

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56712/latam.v5i4.2371>

Education with purpose: Student empowerment, an international perspective

Educación con propósito: Empoderamiento estudiantil, una perspectiva internacional

Erick García Serna

erickga29@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5178-9676>

Universidad Hipócrates

Acapulco, Guerrero – México

Edwin Yépez González

yepesgonzaleze@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9282-8918>

Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios, Cundinamarca

Bogotá – Colombia

Yulissa Calderón Ávila

yulissadcalderon@hotmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9282-8918>

Universidad Hipócrates

Acapulco, Guerrero – México

Artículo recibido: 28 de junio de 2024. Aceptado para publicación: 15 de julio de 2024.

Conflictos de Interés: Ninguno que declarar.

Abstract

This scientific essay addresses the evolution of education, emphasizing the need to view the human being as a dynamic and multifaceted entity from birth to death. It focuses on the student as a critical pillar of the educational process, highlighting the importance of their philosophical inclusion to enhance the effectiveness of the educational system. The essay underscores the relevance of mobile devices in education, promoting teaching strategies that integrate technology to foster collaboration and interaction. The objective of the essay is to analyze the importance of purpose-driven education that empowers students and meets contemporary needs using technology. Good educational practices include encouraging student-faculty contact, developing reciprocity among students, using active learning techniques, giving prompt feedback, emphasizing time on task, communicating high expectations, and respecting diverse talents. These principles, along with contemporary educational technologies, create dynamic and interactive learning environments. Education has undergone significant transformations, adopting various methodologies to meet evolving needs. Empowering students within the educational process is crucial, enhancing their self-esteem, socialization, and sense of belonging. This empowerment fosters deeper interest and engagement in learning. Integrating empowerment into education cultivates leaders capable of leveraging various leadership styles, generating positive outcomes in academic, social, personal, and professional realms. Such leaders contribute to the well-rounded development of individuals and the overall betterment of society. By ensuring that students are empowered and well-prepared to lead and innovate, education can address complex contemporary problems and promote a harmonious and productive society. The essay concludes by emphasizing the necessity of empowering students in the educational process, improving their self-esteem, socialization, and sense of belonging. This empowerment fosters a deeper interest in learning and promotes a more engaging educational experience. Integrating empowerment into education prepares students for leadership roles, enabling them to generate

positive outcomes in various aspects of life, thereby contributing to a more cohesive and progressive society.

Keywords: education, empowerment, students

Resumen

Este ensayo científico aborda la evolución de la educación, enfatizando la necesidad de ver al ser humano como una entidad dinámica y multifacética desde el nacimiento hasta la muerte. Se centra en el estudiante como pilar crítico del proceso educativo, destacando la importancia de su inclusión filosófica para potenciar la eficacia del sistema educativo. El ensayo subraya la relevancia de los dispositivos móviles en la educación, promoviendo estrategias de enseñanza que integran la tecnología para fomentar la colaboración y la interacción. El objetivo del ensayo es analizar la importancia de una educación impulsada por un propósito que empodere a los estudiantes y satisfaga las necesidades contemporáneas utilizando la tecnología. Las buenas prácticas educativas incluyen fomentar el contacto entre estudiantes y profesores, desarrollar la reciprocidad entre los estudiantes, utilizar técnicas de aprendizaje activo, brindar retroalimentación rápida, enfatizar el tiempo dedicado a la tarea, comunicar altas expectativas y respetar los talentos diversos. Estos principios, junto con las tecnologías educativas contemporáneas, crean entornos de aprendizaje dinámicos e interactivos. La educación ha experimentado transformaciones significativas, adoptando diversas metodologías para satisfacer las necesidades cambiantes. Empoderar a los estudiantes dentro del proceso educativo es crucial, mejorando su autoestima, socialización y sentido de pertenencia. Este empoderamiento fomenta un interés y un compromiso más profundos en el aprendizaje. La integración del empoderamiento en la educación cultiva líderes capaces de aprovechar diversos estilos de liderazgo, generando resultados positivos en los ámbitos académico, social, personal y profesional. Estos líderes contribuyen al desarrollo integral de las personas y al mejoramiento general de la sociedad. Al garantizar que los estudiantes estén empoderados y bien preparados para liderar e innovar, la educación puede abordar problemas contemporáneos complejos y promover una sociedad armoniosa y productiva. El ensayo concluye enfatizando la necesidad de empoderar a los estudiantes en el proceso educativo, mejorando su autoestima, socialización y sentido de pertenencia. Este empoderamiento fomenta un interés más profundo en el aprendizaje y promueve una experiencia educativa más atractiva. La integración del empoderamiento en la educación prepara a los estudiantes para roles de liderazgo, permitiéndoles generar resultados positivos en diversos aspectos de la vida, contribuyendo así a una sociedad más cohesiva y progresista.

Palabras clave: educación, empoderamiento, estudiantes

Todo el contenido de LATAM Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, publicados en este sitio está disponibles bajo Licencia Creative Commons . 

Cómo citar: García Serna, E., Yépez González, E., & Calderón Ávila, Y. (2024). Education with purpose: Student empowerment, an international perspective: Educación con propósito. *LATAM Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades* 5 (4), 1741 – 1751.
<https://doi.org/10.56712/latam.v5i4.2371>

INTRODUCTION

The landscape of education has undergone significant transformations. As emphasized by López Calva, (2014) it is imperative to conceive of the human being as an entity that undergoes a dynamic continuum, from birth to development, from life to death, encompassing experiences of crying, feeding, loving, needing to be loved, thinking, acquiring knowledge, making mistakes, and finding joy. This holistic perspective acknowledges the multifaceted nature of the human experience, which is inherently subject to variation based on the intricacies of time and context.

In the specific context addressed within this paper, the focus is directed towards the student, a pivotal entity in the educational milieu. It is essential to position the student not merely as a theoretical component within the educational process but rather as a critical cornerstone. The philosophical dimension in which the student is considered becomes paramount, emphasizing the indispensable role they play in shaping and influencing the educational landscape. This perspective transcends the conventional understanding of education, underscoring the profound impact that the philosophy of student inclusion can have on the overall efficacy and transformative potential of the educational system.

Since the onset of the Third Industrial Revolution, marked by significant advancements in informatics, the microelectronic field, and automation, there has been a notable trend towards the delegation of intellectual functions to machines (Lima & Colares, 2023). Whether this technological shift is harnessed for positive or negative purposes, its influence on education is undeniable. In the realm of education, technology serves as a facilitator, assisting students in their pursuit of academic goals. However, it is imperative to underscore that technology should be regarded as a tool, a supplementary asset, rather than assuming the role of the primary actor. The integral principle is to refrain from allowing technology to assume the entirety of the educational workload. Striking a balance, where technology complements and supports the educational process without overshadowing the crucial role of human involvement, is fundamental. This perspective emphasizes the necessity of considering technology as an enabler rather than a substitute for human engagement and critical thinking within the educational framework.

Dabbagh et al. (2019) emphasized the significance of mobile devices, such as laptops and smartphones, as these were the primary means of access for students. These devices were not only frequently used but also valued for their convenience and relevance in various contexts. The authors highlighted the necessity of designing better teaching strategies and learning interactions that integrate technological practices, as this fosters debate, collaboration, and interaction. This context underscores the objective of the present scientific essay, which is to analyze the importance of purpose-driven education that empowers students and meets contemporary needs using technology.

DEVELOPMENT

Being a "digital native" refers to individuals who have grown up with the internet, computers, and mobile devices, and are capable of communicating in a foreign language, a profile characteristic of the 21st century as noted by Alvarado-Barboza (2023). This perspective highlights the need for education to evolve and be conceived in an interconnected, international, and global manner, addressing not only local needs but also macro-level demands. Consequently, the integration of technological tools, foreign language acquisition, situated learning, and empowering students to make decisions are essential components in preparing them for leadership roles. This approach enables students to construct, practice, and propose ideas effectively.

Contrasting this with John Dewey's (1938) classical theory of education, which emphasizes learning through experience and the importance of education in fostering democratic participation, can see a harmonious alignment. Education should not merely transmit knowledge but should engage students

in active learning experiences that are relevant to their lives and future roles in society. In this context, the use of technology, fostering of critical thinking, and promoting global awareness through language learning can be seen as modern extensions of Dewey's principles, adapted to the digital age.

When discussing the importance of "active learning," Bernstein (2018) emphasizes that it is crucial to teach the use of tools effectively. Rather than questioning whether active learning works, he suggests that we should ask which methods provide significant benefits. Bernstein argues that the teaching-learning process should go beyond merely evaluating the effectiveness of active learning and delve into deeper questions about its impact.

Cattaneo (2017) notes that designing active learning environments is challenging due to the lack of clear definitions and multiple perspectives on the concept. She explores five pedagogies based on constructivist elements, which can lead to discrepancies between theory and practice.

However, Chickering and Gamson (1987) offer a framework of seven principles that can guide good practices in the educational field. These principles are:

- Encourages contact between students and faculty.
- Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students.
- Uses active learning techniques.
- Gives prompt feedback.
- Emphasizes time on task.
- Communicates high expectations.
- Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

Expanding on these insights, can contrast these modern perspectives with John Dewey's classical educational theories. Dewey (1938) advocated for experiential learning, where education is deeply connected to real-world experiences and democratic engagement. Dewey's approach aligns well with the principles outlined by Chickering and Gamson, particularly in fostering active participation, cooperation, and respect for diverse learning styles.

Moreover, contemporary educational technology further enriches active learning environments by providing tools that facilitate collaboration, immediate feedback, and personalized learning experiences. For instance, integrating digital platforms in classrooms can help implement the seven principles effectively, ensuring that students are engaged, receive timely feedback, and have their unique learning needs addressed.

Table 1

Summary of Key Theorists in Active Learning

	Key Concepts	Major Works
John Dewey	Experiential learning, learning by doing, democracy in education.	Experience and Education (1938).
Jean Piaget	Constructivist theory, stages of cognitive development.	The Psychology of Intelligence (1950).
Lev Vygotsky	Social constructivism, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).	Mind in Society (1978).
David Kolb	Experiential learning cycle, learning styles.	Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development (1984).
Benjamin Bloom	Bloom's Taxonomy, mastery learning.	Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (1956).

Carl Rogers	Student-centered learning, facilitation of learning.	Freedom to Learn (1969).
-------------	--	--------------------------

Source: own elaboration based on the literature.

John Dewey: Emphasized the importance of experiential learning, where education is rooted in real-life experiences and active participation. His work "Experience and Education" remains foundational in understanding how active learning promotes critical thinking and democratic engagement.

Jean Piaget: Developed the constructivist theory, focusing on how learners construct knowledge through experiences and stages of cognitive development. His work underlines the importance of active engagement in learning processes.

Lev Vygotsky: Introduced social constructivism and the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), highlighting the role of social interaction and scaffolding in learning. His theories emphasize collaborative learning as a form of active learning.

David Kolb: Known for his experiential learning cycle and identifying different learning styles, Kolb's work emphasizes learning through reflection and experience, which are core components of active learning.

Benjamin Bloom: Developed Bloom's Taxonomy, which categorizes educational objectives and promotes mastery learning. This taxonomy is often used to design active learning activities that foster higher-order thinking skills.

Carl Rogers: Advocated for student-centered learning and the facilitation of learning, where the teacher acts as a guide rather than a director. His ideas support the development of autonomous and active learners.

Active learning and Project-Based Learning (PBL) are closely related educational methodologies that emphasize student engagement and practical application of knowledge. While active learning focuses on engaging students in activities that promote analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of class content, PBL is a dynamic approach that extends this engagement by involving students in comprehensive projects that address real-world problems over an extended period, introducing different innovative approaches (Guslyakova et al., 2021). Both approaches aim to move beyond traditional lecture-based instruction to create dynamic and interactive learning environments. By integrating the principles of active learning with the structured framework of PBL, educators can foster deeper understanding and skill development, preparing students for the complexities of the 21st century. Additionally, the incorporation of situational learning and e-learning/blended learning strategies further enhances these methodologies by providing context-rich experiences and flexible, accessible resources, thereby enriching the overall educational experience.

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Definition and Concept

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional methodology that encourages students to learn and apply knowledge and skills through an engaging experience. It involves students working on a project over an extended period of time that engages them in solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question. The essence of PBL is that students learn by doing, which fosters deeper understanding and retention of knowledge (Thomas, 2000).

Importance and Relevance

The significance of PBL lies in its ability to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative skills. By engaging in projects, students not only acquire academic knowledge but also practical skills that are essential for their future careers. PBL helps in making learning relevant to students' lives, thus increasing motivation and engagement. Additionally, it aligns well with the demands of the 21st century, which require learners to be adaptable, innovative, and capable of working collaboratively in diverse teams (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2006).

Integration with Situational Learning and E-Learning/Blended Learning

PBL can be effectively integrated with situational learning, where the context and environment of learning play a crucial role. Situational learning emphasizes the importance of context in understanding and applying knowledge, which can be naturally incorporated into PBL by designing projects that are relevant to students' real-world experiences and local communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Moreover, the integration of e-learning and blended learning with PBL can further enhance its effectiveness. E-learning provides digital tools and resources that can support project development and collaboration, regardless of physical location. Blended learning, which combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning, allows for a flexible approach to PBL where students can benefit from both direct teacher interaction and digital resources (Graham, 2006).

Table 2

Comparative Table

Aspect	Project-Based Learning (PBL)	Situational Learning	E-Learning/Blended Learning
Definition	Instructional approach where students learn by engaging in projects over time to solve real-world problems or answer complex questions.	Learning occurs through participation in a community and the context in which learning takes place is critical.	Combines digital tools and online resources with traditional face-to-face teaching (blended), or entirely online (e-learning).
Key Features	Student-centered, hands-on, collaborative, focuses on real-world applications.	Contextual, community-based, experiential, emphasizes the environment of learning.	Flexible, accessible, combines digital and physical resources, can be self-paced.
Skills Developed	Critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, time management, self-directed learning.	Social interaction, practical application of knowledge, community participation.	Digital literacy, self-regulation, flexibility, adaptability.
Advantages	Enhances engagement, practical skill development, deepens understanding through active learning.	Authentic learning experiences, integrates knowledge with real-world context, builds community.	Accessibility, flexibility, allows for personalized learning paths, wide range of resources.
Challenges	Requires careful planning and resources, assessment can be complex, may need significant teacher facilitation.	Dependent on the availability and relevance of contextual experiences, may not cover all curriculum content.	Requires reliable technology, may lack face-to-face interaction, can lead to a digital divide.

Integration Potential	Can be combined with situational learning to provide context-rich projects, and with e-learning/blended learning to enhance flexibility and resource availability.	Can enrich PBL by providing real-world context, can be supported by e-learning tools to document and reflect on experiences.	Can support PBL by providing digital tools and platforms for project collaboration, integrates situational learning by offering virtual simulations and contextual resources.
-----------------------	--	--	---

Source: own elaboration based on the literature.

In modern education, empowering students is a crucial aspect that goes beyond the transmission of knowledge. It involves giving students the tools, opportunities, and confidence to take control of their learning processes, thereby fostering leadership skills, a sense of belonging, and improved self-esteem. The concept of empowerment in education aligns with the theories of prominent educators such as Paulo Freire and Albert Bandura.

Freire (1970) emphasized the importance of critical pedagogy and dialogical learning, where students actively participate in their education rather than being passive recipients of knowledge. This approach not only cultivates critical thinking and self-awareness but also empowers students to become agents of change in their communities. Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory highlights the role of self-efficacy in learning, suggesting that students who believe in their abilities are more likely to engage in challenging tasks, persist in the face of difficulties, and achieve higher levels of performance.

Empowering students can lead to significant improvements in various aspects of their development:

Cognition: Empowered students are more likely to engage deeply with content, think critically, and apply their knowledge creatively.

Self-Esteem: When students are given autonomy and responsibility, their confidence in their abilities increases, leading to higher self-esteem.

Participation: Empowered students are more likely to participate actively in class discussions, group projects, and extracurricular activities.

Socialization: Empowerment fosters a collaborative learning environment where students develop essential social skills such as communication, teamwork, and empathy.

These benefits contribute to the holistic development of students, preparing them not only for academic success but also for their roles as future leaders.

Table 3

Comparative types of leaderships

Leadership Style	Key Characteristics	Advantages	Challenges	Examples in Education
Transformational	Inspires and motivates through vision and charisma	High motivation, fosters innovation, strong team spirit	Requires highly charismatic leaders, risk of burnout	Teachers inspiring students with a shared vision for success
Transactional	Based on rewards and punishments	Clear structure, straightforward management	May stifle creativity, depends heavily	Classroom management through clear

			on extrinsic motivation	rules and rewards
Servant	Focuses on serving others, prioritizes the needs of the team	Builds trust, strong community, high morale	Can be seen as less authoritative, potential for overextension	Teachers who prioritize student needs and personal development
Democratic	Involves team members in decision-making processes	High engagement, diverse perspectives, shared responsibility	Time-consuming, potential for conflict	Group projects where students have a say in the process
Autocratic	Centralized decision-making with little input from others	Quick decision-making, clear direction	Low morale, discourages initiative	Strict classroom management with clear directives

Source: own elaboration based on the literature.

CONCLUSION

Education has undergone significant transformations over the years, adapting various methodologies to meet the evolving contexts and needs of the times. Despite these changes, the core objective remains the same: to provide a holistic education that prepares individuals not only academically but also psychologically and emotionally, equipping them to become capable citizens who can address current societal needs.

Empowering students within the educational process is crucial. Allowing students to make meaningful decisions in their learning journey enhances their self-esteem, socialization, and sense of belonging. This empowerment fosters a deeper interest in the subject matter and promotes a more engaging learning experience.

Empowerment in structured education regarding leadership; today in various scenarios represented by academia, the government and the business sector; the programs, the real transformative academy and projects depending on the scenario in which they are implemented, always seeking the diversity of learning hand in hand with the differential active methodologies on the one hand tend towards the impact in terms of coverage and improvement in the quality of life and educational of academic contexts of the immersed population groups and another in terms of organizational performance represented in results that become the products generated from the combination and interaction of the internal and external factors of the organization always seeking to resolve processes of teaching learning with significant effects. It should be noted that, regardless of the scenario in which the concept of leadership is incorporated, the term Resilience must be added to it, and its connotation is conceived as the leader's ability to adapt to situations evidenced by problems, threats, tragedies or stressful situations that it impacts the level of relationships within groups and/or work teams of continuous learning and towards flexibility in the learning scenario.

By integrating empowerment into education, can cultivate leaders who are not autocratic but capable of leveraging the strengths of various leadership styles through a benchmarking approach. Such leaders can generate positive outcomes in academic, social, personal, and professional realms, contributing to a well-rounded development.

Education remains fundamental for the development of a better society. It is through education that can foster improved social interactions, effective responses to diverse challenges, and the overall betterment of our communities. Ensuring that students are empowered and well-prepared to lead and innovate is essential for addressing the complex problems of times and for promoting a more harmonious and productive society.

REFERENCES

- Alvarado Barboza, M. A. (2023) Technological Tools to Develop Competences for the 21st Century: A Project to Empower Students in the English Teaching Major at UNED. *Revista Espiga*, 22(46); 91-108. <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=467875680008>
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. Prentice-Hall.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*. Free Press.
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational Leadership* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bernstein, D. A. (2018). Does active learning work? A good question, but not the right one. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*, 4(4), 290-307. <https://doi.org/10.1037/stl0000124>
- Bloom, B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*. Longmans, Green.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.
- Cattaneo, K. H. (2017). Telling active learning pedagogies apart: From theory to practice. *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research*, 6(2), 144-152. <https://doi.org/10.7821/naer.2017.7.237>
- Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1987). Seven principles of good practice in undergraduate education. *AAHE Bulletin*, 3-7 (ED282491). ERIC. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED282491>
- Dabbagh, D., Fake, H. & Zhang, Z. (2019) Student Perspectives of Techology use for Learning in Higher Education. RIED. *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación a Distancia*. 22(1). <https://doi.org/10.5944/ried.22.1.22102>
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and Education*. Macmillan.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum.
- Gastil, J. (1994). A definition and illustration of democratic leadership. *Human Relations*, 47(8), 953-975. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872679404700805>
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. Paulist Press.
- Guslyakova, A., Valeeva, N. & Veretennikova, L. (2021) Project-based learning usage in L2 teaching in a contemporary comprehensive school (on the example of English as a foreign language classroom). *Revista Tempos e Espaços em Educação*. 14(43). <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/5702/570272348120/570272348120.pdf>
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Prentice-Hall.
- Lewin, K., Lippitt, R., & White, R. K. (1939). Patterns of aggressive behavior in experimentally created social climates. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 10(2), 271-299. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.1939.9713366>

Lima, G. S. N., & Colares, M. L. I. S. (2023). Historical-critical pedagogy and integral education: reflections on emancipatory human training. *Acta Scientiarum - Education*, 45. <https://doi.org/10.4025/actascieduc.v45i1.60501>

López Calva, M. (2014). Ser persona y hacerse persona en el cambio de época: desafíos para la formación integral en la escuela y la universidad. *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Educativos*, XLIV (3), 61–81. <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/270/27032150004.pdf>

Piaget, J. (1950). *The Psychology of Intelligence*. Routledge.

Rogers, C. R. (1969). *Freedom to Learn*. Merrill.


Spears, L. C. (1995). Reflections on Leadership: How Robert K. Greenleaf's Theory of Servant Leadership Influenced Today's Top Management Thinkers. John Wiley & Sons.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press.

White, R. K., & Lippitt, R. (1960). Autocracy and democracy: An experimental inquiry. *American Journal of Sociology*, 66(1), 119-120.

Woods, P. A. (2004). Democratic leadership: Drawing distinctions with distributed leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 7(1), 3-26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360312032000154522>

Yukl, G. A. (2013). *Leadership in Organizations* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.

Todo el contenido de **LATAM Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades**, publicados en este sitio está disponibles bajo Licencia [Creative Commons](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) .