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**Title:** System of educative activities for the development of an environmental culture in the English language subject in the seventh grade of Antonio Berdayes Junior High School.

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To my grandparents and my mother for all the support they have given me.

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# Abstract:

The present research paper responds to a problem faced by the seventh grade students at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School concerning the Environmental Education. The general objective of this research is to elaborate a system of educative activities that contribute to the environmental education through the English language subject in the seventh grade, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province. The theoretical foundations, supported by the application of the dialectical-materialistic method in close relationship with the theoretical and empirical ones, allowed the elaboration of the system of educative activities, to arrive at conclusions and give recommendations.

# Introduction:

The interest related to environmental protection in the socialist country is centered on the health and well-being of man who is the fundamental causing agent of the continuous degradation of the environment, and, at the same time, its main victim.

It is extremely important that men possess vast and adequate knowledge about the environment that surrounds them and in which they live, because on it depends in great measure, that present and future generations have the possibility to be, like our Apostle José Martí said: "Our new pines", can substitute the implementation of the environmental education and thus guarantee that all positive actions of every person are taken into account in the environment.

About the topic Environment the following authors have researched: Araujo Joaquín. (1990), Bellamy, David y otros. (1991), ChacholiadesMiltiade. (1992), Aguayo, Alfredo Miguel (1995)., Agosto Malla, Angel. (1995), Berzosca, C.Bustelo y P. Iglesia, J (1996), Chomsky, Noam (1996), Ballesteros, Jesús y Pérez Adam, José. (1997), Carter.larry W. (1998), Gómez Orca, Domingo. (1999), Álvarez de Zayas, Carlos M. (1999), Berriz Valle, Ricardo. (1999), Baxter Pérez, Esther. (2003). Theseauthorshavecontributedtothetheoreticalfoundations and conceptual foundations in thefirstchapter.

Another research paper concerning environmental education has recently been presented in our university:

ÁlvarezPardal, Yohan. (2013)

The novelty of this research paper is found in the facts that the presented research paper is directed to junior high school students instead of university students, so the school level is different; this paper is not intended for students that are majoring in English language, so the level of language skills is different too; and finally, the proposed system of activities is educative, directed mainly to the formation of values,

not language knowledge and abilities, even though the English language is used in the fulfillment of the activities.

However, through the experiences of the author during his work with the seventh grade students, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School, the observations carried out in the group, it was possible to check that difficulties in the environmental education can still be found.

The difficulties found in the seventh grade students, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province are:

- 1- The seventh grade students, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province have difficulties to define: What is the Environment?
- 2-The explanations they provide, referred to the definition of the Environment, are not deep.
- 3- The educative activities carried out at school to contribute to the protection of the environment are scarce.
- 4- There is lack of knowledge about the elements that constitute the environment.
- 5- There is lack of knowledge about actions that could be carried out to contribute to the protection of the environment.
- 6- There is lack of motivation concerning the protection of the environment.

The previously stated difficulties provoke evident contradictions that lead the author to state the following scientific problem:

**Scientific problem:**

How to contribute to the environmental education of seventh grade students at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province?

To solve the stated problem, the author has defined as **object** of the research: The environmental education in the teaching-learning process in seventh grade, and

the **field of action** the environmental education through the English lesson in seventh grade, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province.

The **objective** of the research is: To elaborate a system of educative activities that contribute to the environmental education in the English language subject in the seventh grade, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province.

To complement the proposed objective during the development of the research, the following scientific questions will be answered:

**Scientific questions:**

- 1-What are the theoretical foundations that support the environmental education?
- 2-What is the current state of the environmental education for seventh grade students, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province?
- 3-What educative activities could be integrated in a system to contribute to the environmental education?
- 4-What results to obtain with the application of the system of educative activities that contribute to the environmental education for seventh grade students, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province?

To answer the stated questions the author considers the following **research tasks**:

- 1-Systematization of the theoretical foundations about the environmental education.
- 2-Diagnosis of the current state of the environmental education in seventh grade students, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province.



3-Elaboration of a system of educative activities that contribute to the environmental education for seventh grade students, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province.

4-Evaluation of the obtained results in the practice with the application of the system of educative activities that contribute to the environmental education for seventh grade students, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province.

The **population** of the research is constituted by 28 students of the seventh grade, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province. These students were selected by the author because that is the class to which he teaches the subject English language. The **sample** coincides with the population.

The integrating application of the dialectic-materialistic philosophical method allowed the theoretical foundation of the environmental educative process in its developing dynamic, besides directing research actions with an integrating approach to complement the stated objective.

Among the **methods** of the theoretical level used to study the stated phenomenon, the following were applied:

1-Historical-Logical: to outline the historical evolution of the environmental education and its theoretical foundations.

2- Analysis and synthesis: allowed the thorough study of the environmental education as well systematizing the necessary information to elaborate the system of educative activities.

3-Inductive-deductive: allowed to determine the existing trends about environmental education and elaborate the theoretical foundations of the system of educative activities as a learning tool, through this analysis it was possible to reach the partial and final conclusions.

4- The systemic approach was used to establish the link and the relations among the components of the system of activities. Besides, it was a necessary guide to structure the research and deepen in the essential relations and fundamental qualities of the environmental education.

5- The ascension from abstract to concrete allowed the acquisition of the knowledge about the environmental education, the need to prepare the students concerning this topic.

The empirical methods applied made it possible the characterization of the objective of the research and the obtaining of the necessary data for its understanding. The study of documents to check with objectivity what is established for the Environmental Education with a scientific character, the interview to students allowed to check the knowledge they had about environmental protection.

Observation: With the objective of knowing, through the behavior of the students, the state of the environmental education in the seventh grade, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province.

Besides, statistical or mathematical methods were used for the percentage analysis of the empirical data that are obtained.

The practical significance is found in the elaboration and application of a system of educative activities to contribute to the environmental education in seventh grade students, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province, that propitiates not only the sustainable development of the community inside and outside the school, but also a greater environmental culture that will allow the behavior in agreement to the current needs.

## CHAPTER 1

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS THAT SUPPORT THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

In this chapter the author presented the theoretical foundations to substantiate the research carried out concerning the environmental education, the characteristics of junior high school students and the junior high school curriculum, and the potentialities and difficulties of an environmental education in junior high school.

#### 1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION. GENERAL CONCEPTUALIZATION.

The interaction of men with nature goes back to the origins of the human being himself, when the first hominid able of transforming the environment appeared on Earth. The homo habilis, as his name implies, besides taking from the environment what he needed to survive, possessed the ability to transform it for his own benefit. The production of the objects and goods that the man needed, allowed for a better survival, they also determine the emergence of work in the process of hominization, according to the environmental conditions of each epoch.

While human work was becoming successful they were improving and, this way, its range of action was widening and developing, the incidence of man on the environment increased.

The social demands linked to the education of professionals and students with a wide profile, able to think about their own practice directed towards an adequate political-ideological work that includes the environmental conception that allows to deepen in knowing: What is Environmental Education? What is the importance of the study of Environmental Education? To answer the stated questions the author carried out a study that allowed him to obtain the following answers:

According to Ph.D. Lucie Sauvé, from the University of Montreal: "The environment can be understood as nature (what to appreciate, what to observe), or it can be approached as a resource (what to administer, what to share), or as a problem (what to prevent, what to solve) or as a system (what to understand to make better

decisions), it can be also perceived as a means of life (what to know, what to organize), or as a territory (a place of belonging and cultural identity), or as a landscape (what to walk through, what to interpret), it can be also approached as a biosphere (where to live together and in the long term), or as a community project (where to get involved)”

The environment is also studied from the philosophical and psychological point of view.

The field Environmental psychology defines the term environment broadly encompassing natural environments, social settings, built environments, learning environments, and informational environments.

Environmental philosophy is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with the natural environment and humans' place within it.

In the pedagogical foundations of the educative activities we can find the educative nature of teaching, which implies that the teaching-learning process is oriented towards educative objectives as well as instructive objectives. Learning a language as communication contributes to the aesthetic, ethic and political education of the learners.

The principle of the educative nature of teaching is based on the law of the unity of instruction and education. This law expresses the unity between the acquisition of knowledge, the development of habits and the formation of the behavior. According to Labarrere and Valdivia (op. cit.), formation of the learners' all-around personality occurs on the basis of knowledge.

In the application of the principle of the educative nature of teaching, it is important to know how to form convictions and develop feelings in the learners. The teacher's example is fundamental. The link between the word and the action between convictions and behavior are the basis of the teacher's moral prestige.

The following rules are to be borne in mind in the application of this principle:

- The adequate selection of the content and methods of teaching with a scientific approach.
- The exploitation of all the educative possibilities of the content.
- The link of the contents with the problems of the construction of a better society.
- The stimulus of logical and creative thinking, feelings of social behavior and good manners.

Environmental Education: It is a pedagogical mechanism to safeguard the Environment, besides raising awareness and providing suitable solutions to the current environmental problems caused by anthropogenic activities and the effects of the relation of men and the environment, besides instilling the interaction that exists within the ecosystems. The physical, chemical and biological processes and factors, the way they react, relate and intervene with each other, is another topic divulged by the Environmental Education, all this with the objective of understanding the world and form an environmentalist culture where men apply in all productive processes clean techniques providing solutions for the environmental problems, thus allowing the sustainable development.

Environmental education is a process that allows individuals to explore environmental issues, engage in problem solving, and take action to improve the environment. As a result, individuals develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues and have the skills to make informed and responsible decisions.

The components of environmental education are:

- Awareness and sensitivity to the environment and environmental challenges

- Knowledge and understanding of the environment and environmental challenges
- Attitudes of concern for the environment and motivation to improve or maintain environmental quality
- Skills to identify and help resolve environmental challenges
- Participation in activities that lead to the resolution of environmental challenges

Environmental education does not advocate a particular viewpoint or course of action. Rather, environmental education teaches individuals how to weigh various sides of an issue through critical thinking and it enhances their own problem-solving and decision-making skills.

The study of the environmental education is extremely important because it allows the acquisition of the necessary knowledge about the elements that form the environment, such as the abiotic, including the solar energy, the soil, the water, the air that are quite important for the survival of the biotic elements that include the living organisms that constitute the thin layer of the Earth called biosphere, sustenance and home of the living beings. With the previous knowledge a vast environmental education will be created, an environmental culture will be sowed to obtain the necessary knowledge about the damage that could be caused to the environment if it is not extensively known.

Many scientists and professionals have dedicated their life to the thorough study of the environment in general with the objective of achieving through their research that man, as a thinking being and an influential part on the degradation that the environment is suffering throughout the world, become aware and react before it is too late.

On June fifth, 1972, at Stockholm, Switzerland, the International Conference of United Nations about environment was held. A deep reflection about environmental problems and their causes is made in this meeting, making allusion to environmental education at an international level by each nation that participated. At

this moment one of its principles is written: "...it is indispensable to develop an educational work on environmental issues directed not only to young generations but also to the oldest ones to widen the basis (...) and propitiate a behavior in individuals, in companies and in groups, inspired in a sense of responsibility towards the protection and improvement of the environment in its human dimension..." A series of intergovernmental meetings to reflect on how to protect the environment foreseeing new solutions began after this conference.

In 1973 UNESCO created the United Nations Program for the Environment (PNUMA) which includes as main objectives to support the educative programs related to the environment. According to the aspect 96 of its recommendations, it was created the International Program for Educational Environment (IPEE) and after two years of existence its first project was approved with objectives focused on environmental education. It was in 1975, in Belgrade, that the International Seminar about Environmental Education was developed. The International Program of United Nations for the Environment was presented at this moment, becoming a platform to announce the International Program for Environmental education with the creation of the well-known Belgrade Letter -document that norm a platform to implement the process of environmental education in each country, taking into consideration the need of thinking and behaving with the conscience of saving the planet- the goal was "...to develop an environmental conscience in the world population (...) whom have the needed knowledge (...) motivations and desires to work individually and in groups in search of new solutions to the current problems and to avoid those that could come..."

The Cuban Ministry of Education (MINED) and UNESCO, in 1979, auspiced the celebration of the First National Seminar about Environmental Education in Cuba. This seminar contributed to the establishment of a strategy and a plan of actions to develop the environmental education. Later, in 1990, the MINED consent the Circular 10/90 where it is directed the requirements to develop environmental education to the different educative institutions, including those related to higher studies. The delivering of lessons with an integral approach to deepen in the studies of the

environment highlighting the role of pedagogical sciences in this process was the most important aspect in this case. The term Environmental Education has had several definitions since these moments on, but it was first referred to by Professor William Stapp. During the Conference of Nevada 1970, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources stated that the environmental education is the process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and the attitudes necessary to understand and to appreciate the interrelations between men, its culture, and its biophysical environment. It supposes also the practice of decision-making and the auto formulation of a code of behavior in aspects related to the quality of the environment. Seven years later another definition was stated, this time at The First Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education. Tbilisi (Georgia), 1977 and then ratified by the Congress of Moscow (Russia), 1987): Environmental Education is a permanent process through which the individuals and the community get aware of their environment and the interrelation of their biological, physical, social, and cultural components, by acquiring the knowledge, the values, competences, experiences, and developing the will that allows them to solve the environmental problems

Both definitions take Environmental Education as a process that should be developed in a progressive and continuous way. The Cuban Government defined it in the Law of the Environment of Cuba (Law 81/97): The environmental education is a continuous and permanent process, which constitutes a dimension of the general comprehensive education of all the citizens. It is aimed at the acquisition of knowledge, development of skills, capacities, and attitudes in the formation of values, to harmonize the relations between the human beings, with the rest of society and nature, to propitiate the orientation of the economic, social, and cultural process towards a sustainable development.

To substantiate this research paper it was consulted the bibliography related to the XIII National Seminar for Educators held by the Ministry of Education in which analyses from different Cuban Pedagogical Universities are carried out, such as:



the scientific results from several universities like the University of Pedagogical sciences Manuel AscunceDomenech in Ciego de Ávila related to environmental education in High School, the University of Pedagogical Sciences in Matanzas, Holguin, Villa Clara, Havana, Santiago de Cuba, with research related to education concerning climate change, use of water, to contribute to the environmental education in our Educational System.

### **1.1.1 ACTIVITY.CONCEPTS AND ITS IMPLICATION IN THE LEARNING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES.**

In the Philosophical Dictionary it is expressed that activity is: “A specifically human way related to the world, that constitutes the process during the course in which the man reproduces and transforms creatively the nature, becoming himself in that way in an active subject and turning the nature’s phenomenon that he can assimilate into objects of his activity”<sup>1</sup>

From the psychological point of view, Lorenzo M. Pérez Martín in his book the personality its diagnostic and its development tells that activity is the interaction process subject-object, towards the necessities’ satisfaction of the subject as a result in which is produced a transformation of the subject and object .

The theory of verbal activity is based on the general theory of activity developed in the former Soviet Union by A. A. Leontiev and his followers.

Verbal activity is a type of active relationship between man and the world. It is a process in which man uses language to transmit and assimilate the socio-historical experience, to establish communication and to plan his activities. Zimnaya defines verbal activity as a language system that activates, mediates and orients man’s exchange with reality, a process of transmission and reception of information conditioned by a communicative situation This definition is useful in terms of language teaching as it involves the concepts of language, process and situation which become teaching content.

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<sup>1</sup> Diccionario de Filosofía. La Habana; Ed. Ciencias Sociales, 1989. P. 7

Man does adapt himself to the environment but he also assimilates and transforms it thanks to his capacity to plan and foresee his activity. Verbal activity is a kind of activity in which man uses language as a means to interact with the world.

#### Psychological Content of Verbal Activity.

A. A. Leontiev (op. cit.) distinguishes the following psychological components of verbal activity. Object: Thinking. It is a way of reflecting the relationship between objects and phenomena in the environment. Thinking determines the whole verbal activity. Means: Language. It is the means of forming a thought; a system made up of phonetic, grammatical and lexical components to express thought. -Procedure: Speech. It is a way of forming and formulating thought. Speech is a social and individual unit which reflects reality with the help of language as a system of socially made signs. In the process of verbal activity, language and speech form an inner mechanism of the realization of the processes of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Product: It is what materializes verbal activity: deductions and conclusions the listener comes to in the case of receptive skills; utterances and texts the speaker produces in the case of productive skills. - Result: It is man's reaction as a result of verbal stimulus. - Subjects: They are listener and reader in receptive skills (listener), and speaker and writer in productive skills (speaker). The content of communication is derived from the content of thinking which, in turn, comes from reality (reflected in man's consciousness). The main function of language is communication, which involves the other functions (Rubinstein, op. cit) such as informative, expressive, influential and exchange of thought.

In verbal activity, the material (external) factors and the internal factors form a unit. Psychological activity is formed on the basis of the material activity, the task being transference of the subject of teaching from external (text) into the internal, psychological form into mental operation (This process is called 'interiorization') The task of teaching is then to transfer the components of the language to a level of speech.

Verbal activity is communication in itself, the language system, be product and the process of communication, formed by well defined stages wherein verbal capacity develops within communicative situations.

The structural organization of verbal activity embodies three stages: orientation and planning, realization and control. These stages are closely related to the components of the activity, that is: needs, motives, objectives, actions, operations and conditions. The object of the psychological content of verbal activity is thinking. It determines the activity as a whole in such a way that language is the means, and speech is the procedure of forming and formulating thought.

The Psycho-physiological and functional mechanisms of conscientization, memory and anticipation allow the realization of verbal activity. These mechanisms relate closely to the levels of structure of verbal activity? All language skills have common and particular mechanisms which interact.

Concerning language theory, the author considers that the most suitable for the development of this research paper is the pragmatic theory. It deals with the physical data of speech and takes in form, meaning and context.

Three important elements of this theory are:

**Form:** The actual words (written) or sounds (spoken) used to express something in language as opposed to meaning or use. Form is often synonymous with structure.

**Function:** The function of a structure is the communicative purpose of that structure on a particular occasion -what the speaker is trying to do through language. For example, **Have you read this book?** may be present perfect interrogative in form, but the speaker may be using it to make a suggestion to suggest that the listener read the book. Suggesting is

the function of the structure here. The use of a form can be expressed in terms of functions.

**Context** is the leading aspect in communication as it determines function and form. It is commonly referred to as a set of parameters. Lyons (Levinson, op. cit.) lists the following features:

Knowledge of:

- Role and status.
- Spatial and temporal location
- Formality level.
- The medium.
- Appropriate subject-matter.
- Appropriate province.

From the time when grammar-translation courses prevailed, through audiolingualism on into the cognitive-code period, practice material has emphasized mechanical and analytical processes. The recent communicative period has expanded this storehouse to include more global, cognitive, and creative activities. Global activities are directed at overall language use rather than at discrete elements; cognitive activities either prepare learners for or stress intellectual aims; creative practices give learners the widest possible opportunities to use language for self-expression. Many of the global, cognitive, and creative activities that have become associated with communicative language courses have been drawn from other fields, particularly the social sciences where group interaction techniques have come in for special attention within the past decade.

Warm-ups/Relaxers are motivational workouts which add an element of enjoyment and personal involvement. They can be used at various points during the session, especially when a relief of tension or a change of pace is called for.

*Warm-ups/Relaxers*

For example, games, songs, physical activities, puzzles.

Group Dynamics and Experiential Tasks are group activities which create opportunities for sharing personal feelings and emotions among learners.

#### *Group Dynamics Activities*

For example, small groups or pairs solve problems or discuss issues which center on topics of personal concern, sharing of self and feelings rather than general subject matter or topics external to self.

#### *Experiential Tasks*

For example, as a group activity, making, building, constructing, or creating something concrete that relates to the thematic material of the language course.

While similarly 'whole-task' focused, workouts which involve transferring and reconstituting information emphasize cognitive uses of language.

#### *Transferring/Reconstituting Information*

For example, following a language stimulus, often a reading passage: transferring information from text to a graphic display such as a chart; filling in forms; providing language to complete visual displays such as a cartoon or photograph; making judgments about people's motives and intentions; putting sentence elements in sequence (the strip story).

Skill-Getting Strategies are activities which enable learners to develop specific skill areas in the target language.

#### *Skill-getting Strategies*

For example, in reading: previewing material before reading it, using the SQ3R strategy (survey, question, read, recite, review); in writing: reassembling scrambled language to build topic-sentence and paragraph sense.

## 1.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

The focus of the teaching of English in Cuba must be on communicative competence, which is a high-level concept that implies the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning involving interaction between two or more persons, or between one person and a written or oral text."

The teaching of English in Secondary School should contribute not only to functional language proficiency, but also to the ability to construct and reconstruct new knowledge.

One of the curriculum objectives is to enhance and continue to develop moral values and attitudes that will lead the students to appropriate social behavior, and the educational content: Related to the system of values and social attitude and responsibility that should characterize students behavior in society and that must be underlying classroom activities. Also related to the developing of thinking and reflective skills that enhance active participation and engagement of students in the learning process.

Concerning the characteristics of junior high school students, the beginning of high school for children coincides with the start of a new stage: adolescence, which constitutes a very peculiar period in the individual's life, and this is a stage in the student's life that needs special attention. During the adolescence there are changes at school level, which imply a group of demands that provide independence. When advancing through adolescence they reach a more stable organization of their motivations. He is experiencing his new feelings, discovering his contradictions, suffering with what he is leaving behind, and worried about the new elements that are approaching him, sometimes they express fears not like those of childhood, but fear of mockery, failure, and ridicule. Some of them feel unable to perform that activities presented by other adolescents.

### **1.2.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEVENTH GRADE ENGLISH SUBJECT SYLLABUS**

The English syllabus is intended to support the general curriculum and the formation of the students as responsible and revolutionary citizens in a non-threatening, active environment.

Speaking, listening, reading and writing are integrated reflecting the principle that achievement in one skill area enriches and reinforces progress in all others.

Students must be exposed to educational activities that are relevant and authentic to challenge them to use English to do real things.

Project works are viewed as a concluding activity through which students demonstrate their level of proficiency.

### **1.3 POTENTIALITIES FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.**

The potentialities can be found in the fact that the English language lesson in Junior High School provides opportunities for an education because it contributes to the political, ideological formation of the students as they learn to use English as a means of communication and social interaction in classroom activities and outside the school context.

Language instruction exposes students to both language patterns and their infinite number of manifestations so that communicative competence can emerge. Even when language learning in the classroom is to a certain extent artificial, an authentic environment must be created, in which the need to know and the reason to communicate are genuine.

The English lesson in Junior High School enhances and continues to develop moral values and attitudes that will lead the students to appropriate social

behavior and this could be used to develop values concerning the need to protect the environment.

In junior high school lessons there is educational content, related to the system of values and social attitude and responsibility that should characterize students' behavior in society.





## CHAPTER 2

### SYSTEM OF EDUCATIVE ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION OF SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS

This chapter includes the diagnosis of the current state of the environmental education in seventh grade students, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province, the elaboration of a system of educative activities that contribute to their environmental education, and the evaluation of the obtained results in the practice with the application of the system of educative activities that contribute to the environmental education for seventh grade students, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province.

#### 2.1 DIAGNOSIS OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS, GROUP FOUR AT ANTONIO BERDAYES JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN MATANZAS PROVINCE.

A diagnosis was carried out for the analysis in this research paper, taking into account the following dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral.

DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS
<b>Cognitive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Knowledge of the meaning of environment</li><li>➤ Knowledge of environmental education</li><li>➤ Knowledge of the causes of environmental pollution</li><li>➤ Knowledge of the ways to protect the environment</li></ul>
<b>Affective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Manifest love for the environment.</li><li>➤ Disposition and commitment towards the environmental activities.</li><li>➤ Consider as important the practice of the environmental protection.</li><li>➤ Value the environmental protection.</li></ul>
<b>Behavioral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Participate in a leading role in the environmental activities.</li><li>➤ Manifest interests for these activities.</li><li>➤ Analyze the importance of the environmental education.</li></ul>

Following these elements, the instruments for the analysis were elaborated.

Based upon the analysis of the diagnosis made by the author of this research a system of educative activities was elaborated. This system has 11 activities with the general objective of developing an Environmental Education. This system of educative activities is to be applied to students from the seventh grade. All the activities are structured in a close relation one to another.

A great number of definitions of system have been given. Among these definitions the one offered by Gastón Pérez and his collaborators appears. They consider that system is all that "...provide the general orientation for the study of phenomena as a comprehensive reality formed by components that carry out determined functions and keep stable forms of interaction among them"<sup>2</sup>.

Another definition about system is the one offered by Kursanov, G., who states that system is "...a comprehensive set of elements that are closely linked one with another, they appear as a unique whole respect to the circumstantial conditions and other systems"<sup>3</sup>.

De Zayas, A. defines as a system "...the set of components that interrelate each other; from the static and dynamic point of view, whose way of functioning is directed towards the achievement of determined objectives"<sup>4</sup>.

The analysis made by the author of this investigation about the previous definitions allows highlighting the existing coincidence among the definitions stated by the different authors. They point out as the essential aspects of system: the set of elements, components or activities that are interrelated for achieving an objective.

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<sup>2</sup> Metodología de la Investigación Educativa: Primera parte / Gastón Pérez.-- /et al. / – La Habana: Ed. Pueblo y Educación, 2002.

<sup>3</sup>Kursanov, G. Problemas Fundamentales del Materialismo dialéctico. -- La Habana: Ed. Ciencias Sociales, 1979. -- pág. 225.

<sup>4</sup> González Soca, Ana María en Naciones de sociología, psicología y pedagogía. – La Habana: Ed. Pueblo y Educación. -- pág. 157

For the conception of the system of educative activities, the author of this investigation assumes the definition of system given by Gastón Pérez. This definition expresses that the interaction in each component is what generates general integrative qualities and at the same time conforms the system as a unique interactive condition.

The definition of activity assumed in this investigation is the one offered by specialists of the Latin American and Caribbean Pedagogical Institute, it expresses that activity is "...the process through which the individual; responding to necessities, relates with objects of reality, adopting an attitude towards them"<sup>5</sup>.

To complement the theoretical foundation of the system the author of this investigation assumes the definition of system of activities given by Martínez González, L. E. by considering this definition as the most complete and suitable to the research process that is carried out. Such definition states that a system is characterized by a: "Set of activities interrelated in such a way that they constitute an integrity, which contributes to the success of a general objective as solution to a problem previously determined"

Concerning the principles for the selection and elaboration of the activities, it was taken into account that they fulfilled the following methodological requisites, proposed by María Eugenia PagésBarani, in her Master's Dissertation, 2005:

- Get the attention to the meaning, purpose and promote the interchange. The direction stimulates the activity and directs it towards a concrete result. It implies that the objectives should be formulated from the communicative needs of the students.
- The flexibility of the task allows the student different ways, procedures and means of participation, as well as the search for different solutions depending on the developed abilities and the strategies outlined by him. With the help of the activity the main function of the system is complemented: to serve as a material instrument for the direction of the

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<sup>5</sup> Instituto Pedagógico Latinoamericano y Caribeño. Fundamentos de la Investigación Educativa.

teaching-learning process. With the support of the exercises the motivational, informative, pragmatic, and control functions are fulfilled.

- To give opportunities for students to practice the linguistic structures, speak and communicate during the appropriation of the content, identify and solve the communicative problems from the exchange of information and experience.
- The activities should sensitize the student with the learning process, in which the student participates.
- The activities guarantee that the knowledge that is acquired in the language is fundamentally profitable, for communication during the lessons and for the development of cognitive and affective strategies.

### **Qualities of the strategy:**

Quality is a natural or acquired characteristic that distinguishes people or things.

The system of actions expresses the following qualities:

**Objectivity:** Because it provides answers to a real problem that exists in Antonio Berdayes Junior High School related to the environmental education. Knowledge about something or values can be acquired taking as a starting point the needs of the individual, so this acquisition should be related to something that has certain significance for him and the need should be related to the individual interests of the student or to what takes place in his daily life.

**Its character of multi-factor process:** it allowed the structuring of the actions to contribute to the environmental education in the students, by analyzing the reality in the schools to integrate all the factors and students, as well as different contexts and stages, such as classrooms, teaching staff, family, community, to transform them from an initial to a potential state, which guarantees a differentiated attention in a process that in each stage improves and which can be transferred to new situations.

**Systemic approach:** Because the predominant elements are the coordination relationships among all the components of the pedagogical process academically, as well as concerning research and work and formation taking into account the subordination, dependence and interdependence relationships.

**Developing character of the system:** It is directed to recognize the influence of all the factors involved in the education in the schools to stimulate the processes of socialization and communication among the involved ones and motivate them to learn, establish common goals from the interchange of opinions, open and respectful discussions, contributing to develop the processes of social interaction in the groups to favor the acquisition of higher learning and values in the students.

**Collective and individual character:** directed to solve the problems and difficulties found in the classroom when the teachers are trying to educate and control the internal dynamics of the students. This quality takes place when all the involved ones are considered as subjects of the educative actions and, as such, get committed to it.

**Participative character:** it is manifested in the intervention of all the factors to achieve the integral formation of the students. The activities should allow and stimulate that students assume a main role in the development of each of them and that the students develop the self-evaluation. It propitiates the student-student relation as well as the student-teacher relation and the activities are student centered.

**Its flexible character:** it is associated to the possibility of employing alternatives in the structure and application in different contexts. It allows adaptations, adjustments, rectifications to the initially conceived, because all systems are flexible to the changes of the context that take place as a result of its own application.

**Its own contextual character:** it exacts the preparation in the identification of conditions and possibilities, as well as the elaboration of systems of actions that

control the process. The socio-cultural context that is created in the educative environment at school and in the community is an important condition because the education does not only take place at school but also in other contexts, through which the students learn, acquire values and get developed.

**Its integrating quality:** it materializes the internal unity of all the educative components and factors of the formation process of the students. It is necessary to value all the processes that take place in the educative actions, the motivation, the feelings provoked, the values that are acquired, so it is considered that the teachers and students should be prepared to diagnose, transform and evaluate their own educative reality.

**Its multi-facet approach:** essential trait of this system, underlying in the study of the processes, phenomena and facts, their interrelation, interdependence: it takes place in the links, interrelations inside and outside school.

**Innovative character:** it is interpreted in the solution of problems through actions elaborated to face the difficulties and inconveniences that occur in the practice. The innovation takes place from the results obtained in the implementation and divulging of the system in the socialization and communication of the activities, the interchange of experiences, and the generalization of those actions that could be implemented whenever the conditions and context exist.

**Interdisciplinary character:** In the activities it is offered a close relationship between the content of the different subject matters of the curriculum and others that allow the general educative preparation of the students.

## **2.2 ELABORATION OF A SYSTEM OF EDUCATIVE ACTIVITIES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS, GROUP FOUR AT ANTONIO BERDAYES JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN MATANZAS PROVINCE.**

Each activity is structured in the following way:

Activity #

Title:

Objective: (they all aim at fulfilling the general goal of the system of educativeactivities)

Materials:

Procedure:

Evaluation:

### **Activity 1**

Title: World of words.

Objective: To recognize our inclusion in the environment by introducing terms related to the environment.

Materials: Blackboard, chalk.

Procedure: The professor divides the group into two teams. Then the professor writes the word environment in the center of the blackboard and he asks the students to surround it with words related to the environment. The professor or a student explains the meaning of difficult words. Then he should make students reflect on how we are all surrounded by what those words represent to make students aware of our involvement in the environment.

Evaluation: oral, the team with more terms related to the environment wins, analyzing the amount of words related to the environment that each student contributes to the activity. The students with most terms will be especially congratulated for his or her good work.

### **Activity 2**

Title: Pollute or protect?

Objective: To reflect on the importance of the protection of the environment and the avoidance of the environmental pollution.

Materials: Blackboard, chalk.

Procedure: The professor asks the students to divide the words from the previous exercise into two groups: words related to environmental protection and words related to environmental pollution, directing students' attention to the negative and positive connotation of the words in the two groups and the importance of protecting the environment (first group of words) by avoiding pollution (second group of words).

Evaluation: oral, self-evaluation about the knowledge of the positive and negative effects on the environment.

### **Activity 3**

Title: The environment in my words.

Objective: To recognize the need to find solutions for the environmental problems.

Materials: Students' notebooks.

Procedure: The students write sentences or a short paragraph using the words on the blackboard, explaining the need to solve the problems concerning environmental pollution by implementing the environmental protection.

Evaluation: written, the quality of the sentences or paragraph, mainly the content and the coherence and cohesion of the ideas.

### **Activity 4**

Title: Action after words.

Objective: To identify possible negative contributions to the environmental pollution in the classroom.

Materials: Anything within the classroom.



Procedure: The professor asks for two volunteers to perform a dialogue. One student should start contributing to the pollution of the environment in the classroom (for example, he or she could throw papers to the floor) and the other student should explain why his or her actions are wrong and how to make them right.

Evaluation: oral, the quality of the performance, the more it looks as a real situation the better the evaluation.

### **Activity 5**

Title: Environmental board.

Objective: To include in the classroom, in a permanent way, items related to the environmental protection.

Materials: Board, sheets of paper, posters, pictures, etc.

Procedure: Students should prepare an environmental board for the classroom.

Evaluation: self-evaluation of the contributions to the fulfillment of the activity.

### **Activity 6**

Title: The environment in my community.

Objective: To reflect on our role in the protection of the environment in our community.

Materials: sheets of paper, student's notebooks, etc.

Procedure: Students should write a report about the way they contribute to the environmental protection in their community, including both their neighborhood and their school and prepare to present the report to the class.

Evaluation: oral and written, using also a self-evaluation in which students will analyze themselves according to their behaviour in the community to contribute to the environmental protection.

### **Activity 7**

Title: Speech by a specialist.

Objective: To contribute to the formation of an environmental culture in the students.

Materials: Blackboard, chinks, etc.

Procedure: A specialist on the topic of environmental protection will be invited to the classroom to deliver a speech and then debate with the students about this topic.

Evaluation: oral, it is going to be evaluated through questions to get information about what they learned during the activity.

### **Activity 8**

Title: Taking care of the beaches.

Objective: To reflect on the importance of taking care of the resources in the community.

Materials: notebooks.

Procedure: Due to the importance of the beaches in the students' community because in Matanzas there are many beaches, students will go with the professor to the closest beach to school to help clean it of the garbage that is always abundant in these places, to write later a report about the way they felt with this contribution to the environment

Evaluation: written, with the quality of the report and also with the students participation in the cleaning task.

### **Activity 9**

Title: Songs for our thoughts

Objective: To sensitize the students about the consequences of war for the environment and mankind.

Materials: notebooks, recorder.

Procedure: Before you listen to the song try to predict what the words in the blank spaces should be. Then listen and compare what you wrote with the original version.

“Imagine” by John Lennon.

Imagine there's no Heaven  
It's easy if you try  
No hell below us  
Above us only sky  
Imagine all the people  
Living for today.

Imagine there's no countries  
It isn't hard to do  
Nothing to kill or die for  
And no religion too  
Imagine all the people  
Living life in peace.

You may say I'm a dreamer  
But I'm not the only one  
I hope some day you'll join us  
And the world'll be as one.

Imagine no possessions  
I wonder if you can  
No need to dream, no hunger  
A brotherhood of man  
Imagine all the people  
Sharing all the wealth, you could.

You may say I'm a dreamer  
But I'm not the only one  
I hope some day you'll join us  
And the world'll live as one.

Evaluation: oral.

### Activity 10

Title: Songs to make us think.

Objective: To reflect on the importance of contributing to the environmental protection

Materials: notebooks, recorder.

Procedure: Listen to the song and be ready to discuss what Lennon means when he says:

You may say I'm a dreamer

Evaluation: oral.

### **Activity 11**

Title: Environmental Project Work

Objective: To obtain a new dynamism in the classroom for students to become "protagonists of their own learning process", through participation, creativity and critic spirit.

1. What else can we do to protect the environment?
2. Fidel told FreiBetto what he used to do in this sense when he was young. Consult the book *Fidel and Religión* and find out. Write a list of the activities that Fidel mentions.
3. The Cuban government is very much concerned about the preservation of the environment. How do we know about this?
4. Draw an environmental poster to show your concern for the preservation of the environment.

Procedure.

Project development. Starting from a given topic, the student or a team research and elaborate a report to present to the group. This kind of activity propitiates discussion and debate through group dynamics.

The proposed topics help to foster a positive group atmosphere which is solidified from the participation and relations among its members. They allow: the increase of the self-esteem, maintain the group unity when students express themselves and exchange their ideas, opinions, values, feelings, and evaluate their personal experiences.

Evaluation:

7th grade Prepared oral report.

The presentation should be of about 4-5 sentences with cohesion and should last 15-30 seconds. Students can memorize the report and use notes, but they should try to speak naturally.

The presentation should include:

- Greetings to the audience and introduction of the student.
- 4-5 sentences about the topic.
- Answer to a simple question about the topic formulated by the professor.

Teachers can use this evaluation to assess the oral communication and students can use to evaluate themselves.

Note: As students have the opportunity to prepare, they should demonstrate a better level of correction a greater variety in the use of vocabulary than in spontaneous speech.

The scale is from 1 to 10 points.

Criteria 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

-Meaning is easily understood.

- Includes the required information

(4-5 sentences; 15-30 seconds)

-Talks with confidence and takes risks

-Uses the vocabulary and structures that have been practiced

-Reproduces the English pronunciation or gets close to it in most words.

-Speaks slowly making pauses at the end of the phrases

-If needed: Answers the questions of the professor.

### **1.3 EVALUATION OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS IN THE PRACTICE WITH THE APPLICATION OF THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATIVE ACTIVITIES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS, GROUP FOUR AT ANTONIO BERDAYES JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN MATANZAS PROVINCE.**

In order to analyze the results of the application of the system of educative activities the following aspect was analyzed: students identifying causes of environmental problems and the way to solve them. The observation of the students' behavior was the instrument used to determine the results of the application of the system of educative activities, related to concern for the environment at school, and promoting care for the environment at the school in other students. The analysis showed that they understood a lot better the importance of protecting the environment, acknowledging their contributions to the environmental protection.

Compared results obtained from the different methods. Aspects(%of students before) (% of students after)-Motivation towards the environmental education (14) (77) - Identifying causes of environmental problems and the way to solve them (14) (50)

Fulfillment of the indicators through the observation of the following dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral.

<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>
<b>Cognitive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Knowledge of the meaning of environment</li><li>➤ Knowledge of environmental education</li><li>➤ Knowledge of the causes of environmental pollution</li><li>➤ Knowledge of the ways to protect the environment</li></ul>
<b>Affective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Manifest love for the environment.</li><li>➤ Disposition and commitment towards the environmental activities.</li><li>➤ Consider as important the practice of the environmental protection.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Value the environmental protection.</li> </ul>
<b>Behavioral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Participate in a leading role in the environmental activities.</li> <li>➤ Manifest interests for these activities.</li> <li>➤ Analyze the importance of the environmental education.</li> </ul>

After the application of the system of educative activities the cognitive dimension is manifested in the fact that students know how to define the environment, what environmental education is, and they can mention causes of environmental pollution and ways to protect the environment. Concerning the affective dimension students manifested love for the environment in the activities and were committed to the environmental activities, they consider as important and value the practice of the environmental protection. Concerning the behavioral dimension students participated in the environmental activities, showing their interest for them while analyzing the importance of the environmental education.

## Conclusions:

After all the research carried out for this paper we can conclude the following:

1. The theoretical foundations propitiated the conceptual systematization of the theoretical referents related to the environment. In this sense it was assumed the main categories for the methodological foundation of the proposed system of educative activities.

2.The analysis of the current situation, starting from all the applied methods and instruments allowed to determine that there is a need to increase the environmental culture of the students to contribute to their preparation as members of society that behave in an environmentally responsible way.

3.The proposed system of educative activities starts from the methodological conceptualization, which includes principles, qualities, procedures and typology of exercises, to be applied in the English language subject in the seventh grade, group four at Antonio Berdayes Junior High School in Matanzas Province.

4. The application of the proposed system of activities contributed to the formation of an environmental culture and education, with the participation of the students, professors and communities to solve the environmental problems.



# Recommendations:

The author of this research paper recommends the application of the system of educative activities in other junior high schools.

The author also recommends continuing the research on this topic of environmental education because it is really helpful to face the problems human beings have nowadays.

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# Annexes:

## Annex 1. Survey to students:

Dear student: As a part of a research about the environmental education of students from our school we would like your cooperation answering the following questions. We need you to read carefully and to answer with honesty.

1. What is for you the environment?
2. Do you know some of the causes of the environmental pollution? If your answer is yes, can you mention them?
3. Do you know some of the possible solutions for these problems? If your answer is yes, can you mention them?
4. Do you consider that environmental education is important? Why?
5. Which activities does our school do to develop an environmental education in the students?
6. Do you know some of the main environmental problems in your community?
7. How could you contribute to solve the environmental problems in your community?

## ANNEX 2

### ENCUESTA A ESTUDIANTES DE 7mo GRADO DE LA SECUNDARIA BASICA ANTONIO BERDAYES NUÑES CERCA DE LAS ACTIVIDADES DESARROLLADAS A PARTIR DEL CONTENIDO MEDIO AMBIENTAL.

Estimados estudiantes esta encuesta está dirigida a contribuir al perfeccionamiento de la enseñanza aprendizaje de idioma inglés. Se le solicita que respondan las siguientes preguntas, marcando con cruz(x) las opiniones que se correspondan con sus criterios en relación con el material que se les entregó acerca de las actividades realizadas acerca de Medio Ambiente. Sus respuestas son de gran utilidad para lograr este empeño.

1. ¿En qué medida las actividades desarrolladas se corresponden con tus intereses y motivaciones por el cuidado del Medio Ambiente?

	Correspondencia de las actividades desarrolladas con tus intereses y motivaciones por el cuidado del Medio Ambiente se aprecian	Totalmente	parcialmente	No existe
1	Durante todo el programa se aprecia			
2	Casi en todas las unidades			
3	En algunas sesiones de las unidades			

2. ¿Cómo valoras las actividades ofrecidas sobre el tratamiento del Medio Ambiente?

Criterios	a)Muy interesantes	b)Interesantes	c)Poco interesantes
Los considero			

3. Valora los siguientes aspectos relacionados con las actividades realizadas en las clases de inglés.

Aspectos	Siempre	A veces	Nunca
a) Me resultaron interesantes			
b) Comprendía las orientaciones de los ejercicios			
c)Me ayudaron a participar en el aula			
d)Pude trabajar con mis compañeros			
e)Me quedaba con dudas en las clases			

f)Me permitieron profundizar y estudiar el idioma de manera independiente a partir del contenido medio ambiental			
g)Me permitieron expresar mis ideas en inglés sobre el cuidado del Medio Ambiente en las clases.			
h)Me ayudaron aprender idioma inglés			
i)Me motivaron a continuar el estudio del idioma a partir del cuidado del Medio Ambiente			

4. ¿Qué otras actividades te gustaría realizar en las clases de inglés a partir de temáticas relacionadas con el Medio ambiente?

#### MODELO PARA LA TABULACIÓN DE LOS DATOS DE LA ENCUESTA NO 2 APLICADA A LOS ESTUDIANTES

Criterios	totalmente			parcialmente			No existe			
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	
indicadores										
Total	28	0	0	0	28	28	28	0	0	0
Por ciento	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%

#### Preguntas 2 y 3

Preguntas	Valoración ¿? No2			Aspectos de la pregunta No 3									
				crit.	indicadores								
Indicador	a)	b)	c)		a)	b)	c)	d)	e)	f)	g)	h)	i)
Total 28	20	8		S	2	24	28	28		11	20	28	28
				%	7	85.7	100	100		39	71	100	100
				A v.	26	4			26	15	4		
Total				%	92.8				92.8	53	14		
Por ciento	71	29		N.					2	2	4		
				%					7	7	14		