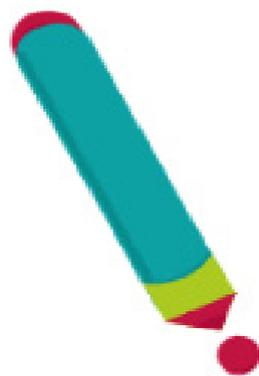


THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF LIBERATORY PEDAGOGY.

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Abstract.

EThis study addresses the importance of improving interpersonal relationships within the educational setting with a particular focus on bullying and its impact on learning processes. Through a theoretical review that includes topics such as interpersonal relationships, teaching strategies and liberating pedagogy, it advocates for a more critical and humanistic approach to education. The impact of bullying between 9th and 10th grade students at the Nuestra Señora del Carmen School in Pasto was examined using the qualitative method incorporating research instruments such as observation, interviews and focus groups. The findings led to the implementation of a pedagogical proposal called "Closet zap bullying: for you and for others we are going to walk", designed to improve interpersonal relationships and learning processes like consequences of bullying, offering a practical approach, transformative and critical within educational context.

Keywords: Relationships, bullying, teaching strategies, learning and liberating pedagogy.

Resumen.

Este estudio aborda la importancia de mejorar las relaciones interpersonales en el ámbito educativo, centrandose su atención en el bullying y cómo este afecta los procesos de aprendizaje. A través de una revisión teórica que incluye temas como relaciones interpersonales, estrategias de enseñanza y la pedagogía liberadora, la cual propone una enseñanza más crítica y humanista. Utilizando el método cualitativo utilizando instrumentos de investigación como la observación, entrevistas y grupos focales, se investiga el impacto del bullying entre estudiantes de 9° y 10° grado en el Colegio Nuestra Señora del Carmen en Pasto. Los resultados de la investigación apuntan hacia la implementación de una propuesta pedagógica denominada "Closet zapbullying: por ti y por los demás vamos a caminar", diseñada para mejorar las relaciones interpersonales y los procesos de aprendizaje ocasionados por el bullying, ofreciendo un enfoque práctico, transformador y crítico en el contexto educativo.

Palabras Clave: Relaciones interpersonales, bullying, estrategias de enseñanza, aprendizaje y pedagogía liberadora.

EL PODER TRANSFORMADOR DE LA PEDAGOGÍA LIBERADORA.

I. INTRODUCTION.

This research focuses on the phenomenon of bullying, a form of aggression or intimidation that seeks to exert power over others through hostile threats, whether physical or verbal, creating an environment of distress for the victim and a notable power imbalance. Particularly prevalent in the school settings, manifests itself both implicitly and explicitly, severely impacting students' sense of safety and well-being who often choose to remain silent for fear of retaliation or stigmatization as cowards. Despite the difficulty in detecting these situations of violence in a timely manner, it is essential for teachers to be equipped with the knowledge and pedagogical tools necessary to prevent and adequately address these violent behaviors, thus contributing to a safer and more supportive educational environment.

Colombia ranks ninth in the world in cases of bullying, according to a study by the international organization Bullying Without Borders. The urgency of addressing this problem effectively is evident. Although there is extensive research on bullying, there is a clear need to approach these studies from the perspective and daily reality of the classroom, where teachers and students directly face its consequences. This research not only addresses the recognition and prevention of bullying, but also the promotion of healthy interpersonal relationships and effective learning strategies.

Given this context, we propose to explore the potential of Paulo Freire's liberating pedagogy to enhance interpersonal relationships and learning processes caused by bullying among 9th and 10th grade students at Colegio Nuestra Señora del Carmen in Pasto. This private, Catholic school is owned by the Carmelite Missionary Sisters and grants the academic baccalaureate degree. The institution is located in the city of San Juan de Pasto, in the San Andrés neighborhood, in a predominantly commercial area surrounded by a variety of businesses and the parish of the same name. The students are characterized as cheerful, outgoing, creative, dynamic, and innovative. They are characterized by a climate of security and affection, where the family is considered as a foundational pillar, and communication is multidirectional, encouraging a sense of community. The

school provides spaces that allow student participation in educational, cultural, sports, and recreational activities.

Through guiding questions, we seek to delve deeper into the existence and effects of bullying, the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, teaching-learning strategies, and the value of liberating pedagogy in building a more inclusive, transformative, and empathetic educational environment. According to Freire (2003): "One of the most beautiful and rewarding tasks we have ahead of us as teachers is to help students construct the intelligibility of things, to help them learn to understand and communicate that understanding to others" (Freire, *El grito manso*, 2003). This comprehensive approach not only advocates for a change in teaching practice, but also for a transformation in school culture, oriented toward mutual respect, understanding, and collective well-being.

II. METHODOLOGY.

This study used a qualitative approach, drawing on theoretical references from González, who stated: "The qualitative approach is ideal for social research, as it seeks to understand phenomena in their uniqueness, exploring the reasons for their current state. It emphasizes the importance of considering the specific and temporal context of the studies, focusing on the individual and recognizing the diversity of realities" (González-Morales, 2003).

To explore the complex dynamics of bullying and its impact on interpersonal relationships and learning processes in educational settings. A qualitative paradigm, rooted in understanding of social phenomena from the perspective of participants and their natural context, stands out for its ability to delve into the nature and root causes of the bullying problem. This approach focuses on describing specific individuals and situations acknowledges the existence of multiple realities, and values the contextual relevance of theoretical frameworks.

The choice of a qualitative paradigm allows for a richer and more detailed understanding of how bullying affects victims, perpetrators, observers, and educators, taking into account the emotional and cognitive effects, as well as the school group and cultural dynamics that influence these processes. Using qualitative methods such as interviews and observations, this study aimed to explore in detail how bullying interferes with learning, affects

academic performance, self-esteem, and participation in educational activities.

The method's design is developed in a dynamic process involving multiple phases, from idea generation and question formulation to data collection and analysis, and the interpretation and reporting of results. This flexible approach allows the researcher to move between data and theory, interacting with the phenomenon under study and building knowledge from participants' experiences. The research aims to provide a deeper and more specific understanding of bullying behavior in order to identify effective prevention and intervention strategies and promote a safer and more empathetic educational environment.

The critical social approach analyzes bullying within a broader cultural and social framework, considering how prevailing social norms and cultural structures influence students' interactions and perpetuate the problem. It promotes equality and social justice and encourages students to take an active role in identifying and combating bullying, empowering them to become agents of change. This approach also promotes the development of critical consciousness in students, encouraging them to question social norms, recognize diversity, and resist oppressive structures.

This critical social approach seeks to provide an in-depth analytical perspective that focuses on the underlying roots and structures of bullying and seeks not only to alleviate the symptoms, but also to change the social conditions that contribute to this phenomenon, with the ultimate goal of the research being to promote equality and social justice, leading to transformation through Paulo Freire's Liberating Pedagogy.

Authors Carr and Kemmis will tell us: "Action research is a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these and the situations within which they take place" (Sandin Esteban, 2003).

Action research can lead to cultural change in educational institutions by promoting values such as empathy, inclusion, and bullying prevention. This approach is characterized by its participatory nature, focusing on translating research into practical, sustainable interventions and actively involving the school community throughout the process.

In this research, the work unit is composed of students and teachers from Nuestra Señora del Carmen School in Pasto. It focuses specifically on 9th and 10th grades, encompassing a total of 107 students and 10 teachers.

Table 1

RELACIÓN CON LA INSTITUCIÓN	Estudiantes	Profesores	Total
Unidad de Análisis	21	5	26

Nota: unidad de trabajo es de tipo no probabilística y a su vez se rige por criterios de selección.

The selection of this unit is based on non-probabilistic criteria and is subject to certain requirements:

- Be part of the Our Lady of Carmen School - Pasto.
- Belong to the 9th and 10th grades.
- Show availability and willingness to participate in research activities.
- Students who have shown signs of being involved in bullying situations, either as aggressors or victims.
- Belong to the College's Piar program.

These selection criteria will help focus the research on a specific sample that will allow for a more precise approach to the phenomenon of bullying in the school context of Colegio Nuestra Señora del Carmen in Pasto.

To carry out the research, three data collection instruments were used:

Structured Interview: This technique will allow for the collection of relevant information through open-ended, standardized questions. Despite its rigidity, a more flexible approach will be adopted to balance structure and exploratory capacity. The interview will be conducted with teachers and students, with prior informed consent from parents for the participation of minor students.

Observation: Direct observation, conducted by the research group, will be used to identify, interpret, and analyze the environment, focusing on interpersonal relationships and learning processes affected by bullying.

An observation guide will be developed to avoid bias and ensure the collection of relevant data.

Focus Group: This qualitative technique is used to gather in-depth data on the perceptions, opinions, and experiences of a group of people. Guided by a moderator, participants will exchange ideas and perspectives, allowing for the identification of common patterns and a diversity of opinions. Focus groups offer contextualized and complementary perspectives.

These carefully designed and validated instruments will provide detailed information on the effects of bullying on interpersonal relationships and learning processes, as well as the effectiveness of liberatory pedagogy in this educational context.

III. RESULTS.

The research results are obtained from the designed instruments and are organized according to the specific objectives suggested by the researchers.

In the first specific objective, it is sought to identify the characteristics of interpersonal relationships of 9th and 10th grade students of the Colegio Nuestra Señora del Carmen-Pasto, from 3 categories and each of them is accompanied by subcategories. As the first category we have interpersonal relationships, and the subcategory is the beginning of interpersonal relationships, the second category is characteristics of interpersonal relationships and it is accompanied by two subcategories the values that we possess as human beings and the characteristics of interpersonal relationships, and as the last category refers to the models of interpersonal relationships from two subcategories; typology of interpersonal relationships and social needs of adolescents.

The results of this first objective reveal the fundamental importance of relationships in an adolescent's life. Several categories and characteristics were identified that describe the nature of these interpersonal relationships. When it comes to the beginning of a relationship, it is important to emphasize that these relationships are generally formed in the family environment and in the broader environment (e.g., school or community). Young people view these relationships as centered around shared interests and self-expression, allowing them

to form meaningful connections based on trust and authenticity. Based on the characteristics of interpersonal relationships, students classified them as good, average, and poor.

A good relationship is characterized by empathy, reciprocity, and brotherhood; a poor relationship lacks frequent interaction and trust; and a poor relationship is characterized by misunderstandings and unresolved conflicts. Furthermore, it has been observed that young people's early friendships and relationships are often formed in a supportive and trusting family environment. As they grow older, they strengthen their bonds with peers and other groups, although relationships with teachers often face difficulties due to a lack of trust and intimacy. Overall, this study highlights the importance of fostering healthy and meaningful relationships for young people at home and at school to foster a sense of belonging, trust, and mutual support during this critical stage of human development.

The study's second objective was to describe the teaching strategies used by teachers to improve interpersonal relationships and student learning at the institution where the research was conducted. This was done through two categories: the first, teaching strategies, which is accompanied by four subcategories: conceptualization of teaching strategies, strategies in education and didactics and their contribution to school work, and types of teaching strategies. The second category delved into learning, working from three subcategories: the first, learning epistemology, the second, learning theory, and the third, learning strategies. Data collection was carried out through interviews, focus groups, and observations of five educators.

The analysis of the results for this objective shows that there are significant differences in teachers' understanding of the concept of "teaching strategies." While only two provided a clear definition and focused on adaptive strategies and flexible approaches, others confused the term with pedagogy or methodology. Despite this difference, the interviews show that teachers with a deep understanding also consistently use these strategies in their teaching practice, which is consistent with contemporary educational theory, especially constructivist approaches.

The observations supporting these findings emphasize that teachers with a clear understanding not only have a solid theoretical foundation but are also able to effectively apply these strategies in their teaching

practice, demonstrating a deep understanding of content and teaching strategies. In summary, the main findings point to teachers' differing interpretations of the term "teaching strategies," the importance of clearly defining and understanding these strategies to improve pedagogical practice, and the need to integrate theory and practice in teaching to maximize teaching quality. Furthermore, the importance of developing greater theoretical and practical coherence in teaching strategies is emphasized, suggesting that teaching effectiveness can be significantly improved through reflection and ongoing training in innovative and adaptive teaching strategies tailored to the needs of young people. In their teaching practices, teachers differ significantly and require significant needs in their understanding and application of teaching theory.

The importance of further exploration of theory-based teaching approaches is emphasized, as well as the importance of adapting strategies to effectively support students and foster a stimulating environment that accommodates different learning styles and social realities.

In order to meet the third specific objective of establishing the impact of bullying on interpersonal relationships and the learning of students at the institution, where the research was conducted, data collection was conducted through individual structured interviews, a focus group, and an observation guide. Each meeting involved a group of 21 students between the ages of 14 and 17, using dialogue as a tool to initiate an approach and provide guidance on the research. The study is approached from the general category of bullying, exploring three key subcategories: Effects of bullying, Bullies and victims, and Types of bullying.

The in-depth analysis revealed a complex web of perceptions and experiences related to bullying among students. It highlights the urgency of a comprehensive educational approach that not only prevents bullying but also fosters empathy, mutual respect, and peer support. Early intervention and ongoing education are identified as key elements in changing the normal perception of bullying and cultivating a safer and more welcoming school environment for all students.

The instruments used provided a detailed analysis of the bully's characteristics, highlighting their need for dominance and control, and recognized the impact of group dynamics on the attackers' behavior. This broad

approach allows us to understand bullying not only as an individual problem but also as a social phenomenon. The diversity of approaches underscores the importance of adopting multifaceted strategies to address the academic and emotional difficulties caused by bullying, as well as the need for interventions at both the individual and structural levels to create safe school environments that foster learning.

IV. DISCUSSION.

The first objective of the current research highlights the importance of relationships in the personal and emotional development of young people and emphasizes the impact of relationships on emotional, psychological, and academic stability. Referring to a previous study by Yarlaque (2019), the study concluded that interpersonal relationships are the result of several experiential and cultural factors that play an important role in interpersonal relationships.

Melo Delgado and Rodríguez (2020) claims that interpersonal relationships are the social skills for life, which are learned through training, imitation and social molding throughout life, which are developed in the contexts that the adolescent plays as a family and in their relationship with peers. This concept coincides with what was found in the present study where interpersonal relationships are identified as that process that occurs from the first cycle of life, identifying as the first interactions of an individual as a member of a family: parents, siblings, cousins and people such as neighbors and classmates.

Furthermore, it emphasizes the idea that interpersonal relationships are social skills that are learned throughout life through imitation, training, and social modeling. These skills develop in different contexts, such as the family environment and interactions with peers. This concept is consistent with the results of the present study, which examines interpersonal relationships as a process that begins in childhood and includes family members, neighbors, and classmates.

The discussion of the second objective considers various aspects related to educational strategies and practices through four key subcategories. These subcategories highlight the importance of integrating theory and practice in teaching, following Paulo Freire's ideas about educational practice, " School is not a physical space. It

is a work environment, a posture, a way of being" (Freire, 2005), in order to significantly impact the teaching and learning process.

Addressing differences of opinion regarding the implementation of educational strategies, highlighting the importance of active participation, cooperation, and the development of social skills, with a focus on reflection and personalization in the application of these strategies.

Focusing on pedagogy and its role in education, it reveals differences among educators regarding its value. While some recognize its importance in transforming teaching into meaningful learning, others view it as merely theoretical and lacking practical applicability. The lack of systematization of Latin American pedagogy and the uncritical adoption of foreign theories are criticized, although the role of pedagogy in fostering critical thinking and personal transformation is recognized, according to Paulo Freire; "True education is praxis, reflection, and action of humankind upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1987).

Teaching strategies are examined, revealing a divide between teachers who adopt innovative methods, such as constructivist, cognitive, and problem-based approaches, and those who prefer traditional methods and resist change. This highlights the diversity of teachers' attitudes and practices toward teaching and suggests the need to promote educational innovation to improve the quality of education.

All in all, the text advocates for an education that effectively combines theory and practice, promotes active participation and the development of social skills, and adopts a critical and transformative pedagogical approach. It also points out the need to overcome resistance to change in order to adopt innovative teaching strategies that can significantly improve education. Clemente Lobato (2006) defines: "Strategies are conscious procedures for addressing a situation effectively, they involve a socially situated response, with a specific character and may include different procedures" which gives quality to education, together, these findings provide a comprehensive understanding of teachers' attitudes and practices towards teaching strategies and provide a valuable starting point for the development of effective educational interventions.

The fundamental key is competency-based training in education, highlighting how to prepare children and young people to face complex problems through the articulation of knowledge. The importance of

continuous assessment to improve and recognize skills is emphasized. In addition, different pedagogical strategies are mentioned. According to Díaz Barriga and Hernández Rojas (2002), "Learning strategies are procedures or sequences of conscious, voluntary, controlled and flexible actions, which become habits for those being taught, whose purpose is learning and problem solving both in the academic field and outside of it".

Some of these are Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and collaborative learning, emphasizing self-learning and the importance of group work to maximize individual and collective learning.

Offering historical and contemporary perspectives on learning, including contributions from Rousseau, William James, H. Ebbinghaus, Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, Ausubel, and Freire, each highlighting different aspects of the educational process, from the importance of experience and interaction with the environment to the conceptualization of learning as an active process of knowledge construction.

Finally, the categories of this objective examine learning strategies, highlighting the importance of adapting them to individual students' needs to motivate them and support them, especially those with low academic performance. Emphasis is placed on the goal of enabling students to be autonomous, independent, and capable of learning meaningfully.

The discussion of objective two provides a comprehensive analysis of various facets of modern education, from competency-based training to the application of learning theories and strategies, highlighting the need for an adaptive and reflective pedagogical approach that prepares students for the challenges of the future.

The third objective of the study, which explores the effects of bullying on interpersonal relationships and the learning of 9th and 10th grade students, reveals the complexity and profoundly negative impact of bullying. Through qualitative methods with 21 young people, the various dimensions and consequences of bullying were examined, emphasizing the gap in students' perceptions of bullying, the influence of sociocultural dynamics in perpetuating bullying, and the variety of forms it can take, including cyberbullying. In the study by Rengifo (2021) Rengifo de la Torre, TG (2021). Incidence of bullying on the learning of basic education students. (UT Maná, Ed.) Maná, Ecuador, highlights that "bullying and victims

in the context of bullying exhibit distinct characteristics, which allows them to be classified based on their ability to use power, identify the victim, and subdue them. These conditions contribute to the construction of the bully's personality, which manifests itself through various forms of offensive and aggressive behavior".

The findings underscore the urgency of implementing early educational interventions that promote empathy, mutual respect, and peer support to prevent and counteract bullying. Theoretical references such as Gardner (1990), Goleman (1993), and Shapiro (1997) emphasize the importance of early emotional education. They emphasize the need to address the underlying causes of the phenomenon, such as the social and cultural structures that foster discrimination and abuse of power. They also mention the importance of adopting specific strategies against cyberbullying, given its impact on young people's well-being.

The discussion concludes that combating bullying requires a holistic and collaborative approach that involves the entire educational community and goes beyond treating the symptoms, aiming to change the cultural and social norms that normalize it. Values education, along with fostering an inclusive and safe school environment, are fundamental to students' well-being and comprehensive development. Furthermore, it emphasizes the need for psychological support services for victims and bullies, as well as digital skills training to effectively manage cyberbullying.

V. CONCLUSIONS.

In summary, the article highlights the importance that young people recognize and foster interpersonal relationships in order to reinforce positive values and skills acquired in their home and school environments. This approach is essential for preventing conflicts in the development of personality during adolescence, enabling them to face the challenges of daily life with responsibility and respect.

The research underscores the crucial need for a deep understanding of teaching strategies and the effective integration of theory and practice in education. It highlights the variability in pedagogical preferences and methods among educators, emphasizing the importance of reflective and personalized approaches to pedagogy to strengthen interpersonal relationships and foster meaningful learning among students in the study group.

The study emphasizes the critical need to treat bullying as a serious problem that impacts students' emotional well-being, academic performance, and ability to establish healthy relationships. It recommends the implementation of preventive strategies and psychosocial support to effectively address bullying in schools.

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