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Activities Based on Sustainable Education to Foster Students' English Language Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

A quantity- qualitative research was developed at San Daniel Comboni School in the province of Esmeraldas in 2023, with the main aim of the investigating on some activities based on sustainable education to foster students' English language speaking skills. The methos used were the documentary and explanatory study based on the socio-pedagogical project model with a quantitative approach, also it was used the Inductive – Deductive Metho, Analysis and Synthesis and Statistical one. The technique applied was the survey and the instrument was a questionnaire, and a sample of 46 students in the sixth year of Basic Education and 6 teachers of the mentioned school. The results obtained determined that in the classroom teachers are interested in applying tools focused on sustainable education so that students can strengthen the oral expression of the English language. Therefore, it is concluded that some activities based on sustainable education to foster students' English language speaking skills in the sixth year of Basic Education students at the San Daniel Comboni School, located in Esmeraldas, in the period 2023. This fact is due to the fact that, through the use of teaching strategies, techniques and teaching resources, it is possible to encourage students to communicate in a natural and simple way in English, and being aware of what is happening around them.

Keywords: Education, Oral expression, Sustainable

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Actividades Basadas en la Educación Sostenible para Fomentar las Habilidades de los Estudiantes para Hablar Inglés

RESUMEN

Se desarrolló una investigación cuantitativa-cualitativa en el Colegio San Daniel Comboni de la provincia de Esmeraldas en el año 2023, con el objetivo principal de indagar sobre algunas actividades basadas en la educación sostenible para fomentar la habilidad oral en inglés de los estudiantes. Los métodos utilizados fueron el estudio documental y explicativo basado en el modelo de proyecto sociopedagógico con enfoque cuantitativo, además se utilizó el método Inductivo – Deductivo, de Análisis y Síntesis y el Estadístico. La técnica aplicada fue la encuesta y el instrumento un cuestionario, y una muestra de 46 estudiantes del sexto año de Educación Básica y 6 docentes del mencionado colegio. Los resultados obtenidos determinaron que en el aula los docentes están interesados en aplicar herramientas enfocadas a la educación sustentable para que los estudiantes puedan fortalecer la expresión oral del idioma inglés. Por lo tanto, se concluye que se implementarán algunas actividades basadas en la educación sustentable para fomentar el dominio del idioma inglés en los estudiantes de sexto año de Educación Básica del Colegio San Daniel Comboni, ubicado en Esmeraldas, en el periodo 2023. Este hecho se debe al hecho de que, mediante el uso de estrategias, técnicas y recursos didácticos, es posible incentivar a los estudiantes a comunicarse de forma natural y sencilla en inglés, y siendo conscientes de lo que sucede a su alrededor.

Palabras clave: Educación, Expresión oral, Sostenible

INTRODUCTION

When referring to Sustainability, it is obvious to think of a topic which is not as developed as it was supposed to be, perhaps because people do not give the importance it has, they are not conscious of how necessary it is for life in the planet, and it is true that it is not focused in the majority of schools, besides that it is not part of the curriculum in Ecuador. Children do not have knowledge on topics around it, there is lack information which they may access to in order to practice this relevant issue for the bettering of environment and for the prevention of natural phenomena which may affect people's life. Sustainability is the capacity to gather the present needs of the world with no negotiating with the future.

The present scientific research was intended to contribute to the development of ability of Speaking by means of Sustainable Education, since students will be a lot more motivate to participate in classess, interacting among them with communicative activities which may lead to a significant improvement in their comprehension of the importance of having a sustainable planet.

Education must be sustainable to give a good example to students of all levels, this means that they must strain to make school activities and the development of the academic curriculum more ecological, combining teaching-learning processes with school and practice; Therefore, school gender should be influenced not only by the specific content of the English subject, but also by what they experience and observe in the school environment in their everyday lives.

From Galarza (2022) perspective, one of the reasons why students often have difficulties in speaking a language such as English is centered on the type of education that is fostered in the classroom. In this regard, this author points out that, for a long time, memorization, repetition of concepts and lack of clarity in the understanding of phonetic and grammatical structures cause students to face limitations when speaking a language and communicating correctly with other speakers.

In the context of the educational institution corresponding to the San Daniel Comboni School, located in the province of Esmeraldas in Ecuador, it is evident that students from the sixth year of Basic Education present several difficulties in the Teaching-learning process of the English language. This is due to the fact that the classroom methodology is not very active and participatory and does not encourage a natural approach to the language, generating frustration in the students and even fear at the moment of expressing themselves orally.

One of the reasons that justifies the development of the research focuses on its social impact. The English language within the Ecuadorian academic curriculum should be approached in a sustainable manner as a daily practice in the educational environment and in their daily lives. The teaching of English is currently of great importance, considering that it is one of the languages that is in line with educational and technological advances worldwide.

The students of the San Daniel Comboni school present difficulties in the speaking skill, which is demonstrated in low participation, lack of communication in English language, pronunciation problems. That is why it is necessary to reinforce this skill and considering that the theme of Sustainable education is motivating and necessary, it would be very good to develop the speaking skill through activities based on the theme of sustainable education.

Finally, it should be noted that the research is novel at the scientific level, since the application of a sustainable education in relation to the oral expression capacity of the English language is a topic that is gradually being addressed in the educational field, although in the case of the Ecuadorian context it has been little addressed.

The above leads to the formulation of the scientific research question: Which activities based on Sustainable Education may be useful to foster Six-year basic education students' speaking skills at San Daniel Comboni School, Esmeraldas 2023?

For all of the above information, it is necessary to transform this reality, since otherwise the students will not be able to have an efficient formative process with respect to the English language, that is why the general objective is to design activities based on Sustainable Education

to foster students' English language speaking skills at San Daniel Comboni school, also as specific objectives there were the following: to diagnose which usefully content the students may know to develop the Speaking skill for sustainable education, as well as to determine the main techniques that could be used for teaching the Speaking skill for the theme of sustainability and finally to develop a group of activities to foster the Speaking skill with the students of six level for sustainable education.

The Speaking Ability

Oral expression in English refers to the ability to communicate effectively using the voice and spoken language. It is an essential component of interpersonal communication and plays a crucial role in student life, both in formal and informal situations. This skill involves the correct pronunciation of words, proper intonation, rhythm, and the ability to articulate ideas clearly and coherently Juárez et al., (2019).

Sustainability and education

Sustainability in education is the central and moral nature of the events of the educational community, allowing people of all ages to better understand the planet where they live and their relationship with the environment, it is a reference for educational units to value their contribution to the future of students through the knowledge and skills that are consolidated in the classroom.

Sustainability in education is a comprehensive approach that seeks to promote sustainable development in all aspects of the educational process. This concept is based on the idea of balancing the needs of today without compromising the opportunities of future generations. In this context, sustainability in education encompasses environmental as well as social and economic aspects, fostering a holistic understanding of global and local issues Herrero(2022)

Definition of the teaching-learning process

The teaching-learning process is a term that describes the dynamic interaction between an educator and a student, with the purpose of transmitting knowledge, skills and values. This

process is not limited only to the act of teaching, but also encompasses the active assimilation of information by the student. Corredor et al.,(2019).

Rochina et al. (2020) state that the teaching-learning process is established in a given situation in which the student has all the skills that allow him/her to learn. A dialectical process is then consolidated in which situations are generated so that the person makes use of tools that allow him/her to approach reality and understand the world from a scientific, personalized and creative perspective. The teacher plays an important key role in this process, as he/she is the mediator between information, the student and the generation of new knowledge.

Meaningful learning

The meaningful learning process involves the active participation of the student in the construction of meaning. This is due to the encouragement of critical thinking, reflection and practical application of the knowledge acquired, which contributes to deeper and transferable learning in different contexts, i. e. to the application of what has been learned in real-life situations. Furthermore, relevance and applicability are key elements in meaningful learning. The contents should be presented in such a way that students perceive their usefulness and application in real situations, which increases their motivation and commitment to learning. Ballester, (2015).

Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning is a pedagogical approach that focuses on collaboration between students to achieve shared educational goals. Unlike traditional competency-based approaches, cooperative learning fosters positive interaction and joint knowledge-building. This model is based on the premise that peer collaboration promotes deeper learning, the development of social skills and the strengthening of a sense of community in the classroom **Torrego and Monge**, (2019).

In this type of learning, students work together in small groups, each with a specific role or task, with the goal of completing a common task or project. This approach seeks to harness the

individual strengths of each student, fostering mutual responsibility and positive interdependence. Through collaboration, students are expected to share ideas, solve problems and learn from each other Iglesias et al. (2017).

Collaborative learning

Collaborative learning is an educational approach that focuses on active and cooperative interaction between students in order to jointly build knowledge. Unlike individualistic learning, where each student works independently, collaborative learning promotes problem-solving and the achievement of shared goals through joint participation. This educational model recognizes the importance of effective communication, positive interdependence and the collective construction of knowledge Hernández , (2017).

The structure of collaborative learning can vary from group projects to cooperative discussions, hands-on activities and research projects. The key is for students to work together in an active and reflective way, sharing knowledge and building understanding collectively. In addition, this form of learning can be facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs), which enable online collaboration and the exchange of information through various platforms. These tools can enhance the connection between students, even when they are not physically in the same place Delgado, (2018).

One of the antecedents corresponds to the one called "Compensatory learning strategies in the development of the oral skill (speaking skill) of the English language in third year high school students of the Educational Unit "Mariano Benitez" of the Pelileo canton, province of Tungurahua" conducted by Rodriguez (2016) at the Technical University of Ambato. The general objective of this work was to determine the influence of compensatory learning strategies in the development of oral skills. (speaking) of the English language in the students of the third year of high school of the "Mariano Benitez" Educational Unit of the Pelileo Canton, province of Tungurahua. At the methodological level, this is a descriptive, exploratory study, with a quantitative and qualitative approach. The technique implemented was the survey and the

instrument was a structured questionnaire applied to a sample of 100 students in the third year of high school and 2 teachers. The results determine that, despite limited knowledge, it is theoretically possible to demonstrate that compensatory strategies can lead to independence, since students improve learning, facilitate the development of specific tasks and help solve problems. It is concluded that social-affective communication makes learning faster, easier and more fun and compensates for linguistic deficiencies in English language acquisition.

Another previous study was the research formulated with the title "Strengthening English as a foreign language, appealing to ICT, with students of Secondary and Middle School of the Fonquetá Educational Institution of the Municipality of Chía, conducted by Ospina (2019) at the Universidad de La Sabana. The general objective was based on determining the impact of a didactic strategy, appealing to ICT, for the strengthening of the learning processes of English as a foreign language, of high school and middle school students of the Fonquetá Educational Institution of the Municipality of Chía. At the methodological level, this is a study with a mixed approach, based on the CIP Research model. The techniques used correspond to a semi-structured interview, survey and participant observation that were applied to 180 students of Secondary and Middle School Education. The results obtained establish that students face difficulties in the process of learning English due to the type of methodology implemented in the classroom, which is characterized by the repetition of concepts and memorization of structures. It is concluded that the implementation of pedagogical activities allows reducing pedagogical problems and institutionalizing ICT as an innovative pedagogical strategy within the English teaching-learning process.

A third background on the topic formulated corresponds to "Collaborative Professional Learning: Towards Sustainability in Continuing Teacher Education". for Quality Education" developed by Palacios et al. (2022), which was connected to this investigation.

Another research that contributed to this investigation was the one entitled "Environmental education through tasks for the evaluation of reading in English language, work carried out by

Áviles et al. (2021) at the University of Cienfuegos in Cuba. The general objective was to strengthen environmental education from the teaching-learning and evaluation of reading in English aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), through tasks that favor the change from traditional forms of evaluation to objective forms. At the methodological level, it is bibliographic research that was applied to synthesize relevant texts on environmental issues and grammar of the English language, using for its development the materialist dialectic as a general method and theoretical methods such as induction and deduction, analysis and synthesis and historical logic. The results obtained establish that environmental education as a curricular strategy should ensure the development of the knowledge, skills and values that educational institutions and societies need to recognize and address environmental problems. It is concluded that, with careful methodological work by teachers, it is possible to strengthen environmental education using the contents of the English language curriculum.

An important antecedent was this investigation was the unpublished Manuscript of the thesis report entitled "The use of didactic activities with an environmental focus to motivate students toward English learning" at the School of Education at PUCESE, by Plata(2024) which was about this research aimed to analyze the potential benefits of didactic activities with an environmental focus to improve students' motivation level when integrated into the English Teaching- learning process.

Another previous study that was connected to this research was the Unpublished Manuscript of the thesis report entitled "Activities based on the topic of sustainability to improve the English productive abilities" at the School of Education at PUCESE by Chasing(2024), which was about some useful activities based on the topic of sustainability to improve English productive abilities.

METHOD

This research was based on the socio-pedagogical project model, which is characterized by defining proposals to solve problems that arise in educational institutions. In this case, the results

obtained allowed us to understand the activities based on sustainable education to foster students' English language speaking skills at San Daniel Comboni School.

The research had a quantitative approach since it worked with statistical data that allows us to understand the activities based on sustainable education to foster students' English language speaking skills at San Daniel Comboni School.

The types of research that were applied, documentary or bibliographic, and explanatory. In the case of field research, it is that which allows data to be collected directly in the place where a study problem arises Garcés, (2019). In this case, this kind of research was applied when collecting information at the San Daniel Comboni School, located in the province of Esmeraldas.

Documentary or bibliographic research is that which allows the collection of information from articles in indexed scientific journals, books, newspapers, and audio recordings, from the point of view of an expert and in an organized way (Hernández Sampieri, et al., 2015). In the case of the proposed study, this type of research was applied when constructing the theoretical framework and then using it as a reference for the elaboration of the instruments with which the information is collected at the field level.

The research explanatory is one that allows data to be collected and analyse the relationship between the variables studied, accounting for their impact on a given population (Baena, 2017). In the case of the work carried out This type of research was applied when analysing the activities based on sustainable education to foster students' English language speaking skills Basic Education of the Colegio San Daniel Comboni, located in Esmeraldas in the period 2023.

The technique used in this research corresponds to the survey, which is defined as that which is integrated by a set of closed questions that participants answer according to their experience and own knowledge Hernández et al., (2015). In the proposed study, a survey was applied to students in the sixth year of Basic Education of the San Daniel Comboni School, as well as to teachers who teach English.

The survey technique was used for data collection, and a questionnaire consisting of six structured questions related to the research variables was used as an instrument. The questionnaire was answered by both teachers and students to account for the vocabulary, grammatical structures and pronunciation errors faced by sixth grade elementary school students when expressing themselves orally in English.

The population is defined as the group of people who share common characteristics such as age, gender, place of residence, among others, and that are fundamental for the researcher and the topic being analyzed Muñoz,(2015). In this case, the population of the research were the teachers of the English area and the students of the sixth year of Basic Education. Regarding the criteria used for the sample, it corresponds to the convenience of the researchers, which is why the sample extracted is the one presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample

POPULATION	POPULATION NUMBER
English teachers	6
6th grade EGB students	46

Prepared by: the investigators

RESULTS

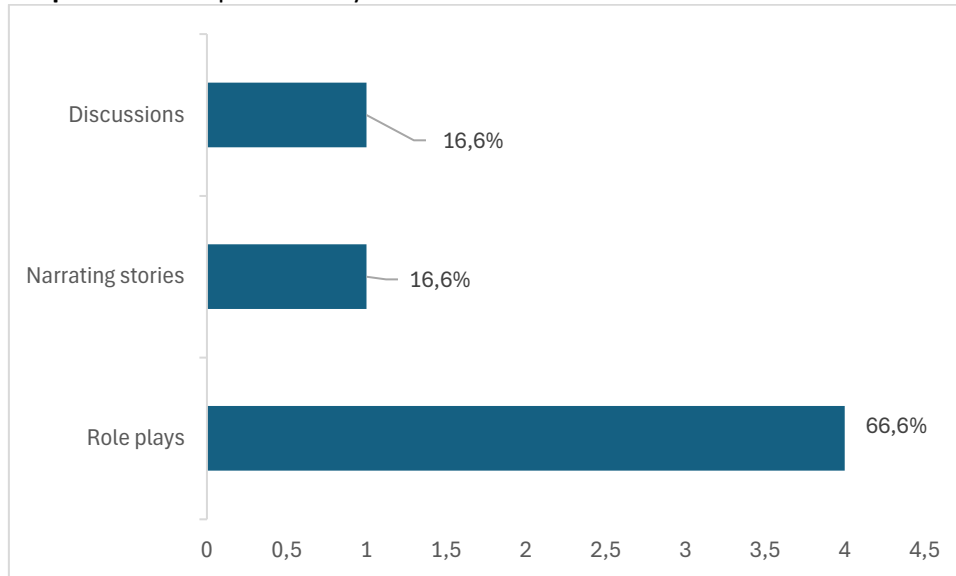
Table 1 Preferred topics on sustainability in English classes

Environmental topics to learn in the English classes	# of students	%
Planting a tree	15	32,6
Recycling paper	10	21,7
Short story about a found object	15	32,6
Using electric energy	6	13.04
	46	100

Source: Survey applied to students

In this table it is evidenced that the activities students liked the most to be developed in classes were those on instructions on planting a tree, narrating short stories, and the one devoted to discussions on recycling papers.

Graphic1: Techniques used by teachers in classes.



Source: Survey applied to teachers of the English area

ANALYSIS

The graphic shows that the technique teachers used most was role play, with the 66,6% while two of them used narrating stories and discussions respectively.

The third result was about the proposal of some activities to foster the Speaking ability by using them in favor of Sustainable Education. These activities are an excellent tool for engaging students in active learning and connecting them with their environment. They allow students to explore and observe nature in a deeper way, fostering curiosity and creativity. On the other hand, they involve students in community projects that have a positive impact on their environment and teach them the importance of social responsibility.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained determine that the teachers who teach English apply didactic strategies, techniques and resources based on a sustainable education model that seeks that the students develop oral expression in English taking into consideration the context they are part of, and an

example of this is that they encourage them to acquire vocabulary that is part of their daily situations. All this allows students to apply the language in their daily lives, generating significant learning in this regard, in addition to strengthening their communicative processes with other students.

This reality corresponds to what was stated by Martínez (2020), who refers that in order to consolidate a sustainable education model, it is necessary for students to understand the impact that their actions have on the environment of which they are a part. Therefore, each of the knowledge acquired in the classroom should be used to respond to the needs that arise in everyday life, contributing to the transformation of society.

Juárez et al. (2020) state that in order to effectively address the difficulties or limitations that arise when developing oral expression in English, it is essential to apply innovative techniques that motivate the use of the language in a dynamic and interactive way among students. Thus, in the research conducted, it became evident that most teachers use role-playing games as one of the main techniques to promote the use of English in a sustainable context among students.

The unpublished Manuscript of the thesis report entitled "The use of didactic activities with an environmental focus to motivate students toward English learning" at the School of Education at PUCESE, by Plata(2024) was about analyzing the potential benefits of didactic activities with an environmental focus to improve students' motivation level when integrated into the English Teaching- learning process. It coincided with this investigation by the fact that the integration of activities with an environmental focus in learning English can not only increase students' motivation in English learning but also foster a sense of responsibility and environmental awareness, especially activities that involve dramatizing, making a stand, and creating a story.

The unpublished Manuscript of the thesis report entitled "Activities based on the topic of sustainability to improve the English productive abilities" at the School of Education at PUCESE by Chasing(2024) .These activities at the same time promote an improvement in the way people act with the planet, for that reason, it is relevant to use activities based on sustainability in

English lessons nowadays .It coincided with this investigation because it was a design of some activities to promote Writing and Speaking.

PROPOSAL

Activities Based on Sustainable Education to Foster Students' English Language Speaking Skills

These activities can be implemented in the classroom in a variety of ways. For example, outdoor field trips can be organized where students can make observations and take notes in their nature journals. Projects can also be planned where students work in teams to address community problems or needs.

Activity 1

How do I use electric energy?

Objective: Students analyze their usage of energy and write some pieces of advice for using it adequately.

Methodology:

Divide students into pairs for a discussion activity.

Write some questions on the board: In what kind of activities do you waste electric energy the most? Do you calculate the quantity of electric energy you use? Are the activities where you use electric energy all necessary?

While students socialize the questions, the teacher assists them in writing their ideas in English using prior vocabulary and knowledge.

Then, they will write some sentences to be read in classes, about the discussion,in which they will give some suggestions on what they should or shouldn't do not to waste electric energy.

Examples: You should turn on the lights at home when it is really dark. You shouldn't let the phone chargers connected to the plugs.

ACTIVITY 2

Instructions on how to plan a tree

Objective: Students learn about planting trees and its importance for the environment

Methodology:

The teacher is going to ask them how to plan a tree. The teacher is going to give them some markers like: first..., then..., after that...and finally...Before developing the activity, the teacher is going to preview some new words, like: **digging, seedling, removing, filling**, and so one. Then they are going to work in groups and discuss on how to do it, with this procedure:

Procedures

1. Cleaning the site.
2. Digging a hole.
3. Obtaining the plant.
4. Watering the seedling.
5. Removing the plant from the pot.
6. Placing the plant in the hole.
7. Covering the roots with soil.
8. Gently filling the soil around the tree.

Remind students of the structure for affirmative sentences. According to examples from the chart, students write statements using “*going to*” to express what they are willing to do.

The teacher monitors the activity.

Examples: To plant a tree first you are cleaning the site, then you are digging a whole...

Finally, students read what they have discussed in the group

ACTIVITY 3**Narrating a short story about a found object in an outdoor activity**

Objective: Students will create a story with an object they have found

Methodology:

Present some pictures with some object they found on a picnic.

Students choose a found object or item to use as inspiration for a short story in this environmental educational activity. It may be something they collected during a nature walk,a

food product in a lunchbox. This creative oral activity will put items that might have gone unnoticed in the focal point encouraging students to think about them in an entirely different way.

Students describe the pictures.

Let students reflect and analyze on those pictures and create a short story.

Then ask, how important the topic is to them. Make students comment about it, by saying: *Once upon a time there was...*

Divide the class into groups of three students.

The teacher monitors the activity and gives help as needed.

Examples: *Once upon a time, I was in school... I found a... It helped me...*

ACTIVITY 4

Re-purpose paper

Objective: Students analyze the importance of reusing paper in the classroom

Methodology:

Talk to your students on the importance of paper using.

Ask students:

- What is the importance of recycling paper?
- How do people can contribute to save the environment with it?
- Do we take care of it, or we waste lots of it?
- What do we need to do?

In order they reflect and interchange ideas, give the students some scrambled ideas on how to reduce paper use, like:

- Make printable worksheets into booklets
- Make students' journals last longer by organizing loose worksheets into folders
- Donate your printed paper for animals bedding
- Create some pieces of art with the worksheets.

At the end, make students express their emotions using the following phrases.

Donating the printed paper for animals bedding...make me feel very happy

Emphasize that we could feel happy when we do the right thing for our environment and our planet, but there are some bad things that can make us feel bad.

CONCLUSIONS

This research was developed to design some activities based on sustainable education to foster students' English language Speaking skills. It allowed concluding that the effects of sustainable education are positive with respect to the development of the oral expression capacity of the English language in the students of the sixth year of Basic Education of the San Daniel Comboni School, in Esmeraldas, in the period 2023.

The activities students liked the most to be developed in classess were planting a tree, and narrating short stories about a found object in an outdoor activity

Regarding the content that students should learn to improve English learning through a sustainable education model, this should be characterized by being linked to students' everyday situations and that are part of their reality, since this motivates them to continue learning new words and using them in conversations established with the rest of their classmates and with the people who interact in their daily lives, so the activities students liked the most to be developed in classess were instructions on how planting a tree, and narrating short stories about a found object in an outdoor activity.

Regarding the most important techniques teachers used in classess with respect to the English language teaching process, the majority of them stated that they used role plays and some of the used discussions

In relation to the activities designed to develop the Speaking ability in favor of sustainability, they were the following: instructions to plant a tree, narrating a short story about a found object in an outdoor activity, discussing on paper recycling, and so one.

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