT ON THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

This questionnaire was answered by a number of 123 students aged 13 to 18, belonging to the different courses of the morning, afternoon and evening classes of Néstor O. Palacios School N° 5020.

When answering the 1st question about "whether they usually pay attention and participate actively in the different classes", 42% chose the option "**YES**"; 11% answered "**NO**"; 58% answered "**SOMETIMES**"; and 6% chose the option: "**IT DEPENDS**", making clear that it usually depends on the level of difficulty of the activities, i.e. **they pay attention when the topics are difficult and participate if the tasks are easy ones**.

When answering the 2nd question about "their preferences when they are to participate in something either at school or in whatever other situation that requires their participation in life", their answers were as follows:

- 37% prefers option a) "**To answer their teachers and / or interlocutors' questions about what they are saying**", because they say "they want to show that they already know what is being said/explained"; "they feel comfortable

enough”; “to make sure they have grasped the concepts properly”; “to let teachers know that they’re listening to them”; “I like it”; “it’s important”; “Just because”.

-16% prefers option b) “**I prefer somebody else to answer**”, because “it’s important”; “I prefer it this way”; “I feel better when somebody else answers”.

-No-one prefers option c) “**To ask questions myself**”.

-47% prefers option d) “**I prefer to listen while others ask questions**”, because “I think this is important”; “I don’t like to speak in public”; “to be able to listen to others”; “if I understand the topics, then I can ask questions about them”; “I don’t like asking questions, I don’t like to make mistakes”; “I have already studied and I know the topics, that’s it, why ask anything?”.

-26% prefers option e) “**To ask their questions aloud**”, because “in so doing, mistakes can be corrected somehow”; “I like to express myself aloud”; “to show others that I have studied”.

-11% prefers option f) “**To write their questions**”, because “I don’t like asking”; “I feel more comfortable or at ease when I write”.

-11% prefers option g) “**Not to ask questions and not to express their needs and doubts**”, because “I don’t like to make mistakes when I ask”; “I don’t like to feel exposed when speaking in front of others”.

When answering the 3rd question, What do you need in order to ask the questions yourself? The answers were as follows:

-47% chose option a) **To study harder and more practice.**

- 58% chose option b) **To understand (them/ it).**

-16% chose option c) **To know what to ask.**

-21% chose la option d) **To know how to ask questions and to practise more.**

-No-one chose option e) **That our interlocutors don’t get angry when we ask.**

-No-one chose option f) (**More) time to think and to ask the questions we have.**

-No-one chose option g) **Other factor(s)**.

Graciela F. Onaga

Prof. de Inglés

6.- ANALYSING LEARNERS' TEST PERFORMANCE

The students belonging to the courses I teach at Néstor O. Palacios Public Secondary School were all given different make-up tests which included varied types of tasks such as "**Read and answer**"; "**Listen and fill in**"; "**Match**" and "**Ask a suitable question**" because of their bad performance during the 1st and a part of the 2nd terms this year.

Considering their performance in class and their test results which did not usually coincide with our expectations despite intensive practice and hard work. Also considering such factors as my need to do something to change this situation and to make sure that these students learn and have better marks, as well as their tendency to have better performance in the type of tasks that do not require to ask questions, I decided to change my teaching strategies into a more conscientious type of work, focusing our attention on question forms(types, uses, structures), esp. of the different questions we had been working with and giving them a more intensive practice.

As the end of the 2nd term was approaching, I decided to give them an easy test with the following results:

- There was a tendency to improve performance in most courses after this conscious and conscientious work, with only 30 to 38% of students failing their tests.
- Most students could pass the tests,
- 50% did well when they had to "Ask suitable questions to given answers";
- 50% did well when they had to do the other type of exercises.

- Most students did better asking “Wh-questions” than “Yes-No questions”
- There is an over-generalisation in the use of “What”. Students usually do not use other question words.

Considering the exercise: **“Ask a suitable question to the following answers”**, although there is a general tendency to improve as a result of intensive work and various teaching strategies and techniques being applied, few students did completely well, most of them continue making the following types of mistakes:

- a)? It’s December 5th (What day is it today?)
- b)? It’s 12 o’ clock. (What is the time?// What time is it?)
- c)? I like Christmas. (What celebrations do you like?)
- d)? My birthday is on Sept 13th. (When is your birthday?)

Typical Mistakes

Option a):

What is the day is today?, ¿What is the day?, What’s the date the day?, What day today? When day today?, What day it today, What is it date today?, What is today?, Watch day?, Whoch day it’s tuday?, Wat’s day?, What dead day is today?

Students presented all types of difficulties to ask this “easy” question.

Option b):

What the time?, What is time, What’s time is it?, Watch the time?

In general terms, students did much better asking this question than asking a), for example.

Option c):

What is favourite celebration?, What's is favourite celebration?, What is your favourite celebration?, What is your favorite celebration?, What celebration?, What your celebration?, What do you like celebration?, What celebration you like?, What you celebration?

Students presented all types of difficulties to ask this “easy” question.

Option d):

Very few students completed this question with the following mistakes:

What is your birthday, When it birthday?, What is birthday?

These students’ recurrent mistakes appear to be developmental mistakes that can be corrected with further practice and more frequency of exposure to the type of activities and to the structures.

Graciela F. Onaga

Teacher

7) The Spanish Version of the Project (for the School Authorities):

PROYECTO INSTITUCIONAL DE INTERVENCIÓN: “LA IMPORTANCIA DE LAS PREGUNTAS”

U. E. N° 5020 “PROF. NESTOR OSCAR PALACIOS”

N°	ACTIVIDAD	OBJECTIVO	METODOLOGÍA	RECURSOS		TIEMPO
				Humanos	Financieros / materiales	
1	La 1º Jornada		a) ANTES PERMISOS			

<u>Institu- cional</u>	-Informar a los directivos de la institución acerca del proyecto de intervención y solicitar autorización para tener un espacio dentro de la primera jornada institucional como también poder acceder a datos y documentación del colegio (del personal, rendimiento escolar del alumnado, N.A.P., programas, planificaciones, etc.). -Asegurarse de que este	Directivos de la Institución			
		-Cartas (ver <u>Anexo B</u>) con una copia del proyecto de intervención y de los informes sobre los resultados de los cuestionarios a docentes, directivos y alumnos para fundamentar la necesidad de implementar este proyecto. -Solicitar autorización para utilizar distintos recursos de la institución (retroproyector, computadoras, equipo de sonido, jefes de área, técnicos,	La autora de este proyecto de intervención. Los directivos del colegio incluyendo a la supervisora.	Copias de las distintas cartas por duplicado. Una copia del proyecto (versión española). Apoyo financiero para costear los gastos del desayuno de trabajo. Apoyo económico para pagar gastos de fotocopias.	Diciembre 2015 Febrero 2016

		<p>proyecto de intervención cuenta con todo el apoyo necesario para garantizar su pertinencia, relevancia y el éxito de su implementación.</p>	<p>etc.) y para incorporar este proyecto de intervención al P.M.I. de la institución para contar con apoyo económico para la implementación del proyecto (pago de honorarios de ser necesario, materiales, copias, el desayuno de trabajo, etc.).</p> <p>-Fijar el día para la jornada institucional y acordar el tiempo que se le asignará al proyecto durante esa jornada.</p> <p>-solicitar</p>			
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			<p>autorización para reunirme con los jefes de área para informarles sobre el proyecto y pedir colaboración para el trabajo en la jornada.</p>			
			<p>Jefes de Área</p>			
		<p>-Informar a los jefes de área acerca del proyecto de intervención dándoles un esquema de las actividades de la jornada.</p> <p>-Incentivar y solicitar su apoyo y colaboración.</p> <p>-Asegurar el éxito de la actividad.</p>	<p>Una reunión para:</p> <p>-informarles acerca de los pormenores del proyecto,</p> <p>-pedir su cooperación:</p> <p><u>dándoles una copia del esquema de la jornada con las actividades que ellos deben preparar antes, durante y</u></p>	<p>La autora de este proyecto de intervención.</p> <p>Los directivos del colegio.</p> <p>Todos los jefes de departamento.</p>	<p>Una copia del esquema de la jornada para cada jefe de área.</p>	<p>Febrero ó Marzo 2016</p>

		<u>después de la jornada.</u> (ver Anexo B)			
		<u>Los Técnicos del Colegio</u>			
	-Informar a los técnicos acerca del proyecto de intervención. -Incentivar y contar con su apoyo y participación. -Evitar riesgos y errores innecesarios y previsibles.	-Acordar todo lo que sea necesario para la jornada institucional: equipos (computadoras, presentaciones con powerpoint, micrófonos, cables, adaptadores, retroproyector, etc), fecha y hora de encuentros, mobiliario necesario, etc.	La autora de este proyecto de intervención. Los directivos del colegio. Los técnicos del colegio.	Una lista de todos los elementos que será necesario utilizar durante la jornada.	Febrero ó Marzo 2016
		<u>c) DURANTE</u>			
	-Socializar los	-Tener los	Los	Sillas,	El día de la

		<p>resultados de las encuestas con todo el personal e informarles respecto de las dificultades más comunes que se detectan en nuestros alumnos, específicamente en lo que se refiere a su <u>falta de mentalidad interrogadora</u> :</p> <p>-Refrescar lo que sabemos sobre las preguntas (estructuras, tipos, usos, las preguntas esenciales que se espera que nuestros</p>	<p>equipos y el mobiliario, copias, pendrive, CDs, etc, todo listo para la presentación.</p>	<p>técnicos del colegio. Personal a cargo de comprar, preparar y servir el desayuno de trabajo. Personal de maestranza para limpiar, organizar las sillas y otros, Todo el personal del colegio</p>	<p>Presentaciones en powerpoint. Computadoras, Retroproyector, Cables, adaptadores, Micrófono, Desayuno, Tazas, vasos, platos, servilletas,</p>	<p>jornada que asignen los directivos (probablemente Marzo 2016)</p>
		<p>tipos, usos, las preguntas esenciales que se espera que nuestros</p>	<p>Con todo el personal</p>			
		<p>que nuestros</p>	<p>-Socializar los resultados de los cuestionarios,</p>	<p>Los directivos del colegio incluyend</p>	<p>Sillas , Presentaciones de powerpoint Computador</p>	<p><u>Idem</u></p>

		<p>alumnos formulen y las que formulan en realidad).</p> <p>-Reflexionar acerca de la importancia de ser capaces de formular preguntas en cualquier contexto /situación que uno se encuentre.</p> <p>-Proponer considerar las preguntas como una estrategia de estudio que puede ser de suma utilidad para que el alumnado de este colegio mejore su rendimiento</p>	<p>-Hablar acerca de las preguntas y del proyecto y sugerir considerar su práctica como “una estrategia o técnica de estudio útil para nuestro alumnado” y que debemos incorporar este proyecto al P.M.I. de la institución.</p> <p>(ver Anexo B)</p> <p>-Desayuno de Trabajo</p>	<p>o a los jefes de área y a la autora de este proyecto de intervención.</p> <p>Personal de limpieza y encargados de comprar, preparar y servir el desayuno.</p>	<p>as Retroproyector, Cables, adaptadores, Micrófono, Desayuno, Tazas, vasos, platos, servilletas, olla, jarras, Productos de limpieza.</p>	
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		escolar y obtenga mejores resultados.				
			Con los Pares/ Por Área/ Por Materia			
		<p>-Intercambiar ideas, sobre estrategias y actividades, sugerencias para incentivar la formulación de interrogantes en las distintas aulas y en las diferentes materias.</p> <p>-Revisar los N.A.P.(Núcleos de Aprendizaje Prioritarios) de cada curso y materia.</p>	<p>-Discutir sobre y hacer una lista de:</p> <p>* esas preguntas relevantes/ esenciales que esperan que sus alumnos formulen,</p> <p>*cómo provocar esas preguntas (actividades, estrategias, juegos, etc.)</p> <p>*dónde dejar las listas para que siempre estén disponibles para quién(es) quiera(n) utilizarlas (¿será conveniente</p>	<p>Jefes de departamento con los docentes de cada departamento</p>	<p>Listas de los NAP por área. Programas y planificaciones anuales de las distintas materias y profesores. El esquema de la jornada. El cuadro que debemos llenar por área (ver anexo B)</p>	<u>Idem</u>

		<p>-Hacer una lista de las preguntas esenciales que los docentes debieran obtener / incentivar en sus alumnos</p>	<p>armar una “cartilla” con estas listas?, ¿Quién(es) la diseñará(n)?, ¿Cuándo?).</p> <p>*cómo y cuándo implementar el uso de la cartilla.</p> <p>(ver Anexo B)</p>			
			<p>Con todo el personal</p>			
		<p>-Intercambiar experiencias y socializar lo que cada grupo trabajó.</p> <p>-Proponer e invitar a armar “<u>La Cartilla de las Preguntas</u>”, una herramienta de trabajo del colegio para ayudar a</p>	<p>-Puesta en común de las experiencias de los diferentes grupos y sus opiniones respecto de las listas.</p> <p>-Hacer entrega a los directivos de las listas armadas en las diferentes áreas.</p> <p>-Sugerir la</p>	<p>Todo el personal de la institución .</p>	<p>La lista de preguntas que arme cada grupo. Micrófono, cables, adaptadores, Sillas</p>	

		<p>mejorar los procesos escolares en esta institución.</p> <p>-Informar al personal que se fijará una fecha en la que <u>toda esta comunidad educativa se comunicará únicamente a través de las preguntas</u> a fin de aplicar lo aprendido en esta jornada y que constituye la 2º actividad de este proyecto de intervención.</p>	<p>conveniencia de diseñar una especie de “cartilla” que contenga a todas las listas (puede estar formada por las listas de todas las materias unidas ó separadas por material y/o por área. Incluso puede armarse una especie de “cartilla por departamento” que reúna todas las listas del departamento y sus respectivas materias (con actividades por año/ curso/ y / o por tema o contenido tomado de los NAP de la materia.</p>			
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			-Informar al personal sobre la implementación de la Actividad 2 (reglas, objetivos, fecha).			
2	Jornada: “Dígalo con una pregunta”	-Recordar y/ o informar a la comunidad educativa acerca de esta actividad del proyecto de intervención sobre “La importancia de las preguntas”. -Ultimar detalles para garantizar el éxito de esta actividad.	a) ANTES -Recordarle a la comunidad educativa que en fecha a fijarse pronto, todos participaremos de la jornada: “Dígalo con una pregunta”. -Convocar a todos a participar de la jornada. Será como un juego que consistirá en decirlo todo, incluso responder mediante una	Los directivos del colegio incluyen- do a los jefes de área y a la autora de este proyecto de intervenci ón.	Pizarra y cuadernos de acta y de notificaciones. Cuadernos de departamento	<u>Mayo 2016</u>

			<p>pregunta.</p> <p>-Acordar que castigos se impondrán a aquellos que no usen preguntas en dicho día.</p> <p>-Pedir a los profes que preparen actividades que involucren el uso de preguntas, por ejemplo: obtener información, presentación de temas, evaluaciones, etc., todo a través de preguntas.</p>			
			b) <u>DURANTE</u>			
			-Todos se comunican usando las preguntas para	Toda la comunidad educativa.		<u>Idem</u>

			no ser multado/ castigado.			
			c) <u>DESPU</u> <u>ÉS</u>			
			-Repartir cuestionarios para medir el impacto de la Actividad 2 y/ o acerca de la utilidad de las cartillas para trabajar con preguntas. (ver Anexo B) -Escribir el informe sobre los resultados de este cuestionario. -Informar a los directivos de la institución acerca de los resultados de las actividades.	Jefes de área La autora de este proyecto de intervención Toda la comunidad educativa.	Computadora con la cual escribir informes. Copias de los cuestionarios Grabador	<u>Mayo ó</u> <u>Junio 2016</u>

			<p>-Recomendar la conveniencia o no de:</p> <p>* implementar una jornada similar al “Día de la Pregunta: Dígalo con una Pregunta” más frecuentemente,</p> <p>* incentivar el uso de las cartillas y su permanente revisión, corrección, mejora, etc.</p> <p>*evaluar el impacto de este proyecto de intervención sobre los resultados académicos del colegio</p>			
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Graciela Fabiana Onaga

8.- THE PROJECT IMPACT

8A) LETTER AND REPORT ON THE PROJECT IMPACT

Salta, 1 de diciembre de 2016.

Personal Directivo

U.E. N° 5020

Prof. Néstor O. Palacios

S / D

Estimados Profesores:

Me dirijo a ustedes y a través de su intermedio a quien corresponda, a fin de presentarles el informe de los resultados hasta aquí obtenidos de la implementación del proyecto "**La importancia de las preguntas**", cuya copia se adjunta a la presente, para agradecer todo el apoyo por ustedes brindado a la implementación del mismo durante el período lectivo 2016, y para recomendar la conveniencia para el Secundario N° 5020 "Profesor Néstor O. Palacios" de poder continuar implementándolo en el período lectivo 2017 y en años sucesivos de ser posible.

Basándome en el impacto positivo que la implementación de las actividades del proyecto produjeron en esta comunidad educativa durante el período 2016, logrando la concientización de la comunidad respecto de la importancia de preguntar como así también la unión del personal aportando ideas y sugerencias, motivando al alumnado a atreverse a preguntar y aclarar así sus dudas e inquietudes, y participando en el diseño de la cartilla de preguntas del colegio, y motivada por la sola intención de seguir cooperando con la mejora de los resultados escolares de esta institución, considero pertinente proponer que se continúe implementando la ejecución de las actividades del proyecto "**La**

Importancia de las Preguntas”, implementación iniciada en el período lectivo 2016 y que por sus relevancia y buena aceptación y resultados positivos debe continuarse en el período lectivo 2017 y a futuro si el PMI y vuestra dirección prosigue alentándolo para la mejora de las prácticas institucionales y siempre contemplando que saber y atreverse a efectuar preguntas puede convertirse en una herramienta y técnica de estudio útil para el alumnado de esta institución que presenta dificultades al momento de formular preguntas y obtener información pertinente para su utilización en diversas tareas, y que presenta dificultades de comprensión.

Sin otro particular, me despido esperando obtener una respuesta favorable a mi pedido y quedando a vuestra disposición para ampliar y / o aclarar cualquier información referente al proyecto que ustedes estimen pertinente.

Saluda a ustedes muy atentamente,

Graciela F. Onaga

Prof. de Inglés

8B) **THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO ASSESS THE PROJECT IMPACT**

CUESTIONARIO EVALUACIÓN PROYECTO

A) Por favor lee y responde las siguientes preguntas:

1.- ¿Eres estudiante, docente o directivo de la Unidad Educativa N° 5020 “Prof. Néstor O. Palacios?”

2.- ¿Participaste de las actividades del Proyecto “La Importancia de las Preguntas” el año pasado y/ o durante este año?

3.- ¿Qué opinas de las mismas o del proyecto?

4.- ¿Puedes percibir algún cambio (positivo o negativo) en la escuela a partir de la implementación de las actividades de este proyecto?

5.- ¿Consideras que se debe continuar implementando este tipo de actividades? (Si / No, con qué frecuencia?)

6.- ¿Tienes alguna sugerencia para aportar a fin de mejorar la implementación de las actividades de este proyecto?

QUESTIONNAIRE TO EVALUATE THE PROJECT

A) Read and answer the following questions please:

1.- Are you a teacher, a student or an authority at “Prof. Néstor O. Palacios Secondary School?”

2.- Did you take part in the activities of the project “The Importance of Questions” either this year or last year?

3.- What is your opinion about the project / activities?

4.- In your opinion, has there been any (positive or negative) change in the school dynamics, work, atmosphere since the implementation of the different activities of this project?

5.- Do you think our school should encourage this type of activities? (Yes / No, How often?)

6.- Would you like to make any suggestion(s) to improve the implementation of the activities of this Project?

9.- THE MEETING WITH COORDINATORS

This meeting will be held once the school authorities are familiar with the Project and agree on incorporating it to the school PMI.

Date: it will be held with the different school department coordinators also inviting the school authorities to attend it in due time (before the 1st institutional meeting) and perhaps at the Staff Room or wherever the school authorities consider it should be held.

Objective: to inform the coordinators about the project

To ask for help

Note: most probably this meeting will be held during a break; consequently, be ready to be short and precise saying something like:

“El PMI de la institución continúa trabajando y solicitando nuestra participación y colaboración para mejorar el bajo rendimiento escolar del alumnado de los tres turnos. El año pasado, el Dpto. de Sociales incorporó el trabajo con técnicas de estudio, incluso armando una cartilla de trabajo para su área pero aplicable y disponible para cualquier otra área que precise hacer trabajar a los chicos con resúmenes, presentación de informes y redes conceptuales.

Siguiendo con esta modalidad de trabajo sobre técnicas de estudio, preparé un proyecto de intervención, actividad requerida para el trabajo final de la licenciatura en inglés que estoy cursando en la Universidad FASTA. Este es un proyecto sobre la “**Importancia de las Preguntas**”, que se pretende tome carácter institucional, ya que en base a los resultados de las encuestas que efectué en agosto, un alto porcentaje del alumnado presenta problemas al momento de interrogar en casi todas las materias: no lo sabe hacer, no se anima, no quiere y esto puede estar perjudicándolos al momento de resolver tareas; también en sus pruebas y en los resultados académicos. Me parece que si todos los hacemos ejercitar y fomentamos la “interrogación” por parte del alumnado, en los cursos, en nuestras materias animándolos a que expresen sus dudas, curiosidad, inquietud, necesidades respecto a los temas que les estemos enseñando, la práctica frecuente de la interrogación puede convertirse en una estrategia para mejorar los aprendizajes y estudio que eventualmente ayudará a que el alumnado mejore su rendimiento escolar.

¿Ustedes qué opinan?

Escuchar la opinión de coordinadores al respecto.

El Proyecto se llama "**La Importancia de las Preguntas**". Ya tenemos el aval del PMI, será presentado al personal en la Jornada Institucional de fecha..... y como habrá un período de trabajo por área, precisamos contar con su ayuda por favor (entréguese a los coordinadores una copia del siguiente esquema explicativo de la jornada):

Proyecto de Intervención: "Expresando nuestra curiosidad y Obteniendo información a través de las preguntas: Una estrategia que puede ayudarnos a mejorar nuestro rendimiento escolar y nuestros resultados académicos".

➤ **Fecha de la Jornada Institucional:** Marzo 2016

➤ **Actividades:**

a.- Presentaciones en Salón de Actos (8.00 hs a 9.00 hs) a cargo de la Dirección y del Proyecto (9.05 hs a 9.30 hs) a cargo de Graciela Onaga.

b.- Coffee Break (Recreo) (9.30hs a 9.45 hs)

c.- Trabajo con los docentes por Departamento (9.50.00 hs a 11.30 hs) a cargo de **los Coordinadores** en las aulas.

d.- Puesta en común y entrega de listados a los directivos en el Salón de Actos (11.40 hs a 12.00 hs).

➤ **Explicaciones:**

Tu cooperación consiste en:

ANTES DE LA JORNADA

a.- Tener y leer tu copia del esquema de la jornada y la copia de la "Lista" a completar y entregar a los directivos al finalizar la jornada.

b.- Tener una copia de los programas y planificaciones anuales de cada curso y docente de los distintos turnos durante la jornada. (Deberás solicitarla en

secretaría con anticipación y devolverlas al finalizar la jornada junto al listado que armes con los docentes de tu área luego del Coffee Break).

c.- Tener la lista de los NAP para cada curso.

d.- Revisar estrategias, técnicas, actividades y juegos aplicables para fomentar el uso de preguntas en el alumnado aplicando los recursos disponibles en la institución y / o sugiriendo a los directivos la adquisición de otros indispensables para el área. (Este trabajo previo a la jornada tiende a contar con herramientas de trabajo en caso de que los docentes de tu área no acostumbren a hacer que sus alumnos interroguen respecto a los contenidos en clases).

e.- Saber qué aula se asignó para que trabajen los docentes de tu departamento.

DURANTE EL TRABAJO CON DOCENTES DE TU ÁREA

a.- Administrar bien tiempos para poder desarrollar las distintas actividades.

b.- Propiciar el debate e intercambio de ideas, sugerencias y experiencias entre colegas durante el trabajo por área que se hará tras el recreo procurando que este debate:

- no se vaya por las ramas para hacer un **uso eficiente de los tiempos,**

- **que sea enriquecedor,** sirva para mejorar las prácticas de enseñanza y aprendizaje de los distintos temas,

- que se encuentren **estrategias y actividades** con las que se pueda **fomentar el uso de interrogantes en el aula,**

- que se **acuerde el uso de estas actividades con determinada frecuencia** por parte de todo el departamento (Ej, semanalmente, una vez al mes, una vez por trimestre).

- que se **acuerde** si los docentes consideran conveniente plasmar estas ideas / sugerencias/ actividades, etc. en una especie de **“CARTILLA para UTILIZAR PREGUNTAS”** (específica de este departamento). Si la **respuesta es favorable,**

acordar **quién(es)** estaría(n) a cargo de su diseño y diagramación (recordar que los gastos corren por cuenta del PMI) y **cuándo** se presentaría ante los directivos el producto final.

c.- Designar quién irá completando el cuadro que aquí se presenta y que se debe entregar a los directivos durante la puesta en común y quién será el vocero del departamento que explicará esta producción en caso de que los directivos consideren pertinente se hagan aclaraciones. (Para poder completar este cuadro, puede decirse algo como: ¿Qué contenido tomamos? ¿Qué preguntas esperamos que hagan los alumnos? ¿Cómo las generamos?)

U. E. N° 5020 “Profesor Néstor O. Palacios”					
<u>DEPARTAMENTO</u> ó <u>AREA</u> :.....					
<u>COORDINADOR</u> :					
<u>DOCENTES</u> que lo integran:					
<u>FECHA</u> de esta Producción :					
Las Preguntas en las clases de (llenar con nombre de materia y/o Dpto)					
N°	N. A. P.	<u>Curso/</u> <u>Materia</u>	<u>Preguntas</u> <u>fundamentales</u>	<u>Estrategia/</u> <u>actividad</u>	<u>Recursos</u>
1	La célula	Biología (1° a 3°)	¿Qué es la célula?	Diálogo	Pizarrón, copias
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					

10					
	<u>OBSERVACIONES</u>				
	<u>Sugerencias:</u> <u>Pedidos:</u> <u>Otros:</u>				

DESPUES DE LA JORNADA

- a.- Redactar acta sobre la jornada en el cuaderno del departamento notificando a presentes y ausentes sobre lo realizado, acuerdos (fecha y modo de aplicación de las preguntas de la lista; si se hará la cartilla de preguntas (quien, cómo, cuándo).
- b.- Verificar se esté cumpliendo con los acuerdos
- c.- En caso de armar cartilla de preguntas de tu departamento, hacer entrega de la misma a los directivos en la fecha pactada.

Muchas gracias

Graciela F. Onaga

Prof. Inglés

Graciela F. Onaga

10.- THE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

10 a) PRESENTING THE PROJECT

This meeting will be held once the school authorities are familiar with the Project and agree on incorporating it to the school PMI.

Date: it will be held with the school staff whenever the school authorities consider it is convenient.

Objective: to start the school year, agree on courses of actions to follow, introduce the project to the whole staff in order to be able to implement it.

How to introduce it (ideas on what to say)

Esta jornada institucional se llevará a cabo una vez que los directivos estén informados sobre este proyecto de intervención y acepten implementarlo e incorporarlo al P.M.I. de la institución.

Fecha: los directivos decidirán cuál será la fecha de esta jornada institucional.

Objetivo de la jornada institucional: dar inicio al nuevo año lectivo, establecer acuerdos sobre acciones a implementar y presentar el proyecto de intervención sobre la importancia de las preguntas.

Ideas sobre cómo presentar el proyecto durante la jornada institucional

Buen día, el PMI de la institución continúa trabajando y solicitando nuestra participación y colaboración para mejorar el bajo rendimiento escolar del alumnado de los tres turnos. El año pasado, el Dpto. de Sociales incorporó el trabajo con técnicas de estudio, incluso armando una cartilla de trabajo para su área pero aplicable y disponible para cualquier otra área que precise hacer trabajar a los chicos con resúmenes, presentación de informes y redes conceptuales.

En base a los resultados de las encuestas que efectué en agosto sobre los problemas de aprendizaje comunes en nuestros alumnos, un alto porcentaje del alumnado presenta problemas al momento de interrogar en casi todas las materias: no lo sabe hacer, no se anima, no quiere y esto puede estar

perjudicándolos al momento de resolver tareas; también en sus pruebas y en los resultados académicos.

Antonio Faundez y Paulo Freire trabajaron en el libro *“Por Una Pedagogía de la Pregunta”, Crítica a una Educación basada en Respuestas a Preguntas Inexistentes*. Siglo XXI Editores. Biblioteca Esencial del Pensamiento Contemporáneo. Allí Faundez manifiesta que (reproducir presentación en power point):

“...el verdadero trabajo intelectual, aquel en el que la teoría, la práctica y todo lo que se hace intelectualmente, se realiza con la finalidad de **comprender la realidad y, si es posible, transformarla**”.

“...plantear al problema del descubrimiento del Otro y de la importancia de partir de lo que es el Otro para proponer una praxis de la transformación de la realidad, una teoría del poder, **una teoría de la pedagogía que posibilite o contribuya al proceso de transformación de la realidad, considerando que el Otro es cultura, una cultura diferente**”.

“No sólo se trata de aprender a leer y escribir; se trata de apropiarse de un conocimiento básico en todos los niveles de la vida, de que el ser humano pueda progresivamente tener condiciones para **responder a preguntas centrales** que nuestro cuerpo y nuestra existencia cotidiana nos plantean” // “...**debe alcanzarse un enriquecimiento mutuo entre las culturas orales y las escritas**”.

“No tendremos una nueva educación si no tenemos una educación en constante renovación” // “...es un proceso de transformación de sí misma que debe transformarse en forma permanente. No debe aferrarse a ideas y modelos preconcebidos. La nueva educación no debe temer el proceso porque la vida es un proceso, como la lucha, el poder o la educación”. No debe temer al cambio. Este debe ser el motor de toda transformación. **Es preciso aceptar de manera objetiva el cambio y también provocarlo.** En la medida que provocamos el cambio, ejercemos nuestra libertad. La libertad tiene justamente esa posibilidad,

esa voluntad nuestra de provocar la historia, de dirigirla con todos los límites que eso implica”.

“Pienso que todos los movimientos progresistas deben estudiar esos fenómenos, apropiárselos y aprender a dialogar con ellos. Tienen que **aprender o reaprender a preguntarse, a proponerse preguntas esenciales, porque solamente por medio de la pregunta esencial encontraremos respuestas esenciales**”.

“Es **profundamente democrático comenzar a aprender a preguntar. En la enseñanza se han olvidado de las preguntas**, tanto el profesor como los estudiantes y, en mi opinión, **todo conocimiento comienza por la pregunta**. Se inicia con lo que tú llamas curiosidad. ¡Pero la curiosidad es una pregunta!” // “...**hoy la enseñanza, el saber, es respuesta y no pregunta**”.

Y lo más grave es que el estudiante se acostumbra a ese tipo de trabajo. Entonces, ante todo **el profesor debería enseñar** – porque él mismo debería saberlo – **a preguntar**. Sólo a partir de preguntas se buscan respuestas, y no al revés. Si se establecen las respuestas, el saber queda limitado a eso, ya está dado, es un absoluto, no da lugar a la curiosidad ni propone elementos a descubrir. Ya está hecho: esta es la enseñanza actual. Pero yo diría: **“La única manera de enseñar es aprendiendo”**. Y esa afirmación es tanto para el estudiante como para el profesor” .

“Insisto que **la educación en general es una educación de respuestas en lugar de una educación de preguntas que es la única educación creativa y apta para estimular la capacidad humana de asombrarse**, de responder al asombro y resolver los verdaderos problemas esenciales, existenciales y el propio conocimiento” // “...**es el hecho de equivocarse lo que permite avanzar en el conocimiento**. Entonces, la pedagogía de la libertad o de la creación, la pedagogía de la pregunta debe ser eminentemente arriesgada provocando como única forma de avanzar en el conocimiento, de aprender a enseñar verdaderamente”. // “...juzgo importante **esa pedagogía del riesgo que está**

relacionada con la pedagogía del error. Si negamos la negación que es el error, esa nueva negación dará positividad al error: ese paso del error al no-error es el conocimiento”.

“Cuando se propone que **lo verdadero** es una búsqueda y no un resultado (*aunque actualmente se nos exigen mejores resultados académicos al menos en este colegio*), que lo verdadero es un proceso, que el **conocimiento es un proceso** y que, por lo tanto, tenemos que hacerlo y alcanzarlo a través del **diálogo**, a través de rupturas, la mayoría de los estudiantes no lo acepta. Porque **están acostumbrados a que el profesor jerárquicamente tenga la verdad; él es el sabio y, en consecuencia, no aceptan el diálogo.** Para ellos, el diálogo es una señal de debilidad del profesor y la modestia en el saber, una muestra de **debilidad e ignorancia** // “...la fuerza está en aquel que afirma: **“Yo quizá tenga parte de la verdad, pero no la tengo en su completud, parte de ella está en ustedes; busquémosla juntos”**”.

Por su parte, Freire aporta que (reproducir presentación en power point)::

“Nadie se toma el trabajo de preguntar, de indagar, porque la **incompetencia** de la población se considera una “dimensión de su naturaleza” // “...las **primeras preguntas** se pierden destruidas por la fuerza de las respuestas vigentes” // “...pretenden introducir tecnologías no adaptadas al conocimiento del pueblo, sin preguntarse qué saberes tiene el pueblo para resolver el problema”.

“Ese fenómeno de **castración de la curiosidad**”, es un movimiento unilineal, no tiene vuelta y ni siquiera existe una demanda: ¡el educador, en general, ya trae la respuesta sin que le hayan preguntado nada!”.

“El **autoritarismo** que obstaculiza nuestras experiencias educativas **inhibe, cuando no reprime, la capacidad de preguntar.** La **naturaleza desafiante de la pregunta** tiende a ser considerada como una **provocación a la autoridad**” // “la experiencia sugiere que **preguntar no siempre es cómodo**” // “...el educador autoritario teme más la respuesta que la pregunta. Teme la pregunta por la respuesta que pueda tener que dar” // “...Lo que pretende autoritariamente con

ese silencio impuesto en nombre del orden no es más que **sofocar el poder de indagación del individuo**”.

“Radica en vivir la pregunta, vivir la indagación, la curiosidad y demostrárselo a los estudiantes” // “...el profesor debe ir creando en ellos, y en la práctica el hábito de preguntar, de admirarse” // “para el educador que adopta esta posición, **no existen preguntas tontas ni respuestas definitivas**” // “...El educador que no castra la curiosidad del educando, que **se adentra en el acto de conocer**, jamás le falta el respeto a ninguna pregunta. Porque, aun cuando pueda parecerle ingenua o mal formulada, no siempre lo es para quien la formula, [...**el papel del educador es ayudarlo a reformular la pregunta**”.

“El educando que participa en un **proceso de educación permanente tiene que ser un gran preguntador en sí mismo**” // “...estimular en forma permanente la curiosidad, el acto de preguntar, en lugar de reprimirlo. Las escuelas rechazan las preguntas o bien **burocratizan el acto de preguntar**” // “...la burocratización implica **adaptación con un mínimo de riesgo, con cero asombro y sin preguntas**. Así, la **pedagogía de la respuesta** es una pedagogía de la adaptación y no de la creatividad. No estimula el **riesgo de la invención y la reinención**. Para mí, negar el riesgo es la mejor manera de negar la existencia humana”.

“Los profesores deben tomar las inquietudes de los estudiantes, sus dudas, sus curiosidades y su relativa ignorancia como **desafíos**. En el fondo, la reflexión sobre todo eso es iluminadora y enriquecedora para ambos. La **curiosidad y la expresividad del estudiante** a veces pueden sacudir la seguridad del profesor. Es por eso que, al limitarlas, el profesor autoritario limita también las de él. Por otro lado, muchas veces la **pregunta** que el estudiante que tiene libertad para hacerla, hace sobre un tema, puede situar al profesor en un **ángulo diferente**, desde el cual podrá profundizar más tarde en una **reflexión más crítica**”.

Ahora, a fin de refrescar de modo simplificado lo que todos ya sabemos, ¿de qué estamos hablando en realidad? (reproducir presentación de powerpoint):

¿Qué es una pregunta?

Las oraciones interrogativas son oraciones que suelen escribirse entre signos de interrogación.

¿Cómo se clasifican?

PREGUNTAS TOTALES ó CERRADAS(por SÍ / NO): que efectuamos cuando buscamos aclarar dudas, corroborar información. De fácil estructuración (similar a las enunciativas).

Ej: Quieres tener un recreo. ¿Quieres tener un recreo?

PREGUNTAS PARCIALES ó ABIERTAS: buscan información específica; no se responden ni con SI ni con NO. Inician con un **pronombre interrogativo** (*qué, quién, cuándo, por qué, para qué, dónde, cómo, etc.*) que siempre lleva tilde, incluso en las preguntas indirectas.

Ej ¿Cuándo vamos a desayunar?

PREGUNTAS DIRECTAS: van entre signo de interrogación

_ Ej. ¿Podemos salir?

_ Ej. ¿Dónde están los baños?

PREGUNTAS INDIRECTAS: oraciones compuestas que tienen una subordinada interrogativa y una principal enunciativa. No suelen aparecer entre signos de interrogación pero el pronombre interrogativo llevará tilde:

Ej. Me pregunto si podemos salir.

Ej. Alguien sabe dónde están los baños.

¿Para qué se usan las preguntas?

Las oraciones interrogativas se usan para:

- Obtener información,
- Aclarar dudas,

- Iniciar charlas,
- Expresar curiosidad, interés, etc.
- Otros

(Esto es precisamente lo que todo educando precisa hacer permanentemente en todos los espacios curriculares de nuestras aulas. En esto se basa la relevancia de saber y atreverse a preguntar.).

Siguiendo con esta modalidad de trabajo sobre técnicas de estudio, preparé un proyecto de intervención sobre la “**Importancia de las Preguntas**”, que se pretende tome carácter institucional, ya que, en mi humilde opinión, si todos los docentes les hacemos ejercitar y fomentamos la “interrogación” por parte del alumnado, en los cursos, en nuestras materias animándolos a que expresen sus dudas, curiosidad, inquietud, necesidades respecto a los temas que les estemos enseñando, la práctica frecuente de la interrogación puede convertirse en un estrategia para mejorar los aprendizajes y estudio que eventualmente ayudará a que el alumnado mejore su rendimiento escolar.

El Proyecto tiene el aval del PMI, y hoy inicia sus actividades con esta presentación y con la actividad que se realizará después del desayuno de trabajo con acuerdos respecto a la viabilidad y conveniencia de armar una “Cartilla para el trabajo con preguntas del colegio”, y concluirá con una Jornada en la que sólo podremos comunicarnos pero a través de las preguntas. Quedan todos formalmente invitados a sumarse y promover el uso de las preguntas en el aula. Espero que verdaderamente contribuya a que tengamos mejores resultados académicos.

Ahora se los invita a participar del desayuno.

Muchas gracias,

Graciela F. Onaga

10 b) WORKING WITH THE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH DURING THE INSTITUTIONAL MEETING (Ideas for the Foreign Languages Department Coordinator):

Ideas on how to work with the topic of questions with the teachers of English of Nestor O. Palacios school

➤ **What is a Question?**

According to the “Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English”, New Edition, page 849,

Question [C]: a sentence or a phrase which asks for information

➤ **Types and Uses**

Quoting from Longman English Grammar, there are different types among which we can mention: **Yes/No-Questions** (asked expecting a Yes/ No answer), **Wh-Questions** (asked, not expecting a Yes/ No answer but specific information instead), **Tag Questions** (it’s a short answer that follows a statement), **Echo Questions** (it’s a response in a tag form to an affirmative or a negative statement by which we may (not) request further information)

➤ **NAP**

There has been a Department agreement on what contents to teach in each course of the different school shifts including the NAP. This agreement goes as follows: (information taken from the “Department book of meetings”:

NAP

1st Year: Datos y presentación personal. Verbo be (formas afirmativa, negativa e interrogaciones). Pronombres personales y adjetivos posesivos. El artículo indefinido: a/an. La familia: verbo have got/ has got (formas afirmativa,

negativa e interrogaciones). El genitivo. Presente Simple: Preferencias: like, love, hate (formas afirmativa, negativa e interrogaciones). Like/love/hate+ Verbo+ ing. Rutinas. La hora. Preposición at. Vocabulary: países, nacionalidades, océanos, continentes, puntos cardinales, números, el alfabeto, saludos, verbos de rutina, miembros de la familia.

2nd Year: Descripción de casas: there is/ there are(formas afirmativa, negativa e interrogaciones). Formas singulares y plurales. Pedimos e indicamos cómo llegar a diferentes lugares. Vocabulario turístico, profesiones, las estaciones del año, habitaciones de una casa y objetos de las habitaciones, lugares, Can, (formas afirmativa, negativa e interrogaciones). Los sustantivos: tipos: contables e incontables. Formas singulares y plurales. Vocabulario: comidas, bebidas, la ciudad y el campo, tipos de películas, habilidades y talentos, profesiones, días y meses, números cardinales y ordinales, adjetivos calificativos, intereses. Uso de some/ any/ a lot , how much y how many. Presente Continuo (formas afirmativa, negativa e interrogaciones). Descripción de ropas: What....be wearing?

3rd Year: Comparativos y superlativos regulares e irregulares(good/ bad). El pasado simple (formas afirmativa, negativa e interrogaciones). Verbos: was/were, could, was born. Lista de verbos regulares e irregulares. Auxiliar did/ didn't. Frases y Adverbios de pasado. El futuro: be going to (formas afirmativa, negativa e interrogaciones). Proyectamos nuestro futuro (laboral, familiar, y hasta físicamente).

4th Year: Pasado continuado todas sus formas. Contraste entre Pasado simple y continuado. Futuro expresado con: be going to, will y Presente Continuo. Condicionales del tipo 0 y 1. Expresión de opinión. Películas. Comparativos y superlativos regulares e irregulares (good/ bad).

5th Year: Presente Perfecto Simple. Experiencias. La voz pasiva. Condicionales del tipo 0, 1 y 2. El curriculum vitae. Revisión de tiempos verbales.

➤ **Ideas on how to elicit Questions**

As teachers, we normally do our best to engage our students in the content of the curriculum.

“The secret to teaching may be as simple as asking students good questions – and then giving them the opportunity to find the answers”.(Wilhem, Jeffrey).

An “essential question” frames a unit of study as a problem to be solved (problem-solving task). This type of questions can be geared toward uncovering a topic. It should connect students’ past experiences and interests (their only resources for learning something new) to disciplinary problems in the world.

We can elicit them engaging students in pair or group collaborative work to develop a problem- solving task, games (The 10 questions game), and in many more ways. Make a list of the ideas that the teachers of English have. However, if they do not have any, it will be worth reflecting upon the following:

- ✓It is ideal to use important or **essential questions** to set the class off on **an inquiry** to foster deep understanding and animated learning. Instead of the traditional practice of consuming information that teachers distribute, repeating it on a test. Here, students carry out their own research and construct their own understandings – through traditional kinds of writing as well as through other forms that express what they have learnt and want to communicate. They make plays, public service announcements, movies, museum / Art exhibits, etc.
- ✓Teachers can create a context for an inquiry with an essential question as “What makes a good student/ teacher/ friend / hero?” or teachers could focus on traits with a question like “What is courage / maturation? (or any other trait). As students go deep into inquiries such as these ones, they will learn the content and processes they need along the way.

Characteristics of an “essential question”:

- be concise and clearly stated, open-ended and **arguable**,
- get to the **heart of the topic**, text, discipline, etc. having emotive force, intellectual bite, etc.,

-be linked to data (i.e. students will learn content and strategies in pursuit of the inquiry).

-**should interest students** and matter to them now and in the future,

-help to create better understandings of the topic under study and make judgement.

-require students to **produce meanings and** projects and reward them for doing so.

-focus on strategies, **the knowledge of HOW.**

-in the service of achieving **usable understandings** that can be **shared** with other people, students ***learn how to read and write, speak and listen.***

➤ **Why do our students have difficulties to ask or do not use the already learnt questions?**

See Literature Review Sections 1 to 4 (teachers can discuss the main ideas presented in these sections).

➤ **Shall we make a booklet or just complete this list?**

U.E. N° 5020 “Profesor Néstor O. Palacios”					
<u>DEPARTAMENTO ó ÁREA:</u>					
<u>COORDINADOR:</u>					
<u>DOCENTES que lo integran:</u>					
<u>FECHA de esta Producción:</u>					
Las Preguntas en las clases de(llenar con el nombre de la materia y/ o Dpto)					
N°	N. A. P.	Curso/	Preguntas fundamentales	Estrategia/ actividad	Recursos
1	Preguntas esenciales de uso general	1st to 5th year (all divisions)	How do you say...? What is the	-Dialogue -Drilling (oral and written)	Paper Markers Tape

2	Personal information	1 st year (all divisions)	<p>meaning of..... in Spanish? What's the English word for....? How do you pronounce....? How do you spell...? Can I have....? Pardon me?</p>	<p>practice) -Group work: making posters with this questions - Hanging the posters on the classroom walls to have them available for students to resort to them if they forget the questions</p>	<p>Board Chalk</p>
3	Routines	2 nd year (all divisions)	<p>Are you from...? Is he Tom? What is your /his (name/ first name/ surname?) How old are .../ is / am..? Where is / are/ amfrom?</p>	<p>-Drilling (oral and written work) -Role playing - Pair and group work - Guessing Games (The 10 questions)</p>	<p>Flashcards Pictures of different well-known characters Board Chalk</p>
4	Etc.	Etc.	<p>Do you usually...at...? Does he study....? What do you usually do in the mornings? How often do you....? What time do you.....?</p>	<p>-Drilling -Guessing games -Role playing interviews and conversations in general, - etc</p>	<p>Flashcards Photocopies Folders CDs Tape recorder, Board and Chalk Etc</p>
			Etc.	Etc.	Etc.

OBSERVACIONES

➤ <u>Pedidos:</u>
➤ <u>Sugerencias:</u>
➤ <u>Otros:</u>

Graciela F. Onaga

Salta, 16th March, 2016.