

A CRITICAL (HYPER)PEDAGOGY FOR AUTONOMY APPLIED TO EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLISH TEACHING IN THE FIRST CYCLE OF BASIC EDUCATION

A (HIPER)PEDAGOGIA CRÍTICA PARA A AUTONOMIA APLICADA À EDUCAÇÃO PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO SUSTENTÁVEL NO ENSINO DE INGLÊS NO 1.º CICLO DO ENSINO BÁSICO

(HIPER)PEDAGOGÍA CRÍTICA PARA LA AUTONOMÍA APLICADA A LA EDUCACIÓN PARA EL DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS EN EL 1ER CICLO DE LA EDUCACIÓN BÁSICA

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore the effectiveness of innovative pedagogical-didactic approaches, grounded in critical pedagogy for autonomy, in the context of Primary English education. It particularly emphasizes the role of hypermedia and audiovisual resources in enhancing pupil motivation and participation, thereby fostering holistic, sustainable learning and the development of pupils' autonomy.

Employing an ethnographic, qualitative, and action research approach, this study delves into various strategies for implementing critical pedagogy to cultivate autonomy and critical thinking in English learners. Data was collected through lesson plans, visual records (videos and photographs), logbooks, pupil questionnaires, analysis of pupil work, and interviews, focusing on the contributions of interactive, multisensory, and hypermedia resources towards sustainable development and autonomy in learning English.

Preliminary results suggest that the pedagogical strategies examined can significantly enhance skills related to autonomy and collaboration. Furthermore, they promote effective and active learning of English, where pupils exhibit heightened motivation towards acquiring a foreign language. Such an approach not only contributes to their comprehensive development as proactive citizens but also prepares them to be future change agents.

The study underscores the potential of a critical pedagogy for autonomy, augmented by hypermedia resources, to revolutionize English teaching in the primary setting. It demonstrates how these methodologies can contribute to the creation of a more engaging, autonomous, and sustainably-minded learner base, equipped with the skills necessary for the 21st century.

Keywords: education for sustainable development; pedagogy for autonomy; collaboration; primary English; hypermedia resources.

Resumo

O presente artigo tem como principal objetivo explorar a eficácia de abordagens pedagógico-didáticas inovadoras, baseadas na pedagogia crítica para a autonomia, no contexto do ensino de Inglês no 1.º Ciclo do Ensino Básico. O estudo destaca em particular o papel dos recursos hipermédia e audiovisuais no reforço da motivação e da participação dos alunos, promovendo, assim, uma aprendizagem holística e sustentável e o desenvolvimento da autonomia dos alunos.

No contexto investigativo do estudo, utilizou-se uma abordagem etnográfica, qualitativa e de investigação-ação, sendo que este estudo analisa várias estratégias de implementação da pedagogia crítica para cultivar a autonomia e o pensamento crítico dos alunos na disciplina de inglês. Os dados foram recolhidos através de planos de aula, registos visuais (vídeos e fotografias), diários de bordo, questionários aos alunos, análise de trabalhos dos alunos e entrevistas, centrando-se nos contributos dos recursos interativos, multissensoriais e hipermédia para o desenvolvimento sustentável e a autonomia na aprendizagem do Inglês.

Os resultados preliminares apontam que as estratégias pedagógicas analisadas podem melhorar significativamente as competências relacionadas com a autonomia e a colaboração. Adicionalmente, promovem uma aprendizagem eficaz e ativa do inglês, na qual os alunos demonstram uma maior motivação para a aquisição de uma língua estrangeira. Esta abordagem não só contribui para o seu desenvolvimento global enquanto cidadãos proativos, como também os prepara para serem futuros agentes de mudança.

O estudo reforça o potencial de uma pedagogia crítica para a autonomia, ampliada por recursos hipermédia, de maneira a revolucionar o ensino do inglês no 1.º Ciclo do Ensino Básico. Demonstra como estas metodologias podem contribuir para a criação de uma base de alunos mais envolvente, autónoma e sustentável, provida com as competências necessárias para o século XXI.

Palavras-chave: educação para o desenvolvimento sustentável; pedagogia para a autonomia; colaboração; 1.º ciclo do ensino básico; recursos hipermédia.

Resumen

El objetivo principal de este artículo es explorar la eficacia de enfoques pedagógico-didácticos innovadores, basados en la pedagogía crítica para la autonomía, en el contexto de la enseñanza del inglés en el 1er Ciclo de la Educación Básica. En particular, el estudio hace hincapié en el papel de los recursos hipermedia y audiovisuales en la mejora de la motivación y la participación de los estudiantes, promoviendo así un aprendizaje holístico y sostenible y el desarrollo de la autonomía de los estudiantes.

En el contexto del estudio, se utilizó un enfoque etnográfico, cualitativo y de investigación-acción, y en él se analizan diversas estrategias de aplicación de la pedagogía crítica para cultivar la autonomía y el pensamiento crítico de los estudiantes en la asignatura de inglés. Los datos se recopilaron a través de planes de clase, registros visuales (vídeos y fotografías), cuadernos de bitácora, cuestionarios a los alumnos, análisis del trabajo de los alumnos y entrevistas, centrándose en las contribuciones de los recursos interactivos, multisensoriales e hipermedia al desarrollo sostenible y la autonomía en el aprendizaje del inglés.

Los resultados preliminares indican que las estrategias pedagógicas analizadas pueden mejorar significativamente las competencias relacionadas con la autonomía y la colaboración. Además, promueven un aprendizaje efectivo y activo del inglés, en el que los alumnos muestran una mayor motivación por adquirir una lengua extranjera. Este enfoque no sólo contribuye a su desarrollo general como ciudadanos proactivos, sino que también los prepara para ser futuros agentes del cambio.

El estudio refuerza el potencial de una pedagogía crítica para la autonomía, aumentada con recursos hipermedia, para revolucionar la enseñanza del inglés en primaria. Demuestra cómo estas metodologías pueden contribuir a la creación de una base de estudiantes más comprometida, autónoma y sostenible, dotada de las competencias necesarias para el siglo XXI.

Palabras-clave: educación para el desarrollo sostenible; pedagogía para la autonomía; colaboración; inglés en el 1er ciclo de educación básica; recursos hipermedia.

INTRODUCTION

Today's society lives in an era of constant evolution, accelerated change, and daily challenges. Pupils in the 21st century are victims of this fast-paced era, in which little (or no) time is spent thinking about the interests of today's children, but rather on maintaining a panorama that has long been established in our society.

It is urgent to believe in and fight for student-centred education, where children are allowed to choose, think, create, and above all play. In this sense, the idea arises of combining the development of the digital age with a critical (hyper)pedagogy for autonomy (Raya et al., 2007), which is why it is increasingly necessary to train pupils who are aware, active, and participatory in the sustainable development of a globalised world (Sá & Andrade, 2008).

In our experience of teaching English, we seek to develop practices that promote the integral and sustainable development of pupils through holistic approaches and active methodologies, geared towards a transformative, action-oriented pedagogy, such as the Experiential Communicative Approach (Fernández-Corbacho, 2014).

Taking this into account, in this article we will explore the concepts above concerning to our experience of English language teaching.

1 BUILDING A CRITICAL (HYPER)PEDAGOGY FOR AUTONOMY IN PRIMARY ENGLISH EDUCATION

In this first section, we present processes and strategies of scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976) in the construction of a critical (hyper)pedagogy for autonomy.

1.1 Scaffolding processes and strategies in building a critical (hyper)pedagogy for autonomy in primary English education

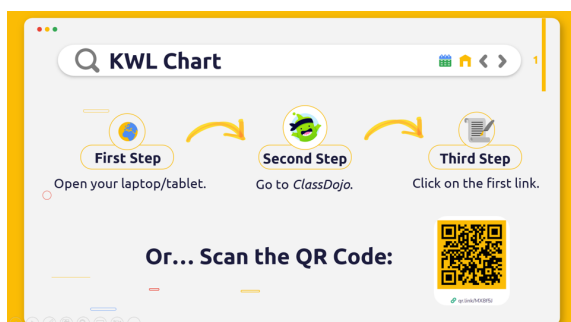
In our study, to emphasise hypermedia and audio-visual resources, we combined them with scaffolding strategies to create a bridge between pupils' knowledge and the promotion of their autonomy, thus developing student-centred learning.

According to Wood et al. (1976), from the perspective of the teaching and learning process, the scaffolding strategy refers to the involvement of an adult, in this case, the teacher, as a facilitator of learning, thus enabling the pupil to be supported in solving a problem, task or as a means to an end. In this sense, to outline the path of critical pedagogy toward autonomy, it is important to plan integrally and consciously, presenting clear and precise objectives, so that bridges can be established between pupils' previous knowledge.

Therefore, strategies such as the step-by-step explanation of the tasks to be carried out in class or the sharing of the objectives of the tasks were often used to allow the pupils to manage the work in groups and/or pairs, always supported by visual and hypermedia resources in the preparation of the tasks (see Figure 1).

Figura 1

Structuring tasks using visual and hypermedia resources.



Note. Image taken from a visual resource used in a lesson on the use of ICT combining English language learning.

On this basis, to understand the relevance of using scaffolding strategies in a critical (hyper)pedagogy for autonomy, it is important to mention the active teaching methodologies that have enriched our study.

2. ACTIVE TEACHING METHODOLOGIES TOWARDS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In this second section, we will analyse the active teaching methodologies with a focus on action-oriented transformative pedagogy present in our study.

2.1. Bridging the gap between active teaching methodologies and education for sustainable development

Active learning methodologies are essential in fostering an engaging and dynamic classroom environment. These methods emphasize pupils' participation, interaction, and collaboration, which are crucial for developing autonomy and critical thinking. In the context of English teaching for sustainable development, active learning plays a significant role in making lessons relevant and impactful (Sá & Andrade, 2008). In this sense, active learning is a teaching approach that involves pupils in the learning process more directly than traditional lecture-based instruction.

Bonwell and Eison (1991) describe it as any method of teaching that involves students in the learning process by requiring them to actively participate in meaningful learning activities and to think about what they are doing. This contrasts with passive learning, where students typically receive information from the teacher without engaging in interactive activities.

In our study, role play was one of the most used strategies. This involves students acting out scenarios related to the content of the lesson. In English language teaching, role play can simulate real-life situations in which students have to use English to communicate. While learning about healthy and unhealthy foods, the students had the opportunity to experience a real-life situation where they tried to convince a character to buy healthy food using real food (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

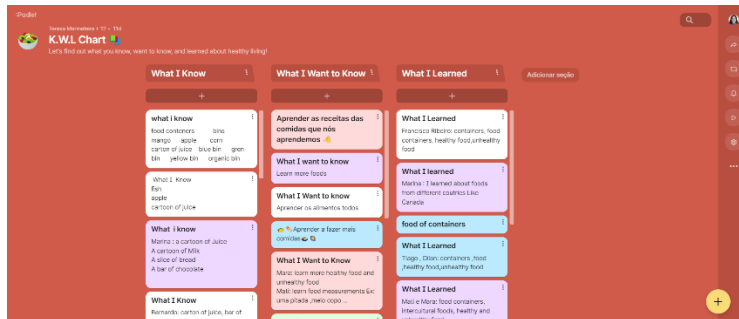
Pupils in a role play activity.



The integration of digital tools and hypermedia can greatly enhance active learning. Platforms like Padlet, interactive whiteboards, and educational software provide diverse ways for pupils to engage with the material. Online forums and collaborative documents allow for asynchronous collaboration and feedback. In our study, pupils completed a KWL chart using the digital platform Padlet. This resource allowed pupils to work with digital resources in class and reflect on what they learned (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

KWL chart from the first unit taught in our study.



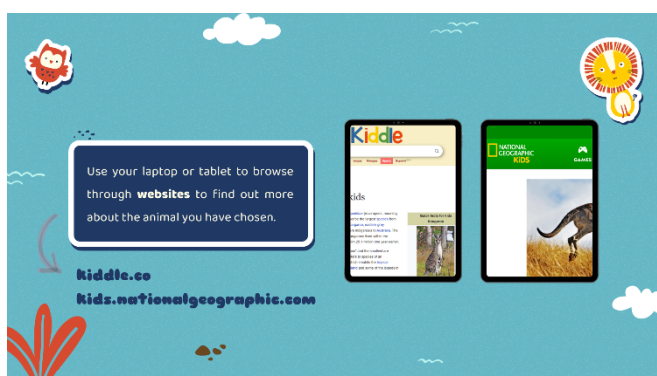
Note: <https://padlet.com/teresamarmeleira/k-w-l-chart-hkqjs56x2sv8cpqq>

Additionally, several audiovisual and hypermedia resources were employed to enhance the teaching and learning process. These resources included interactive videos, digital storytelling, educational games, and multimedia presentations. The use of these tools aimed to foster pupils' engagement, motivation, and participation in learning English. According to Cruz (2012), integrating such resources can create a dynamic and immersive learning environment that promotes critical thinking and autonomy. Interactive videos were used to present new vocabulary and language structures in context, allowing pupils to see and hear the language in action. This method supports visual and auditory learning styles and helps pupils to better retain information (cf. Gardner, 1993).

The study also highlighted the importance of hypermedia resources, which offer non-linear access to information and allow pupils to explore topics in depth at their own pace. Hypermedia tools used in the lessons included online quizzes, and web-based research activities. These tools provided pupils with the opportunity to take control of their learning, promoting autonomy and self-directed learning (see Figure 4)

Figure 4

Image taken from a visual resource used in class where pupils had to find information about an animal and create a presentation about it



3. DATA COLLECTION

In this final section, we present the data collected for our study. The data collection for the study was comprehensive and multi-faceted, incorporating a range of qualitative methods to ensure a thorough understanding of the educational impact.

3.1. Linking and analysing data

Detailed lesson plans were created for each session, outlining the objectives, activities, and resources used. These plans served as a blueprint for educational interventions and provided a framework for evaluating their effectiveness. By clearly defining the goals and the means to achieve them, the lesson plans ensured a structured approach to teaching and allowed for systematic assessment. To complement these plans, visual records, including videos and photographs, were taken during lessons to capture the dynamics of the classroom and the interactions between pupils and teachers. These visual records were invaluable for analysing the engagement and participation of pupils in real-time. The visual data provided an objective means to observe classroom behaviour and interactions, offering insights that might not be evident through other forms of data collection.

In addition to visual records, a logbook was maintained by the teacher to document daily reflections, observations, and insights about the teaching process and pupils' responses. This logbook provided a continuous record of the teacher's perspective and experiences, allowing for reflective practice and ongoing adjustment of teaching strategies. It served as a personal narrative of the teaching journey, capturing the nuances of daily classroom life.

To gather direct feedback from the pupils, questionnaire surveys were administered. These surveys included both closed and open-ended questions to capture quantitative data and qualitative insights. The pupils' feedback was crucial for understanding their perspectives and experiences, helping to tailor future lessons to better meet their needs and preferences.

Further supporting the evaluation process, samples of pupils' work, such as assignments, projects, and tests, were collected and analysed to assess their learning progress and the development of language skills. This analysis provided concrete evidence of pupils' learning and achievement, highlighting areas of success, and identifying aspects that required further attention. The examination of pupils' work offered a direct measure of the impact of the teaching methods employed. In addition, to gain a more in-depth understanding, structured interviews were conducted with selected pupils to explore their experiences and perceptions of the lessons. These interviews provided valuable qualitative data to complement the survey results, offering a more nuanced understanding of pupils' engagement and learning. Through these conversations, pupils could express their thoughts and feelings in greater detail, providing rich, contextual information that enhanced the overall evaluation of the educational interventions.

The data collected from these sources were aggregated and analysed to identify patterns and themes. The triangulation of data from multiple sources helped to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, the study was able to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of audiovisual and hypermedia resources in promoting autonomous and sustainable learning in English education.

Overall, the integration of audiovisual and hypermedia resources in English lessons for primary school pupils showed promising results in enhancing pupils' motivation, engagement, and autonomy. The use of these innovative tools, coupled with a robust data collection and analysis framework, provided valuable insights into the potential of technology-enhanced learning in fostering sustainable educational development.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study's findings indicate that applying a (hyper)critical pedagogy for autonomy, combined with interactive and multisensory resources, can effectively enhance pupils' motivation and participation in learning English. The pedagogical practices implemented not only improved linguistic competence but also contributed to the holistic development of pupils, equipping them with essential skills for their future roles as active and responsible citizens. The research underscores the importance of creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment that supports the development of autonomy and critical thinking.

In addition, this study presents several avenues for future research and acknowledges certain limitations. Future research could expand on the integration of hypermedia and audiovisual resources in diverse educational settings, assessing their long-term impact on pupils' autonomy and engagement. Exploring the scalability of these methods in larger, more varied classrooms would also be valuable. Additionally, investigating the role of teacher training in the effective implementation of these pedagogical approaches could provide insights into improving educational practices. Moreover, the study is limited by its qualitative nature and the specific educational context of the primary

school where it was conducted. The ethnographic approach, while providing in-depth insights, may not be entirely generalisable to different educational environments. Moreover, the reliance on self-reported data from pupils and teachers introduces a degree of subjectivity. Future studies could incorporate quantitative measures to complement qualitative findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the pedagogical impacts (Yin, 2016).

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