

Renewing Pedagogy

*PBL as a Space for Young People's
Educational Citizenship*

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Presentation overview

Main focus and arguments

Research approach & method

PBL: a short overview

Educational citizenship: a short overview

Some findings

PBL & Educational citizenship

Final highlights

Main focus and arguments

- Placing young people at the center of the pedagogical relationship, by creating spaces for the enactment of their *educational citizenship* (Macedo & Araújo, 2014; Macedo, 2018)
- Problem-Based Learning (PBL) as means to assure rights through the active construction of the curriculum

Research approach & method

- ❖ Took place in the school year of 2019/20 during the pandemic confinement
- ❖ Has a qualitative interpretivist approach
 - ❖ polyphonic/ intersubjective view

Data collection and analysis for this presentation:

- 22 teachers' individual reflexive reports about the implementation of PBL in 5 educational institutions (EI) with 75 students
- researchers' fieldnotes on 25 PBL online sessions with three classes of 10th graders
- community feedback by an online questionnaire with 20 respondents

Understanding PBL a short overview

The goal of PBL is not to solve a problem, but to implement a learning intention.

Students work together on a problem:

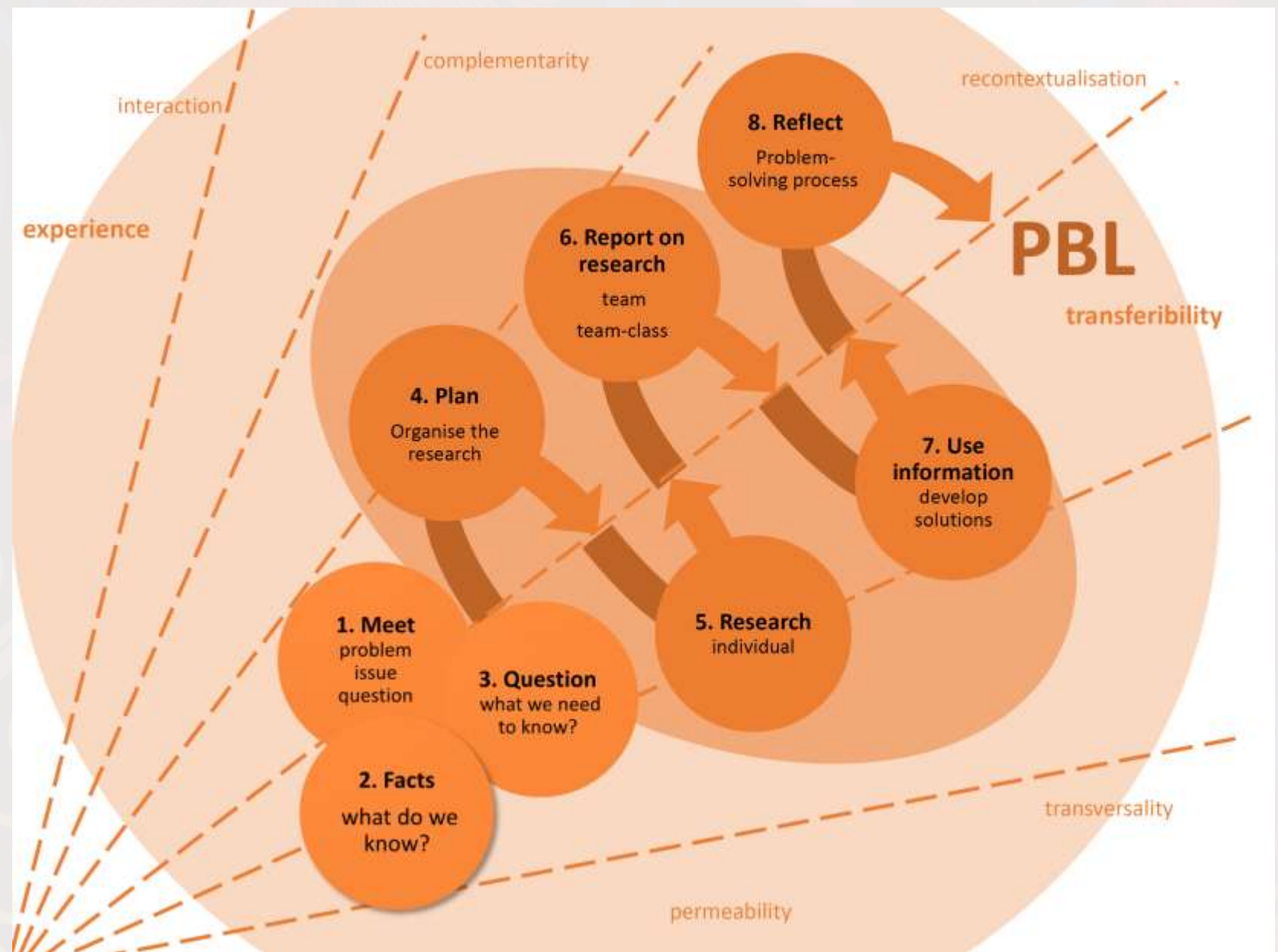
- organize ideas
- collect information
- define the nature of the problem
- define learning goals
- [research]
- and propose possible forms of action

(Ayala, Messing & Toro, 2011)

PBL highlights the relational construction of knowledge

Problem Based Learning

the EduTransfer approach



Understanding “educational citizenship”: a short overview

Two axis of rights

Educational citizenship of rights

- expression and recognition of their own voice
- reflection and action over their life contexts

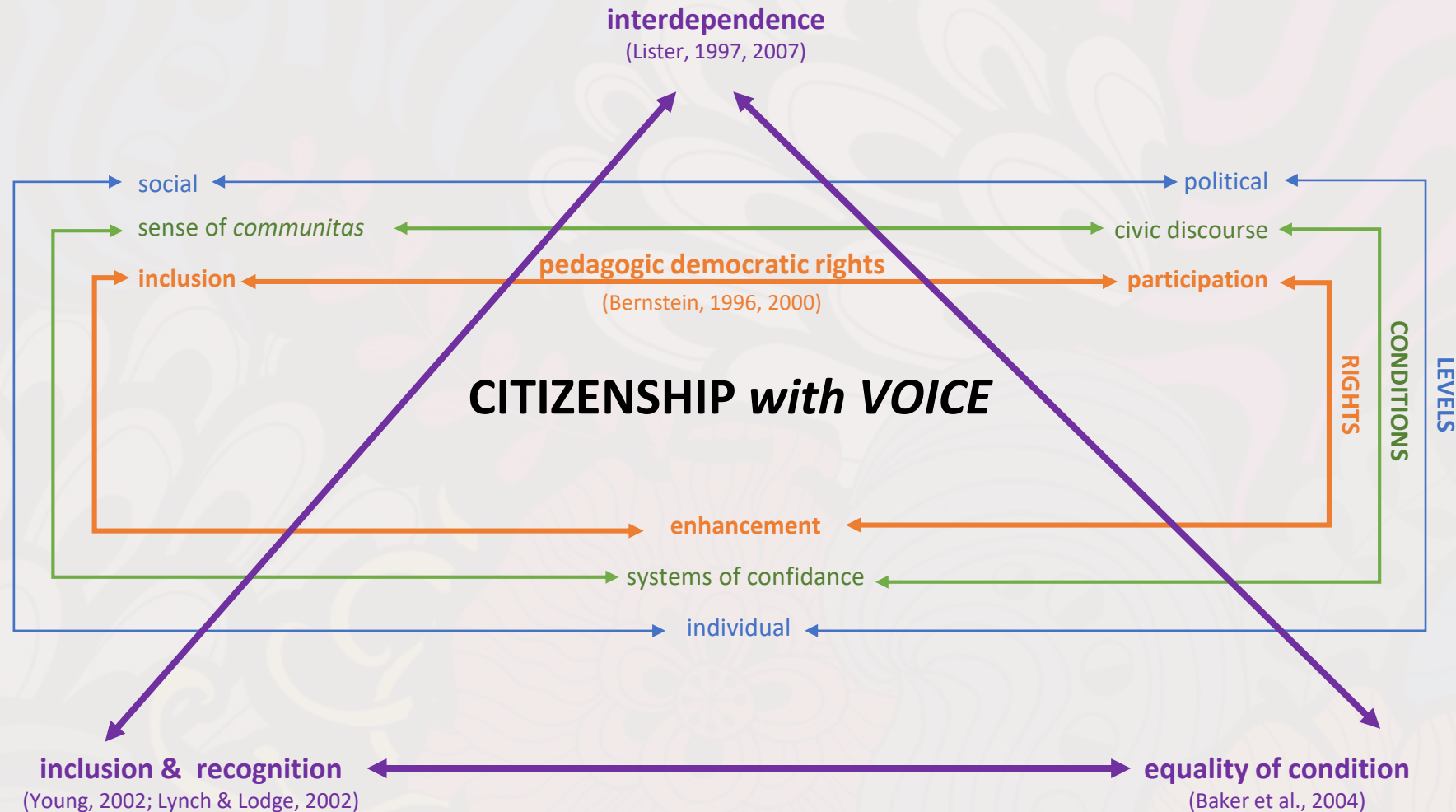
Educational citizenship of knowledge

- right to knowledge
- participation in the definition and construction of knowledge

(Macedo, 2018)

Educational citizenship (Macedo, 2018)

Intertwining pedagogic provision with the construction of rights by the subjects of pedagogy





PBL & educational citizenship: Some findings - the *interpenetration of rights*

- In a PBL discussion, a young woman says that in education there is a focus on the amount of content studied and *not on the quality of learning and on understanding the subjects*. She also states that *at school "they appeal to a future worker"*. (Field Note, 2020, May 12)

The young woman's critical words seem to reveal concerns about *enhancement* (Bernstein, 1996). She claims space - here and now -, to be *recognized* (Lynch & Lodge, 2002) as a student and citizen, being *heard and reflecting and acting in the contexts of life* (Field Note 2020, May 12).

This assertion highlights the intersection among rights, in the context of the enactment of "educational citizenship" (Macedo, 2018).



PBL & educational citizenship:

Some findings - *addressing real problems as citizens*

- The fact that this methodology requires students to work on a *real problem*, which specifically - in this proposal - concerned their lives, contributed to the *transformation of their citizenship practices*. (Joseph, teacher, ES2)

In the critical reflection about the educational process, a teacher asserts the importance of *reality-based work in the reinforcement of citizenship*. Young people are able of *reflexive thinking* about their surrounding world.



PBL & educational citizenship:

Some findings - the *poliphony of voice* in common decision making

- We did an analysis and, as a group, we were able to draw different conclusions so that we can do a good job in the future. (Miguel, Field Note 2020, May 19)

One student states that the team considers there is benefit in exploring the theme “extra support for students”, referring to a dialogue in which the expression of the *heterogeneity* of voices led to decision-making.



PBL's main challenges vis-à-vis educational citizenship (I)

- expression and recognition of young people's voices
 - *Power issues* in the classroom (specially in the 1st sessions)
 - leadership relationships in which *powerful voices* are asserted (Macedo, 2009a, 2009b)
 - passivity of some youngsters in the classroom and in teamwork
 - need of recognition by some young people of other voices/views of the world
 - use of teachers voices, expressing them as their own
- reflection and action over their life contexts
 - difficulties distinguishing between facts and opinions

PBL's main challenges vis-à-vis educational citizenship (II)



- participation in the definition and construction of knowledge
 - some students continue to show lack of motivation
 - some youngsters show individualism, insecurity, need of participation, critical thinking and/or autonomy, as well as time management skills
- For the teachers...
 - pressure to meet the discipline syllabus, preparing students for national exams
 - loss of centrality in the teaching-learning process

In sum: risk of reinforcing powerful voices (Macedo, 2009b) and increasing inequalities among young people.



Some strategies to overcome the students' learning exclusion

- Constitution of *heterogeneous teams* of young people
- Team's systematic *reflection on collaborative work*, enhancing the best in each person
- More *training sessions* on PBL
- More *time* to deepen the issues
- More support from teachers and research team to implement PBL steps, namely to:
 - identify, define and redefine the initial problems-causes-questions
 - distinguish between facts and opinions

PBL reinforces educational citizenship

... it enables *young people's*:

- Participation in decision-making
- Autonomy
- Reflexive and critical thinking
- Search for knowledge and solutions
- Problem-solving skills
- Reflection and action in their own life contexts (classes, school, community)

... while allowing *teachers'*

- reflection about their own pedagogical practices

In PBL teachers and students are challenged to perform new roles. This opens the grounds for change and improvement.

Final highlights

PBL allows for the active reinvention of the curriculum

- teachers & students' roles are also reinvented
- most relevantly in citizenship and self-development subjects

PBL provides space for educational citizenship of rights

- with voice and recognition, decision making and reflection upon one's life and realities
 - Challenge for research team/teachers: find strategies to mitigate risk of reinforcing *powerful voices* (Macedo, 2009b) and increasing inequalities among young people

PBL provides space for educational citizenship of knowledge

- students decide what is relevant to learn and how they should proceed to construct their own knowledge

PBL allows fostering the 21st century competences from soft to hard skills

- knowledge is reinvented within a relational fashion, reinforcing the value of the learning processes

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