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# **An Experience of Place, Inquiry, and Community-based Pedagogies for Enhancing Learning and Engagement of English Learners at a Higher Education Context**

**Una Experiencia de Pedagogías de Espacio,  
Indagación y Comunidad para Enriquecer el  
Aprendizaje y el Compromiso de los Aprendices  
de Inglés en un Contexto de Educación Superior**

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## Abstract

This pedagogical experience introduces the affordances of leveraging principles from place, inquiry, and community-based pedagogies to foster self-directed learning, engagement with learning, and community awareness in a group of nine higher intermediate English learners enrolled in a languages and culture higher education professional program at a highly ranked private university in Bogotá, Colombia. A learning unit was designed to guide them in exploring key places in the districts surrounding the university campus, to introduce them to inquiry processes concerning some outstanding educational sites, and to look into what they could learn from them. Using two examples from learners who granted permission to share their products and insights, the article demonstrates a consistent application of higher-order thinking skills (e.g., comparison and contrast), engagement with the themes uncovered, and heightened awareness of place and community. The project's intention was threefold: (a) to develop experiential knowledge and understanding linked to a place, (b) to enhance critical thinking and research skills via inquiry and data collection, and (c) to raise learners' awareness of community-oriented initiatives happening in the place. The guiding question that was the backbone of the project was "How does this place impact the local community as observed during fieldwork?"

**Keywords:** community, English learners, inquiry, learner engagement, place

## Resumen

Este artículo presenta los beneficios de aprovechar los principios de pedagogías del espacio, la indagación y la comunidad para promover un aprendizaje autodirigido, compromiso con los temas descubiertos y conciencia comunitaria en un grupo de nueve estudiantes de nivel intermedio alto de inglés que pertenecen a un programa profesional de lengua y cultura en una universidad privada altamente rankeada en la ciudad de Bogotá, Colombia. Se diseñó una unidad de aprendizaje para guiar a los aprendientes a explorar sitios claves en los distritos alrededor de la universidad donde estudian con el objetivo de fomentar procesos de indagación sobre algunos espacios educativos sobresalientes fuera del campus. Por medio de dos ejemplos de los trabajos de los estudiantes, el artículo muestra su uso de habilidades de pensamiento crítico (por ejemplo: comparación y contraste), compromiso con los temas indagados y mayor conciencia de elementos comunitarios o espaciales. El proyecto tuvo tres propósitos: a) desarrollar conocimiento experiencial y comprensión asociada a un lugar, b) mejorar las habilidades de pensamiento crítico e indagación a través de pesquisa y recolección de datos y c) concienciar a los estudiantes respecto de iniciativas locales orientadas a la comunidad. La pregunta columna vertebral de la unidad pedagógica fue: ¿cómo cada sitio en la comunidad la impacta de algún modo?

**Palabras clave:** compromiso estudiantil, comunidad, educación universitaria, espacio, estudiantes de inglés

## Résumé

Cette expérience pédagogique met en évidence les potentialités qu'offre l'intégration de principes issus des pédagogies du lieu, de l'enquête et de la communauté afin de favoriser l'apprentissage autodirigé, l'engagement dans les processus d'apprentissage et le développement d'une conscience communautaire. L'étude a été menée auprès d'un groupe de neuf apprenants d'anglais de niveau intermédiaire supérieur inscrits dans un programme professionnel de langues et cultures au sein d'une université privée de premier plan à Bogotá, en Colombie. Une unité pédagogique a été conçue pour guider les étudiants dans l'exploration de lieux significatifs situés dans les quartiers avoisinant le campus universitaire. Cette unité visait à les initier à des démarches d'enquête portant sur certains espaces éducatifs remarquables et à analyser les apprentissages qu'ils pouvaient en tirer. À partir de deux exemples issus des travaux d'étudiants ayant autorisé le partage de leurs productions et de leurs réflexions, l'article met en évidence une mobilisation cohérente de compétences cognitives de haut niveau (telles que la comparaison et le contraste), un engagement soutenu envers les thématiques explorées ainsi qu'une prise de conscience accrue du rôle du lieu et de la communauté. Le projet poursuivait trois objectifs principaux : (a) développer des connaissances expérientielles et une compréhension approfondie liées à un lieu donné ; (b) renforcer les compétences en pensée critique et en recherche par le biais de démarches d'enquête et de collecte de données ; et (c) sensibiliser les apprenants aux initiatives communautaires présentes dans l'environnement étudié. La question directrice qui a structuré l'ensemble du projet était la suivante : « Comment ce lieu influence-t-il la communauté locale, tel qu'observé lors du travail de terrain ? »

**Mots-clés** : Engagement des apprenants, communauté, enseignement supérieur, lieu, apprenants d'anglais.

## Resumo

Esse artigo apresenta os benefícios de aproveitar os princípios das pedagogias do espaço, a pesquisa e a comunidade para promover uma aprendizagem autodirigida, compromisso com os temas descobertos e a consciência de comunidade num grupo de nove estudantes do nível intermediário-alto em inglês que fazem parte dum programa profissional de Língua e Cultura numa universidade privada altamente qualificada na cidade de Bogotá na Colômbia. Foi projetada uma unidade de aprendizagem para guiar os aprendentes a explorar os lugares chave nos distritos ao redor da universidade onde eles estudam com o objetivo de promover os processos de pesquisa sobre alguns dos espaços educativos sobresalientes fora do campus. Por meio de dois exemplos dos trabalhos dos estudantes, o artigo mostra seu uso de habilidades de pensamento crítico (por exemplo: comparação e contraste), compromisso com os temas pesquisados e maior consciência de elementos comunitários espaciais. O projeto teve três propósitos: a) desenvolver conhecimento experiencial e compreensão ligada a um lugar, b) Melhorar as habilidades de pensamento crítico e indagação por meio de pesquisa e coleta de dados e c) conscientizar os estudantes em relação às iniciativas locais orientadas à comunidade. A pergunta principal da unidade Pedagógica foi: Como cada lugar na comunidade impacta ela mesma de algum jeito?

**Palavras chave:** compromisso estudantil, comunidade, ensino universitário, espaço, estudante de inglês.

## Introduction

This pedagogical experience paper examines the affordances of integrating tenets of place, inquiry, and community-based pedagogies to enhance self-directed learning, higher-order thinking skills, and community engagement of students majoring in language and culture studies at a private university in Bogotá, Colombia. For Summerlee (2018, p. 407), “Many of the current approaches to pedagogy in universities rely on prior, incremental acquisition of knowledge for success”. Such a perspective may be desirable within a liberal education environment but may prove incomplete for students’ development and citizenship. Although some learning may be standardized, other approaches foster fact verification, experiential learning, information evaluation, feelings of relevance, richer imagination use, and community awareness. This last element (community awareness) stems from my interest in using culturally relevant pedagogy: a view towards education in which students’ cultural elements are purposefully used in explicit systematic instruction, not only to recognize students’ uniqueness but also to make learning diverse and interesting (Taylor & Sobel, 2011).

Integrating pedagogical principles for learning rooted in place, inquiry, and community arises from my awareness that learners hardly get involved in the surrounding community environments near the university campus, which may prove to be educational in some way. For instance, it came as a surprise that my Intermediate English pupils had never stepped into the cinematheque located five minutes walking distance from the main campus where this pedagogical experience took place. Adopting a tripartite (place-inquiry-community) perspective for learning in one of the content units allowed students to self-direct their learning process while acquiring experiences, putting into practice the language skills introduced in class, and becoming more *place-aware* community members. Higher education is about becoming knowledgeable in a specific field; nonetheless, we, teachers, should not overlook that (a) most learning occurs outside the classrooms and (b) outdoor learning fosters epistemological diversity (Thomas & Munge 2022). Two characteristics that can be taken advantage of when it comes to engaging learners in higher education contexts.

There are key benefits in integrating the theoretical principles of these three pedagogical perspectives. Place-based pedagogy may bridge the gap between what happens inside classrooms and what happens outside them by piquing learners’ interest in what is behind a particular place, and the connections that can be drawn between particular cultural elements and class contents (Thomas & Munge, 2022). Likewise, inquiry-based learning caters to differences in learning and interests (Summerlee, 2018) while supporting a view of education compromised with “individuals able to contribute to their communities” (Buchanan et al., 2016, p. 25). Both place and inquiry pedagogies foster a sense of engagement, choice, and relevance when deciding which place to study in depth and which type of data is required to understand said place (Buchanan et. al., 2016; Thomas & Munge, 2022). Along the same line, community-based pedagogy advances an understanding that learners are also citizens who impact or will eventually impact the communities they participate in. In the next section, I will explore these concepts further.

# Conceptual Framework

## Place-based Pedagogy (PBP)

It is a pedagogical approach rooted in the tenets of experiential learning. It consists of crafting activities that involve active students' participation, discovery, and first-hand experience linked to a specific outdoor environment. Through a series of scaffolded steps, students are compelled to partake in observation, data collection, and understanding of phenomena taking place *outside* the traditional learning environment: the classroom (Thomas & Munge, 2022). It is not a secret that keeping learners' interest in higher education environments is quite challenging when learners approach more advanced English levels. Nicol and Waite (2022) maintain that outdoor learning is suited for higher education students because they can engage in self-directed learning experiences that bring joy, unexpected learning, and more lasting memories. They claim that urban sites have an impact on people's emotions and behaviors and can become learning opportunities.

For Comber (2015), the 'spatial turn' in education has allowed that place turns out to be as important in the reproduction of subjectivities as other identity markers such as class, gender, discourse, and race. This author highlights how social actors' conception of place is relational and a continuous construction that should not be idealized by assuming that people spontaneously develop a sense of belonging where they dwell, or that there is a uniform view of places.

In the case of Bogotá, which can appear as a hectic, insecure, and uninteresting city, inquiry based on place turns into an opportunity to challenge such beliefs or at least develop new understandings and problematizations. Learners may undergo a feeling of uprooting that can translate into a) a sense of exhaustion, (b) a perception of unworthiness, (c) a desire to migrate as soon as an opportunity comes, or (d) a very limited knowledge of the surroundings. These effects lead to not developing an intimate relationship with the place where they inhabit, and therefore a dearth of connection with human and non-human environments. Hence, learners might not be inhabiting the place but just residing in it. As theorized in Grunewald and Smith (2008, p. xvi), "This phenomenon of 'placelessness' is associated with alienation from others and a lack of participation in the social and political life of communities."

## Community-based Pedagogy (CBP)

It aims to relate students to the places they connect with. The purpose behind this teaching approach is to foster a feeling of belonging (Popielarz & Galliher, 2023) and the discovery of ideas previously overlooked or taken for granted concerning places and people that are part of students' surroundings. This approach banks on place-based and place-conscious education. By consciously integrating CBP into lessons, teachers bring about knowledge and reflection regarding matters of local, national, or international interest, allowing learners to reflect on their roles as community members (Popielarz & Galliher, 2023).

A non-exhaustive literature review shows that local scholars have verified the gains of incorporating CBP within English lessons in varied educational settings. For instance, Quintero and Clavijo Olarte (2023, p. 4) list a wealth of benefits of CBP as follows: heightened respect towards learners' knowledge, and teacher's increased awareness of deficit perspectives in education; prospective

teachers, students, and communities' engagement, in transformation of realities; enhancement of creativity and autonomy; and the use of diverse linguistic and semiotic resources when communicating.

In the same train of thought, research by Castillo et al. (2023) explains how stimulating learners from rural and urban backgrounds to study local communities helped them reshape knowledge about those communities and learn from the cultural assets of families and community members. Another case in point is the one by Hernandez Varona & Gutiérrez Álvarez (2020), whose narrative study concluded that participating learners (student-teachers) developed agency through developing their inquiries, voicing their communities' necessities, and implementing initiatives to raise awareness towards local needs.

Similarly, Lastra et al. (2018) conducted a study at a public university with fifty-six students majoring in English teaching from different semesters and classes. The student-teachers mapped their community and became aware of the problems and assets they had in their university context. They also learned what it means to be part of the community when teaching and developing projects in their practicum experience, aiming at fostering self-esteem and parental engagement of their eighth-grade learners during the practicum experience. All in all, community-oriented teaching initiatives are based on the principle that education should have an everlasting impact on the persona and should help learners become more committed citizens.

## **Inquiry-based Learning (IBL)**

This perspective, also arising from the principles of experiential learning, entails teachers crafting learning experiences in which students learn by doing or discovering. For Coffman (2017), students genuinely possess the motivation to discover the world. However, a teacher must get familiar with students' interests little by little so that it is easier to hook them to particular inquiries. In a similar manner, Buchanan et al. (2016) state that IBL is a constructivist and student-centered learning model by nature. They highlight that the model consists of all or some of the next elements: (1) a guiding question, (2) a genuine, situated inquiry, (3) data collection instruments creation, (4) teacher's guidance (not interference), and (5) learner's direct management of the process. With IBL, learners are expected to develop "increased intrinsic motivation; development of expertise; notable self-efficacy; task commitment; and positive attitudes about learning" (Saunders-Stewart et al., 2012, as cited in Buchanan et al., 2016, p. 27). Likewise, Summerlee (2018, p. 407) maintains:

... With inquiry-based learning, following simple steps in an analytical process, students learn not only how to process and research ideas, but appreciate how to evaluate and validate information from diverse sources—effectively they become sophisticated problem solvers in... multidisciplinary contexts.

In a similar vein, Demarest (2014) posits that the convergence of exemplary practices (in this case, place, community, and inquiry) leads to a transformative view of education that constructs learners as researchers and reality transformers, leading to more thorough and rigorous study practices. Consequently, IBL is a suitable tool when it comes to fostering the consolidation of language development of close to advanced English level learners while developing higher-order thinking abilities such as source evaluation and problem solving in varied contexts.

## The Community Impact Project: A Pedagogical Intervention

The current pedagogical intervention, using tenets of place, inquiry, and community-based pedagogies, was first piloted in the second semester of 2023 with a former cohort of ten Intermediate English learners majoring in language and culture studies at a private university in Bogotá. Adjustments were made for the next cohort of the first semester of 2024. Results presented here belong to two learners: Ana (20) and Esteban (19), from a group of nine (five female and four male whose ages ranged between 18 and 22). Upon class observation and interaction, as a teacher, I discovered that learners' interests revolved around gastronomy, language, literature, art, historical memory, and politics. Excerpts from the two students' artefacts (videos and written reflections) are reproduced below with the learners' permission. Pseudonyms were used to preserve their identity.

### Instructional Design Based on Place-Based Pedagogy

The learning experience was called “The community impact project”. For the project, the concept of community is taken from Castillo et al. (2023, p. 130), namely “groups of people that live in particular areas called territories.” One pedagogical decision was choosing a series of places in the neighborhoods surrounding the Uni's campus within a 30- or 40-minute walking distance that could eventually represent some sort of interest for learners, and that they wanted to explore in more depth. The places were intended to cater to different types of interest (e.g., gastronomy, nature, art, social service, peace and reconciliation, and languages) previously observed in learners during the first two months of the semester. This decision aligned with principles of place-based pedagogy explained by Comber (2016, p. 4), as follows: “the embodied and situated nature of students' lives is not forgotten or ignored, on the contrary, students' histories and life-worlds are understood as materials, productive resources in the design of curriculum and pedagogy.”

The study unit revolved around answering the question “*How does this place impact the local community as observed during fieldwork?*” Thus, students were encouraged to read about the place, visit it, interview stakeholders, and conclude how the place impacted the local community. The final product was a video everybody could watch and react to in the class Padlet, along with a series of written step-by-step reflections. The project's intention was threefold: (a) develop experiential knowledge and understanding linked to a place, (b) enhance critical thinking and research skills via inquiry and data collection, and (c) raise learners' awareness of community-oriented initiatives happening in the place. Table 1 best summarizes the key elements of each place:

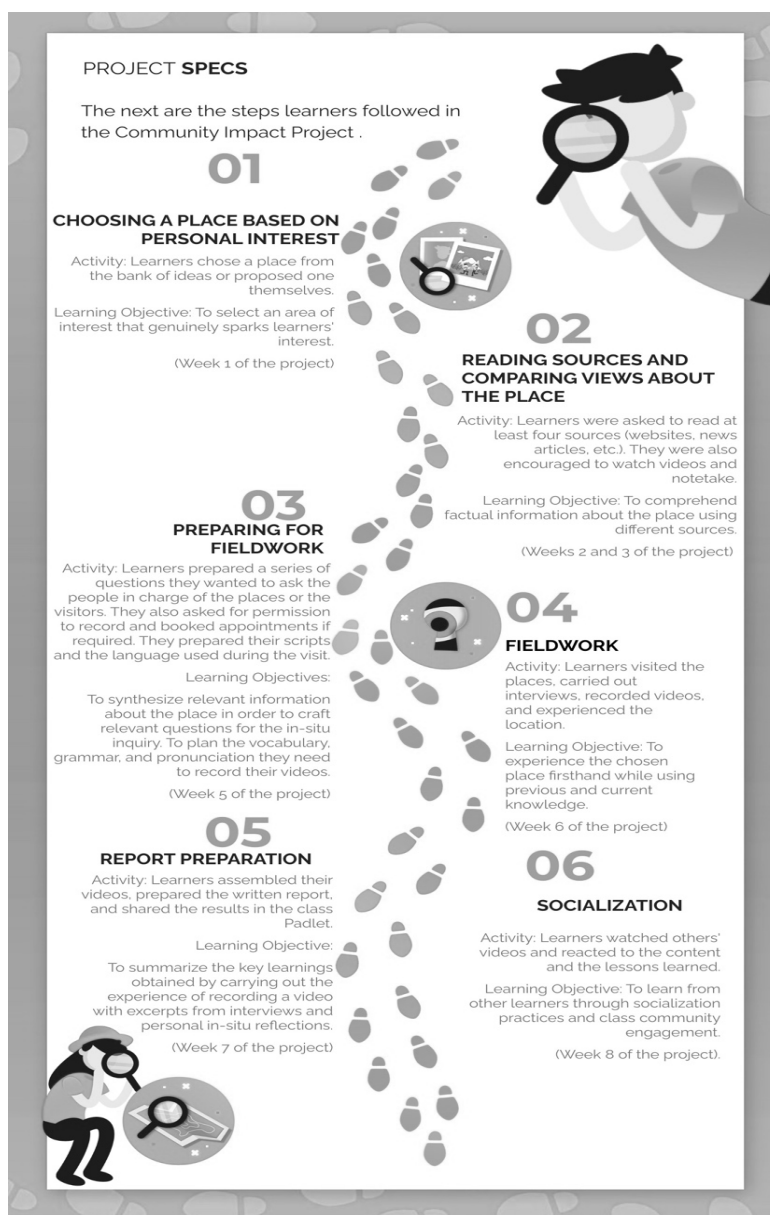
<b>Table 1</b>			
<i>Places to focus on for developing the Community Impact Project</i>			
<b>Type of interest</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Guiding Question</b>
Gastronomy	Plaza de Mercados La Perseverancia. (La Perseverancia Food Market)	Traditional food market located in La Perseverancia neighborhood, famous for preparing some of the most popular Colombian dishes, along with selling staple foodstuffs.	How does this place impact the local community?
Languages	Instituto Caro y Cuervo (Caro & Cuervo Institute)	State-based research institute for the study of philology, literature, languages, etc.	
Art	Fragmentos: Espacio de arte y memoria (Fragments: Space of art and memory)	Place of artistic creation and reflection about the Colombian armed conflict.	
Peace & Reconciliation	Centro de Memoria Histórica (National Centre for Historical Memory)	A public institution created under the Law of Victims and Land Restitution, in charge of producing public information regarding the Colombian conflict.	
Social service	Tapas que salvan vidas (Caps that save lives)	The project is held by Sanar Foundation in charge of providing financial aid for children undergoing cancer.	
Other	Students' proposals of place-based learning experiences were also welcome.		

## Project Evolution During a Bimester

Figure 1 below shows a series of steps learners followed while doing the project to develop different types of knowledge (declarative and experiential) about the chosen place. They were also expected to integrate previous class learnings in their final oral video report (i.e., comparing language, signposting language for organizing their talk, or idiomatic expressions studied in lessons). Following the inquiry process, they also developed their interview questions for the people in the chosen site (design of inquiry tools). In each part of the process, they completed a template that guided their work, considering that they were novice inquirers. In the coming section, I will share two exemplary experiences by Ana and Esteban\* (not their real names) and their reactions towards carrying out the project as part of the English Intermediate III coursework.

**Figure 1.**

*Community Impact Project Steps*



**Learning from Places: Ana and Esteban's Experiences**

**Example 1: 'Tapas que salvan vidas' (Caps that save lives) by Ana**

Ana, one of the Intermediate English III learners, was characterized by being an overachiever and a committed language learner. She found it hard to socialize, though; she described herself being highly sensitive and shy. Still, she took on the challenge and got interested in understanding how a foundation (Fundación Sanar) had an impact on the community. This coursework unit might have posed a challenge for her as she had to interact with people whom she was not previously familiar with,

but in the end, she acknowledged that it was worth doing.

Within the university campus, bottle caps are collected to support projects by Fundación Sanar, but teachers and learners hardly get to know what is behind the initiative. With this choice, Ana deepened her and other students' understandings of how such a small action of depositing a cap in a recycling bin can mean the world to other people outside the uni's campus. In her written research report, she wrote<sup>1</sup>:



The project "Tapas para sanar" that is carried out by the Fundación Sanar in Colombia, was born in 2012 with the objective of collecting funds in order to help children suffering from cancer, in this case, recycling plastic caps. Psychological assistance, food provision, socioeconomic support, and medical assistance are some of the aids children get from this foundation. (Excerpt from Ana's written report, Preparation section)

While getting ready for the fieldwork activity, which consisted of visiting the actual place they were researching, learners had to prepare a few questions they wanted to ask stakeholders involved in the project to expand their own understanding of the place and its impact on the community. Ana proposed the following questions to be answered by the staff of the foundation during fieldwork:

- What is the main objective of this foundation regarding this project?
- In which ways do you think this project makes an impact on the community?
- Are there any other things you want to do or implement in order to expand the aids and benefits the project brings?

(Questions prepared in advance for Ana's fieldwork)

Through the interview Ana conducted and shared, we as a learning community understood that to help a single child, at least 1 million caps are required to be collected. This project not only reduces our environmental impact with the strategy of recycling but also helps children. She concluded that: "small actions could bring comfort to communities that might need everybody's support". She finished her video by urging her classmates to be aware of their impact when they recycled these bottle caps.

<p><b>Picture 1.</b> <i>Excerpt from Ana's Report Video</i></p>	<p><b>Picture 2.</b> <i>Ana with the Project Manager and the Psychologist of the Foundation</i></p>
	

1 Excerpts are taken directly from the participants' posts in the forums or class oral participation. They may contain issues in English language accuracy or use, or the incorporation of Spanish lexical items; however, they show the way the participants express their ideas while learning the language.

After watching the video prepared by Ana in the class Padlet, a couple of classmates reacted as follows:

... Your video encouraged me to help this cause and gather *tapitas*. I like how you organized your video... and now I know how that place looks inside. The questions you did for the workers are really direct to what they want to achieve with their foundation. Having the resources for helping the kids is not easy. And now I'm more conscious of all the work they have to do for helping all those kids. (Classmate's reaction towards Ana's video)

...The fact that people can do something so minimal like recycling something like bottle caps and have an impact so big in the world gives me more faith in humanity...What I didn't know is that they needed so many just to help one child! a million is a lot and I'm thrilled of being a little help to the cause since I was a kid in school. (Classmate's reaction towards Ana's video)

In a written communication with me via email in which I asked her permission to share a few insights from her work, she commented:

I hoped that my project would raise awareness and hearts willing to join this cause, and by seeing the comments they left it seems that I accomplished that mission. (Ana's written communication with the teacher)

### **Example 2: Fragmentos: Espacio de Arte y Memoria (Fragments: Space of Art and Memory) by Esteban**

Esteban, another learner from the English Intermediate III course, fond of dance, art, and expression, decided to focus his attention on an artistic venue created by artist Doris Salcedo called "Fragmentos: Espacio de Arte y Memoria". Such a choice stems from Esteban's knack for art and expression. In a former class task, he had been explaining to us the concept of "performance"; it is not surprising that he was interested in this place, then. In his written report, Esteban wrote the following after having searched for resources about the chosen place:

"Fragmentos" changes the meaning of the word "monument." Traditional monuments are often static and permanent structures. They are meant to remember specific historical events or people. In contrast, Fragmentos is interactive and can change over time. This situation invites people to participate and reinterpret its meaning. This new type of monument helps with collective healing. (Esteban's written report)

As preparation for fieldwork, Esteban not only posed questions to be asked while in the fieldwork but also thought of the objectives he wanted to pursue while doing so. In the second part of his written report, he planned the following:

Objective 1: Understand the difference of this new concept.

- What is the importance of the concept "Contra Monumento"? How could you explain it to children?

Objective 2: Evaluate whether the place is working with the victims in fields other than the arts; Coherence in their Speech: Actions vs. Words.

- Who are the principal workers here?

Objective 3: Determine if there are ways to help the victims at this place.

- How can we help the victims through this place?

(Excerpt from Esteban's fieldwork preparation stage)

### Picture 3

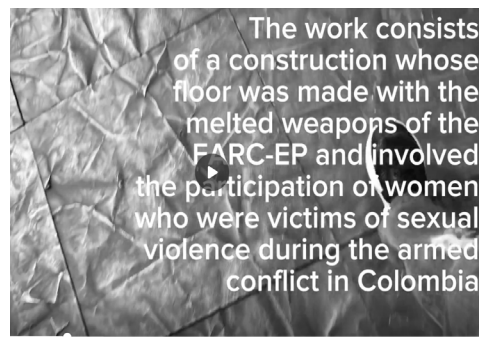
*Esteban Explains the Purpose of the Place during Fieldwork*



In this part of the video, Esteban explained what “counter-monument” means based on what he had read and on what he had grasped from the interview with a guide from the artistic venue. He described that this space is meant to be walked, touched, and experienced first-hand, as opposed to what happens with other artists’ pieces of art, which are only to be observed and admired.

### Picture 4

*Esteban Illustrates the Meaning of the Counter-Monument’s Floor*



In this extract from the video, as Esteban is walking along the place, he also explains how the floor was built out of materials from the melted weapons used in the Colombian armed conflict.

After sharing the video in the class Padlet, a partner reacted as shown below:

It is a fantastic video. I really enjoyed it, because the conflict in Colombia is a topic that mustn't be forgotten. It is great that the ministry of culture, and the museum show us the conflict in a different way such as an artistic view. In addition, the role of Doris Salcedo, it is important in terms of supporting this place. For my, it was interesting the floor that is made by melted guns of FARC-EP, it's something that I've never seen. (Classmate's reaction towards Esteban's video)

After having carried out the inquiry cycle, that is, searching academic and non-academic sources of understanding, preparing the fieldwork questions, interviewing stakeholders and recording a summary video, Esteban concluded the following about “Fragmentos, Espacio de Arte y Memoria”:  
From my standpoint, this is an outstanding place, I was unaware of the existence of this place. However, through my English class, I've learned about the abundance of crucial places to visit. I believe that many people are unfamiliar with this information due to factors such as the lack of promotion, misinformation, disinformation regarding entrance fees, and disinterest or apathy. In addition, this community project impacts in plenty of ways, but most importantly, it recognizes victims, transforms arms into art, and raises our awareness of Colombia's historical memory to prevent repetition. (Esteban's conclusion after having carried out the project)

## Main Pedagogical Insights from the Project

Having designed and carried out this pedagogical initiative, I concur with Demarest (2014) when stating that teachers who get involved in finding more creative ways to engage students in learning will enhance more pleasing learning experiences. If places are socially constructed texts (Comber, 2016), the fact of engaging learners with them means opening spaces for deeper meaning-making practices that are sometimes scarce within the boundaries of classrooms. As a teacher engaged with social transformation, I think having students get involved with places within their community may develop a sensibility that cannot be gained just via class activities. Mixing key principles of place, inquiry, and community-based pedagogies brings about many positive outcomes in an English class environment for students majoring in languages and culture. They are in a language stage in which they can also self-direct their process; therefore, designing lessons in which higher-order thinking skills such as comparing and contrasting, evaluating and comparing sources, or analyzing viewpoints can be more easily nurtured.

As a teacher, I particularly observed: (1) more connections between concepts, (2) heightened awareness of social issues (e.g., the real impact that recycling can have or the importance of art in healing victims of the armed conflict), (3) more informed decisions about learners' projects (e.g., posing objectives for their fieldwork), (4) more use of expressions learned in class, and (5) more confidence while speaking in English, while introducing signposting language and using language structures studied in lessons.

Following Feldt and Peterson (2021), IBL is organized in a way that looks like a research process. Hence, when it comes to developing it within the boundaries of the English lessons, we teachers should understand that learners are still amateur researchers who need guidance and compassion while in the process. The English class is not a research course *per se*; thus, perfect research outcomes are not expected; what is necessary, though, is that with some degree of guidance, learners can achieve their own learning outcomes based on the experiential learning approach.

Similarly, using place and community-based perspectives allows teachers to develop more creative, tailored, and compelling learning experiences. There is room for students to direct their own learning experience and develop a sense of classroom community because they get engaged with others' own inquiries as well. Undoubtedly, there is also a heightened understanding of the place they inhabit and a greater sensitivity towards what is going on in the city.

### Statement of originality

I declare that this manuscript is the result of original research and that it has not been published before and is not currently under evaluation in another journal.

### Conflicts of interest

I do not have any potential conflict of interest to declare.

### Author Contributions

**Adriana Castañeda Londoño:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

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