

Lights, Camera, and Action... Education for Global Citizenship, interculturality and cooperative learning in EFL Teaching

Luces, cámara y acción... Educación para la ciudadanía global, interculturalidad y aprendizaje cooperativo en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera

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Abstract:

This paper explores the transformative potential of cinema as a formative and educational tool for shaping values. It outlines a teaching model based on a previous documentary review, observations, and quantitative research from a foster teaching intervention evaluated through the use of cinema with students in the second year of Bachillerato, the post-16 stage of education in Spain.

The study focused on key objectives: fostering reflection, promoting intellectual growth, cultivating empathy, and nurturing critical thinking skills in young individuals. The central inquiry of this research is whether the integration of intercultural cinema as a pedagogical tool can contribute to a deeper understanding of unfamiliar social issues, foreign cultures, and people.

The overarching goal is to examine whether this approach enhances students' communication skills, cooperative abilities, and motivation within an educational context. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the potential benefits of incorporating Education for Sustainable Development, Global Citizenship, and the Cooperative Learning technique. It argues that these strategies not only have a positive impact on English learners but also play a crucial role in shaping the citizens of the future.

The research contends that by engaging with intercultural cinema, students not only acquire knowledge about diverse social issues but also develop essential life skills. Communication and cooperation are highlighted as pivotal aspects that improve through this pedagogical approach. In conclusion, this paper asserts that cinema can be a powerful medium for shaping values and fostering holistic development in students. The integration of intercultural cinema, alongside pedagogical strategies aligned with global citizenship education, proves to be instrumental in enhancing several crucial factors, contributing to the comprehensive growth of individuals as future citizens.

Keywords:

Citizenship, Cinema, Cooperation, Intercultural Education, Secondary Education.

Resumen:

Este artículo profundiza en el potencial transformador del cine como herramienta formativa en la educación en valores. El estudio, realizado con alumnos de 2º de Bachillerato de un centro público español de educación secundaria, se centra en objetivos clave: fomentar el juicio reflexivo, promover el crecimiento intelectual, cultivar la empatía y fomentar las habilidades de pensamiento crítico en la juventud. La principal incógnita de esta investigación es si la integración del cine intercultural como actividad pedagógica puede contribuir a una comprensión más profunda de cuestiones sociales desconocidas, culturas y personas extranjeras.

El objetivo general es examinar si este enfoque mejora las habilidades de comunicación, las habilidades cooperativas y la motivación del estudiantado dentro de un entorno educativo. Los hallazgos de este estudio ofrecen información valiosa sobre los beneficios potenciales de incorporar la Educación para la Ciudadanía Global y la técnica de aprendizaje cooperativo. Sostiene que estas estrategias no sólo impactan positivamente a los estudiantes de inglés, sino que también desempeñan un papel crucial en la formación de los ciudadanos del futuro.

La investigación sostiene que, al trabajar el cine intercultural, el estudiantado no sólo adquiere conocimientos sobre diversos temas sociales, sino que también desarrolla habilidades esenciales para la vida. La comunicación y la cooperación se destacan como aspectos fundamentales que experimentan mejora a través de este enfoque pedagógico. En conclusión, este artículo afirma que el cine puede ser un medio poderoso para moldear valores y fomentar el desarrollo integral del estudiantado.

La integración del cine intercultural, junto con estrategias pedagógicas alineadas con la educación para la ciudadanía global, resulta fundamental para mejorar varios aspectos cruciales, contribuyendo al desarrollo integral de las personas como ciudadanía del futuro.

Palabras claves:

Ciudadanía, Cine, Cooperación, Educación Intercultural, Enseñanza Secundaria.

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1. Introduction

Education is a captivating subject that plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' lives, aligning them with their interests and imbuing a practical and productive dimension. The journey within the realm of education has been lengthy and somewhat intricate until recently. As we aspire to contribute directly to the construction of a more balanced, less discriminatory, and egalitarian world, it may lead us to believe that direct action is the sole solution. For those with expertise in translation, language learning, and teaching, contemplating the integration of these skills may raise concerns about their limitations. However, assuming that meaningful changes in the environment only result from targeted interventions is a misconception. Another approach to altering reality involves modifying people's perceptions through education—an objective championed by organizations such as the Proyecto Talis research group, a set of entities dedicated to advancing research and education in literary and linguistic studies, sustainable development and global citizenship education, interculturality, and language acquisition.

Organizations like this one focus on promoting educational innovation and research to enhance literary and linguistic education, foster Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship, and encourage interculturality. For individuals driven by a desire to contribute to positive global change, avenues for action include embracing all the previously listed here. Numerous collectives are mobilizing to propose a new educational paradigm that adapts to the evolving dynamics of the environment. However, the evolution of education in schools is not yet evident.

In a world that is increasingly becoming an intercultural mosaic, encompassing citizens of diverse colours, religions, traditions, languages, tastes, dreams, and family structures, differences and lack of awareness can lead to rejection or conflict (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). Yet, these differences can be sources of enrichment for all. The inevitability of these changes calls for an adaptive approach, and education emerges as a potential solution (Dervin & Jacobsson, 2021). Their paper "Teacher education for critical and reflexive interculturality" seeks to explore a new and vital role of education in personal development and the simultaneous improvement of human relations worldwide.

Cultural differences, when viewed positively, can be leveraged and explored. Depending on the educational perspective adopted, an awareness of these differences can either foster positive relationships or lead to estrangement. The social community extends beyond its physical boundaries, and through enhancing language use in ESL classes and integrating Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship through films into the curriculum, young people can learn to understand others, appreciate diversity, promote shared values, become aware of human rights, develop cooperation and responsible action skills, and foster equality of opportunities.

Therefore, this article proposes the Eco-Sustainable Audiovisual Learning Model with a dual objective: firstly, to promote Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship through collaborative activities in ESL, and secondly, to utilise Intercultural Cinema as the primary tool to address the issues mentioned above. In the intervention that we observed during the academic year 2015-2016 in Spain, the film *Diamantes Negros (or Black Diamonds)* (Alcantud, 2013) serves as the central theme in achieving these goals.

2. Interculturality

In early 2016, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) reported a significant increase in the number of individuals living outside their country of origin, reaching 244 million in 2015, a 41% rise from 2000. This trend reflects a global shift toward a “mosaic of immutably different cultures and civilizations” (Pieterse, 2004). Cultural diversity, a longstanding aspect of human groups, is now more pronounced than ever, encompassing majorities and minorities, immigrants, refugees, natives, individuals of various religions, sexual orientations, family structures, and more.

The term ‘intercultural’ has gained prominence in various professional fields such as education and psychology but is also contested due to its association with the increasingly debated concept of culture (Dervin et al., 2012; Byram, 2020). Initially used in Continental Europe to describe relations among citizens and groups in civil society, interculturalism has evolved, linking to normative programs and diversity-driven pedagogical strategies in recent years (Palaiologou & Dietz, 2012).

Intercultural education, in this context, is seen as a practice of placing cultural differences at the centre of reflection and educational inquiry, emphasizing respect and value for cultural pluralism (Aguado, 2005). Cultural diversity, viewed anthropologically, encompasses strategies developed by human beings across time and space for survival and species perpetuation. Recognizing and appreciating these differences becomes essential in fostering positive relationships and cooperation (Martínez Usarralde, 2011 and 2015).

The article argues for the importance of intercultural education in schools, emphasizing the need to address cultural differences to ensure equality, equity, and social participation. It stresses the role of schools in providing tools for success and decent life, especially for students who may not have access to such resources elsewhere (Cernadas et al., 2021).

Intercultural education is characterized by positive connotations, aligning with an active, open, and transformative school environment. It aims to develop active, critical, caring, and democratic citizenship in a pluralistic world, fostering social cohesion and learning community life (Deardorff, 2019). The adolescence stage is highlighted as a crucial period for developing communication and intercultural competence, preventing the development of discriminatory attitudes.

The article emphasizes the importance of incorporating cultural diversity into the educational system, recognizing and validating diverse cultural references. It suggests that schools should promote multiculturalism and intercultural awareness in their curriculum to prepare students for effective functioning in a pluralistic world.

In conclusion, intercultural competence is deemed crucial in language learning and teaching, especially in the context of globalization. The article calls for an educational approach that promotes intercultural and multicultural education, addressing issues such as equal opportunities, overcoming racism and xenophobia, and challenging societal structures that perpetuate inequality. The challenges and conflicts arising from the coexistence of different cultures, especially in the context of migration and economic difficulties, are highlighted as areas where intercultural education can play a pivotal role.

3. Education for Global Citizenship

Undoubtedly, our world is now intricately connected through globalization. When contemplating the concept, thoughts often gravitate towards the integration of different economies and financial markets, with its profound impact on capital movements, currencies, and credit, influencing the economies of all nations (Vilà, 2006). However, globalization extends beyond economic realms, interweaving elements such as science, technology, information, communication, culture, and politics (Held, 2004). In this global reality, education plays a pivotal role, requiring adaptation and responsiveness (Brunner, 2000, as cited in Lubies et al., 2013).

In a globalized society, elements native to a given society come into contact with those introduced through interactions with others. Acknowledging this inevitability, De Sousa Santos (2006) emphasizes the importance of connecting the local with the global. Society is undergoing a process of integration for which it was unprepared, necessitating an adaptation of established realities to this new situation. Delanty and Kumar (2016) characterize this as a cosmopolitan movement oriented towards social justice.

Education is a key player in this transformative process, needing to evolve its policies, structures, and processes to align with economic growth, social equity, and cultural integration in the 21st century. This transition is challenging but crucial, particularly in linking education to values in an increasingly free society (Leite, 2022).

The school, far from being a neutral space, is a cultural creation hub influencing social relations, identity formation, and a sense of community belonging. Therefore, it is an ideal platform to foster coexistence, acknowledging rights and responsibilities within communities and on a broader national and global scale (Kester, 2023).

Education for Global Citizenship, defined as a continuous educational process, aims to instil knowledge, attitudes, and values conducive to a culture of solidarity committed to combating poverty, and exclusion, and promoting human and sustainable development (Ortega, 2008; Nguyen, 2015). It serves as an opportunity to train individuals to exercise economic, social, and cultural rights and fulfil responsibilities towards others based on values of equality, solidarity, and non-discrimination (Cepal, 2000, as cited in Pieterse, 2004).

This form of education is both problematizing and transforming, revealing the complexities and conflicts related to development and highlighting the interdependence of local and global spheres. The curriculum, in this context, gains cultural, ideological, and social significance, fostering autonomy, critical thinking, and a global understanding among citizens (Gimeno Sacristán, 2002).

In conclusion, education becomes a means to comprehend the world and embrace solidarity and justice, nurturing a conscious and committed global citizenship capable of facing the significant challenges humanity encounters.

4. Cooperative Learning and Communicative Competence

Education is fundamentally a form of communication. The University of Northern Colorado's Association for Communication Administration defines human communication as the intentional process wherein one individual or group attempts to convey meaning to another through ver-

bal, nonverbal, or mediated messages. Tulkunovna (2022) describes communication as a symbolic, interpretive, transactional, contextual process where people create shared meanings.

In striving for communicative competence, the emphasis is on developing language fluency to ensure spontaneous and effective interaction. Fluency is honed through activities fostering communication among students, encouraging the use of communication strategies and preventing breakdowns due to vocabulary gaps. The focus on fluency prioritizes achieving meaningful communication, requiring a practical use of language and communication strategies that may be unpredictable (Li et al., 2022). Accuracy, on the other hand, focuses on forming grammatically correct language examples, often practised out of context and through small language samples. While accuracy activities reinforce meaningful communication, they don't necessarily entail it, requiring control over language choice. Therefore, a balanced approach involving both fluency and accuracy activities is recommended for language teachers.

To cultivate communicative competence in second language learners, Hymes (1972) suggests adopting an approach akin to how children naturally acquire their mother tongue, encompassing not only grammatical knowledge but also appropriateness in various contexts.

In our increasingly globalized world, language is no longer just a marker of social advantage but a crucial tool for communication in professional and social settings. Hence, classroom activities and lessons must align with real-life situations and learners' needs through meaningful communication activities.

Connecting the concept of communication with the significance of cooperation is integral to teaching English as a Second Language meaningfully. In conventional classrooms, the student-teacher dynamic often leaves room for improvement. Recognizing that teachers transmit knowledge from their perspectives, which may not always align with their students' learning styles, introduces the importance of peer learning or cooperation among students.

Cooperative learning, characterized by small groups working together to maximize learning for all members, stands in contrast to competitive and individualistic learning. In cooperative learning, individuals seek results beneficial to the group, fostering skills, competencies, and values such as intrinsic motivation, respect for diversity, and commitment to the common good (Bećirović et al., 2022). Associations like The Cooperative Learning Center and The Johns Hopkins Center for Social Organization of Schools advocate for cooperative learning, citing its promotion of equity, self-esteem, and appreciation for peers and the school.

Cooperative learning positions students as active participants in the learning process, with the teacher serving as a facilitator who organizes team learning. The teacher's role involves explaining learning tasks and cooperation procedures, overseeing teamwork, assessing learning levels, and encouraging students to evaluate their group functioning.

For effective cooperative learning, certain conditions must be met:

- Positive interdependence: students have to realise they need to be linked together to perform successfully the proposed learning activity, so they will exert themselves and assume their individual responsibility towards the group (Johnson et al., 1999). They all need each other and benefit equally (Kagan & Kagan, 1994).
- Individual responsibility: all members have to contribute in some way to the learning and success of the group.

- Personal interaction: interaction among students is the key to Cooperative Learning; rather than learning with others, you and others learn together, active implications in learning (Kagan & Kagan, 1994).
- Equitable participation: to prevent some students from taking more responsibility than others do, role distribution within the group is a useful and simple strategy.
- Social integration: certain social skills and abilities are required to work in a cooperative learning context involving respect for their peers, such as attentive listening, knowing to politely disagree, waiting patiently for their turn, etc. For some of these abilities, students will need training implemented by some kind of instructor (Johnson et al., 1998).
- Group self-evaluation: the joint assessment of group members on the learning process they have followed. This way they will be able to recognise what strategies have been useful and what should they change (Navarro, 2007).

Cooperative learning achieves multiple goals simultaneously, enhancing the performance of all students, fostering positive relationships, and providing experiences crucial for healthy social, psychological, and cognitive development. It stands out as an approach that covers a broad spectrum of educational aspects.

5. Teaching through Films

The cinema is commonly viewed as a source of entertainment and amusement. Since its inception, it has reflected the characteristics of the people and the era in which it was produced, embodying three interrelated traits: the documentary, the artistic, and the festive.

Filmmakers and audiences share a desire for cinema to transport them to reality within a fantastical atmosphere, providing an escape from everyday life (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). As times evolve, bringing new perspectives, means, ideas, and challenges, cinema's creative essence explores diverse paths. Virtually no subject or core content remains untouched in cinema, making it a valuable starting point for debates, features, documents, or information in research and studies. Films serve as an interdisciplinary strategy, promoting transversality and forming the foundation for analysing and studying various areas of a curriculum (Hunter & Frawley, 2023).

Cinema, as described by McLuhan (1960), complements knowledge, integrating ideas and languages, and serves as a reflection of human dramas through unconventional technologies and languages. Positioned as the social art of our time, cinema captivates audiences worldwide, transcending age and societal boundaries (Pereira, 2005). Termed *The Seventh Art*, cinema has evolved beyond a mere form of diversion; it has become a window for observing, analysing, and understanding our world.

In the context of an increasingly audiovisual culture dominated by television and emerging technologies (Cobo, 2014), cinema has gained prominence over traditional forms of communication like reading and writing. In today's educational landscape, characterized by Digital Natives (Prensky & Berry, 2001), who are adept at technology and thrive in an audiovisual environment, educators (Digital Immigrants) often struggle to comprehend the educational value of media. However, recognizing the need to adapt to the digital era, instructors must harness students' capabilities and incorporate multimedia learning techniques into their teaching methods.

The Net Generation, shaped by new technologies, calls for educational approaches aligned with their aptitudes and learning styles. The visual learning paradigm is an educational approach that supports this idea. It leverages visual stimuli (such as images and videos) to facilitate the brain's ability to learn and retain knowledge by processing visual information quickly and effectively. Photograms and audiovisual materials would enhance comprehension, retention, and problem-solving by summing up and making complex information more accessible and concrete (Salas & Casarejos, 2013).

Films, as a part of the Net Generation's audiovisual culture, represent an effective means of teaching that connects with the diverse intelligences of these students. Cinema, being socially accepted and engaging personal dimensions, can deepen, express, or analyse human lives, problems, feelings, and passions, prompting cognitive and emotional impact. The visual learning paradigm's approach not only helps explain complex concepts but also keeps learners emotionally engaged, fostering a deeper connection to the material.

Utilizing film fragments in lessons, appropriately selected, can stimulate multiple intelligences simultaneously, enhancing memory, comprehension, and understanding. Cinema's ability to evoke intense cognitive and emotional responses makes it a powerful tool for immersive learning (Wilson, 2020). Students often find themselves familiar with certain topics or activities due to scenes from films that left a lasting impression, illustrating the impact of cinema on knowledge acquisition.

Film sequences, as argued by Losada Aldrey (2009), serve as authentic samples of communication, offering genuine tools to illustrate the selection and use of different language samples. Film fragments can transcend language lessons, showcasing socio-cultural, historical, and scientific aspects that support or lead lesson content, potentially transforming traditional teaching methods. Students, as spectators, become both observers and participants in their own learning process, engaging in identification, internalization, and objective judgment. Consequently, cinema not only imparts the qualities of reality but also enhances sensitivity, fostering emotions and ideas about life situations through the thoughts and emotions evoked by films.

6. Intercultural cinema fostering Education for Global Citizenship through cooperative activities in ESL

In the theoretical context discussed earlier, individuals are consistently engaged with those who possess diverse thoughts, languages, interpretations, and even actions. Managing these differences presents a communicative challenge, often hindered by attitudes of ignorance or resistance to cultural distinctions. In the educational realm, it becomes imperative to instil in students the fundamental skills related to our inherent species-specific trait: communication. The emphasis here is on intercultural communication, the ability to communicate while appreciating and respecting cultural differences, thereby fostering symmetric relationships with people of various backgrounds.

However, the contemporary landscape extends beyond a mere intercultural reality; it transcends borders, transforming individuals into global citizens. Understanding how to interact with people from diverse origins and cultures is crucial, but equally important is shifting our distorted perceptions and embracing a holistic view of our surroundings. Education geared towards global perception entails acquiring knowledge about nations, cultures, and civiliza-

tions, including our own pluralistic society and others, with an emphasis on comprehending their interconnectedness, evolution, and individual responsibility within this dynamic process.

7. Method

This article employs a research methodology of documentary literature review on the subject matter, as an essay outlines and synthesizes the results of previous publications by the authors, presents an innovative model, and stimulates subsequent academic discussion around this proposal.

An essay presenting a model offers clarity in understanding complex concepts, encourages critical analysis, fosters academic discourse, illustrates practical applications, and contributes to the advancement of knowledge within a specific field. As noted by Gilbert and Osborne (1980), models play a crucial role in science education by facilitating the understanding of abstract ideas and preventing misconceptions when appropriately utilized.

8. Results

Recognizing the significance of education in intercultural values and global citizenship, the next consideration is the most effective approach to address these issues. Cinema emerges as a prominent and socially impactful resource in education. While cinema undoubtedly entertains and distracts, it goes beyond mere amusement. Films have the power to instil ideas, influence behaviour, and foster identification with certain values. This impact is particularly potent due to cinema's enduring attractiveness. Ideally, the curriculum should encompass a broad spectrum of cognitive, emotional, procedural, and moral experiences for effective assimilation of taught content.

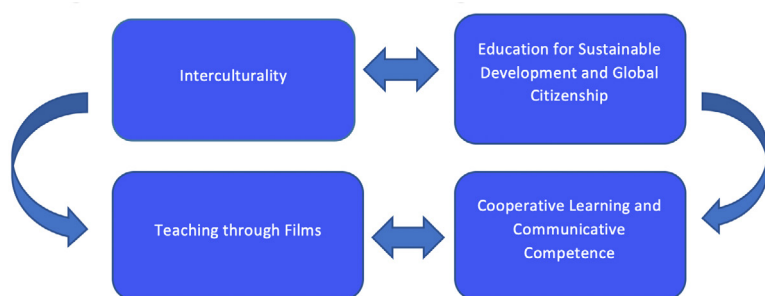
Our educational framework should strive to align with intelligence, rationality, and human creativity. Achieving this requires overcoming challenges within the context of an ESL class, where communication skills in the foreign language are integrated with intercultural and global citizenship education. Modern pedagogy should not merely assimilate new methods into the existing educational system; rather, it should recognise that cinema not only appeals to people's intelligence but also connects with their emotions, generating motivations and facilitating their commitment to social construction.

In the realm of intercultural realities within schools, opportunities for cosmopolitan practices arise. Cinema stands as a valuable tool in this regard, yet the concept of cooperation should not be underestimated in promoting local and global connections. Bridging the differences that separate individuals becomes an avenue for fostering support among students, encouraging their commitment to shared goals, and championing equal opportunities.

The model we proposed, termed Eco-Sustainable Audiovisual Learning, is based on Alcantud-Díaz (2025) regarding the ecology of language in EFL classes and is represented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

Eco-Sustainable Audiovisual Learning Model



Source: Content extracted from Alcantud-Díaz (2025)

9. Discussion and Conclusions

Integrating conceptual understanding with practical application transforms teaching into a multifaceted endeavour that requires years of mastery. The overarching objective of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship is to reshape society—its mindset, attitudes, laws, traditions, and conduct—into a mature entity that transcends unjust or inhumane positions, recognizing each individual as inherently deserving of rights, respect, and dignity. Cinema, in today's society, holds significant cultural, artistic, and human sway. Films serve as a channel for expressing the values and counter-values of the world. Additionally, cinema creates environments conducive to coexistence, fostering attitudes of dialogue, negotiation, compromise, and commitment. Social issues portrayed on screen and resolved in unique ways often serve as valuable life lessons, prompting reflection, critical analysis, and shifts in attitudes.

All learning, encompassing general culture, is perceived as structured around meaningful coherence and rationality, forming a systematic knowledge framework that enriches understanding, cultivates critical thinking, improves human behaviour, and ignites the desire for continuous learning.

This survey seeks to analyse the viability of the Eco-Sustainable Audiovisual Learning Model in promoting Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship through cooperative activities in English as a Second Language (ESL). Furthermore, it explores whether using Intercultural Cinema as the primary tool ensures effective engagement with the issues mentioned before.

Concerning the second objective, initial resistance to a lesson involving social content was observed, but this resistance diminished as students acquired more information on the subject. Increased knowledge correlated with an enhanced willingness to learn. The selection of the film *Diamantes Negros* (or *Black diamonds*) (2013) as the main resource for this lesson appears to have made a significant difference, particularly in terms of motivating and encouraging students to exert effort. Attention to students' interests and motivations in material and activity creation is also noteworthy.

Several areas have been identified for further research. This investigation could expand to encompass a broader range of intercultural films addressing diverse topics, and the lesson plans

designed for their implementation could be tested on a larger student population for more conclusive results. We encourage colleagues of different levels languages, and areas of the curriculum to test the Eco-Sustainable Audiovisual Learning Model, such as teaching values in physical education classes.

The theoretical concepts presented in this work—interculturalism, Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship, cooperative learning, and learning through films—have traditionally been studied independently. By combining and integrating these elements in this proposal, we aim to present a holistic approach to education that provides comprehensive training for the citizens of the future.

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