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HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS AS A STRATEGY TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARGUMENTATIVE SKILLS IN THIRD-GRADE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN AT THE COLOMBO BRITÁNICO SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This analysis presents an educational proposal that utilizes hypothetical questions as a method to promote the development of argumentation skills in third-grade students at the Colegio Gimnasio Colombo Británico, located in Bogotá, Colombia. Given the pivotal role of schools in providing students with a comprehensive education, it is imperative to devise strategies that enhance their capacity to articulate, interrogate, and substantiate their perspectives in a coherent, rational, and substantiated manner. The research employs a qualitative approach, bolstered by quantitative support, adhering to a socio-critical paradigm and action research methodology. A variety of research methods were employed, including participant observation, interviews, and group discussions. These methods were complemented by the use of tools such as observation guides and questionnaires. The proposal was executed in the academic setting through an intervention that incorporated activities based on hypothetical inquiries, with the objective of fostering critical thinking, reflection, and argumentative dialogue. The findings suggest that this methodological approach contributes meaningfully to the development of students' oral and written argumentation skills, fostering heightened levels of active engagement in class and an enhancement of their intellectual autonomy. The investigation identified several obstacles, including the necessity of training teachers in question-formulation techniques and the importance of establishing a secure environment that fosters the uninhibited articulation of ideas. This analysis makes a significant contribution to the field of language education by offering a particular and adaptable instrument for use by elementary school educators. The instrument is centered on fostering the development of critical thinking from the initial stages of the educational process.

Keywords: *hypothetical question, argumentative competence, critical thinking, primary education, teaching strategy, language teaching.*

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary educational settings, the cultivation of critical thinking and argumentation skills among students has emerged as a pivotal imperative. These competencies empower students to articulate their ideas with clarity, to assess divergent viewpoints, to reach informed conclusions, and to engage proactively in a multifaceted and democratic community. In particular, the incorporation of argumentation instruction from the earliest stages of education has been demonstrated to foster the development of citizens who exhibit qualities such as critical thinking, reflection, and environmental engagement (Kuhn, 1991; Toulmin, 1958).

The role of educational institutions, therefore, extends beyond the mere transmission of information. Rather, they should focus on cultivating individuals who are capable of engaging with knowledge, generating meaning, engaging in debate, and substantiating their points of view. However, it has been observed that numerous pedagogical approaches persist in emphasizing memorization and rote repetition of material, thereby neglecting to foster the development of argumentation abilities (Coll and Onrubia, 2001; González and López, 2017).

A multitude of studies have demonstrated that primary school students encounter significant challenges in formulating arguments, substantiating their perspectives, or rebutting divergent viewpoints, even in the presence of proficient reading and writing abilities (Martínez et al., 2019; Montoya, 2018). This reality underscores the pressing need to reevaluate pedagogical approaches in educational settings, with the objective of fostering more dialogic and critical learning environments.

In this context, the employment of hypothetical inquiries serves as a valuable pedagogical instrument, capable of stimulating argumentative processes. The provision of possible and provocative scenarios has been demonstrated to encourage students to engage in critical thinking and to develop counterarguments, thereby fostering creativity (Paul and Elder, 2006; Pérez and Rodríguez, 2020).

The objective of this research is to analyze the potential of hypothetical questions to enhance argumentative skills in third-grade students at the Colegio Gimnasio Colombo Británico, an institution located in Bogotá, Colombia. The present study was predicated on an educational proposal that was integrated with an action research methodology. The objective of this initiative was to design, implement, and evaluate a series of activities centered on hypothetical questions.

The selection of this methodological approach is congruent with the necessity to transform teaching practice from a reflective, collaborative, and context-adapted perspective. The socio-critical paradigm that guides this research considers the classroom as a space for social interaction in which knowledge is constructed collectively and in which the voice of students should play a central role.

The fundamental issue that this research question focuses on is as follows: The following inquiry is posited: What is the efficacy of the utilization of hypothetical inquiries as a pedagogical technique to enhance argumentation skills in primary school students? This inquiry emerges from the observation of a dearth of argumentative participation in the classroom setting, a waning capacity to substantiate thoughts, and an absence of space dedicated to debate and reflection.

De Zubiría (2006) posits that arguments are fundamental to human existence, as they facilitate the exploration and evaluation of diverse options to select the most suitable one. Argumentation can be regarded as a distinctive form of interaction. Consequently, schools should ideally serve as the crucible for nurturing these competencies, fostering discourse, deliberation, and decision-making processes grounded in sound reasoning.

The findings of this research indicate that many students exhibit a deficiency in confidence, reticence, and an absence of autonomy in articulating their ideas. These barriers become more evident in contexts where teaching strategies do not effectively encourage students to engage in critical thinking or establish an environment conducive to open dialogue.

From a skills perspective, the act of arguing entails more than simply "giving an opinion." It involves the substantiation of that opinion through reasoning, evidence, and justification. As Rojas and Peón (2004) have noted, the act of arguing can be defined as "an act of offering reasons and challenging an opinion or confronting conclusions." Consequently, this research posits that questioning serves as a catalyst for complex and meaningful cognitive processes.

Furthermore, Candela (1991) emphasizes that argumentative interventions activate prior knowledge and connect it to new experiences, resulting in deeper learning. Integrating

hypothetical questions into the classroom environment has been identified as a strategy that can effectively encourage analysis, reasoned questioning, and the adoption of informed positions by students.

The significance of this proposal lies in its potential to transform the role of the teacher into that of a facilitator of critical and argumentative thinking. The objective of education is not merely to verify answers, but rather to encourage the formulation of significant inquiries that stimulate children's cognitive processes and facilitate the development of both individual and collective interpretations.

From a theoretical perspective, this research draws on the contributions of authors such as Scriven and Paul (1992), who characterize critical thinking as a systematic process of actively and reflectively conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, and evaluating information. This theoretical framework is further substantiated by research emphasizing the significance of discursive practices in the development of logical reasoning (Osborne, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978).

Consequently, this proposal aims not only to validate a novel educational approach but also to contribute to the academic discourse on the necessity to reevaluate the curriculum and teaching methodologies to ensure the comprehensive development of students. The ability to articulate a cogent argument is arguably one of the most critical competencies in modern education. Thus, the general objective is established in the following terms: conduct an intervention study to determine the extent to which exposure to hypothetical questions in primary school classrooms affects argumentation skills, and the specific objectives are:

1. Diagnose the level of development of argumentative skills in third-grade students at the Colegio Gimnasio Colombo Británico through classroom observations and analysis of oral and written productions.
2. Design a pedagogical proposal based on the use of hypothetical questions as a teaching strategy to promote critical thinking and argumentation in the primary classroom.
3. Implement the pedagogical proposal in real classroom contexts through activities that promote the formulation, analysis, and discussion of hypothetical questions among students.
4. Evaluate the effects of the teaching strategy on the strengthening of argumentation skills, based on a comparative analysis of performance before and after the intervention.
5. Reflect on the impact of the intervention on teaching practice, identifying achievements, limitations, and possibilities for improvement for future applications in similar contexts.

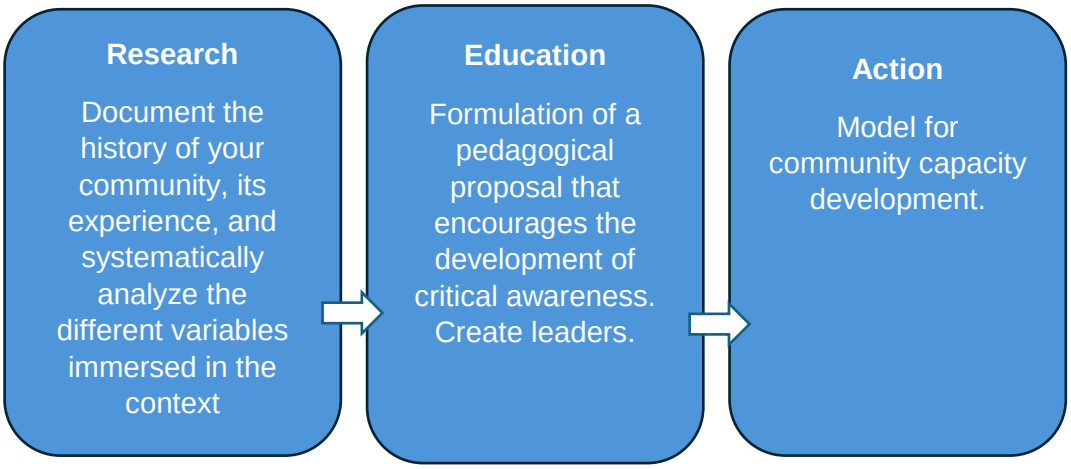
METHODOLOGY

The study is situated within the domain of Language Teaching, with the objective of addressing the methodological and pedagogical-conceptual criteria that are specific to the teaching-learning processes of Spanish in the third grade of primary school. The development of the processes associated with this research is predicated on a qualitative research approach, an introspective experiential epistemological approach, a socio-critical paradigm, and a participatory action research (PAR) method.

According to Belalcazar (2003), from an ideological perspective, participatory action research (PIA) symbolizes convictions about the role of the social scientist in society, the

reduction of injustice in society, the promotion of community members' involvement in the search for answers to their personal problems, and support for community members to increase the level of control they have over significant aspects of their lives (greater power or empowerment). Finally, it is imperative to acknowledge that PAI furnishes a tangible framework for engaging community or group members in the research process in a non-traditional manner, as agents of change rather than subjects of study. Figure 2 delineates the fundamental activities of PAI.

Figure 1.
Key activities of the IAP.



Research design

The study aspires to contribute to the teaching and learning processes in the educational context from the perspectives of pedagogy and didactics. Conversely, the research approach employed in this study is of a mixed nature. According to Hernández, Méndez, and Mendoza (2014), this methodological design promotes the systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative data. The objective of this integration is to obtain a more complete record or snapshot of a particular phenomenon.

According to the postulates of Núñez Moscoso (2017), the present study offers a more complete and structured view of the phenomenon under study, and it possesses characteristics that render it more suitable for this research. Initially, they formulate structured research questions, which will be addressed as the research progresses. In order to accomplish this objective, it is necessary to integrate tools, techniques, and instruments that are derived from qualitative and quantitative approaches.

This phenomenon is referred to as:

This process entails the collection, analysis, and integration of quantitative and qualitative data within a unified study or a series of studies, with the objective of formulating a response to a specific inquiry. It is imperative to justify the utilization of this approach within the study, taking into account the inherent intertwining of both quantitative and qualitative methods across the majority of its phases. This intertwining renders it advisable to amalgamate these methods, thereby facilitating the acquisition of information that enables triangulation. This process of triangulation facilitates the identification of

diverse pathways and the attainment of a comprehensive understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation (Ruiz, 2013, p. 33).

This integration must be carried out in an organized manner and in accordance with the general objectives of the research, seeking to enrich knowledge about the phenomenon under study. Consequently, the mixed approach entails not only the collection of information through varied methods but also entails profound interpretation of the phenomenon under study from both qualitative and quantitative standpoints, with an understanding of how the characteristics of each approach affect the problem. Therefore, in order for a research question to align with a mixed research method, it is essential that the problem be posed in a manner informed by both qualitative and quantitative understanding.

Guilmes and Nieto's (2015) mixed research approach facilitates the comprehension of qualitative elements in conjunction with quantitative ones, thereby elucidating the reciprocal influence between images, words, opinions, and feelings on numerical data and vice versa. Therefore, the strengths of one approach can be utilized to compensate for the weaknesses of the other, thereby yielding more accurate results and a nuanced perspective on the study's conclusions.

In this sense, the adoption of the ADDIE instructional model (analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation) entailed the construction of quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments based on the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation phases of the pedagogical intervention proposal. The research method employed was of an experimental nature, a choice that was guided by the method's recognized flexibility. This characteristic is believed to have facilitated an in-depth exploration of a research topic or problem that had received limited attention within the context of the study. According to Rodríguez (2011), experimentation is the technique that facilitates the identification of causal links between events or phenomena in reality with maximum confidence.

Consequently, it signifies the pinnacle of scientific inquiry. In summary, experimentation is distinguished by the instigation of the phenomenon under study, the alteration of variables, the management of the experimental context, and the application of comparison. The author further emphasizes that the experimental research method commences with the formulation of the problem and the identification of the variables involved. These variables are then manipulated to ascertain the alterations that transpire, thereby facilitating the attainment of precise conclusions regarding the observations made.

As delineated by Guevara, Verdesoto, and Castro (2020), the characteristics of the experimental method are as follows:

- Intentional and systematic manipulation of variables, i.e., the researcher recognizes which variable to manipulate and establishes how to do so. This is determined based on the formulation of the research problem and the general and specific objectives of the study. From this point on, the researcher must establish which variable to manipulate.
- Detailed observation of the consequences: once the variable has been manipulated by the researcher, a reaction of the dependent variable occurs, so the researcher must observe the reaction and establish whether it complies with the initial hypothesis or not.

- Use of inferential statistics: to establish the results more objectively, statistics will be used to make generalizations about the results obtained. The data found must be subjected to a process of statistical interpretation.
- The correct application of the experimental method in research has positive effects:
- It gives researchers greater control over the variables to obtain the desired results.
- The subject or industry is not a criterion for experimental research because any industry can implement it for research purposes.
- The results are quite specific (Morales, 2009).
- The cause and effect of a hypothesis allows researchers to analyze greater details.
- It can be used in conjunction with other research methods (Guevara, Verdesoto & Castro, 2020, p. 166).

In this case, the development of teaching proposals for the enhancement of foreign language skills has been a topic that has received scant attention from the study community, particularly with regard to listening comprehension, as this is one of the most challenging skills to master. After defining the research problem and its associated research questions, the subsequent step in the scientific method is to establish hypotheses and determine the objectives of the study.

This theoretical framework forms the foundation for the design of our experimental methodology, which aims to delineate the variables to be considered in the research study. It also encompasses the methods for controlling and measuring these variables, the procedures for filtering and processing the data collected, and the analytical approaches that will be employed to interpret the data within the context of our theoretical framework. The subsequent presentation will delineate the phases of the research according to the ADDIE instructional design. This design enabled the development of the intervention proposal as a teaching alternative to address the problem situation. A substantial corpus of literature has been dedicated to the ADDIE model (see, for example, Dick, Carey, and Carey, 2001; Morrison et al., 2010). The following section delineates the fundamental components of the ADDIE instructional model.

Analysis: The objective of this stage was to ascertain the educational needs of the students through the administration of diagnostic tests. A comprehensive analysis of the target group's characteristics, their environment, and the educational curriculum was conducted. This analysis enabled the comprehension of the context and the identification of the argumentation skills gaps that the proposal aimed to address.

- **Design:** Based on the results of the analysis, learning objectives were formulated to guide the rest of the process. Activities, teaching resources, and content were designed in line with these objectives. This phase was essential for drawing up a coherent intervention plan focused on the educational reality identified.
- **Development:** In this phase, the materials, resources, and planned activities were created. Decisions were made about the teaching methods to be used (textual, audiovisual, etc.) and the implementation process was structured, considering time frames, dynamics, and interim evaluation methods.
- **Implementation:** The pedagogical proposal was implemented in the classroom, involving both teachers and students. The designed activities were carried out, seeking to generate a participatory and motivating environment that would facilitate the collective construction of argumentative knowledge.

- **Evaluation:** This stage was crosscutting throughout the process and was integrated both formatively and summatively. Throughout each phase, partial results were evaluated to adjust, and at the end, an overall evaluation of the proposal was carried out to determine its effects on the development of argumentative skills. Achievements, difficulties, and opportunities for improvement were identified for future implementations.

Population and sample

The study population comprised students and teachers at the Colegio Gimnasio Colombo Británico, a school located on the southwestern side of Bogotá, Colombia. According to institutional data from 2024, the school has a total enrollment of approximately 1,300 students, ranging in age from 3 to 18 years old, distributed in groups of approximately 25 students per grade. Similarly, the institution boasts a teaching staff of 150 members, which establishes an estimated ratio of 1 teacher for every 8 students.

The selection of the sample was determined by intentional sampling, as defined by Hernández Sampieri, Collado, and Baptista Lucio (2014) as the selection of cases that, in the researcher's opinion, offer the most relevant or representative information for the purposes of the study. In accordance with this criterion, three groups from the third grade of primary school were selected, with each group comprising 25 students, yielding a total of 75 participants.

The decision to enroll third-grade students was informed by a multifaceted consideration of pedagogical and psychological principles. The students, aged between 9 and 10, are at a critical stage in cognitive development, marked by the emergence of concrete operations, as proposed by Piaget (1984). During this stage, children begin to organize their thinking in a more logical and structured way, which allows them to formulate more complex ideas and progressively develop argumentative skills.

Furthermore, this developmental stage marks a pivotal period for cultivating critical thinking, creativity, and the capacity to substantiate one's reasoning through methods such as posing hypothetical inquiries. Consequently, the utilization of this sample enables the observation of the enhancement of these competencies through specific pedagogical interventions, as well as the initiation of the construction of more stable and reflective arguments by students of this age.

Research tools

As part of the needs analysis process within the ADDIE model, an entry diagnostic test was administered. This test was specifically designed to assess the level of development of argumentative skills in third-grade elementary school students. The instrument in question comprised a series of five open-ended inquiries, designed to encourage reflection, position-taking, and the substantiation of ideas by students.

The inquiries posed to students entailed the conceptualization of hypothetical scenarios, such as: The following inquiries were posed to the subjects: If they were to choose to be an animal for a day, which animal would they select and for what reason? If they were to have the ability to change one thing about the world they live in, what would it be and why? If they were to have the ability to grant one wish to a family member, what would it be and why?

The objective of the study was to elicit reasoned responses that would facilitate the evaluation of various aspects, including creativity, conceptual depth, clarity of justification, and logical reasoning skills.

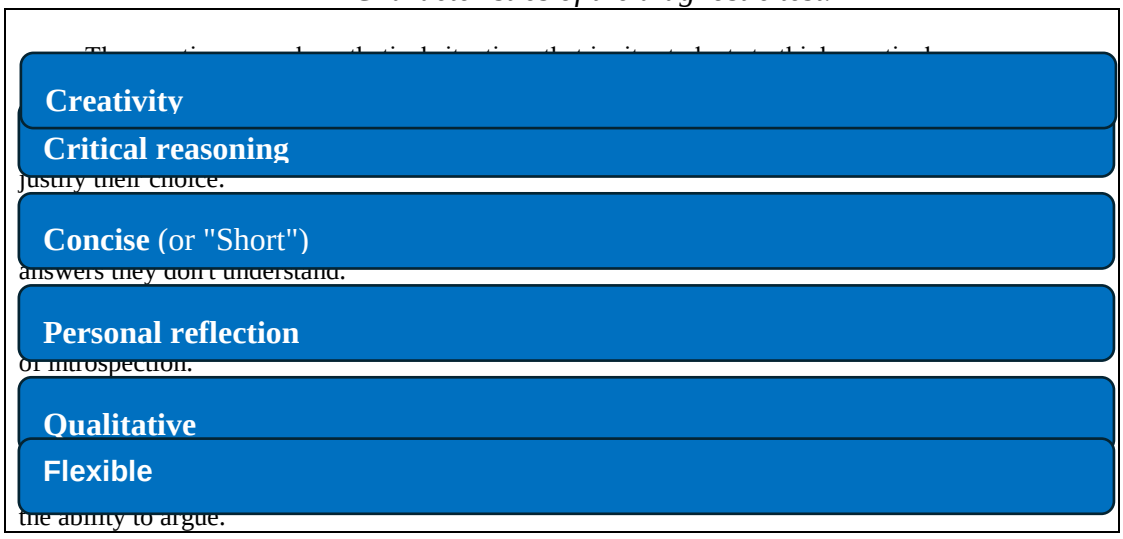
The responses were then subjected to a rigorous analysis using an evaluation rubric that was structured into four distinct performance levels: low, basic, high, and superior. The rubric under consideration encompassed a range of indicators, including the utilization of clear arguments, analytical prowess, creativity, textual coherence, and the legibility of written composition. The rubric enabled the evaluation of both the substances, defined as the argumentative content, and the form, defined as the structure and presentation, of each response.

Furthermore, the responses were methodically categorized according to predetermined criteria, including creativity, difficulty, ease of response, contextualization, and applicability. These categories were meticulously represented in tables and figures within the final report.

This categorization enabled the correlation of argumentative skills with students' ability to project themselves into hypothetical scenarios and propose alternative solutions.

The findings indicated that the majority of students demonstrated proficiency at the elementary level, thereby substantiating the necessity to devise and execute a pedagogical initiative aimed at enhancing these competencies. In general terms, the instrument proved effective in diagnosing specific argumentative weaknesses and guiding subsequent pedagogical actions.

Figure 2.
Characteristics of the diagnostic test.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to examine how the introduction of creative inquiries influences the development of argumentation skills in third-grade students at a private school in Bogotá. The significance of this research lies in its underscoring of the critical role that argumentation skills play in facilitating meaningful learning. Confrontation and discussion of opposing ideas among students has been demonstrated to enhance their comprehension of the subject matter (Larraín, Freire, & Olivos, 2014). The capacity to argue is critical to

cultivating critical thinking in education, largely due to the role that argumentative discourse plays both within and outside the classroom.

This research addresses the need to improve the skills that align with the current demands of educational discourse. It does so by helping to reduce inequalities in effective communication and by promoting the comprehensive development of students. The proposal's versatility is evident in its adaptability to diverse educational settings, facilitating comprehension across various disciplines. Notably, its integration into teaching methodologies enhances the development of scientific literacy and critical thinking skills, making it a valuable resource for educators seeking to promote informed decision-making and engaged learning.

In this context, open-ended and creative inquiries are regarded as efficacious pedagogical instruments that galvanize children's innate curiosity, empowering them to articulate their contemplations, concepts, and sentiments, and to contemplate their surroundings. This pedagogical approach fosters critical thinking and promotes more profound and meaningful learning.

Through the act of observing their environment, children generate ideas that, when articulated through the medium of appropriate questions, can be expressed and shared. The implementation of this strategy in the domestic or educational environment necessitates the establishment of open and unrestricted environments conducive to dialogue, wherein students feel at ease sharing their ideas and actively engaging in their learning process.

For instance, transforming a closed question, such as "Do you like the lentils today?" into an open question, such as "What could be added to the lentils to make them taste better?" encourages children to think creatively and formulate original answers, such as "some chocolate" or "eating them on the sofa while watching videos on my phone." While these responses may appear unconventional, they are indicative of children's capacity to conceptualize and investigate novel prospects, thereby fostering their creativity and inquisitiveness.

This type of interaction is essential for the development of argumentation skills in third-grade students. It allows them to construct and communicate their ideas in a logical and reasonable manner. This prepares them to face the challenges of communication in their daily lives.

Table 1.
Information gathering matrix

Problem	Objectives	Techniques and instruments	Source of Collection
How can we promote the development of oral argumentation skills through questioning as a teaching strategy for language teachers in the third grade at Gimnasio Colombo Británico?	Identify the strategies used by teachers to promote the development of oral argumentation skills.	Interview 1	Teacher
		Direct observation with field journal	Teacher and students
	Identify weaknesses in third-grade students' oral argumentation skills and the factors that influence their development.	Interview 2	Teacher
		Diagnostic workshop	Students

Analysis of Results from the First Interview and Field Diary

Results obtained in interview No. 1 with the Spanish language teacher. Teacher: Dora Umaña.

Date: Tuesday, August 15, 2023

Objective: Identify the strategies used by teachers to promote the development of oral argumentation skills.

1. What activities have you implemented to promote analytical and interpretive skills in your students?

"We have designed and implemented reading and writing projects, reading stories, novels, and news articles according to educational interests, where students recount or reproduce their own interpretations orally. Other activities include telling anecdotes, stories, and movies of their choice."

2. Do you provide opportunities for the development of oral argumentation skills? Yes/No

Please explain briefly.
“Yes, spaces are provided for developing argumentation skills, as there are direct discussions about 'why things are the way they are' or situations where students explain in their own words their interpretation or knowledge of what they have learned. There are also spaces created for making or forming oral arguments in different leadership scenarios, such as the school government or representing their grade in student council events. Furthermore, this is not only done in the language area but involves different areas to develop not only this skill but also different language skills.”
3. Do you consider the needs and interests of students when developing your lesson plans?
”Of course, if we want our classes to be engaging, we must take into account the needs and interests of students in order to come up with lesson plans that appeal to them.”
4. How do you motivate your students to participate orally in class?
"We motivate them with applause, congratulations, and setting an example for their classmates. We highlight their individual strengths and opportunities for improvement in the processes developed.”
5. Considering the resources provided by the school, what kind of teaching materials do you use to promote the development of oral argumentation skills?
"We have two computer rooms and a large library. We try to make use of them as much as possible.”
6. Do you provide spaces that allow for interaction in the classroom: teacher-student, student-student, student-teacher? How do you do this?
"The spaces provided in the classroom that allow for teacher-student interaction are: oral motivation stimuli for those who ask questions, for those who socialize an idea or present suggested topics; for student-student interaction, there are: round tables, small forums, dialogues, debates, promoting leadership, democracy, and respect for the use of speech; for teacher-student interaction, this is done through motivation and personal conversation, oral tests of knowledge and interpretation."
7. What activities do you carry out so that your students can persuade, convince, and manipulate?
“The activities promoted to persuade, convince, and manipulate are student forums, where proposals for personal improvement and strengthening of civic skills are presented, advised and motivated by the teacher."
8. Oral expression is also an important part of the development of oral argumentation skills. What do you do to improve this skill?
“We develop presentations on suggested topics in the area, leadership in group work, stories, fables, anecdotes, and dramatizations, which are used in a kind of contest, and the best ones are presented at literary events scheduled by the institution."
9. Do you promote research spaces where students can explore and acquire the information necessary to create and defend their arguments? Which ones?
“Use of the library and internet research.“
10. How do you strengthen your students' self-esteem?
”Self-esteem is strengthened through personal motivation, praising their values, abilities, skills, and talents in the outcome of a process.”
11. What activities have you developed to help your students acquire new vocabulary?
“Working on reading, as well as writing narratives or descriptions, underlining repeated words and replacing them with synonyms, and looking up the meaning of unknown words.”

12. When asking questions, do you give your students space to justify their answers, or do you only ask close questions?
“Different types of questions are used or asked, such as argumentative, interpretative, and propositional questions, depending on the class topic and the knowledge to be developed."
13. How do you manage interdisciplinarity in the Spanish language area? ”The Spanish language area is the fundamental axis from which
involve different areas of knowledge, such as math, computer science, natural sciences, social sciences, ethics, and values. A single purpose is set, and work is done from different areas."
14. How do you handle cross-circularity in Spanish language arts?
“Citizenship skills are fostered through motivation and academic stimulation to encourage respect for physical and moral integrity, respect for the use of words, and their expressive form to give or ask for favors.

In addition, agreements are made between students in order to achieve healthy coexistence and peaceful conflict resolution based on values such as respect, tolerance, and cooperation.”

Table 2.
Field diary

Field journal **Observations of classroom life**	**Teacher in the Spanish Language Department**
Name of observer (researcher): Karime	
Date: August 18, 2023	
Location: GCB	
Grade: 3E Start time: 7:45 AM End time: 8:35 AM	
Activity or topic to be observed: Spanish language class	
Objective: To observe the development of the Spanish language class and identify the strategies that the teacher uses to develop oral argumentation skills and the shortcomings that students show in this area.	
Observation no. 1 After the interview, direct observation was carried out in the classroom in order to corroborate what was mentioned in the interview. The class is conducted according to a planned agenda. The students are studying myths and legends and begin to make a comparative table of the characteristics, similarities, and differences between the two, writing in their notebooks and keeping a record. The teacher asks some questions related to the characteristics of myths and legends, some students participate, and thus the process of understanding the topic is verified. It would be valid to open a space to further strengthen the argumentative skills related to the topic so that they can work on their comments related to the topic covered.	Comments and reflections Prior to the observation, we spoke directly with the teacher in charge of grade 3E, Ms. Dora Umaña. We also spoke with the students, who were interested in the questions and the observation.

Table 3 presents the analysis of the information obtained from interview No. 1 with the Spanish language teacher and the observation recorded in the field diary.

Table 3.
Analysis of interview 1 and field diary

	Results obtained			
	Aspects evaluated	**Interview**	**Observation**	**Conclusion**
1	Carries out activities involving analysis and interpretation.	According to the teacher, if these types of activities are developed, including reading and writing workshops, reading stories, novels, news, telling anecdotes, stories, and watching movies.	The observation reveals that storytelling is used; however, it was not interpretative in nature, nor did it involve a process of in-depth analysis.	The teacher tries to include interpretive texts in her class, but she is unaware of tools that can be used to facilitate the analysis process.
2	Provides opportunities for developing oral argumentation skills.	The teacher mentions that, if he promotes spaces for the development of oral argumentation skills through discussions and leadership scenarios such as participation in the school government.	It was observed that, out of 25 students, 3 actively participate and are the leaders of the group, while the remaining students prefer to remain silent.	The low level of student participation limits the development of oral argumentation skills. Students are not motivated to participate, even though the teacher provides opportunities for them to exchange ideas.
3	Activities carried out to persuade, convince, manipulate.	The teacher returns to the forums as the means for developing these skills.	It should be noted that the teacher does not include forums as part of their lessons in their lesson plans.	The teacher wants to use forums as spaces to develop oral skills, but they are not included in her lesson plan, which limits their effect on students, since they are not included as a systematic process but as an additional activity.
4	How oral expression works in students.	The interview indicates that oral expression is developed through presentations,	However, observation shows that, even if myth and legend are explored, the teacher does not	The teacher does not have the tools to promote oral expression. There is no effective feedback on the

		group work, stories, fables, anecdotes, and role-playing.	make any suggestions to the student when she presents her story. It should be noted that this was more a reading of a written text than an oral expression.	process, so the student assumes that they did the exercise correctly even though they only read it aloud.
5	Promotes research spaces for finding information to create clear arguments.	The teacher insists that research spaces are available in the computer room and the library.	It was mentioned earlier that the use of these resources is limited and that no other alternative spaces are being sought.	The teacher does not encourage active research by students. Furthermore, she limits it to theoretical aspects and information that has already been prepared, meaning that she does not give students space to carry out their own investigations.
6	Strengthening self-esteem	The teacher affirms that self-esteem is stimulated through personal motivation and praise for the values, abilities, and skills of the students.	The facts mentioned by the teacher are not demonstrated in the observation, given that he does not mention them at any time, either before or after the student participates.	The teacher lacks the tools to effectively praise her students. As a result, she chooses not to praise them or boost their self-esteem in other ways.
7	Develop activities for acquiring new vocabulary.	Reading, writing stories or descriptions, underlining repeated words and replacing them with synonyms, and looking up unfamiliar words are the activities that teachers use to increase vocabulary.	Observation shows that students do not consult their dictionaries; in fact, many of them do not even own one. Furthermore, the teacher does not check the children's writing and makes them participate without having made any corrections beforehand.	The school environment appears exhausted and demotivated. The relationship between the teacher and her students is ineffective, and the children lack basic learning tools despite having the means to acquire them. The teacher does not effectively review the children's writing, which

				further demotivates them.
8	Type of questions asked.		Argumentative, interpretative, and propositional questions are asked, but in the class observed, the questions asked do not require much effort on the part of the student when answering why they liked the story. The teacher does not use the questions to guide the discussion or to elicit more information from the students.	The questions asked by the teacher are simple, she does not give students space to present their own arguments, and she resorts to simple questions, which do not encourage argumentation or critical thinking. Mental skills cannot be developed and strengthened through questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no.
9	Management of cross-cutting issues.	The teacher states that he works on civic skills to promote healthy coexistence.	This is not reflected in the classroom, as students display a high level of indiscipline and disrespect for their classmates, which is evident in the teasing and rude comments they make to each other.	The teacher does not have the tools to reinforce positive behavior. Students frequently disrespect each other and do not interact in a healthy manner. The teacher does not mediate between them to resolve these situations.
10	Handling interdisciplinarity	It is the fundamental axis for integrating different areas of knowledge. He adds that it is possible to work together when designing a purpose that can be worked on from these subjects.	It should be noted that the teacher teaches Spanish in second grade and a third-grade course, which may facilitate the development of the topic in question.	Tools need to be strengthened to enable teachers to effectively integrate different types of knowledge into Spanish classes. Promoting the integration of this knowledge encourages reflection and critical thinking on different topics.

Table 4 below shows the categorization of the results of interview No. 1 and the field diary.

Table 4.
Categorization of results from interview 1 and field diary.

Categorization table

Objective	Findings from the interview and observation	Recommendations
Identify the strategies used by teachers to promote the development of oral argumentation skills.	Analytical and interpretive activities Opportunities to develop oral argumentation skills Relevance to students' interests and needs Motivation to participate in class Use of teaching resources to strengthen oral argumentation skills Opportunities for interaction Activities involving persuading, convincing, and manipulating. Oral expression. Opportunities for research to acquire information that helps create valid arguments. Strengthening self-esteem. Workshops to increase vocabulary.	Increase the use of debates and simulations to reinforce analytical and interpretive activities. Expand spaces for discussion, such as dialogue circles or collaborative projects. Design personalized activities based on students' individual interests and needs. Use gamified strategies to increase motivation in class. Invest in more audiovisual resources to support teaching. Organize activities that involve controversial topics to encourage persuasion and conviction. Implement frequent oral expression exercises in everyday activities. Introduce simple research projects tailored to the level of the group. Hold emotional support sessions to boost students' confidence. Incorporate word games and practical exercises to improve vocabulary.

Analysis of Classroom Interactions

A survey was conducted with the teacher and classroom observation. The results indicated that the teacher endeavors to cultivate students' analytical and interpretive competencies through reading and writing workshops, as well as the reading of stories, novels, and news articles. However, the students exhibit no indications of having developed these skills, as they provide only brief responses devoid of substantiation. The pedagogy employed by the instructor is not conducive to interaction among students. The classroom is teacher-centered, and students adopt a passive role, which does not contribute to enriching the learning experience.

Consequently, two conclusions can be derived from this analysis. First, it is imperative to acknowledge the absence of skills such as dialogue and interaction, which are pivotal to cultivating critical thinking at all levels of education, within third-grade classrooms. In this regard, it is noteworthy to consider the perspective of a contemporary figure in education,

Vygotsky (1981), who advocates for the promotion of interaction among children to facilitate meaningful learning experiences. The author posits that the development of learning is contingent upon the augmentation of social interaction.

In a similar vein, drawing upon the concepts propounded by Vygotsky (1981), the emphasis is placed on the role of other members of the social group as intermediaries between culture and the individual.

The deliberate intervention of other members of the culture in children's learning is essential to the process of child development. The institution of learning, as the agent responsible for cultivating literate societies, assumes a distinctive role in the process of fostering the comprehensive development of the constituents of these societies (Carrera & Mazzarella, 2001, p. 44).

Consequently, strategies that facilitate interaction among students are imperative for achieving meaningful learning outcomes. Conversely, literacy strategies have been found to be ineffective, as evidenced by students' reluctance to engage with new material due to a lack of motivation. In this regard, Ospina Rodríguez (2006) posits that motivation is a critical element in the learning process. It is indisputable that in the absence of motivation, students encounter significant challenges in acquiring knowledge. Motivation is not invariably absent; at times, a discrepancy emerges between the motivations of the teacher and those of the students. Alternatively, the students may be unmotivated due to their lack of learning, which engenders a detrimental cycle.

This may be attributed to the educator's failure to adhere to the commitments made during the interview, opting instead to propose activities that are not adequately challenging for the students. Furthermore, it should be noted that the activities do not encompass argumentative, interpretative, and propositional inquiries, which are also referenced in the interview. In the context of students' argumentative skills and their capacity for analysis and interpretation, it is imperative to design activities that align with different cognitive levels, as proposed by Bloom (1956), who differentiated cognitive development into hierarchical stages.

In this regard, the research conducted by Kumara, Brahmana, & Paik (2019) offers a valuable insight into the nature of the questions asked, as evidenced by the verbs employed. The inquiries posed by the instructor align with the literal interpretation of the text or content reviewed and analyzed, thereby fostering and promoting the development of skills related to memorization and repetition of facts, as opposed to more advanced skills characterized by Bloom's taxonomy. The subsequent illustrations demonstrate how the teacher tends to pose literal inquiries that do not necessitate a process of in-depth analysis or adequate understanding of the situation. Table 5 presents an overview of the various question types and their respective levels of analysis.

Table 5.
Nature of questions and level of analysis.

	Example question used by the teacher	**Analytical question**	**Propositional question**	**Interpretative question**
	What happened in history?	Why do you think the character made	What would you have done in that	What message do you think the author

		that decision? Justify your answer with examples from the text.	situation? Explain the consequences of your choice.	wanted to convey with this story?
Nature	**Literal**	**Analytics**	**Proactive**	**Interpretive**
Objective	These questions focus on basic knowledge. They aim to get students to recall or reproduce information that is directly available in text, material, or situation.	Analytical questions invite you to break down information into parts to understand its components, relationships, or how it works. They involve critical thinking and a deeper exploration of the material.	They focus on generating new ideas, solutions, or alternatives. They require students to apply their knowledge and skills to create or plan something new.	They seek to have students give deeper or more personal meaning to content by connecting it to prior experiences, values, or external contexts. They require reflective thinking and contextual understanding.
Skills developed	Memorization Information retention Basic comprehension Attention to detail Vocabulary recognition	Critical thinking Decoding information Comparison Logical evaluation	Creativity Problem solving Innovative thinking Ability to create Assertive decision-making according to context	Understand Evaluate Reflect Infer Deep understanding Judgment formation Empathy and understanding different perspectives
Level (Bloom, 1956)	Low and basic	Intermediate	High	High

Consequently, it can be observed that the inquiries posed by the instructor typically fall within the lower echelons of Bloom's taxonomy (1956), as they are oriented towards a cursory comprehension of the subject matter, often achieved through memorization. Conversely, the teacher asserts that she fosters environments conducive to the development of oral argumentation skills, such as leadership scenarios and discussions. However, the results of this research did not support the presence of such evidence.

Conversely, the utilization of these information-gathering tools has facilitated the discernment of the teacher's intent to align her lesson plan with the interests and needs of the students. The incorporation of student preferences into the classroom environment has been demonstrated to facilitate both the conventional progression of the class and the educational process. It is noteworthy that the teacher has demonstrated a commendable initiative in prioritizing the student's preferences while maintaining adherence to the prescribed subject matter.

Furthermore, classroom interaction is imperative for the cultivation of oral argumentation skills, manifesting interactions between teacher and student, student and student, and teacher and student. These spaces are characterized by a limitation in participation, with the teacher speaking and the student listening, thereby indicating the

utilization of a conventional teaching method. While students do engage in this practice, it is not voluntary and occurs only in response to direct instruction from their peers or instructors.

In conventional educational settings, students typically assume a passive role during classroom activities. This dynamic is further entrenched by educators who often adopt a authoritative stance to maintain order and discipline. The following table offers a concise synopsis of the observed interactions between students and teachers in the classroom setting.

Table 6.
Characterization of teacher-student interaction within the classroom.

Aspect	Description	Analysis	Recommendations	Potential impact
Level of questions generated by the teacher	The questions correspond to a low level of analysis according to Bloom's classification (1956), focusing on memorization and superficial understanding of the content.	Low-level questions do not promote the development of argumentative skills or critical thinking skills.	Design questions that cover intermediate and high levels of Bloom's taxonomy, such as analysis, evaluation, and creation.	Students will develop critical, analytical, and argumentative skills, improving their logical reasoning abilities
Promotion of argumentative skills	Although the teacher mentions promoting argumentative skills through spaces such as leadership and discussions, this was not evident in practice.	There is a disconnect between teachers' intentions and the activities implemented, limiting the development of these skills.	Implement regular opportunities such as debates, argumentation workshops, or simulations to encourage oral argumentation.	Improved ability of students to persuade, justify ideas, and actively participate in discussions.
Adaptation to interests and needs	The teacher tries to link the lesson plan to the interests and tastes of the students, which promotes the normal development of the class and learning in the classroom.	Adapting lesson plans to students' interests generates motivation, but a strategic approach to enhancing specific skills is lacking.	Conduct interest surveys at the beginning of the school year to personalize activities and relate them to clear learning objectives.	Increases student motivation and participation, improving results in meaningful learning.
Classroom interaction	- Interaction is limited, with the teacher talking and the students listening (traditional teaching method). - Students participate only	Traditional teaching methods encourage passive learning, reducing opportunities for the development of critical and argumentative thinking.	Adopt active methodologies such as project-based learning (PBL) or collaborative learning that promote greater interaction.	Students will play a more active role, fostering their autonomy and ability to collaborate in teams.

	when required, not voluntarily.			
Role of the student	Students play a passive role in the classroom, contributing to a lack of autonomy and leadership in their learning.	Passivity limits the development of critical, communication, and social skills necessary in academic and social settings.	Encourage active roles through activities such as presentations, leadership in group activities, or problem solving.	Students will develop greater self-confidence and skills to face academic and personal challenges.
Role of the teacher	Teachers exercise power in the classroom, which reinforces the passive nature of students.	Excessive teacher control reduces student initiative and hinders the development of independent and creative thinking skills.	Take on the role of facilitator, promoting dialogue and joint knowledge building.	Improves teacher-student relationships, fostering an inclusive and participatory learning environment.

Next, three aspects are characteristic of argumentation: persuading, convincing, and manipulating. The teacher says that this is done through forums, but his response is very vague and does not specify when students are able to persuade, manipulate, or convince, nor can this be evidenced in the observation.

Likewise, oral expression is essential when arguing. The teacher indicates that this is worked on through presentations, group work, stories, fables, anecdotes, and role-playing. However, in the student's presentation, it was observed that her manner of expression was not the best because her voice was very low, she leaned on the board, covered her face with her notebook, and laughed in the middle of her narration, none of which the teacher commented on or corrected.

As for the acquisition of new vocabulary, it can be said that the teacher does not concern himself with this. He mentions that he uses some methods such as the dictionary and searching for synonyms, but he does not do so with any great insistence, nor does he concern himself with his students producing a good story, since he did not correct the student's writing before she participated. It should be remembered that increasing vocabulary is important when arguing, as it enables students to perform satisfactorily in front of a given audience.

Finally, the teacher works on transversality and interdisciplinarity to develop oral argumentation skills. Although cross-circularity is not very evident, as indiscipline and disrespect for classmates predominate in the class observed, interdisciplinarity is present, as the teacher works on all areas specific to the fifth grade and also ensures that, if a goal is set, it can be worked on in different subjects.

Analysis of Diagnostic Test Results

In the intervention implemented in the four third-year classes, it was observed that at the beginning and during the diagnostic test, which consisted of three questions, the students did not expand their answers in these exercises. However, as the intervention was carried out in each class at the beginning of the lesson, taking a few minutes out of the schedule, the children developed the habit of listening to their classmates' answers and began to demand

more of themselves to think and rephrase their questions in order to come up with creative questions, which was something new that was not always related to the class topic. The inquiries posed by the diagnostic test are enumerated in Table 7.

Table 7.
Diagnostic test applied to the four third-year courses.

Number	Question
Question 1	If you had the opportunity to choose to be an animal for a day, which animal would you choose and why?
Question 2	What would you change about the world you live in, and why would you do it?
Question 3	If you were a genie and had a family member in front of you, what wish would you grant them and why? You must choose.

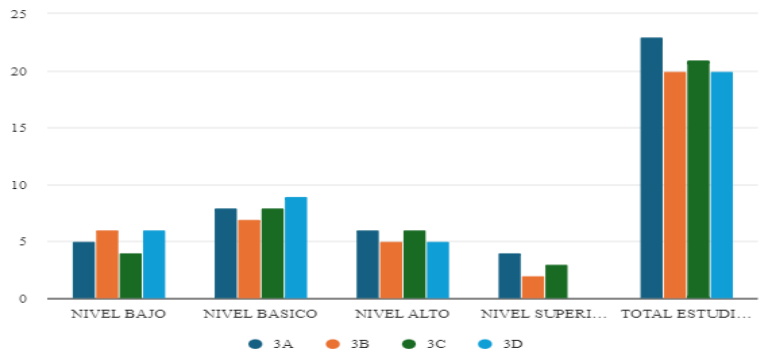
After administering the test, the responses were read and analyzed using a rubric that assessed the content of the response, the writing style, the level of detail, and the accuracy of the answer to the question. The analysis of the diagnostic test responses is shown in Table 8.

Table 8.
Analysis of responses

Background	Form
The answer is creative and addresses all aspects of the question. (30 points)	Use all the lines provided. (20 points)
The answer contains important points to consider. (30 points)	Your handwriting is clear and legible. (20 points)

Figure 3 shows the results obtained when applying the diagnostic test in Spanish classes and each of the courses.

Figure 3.
Diagnostic test results



The students encountered significant challenges in providing satisfactory responses to the inquiries posed. The participants appeared to be contemplative, exhibiting difficulty in unleashing their imaginations and providing detailed responses. Following the administration of the test, the optimal outcome would have been to have a greater proportion of students at the high and upper levels and to assist those at the low and basic levels in their progression.

The total number of students who completed the diagnostic test was 23, of whom 50% reached level 3A. Among the students who completed the test, 17.39% demonstrated proficiency at the basic level, 13.04% exhibited competence at the high level, and 10.87% displayed proficiency at the low level. Furthermore, 8.70% of students demonstrated proficiency at a higher level on the diagnostic test.

In the third grade of the total student population of 20, seven students are at a basic level, six are at a low level, five are at a high level, and two are at a higher level. The majority of students are at basic and low levels, constituting 32.5% and 15% of the total number of students, respectively. A mere 5% of the student body has demonstrated proficiency at the advanced level, thus underscoring the necessity for enhanced support and resources to be allocated to those exhibiting higher levels of academic performance.

In 3C, 50% of the student body undertook the diagnostic evaluation. The results of the test indicated that 19.05% of the student population demonstrated proficiency at the basic level. The proportion of students demonstrating proficiency at an advanced level on the diagnostic test was 7.14%.

In the 3D course, the fundamental level was represented by 19.05% of the students (eight students), constituting the highest percentage of students in the diagnostic test. The upper level is characterized by a comparatively low student population, with a total of three students constituting 7.14% of the overall enrollment. The aggregate number of students at the high and low levels is equivalent to the number of students at the upper level.

Table 9 offers a synopsis of the primary findings that emerged subsequent to the implementation of the diagnostic test. Table 10 presents the percentage results of the diagnostic test.

Table 9.
Main findings after diagnostic testing.

Course	Number of Students	Low Level (%)	Basic level (%)	High Level (%)	Higher level (%)	Key Findings	Recommendations
3A	23	21.74% (5)	34.78% (8)	26.09% (6)	17.39% (4)	Most students are at low and basic levels. The need to increase students at high and advanced levels.	Focus activities on fostering creativity and critical thinking. Provide examples of more detailed answers.
3B	20	30% (6)	35% (7)	25% (5)	10% (2)	High concentration at low and basic levels. Urgent need for resources and support to improve performance.	Implement more creative writing and critical analysis exercises. Offer personalized tutoring.
3C	21	19.05% (4)	19.05% (4)	28.57% (6)	7.14% (3)	Most are at low and basic	Create spaces for feedback to enrich

						levels, but 19% reach the advanced level. Focus on improving creativity and detail in responses.	responses. Encourage participation in creative discussions.
3D	20	30% (6)	40% (8)	25% (5)	5% (1)	The basic and low levels predominate, with few students at the higher level. A focus on improving expression and creativity is required.	Provide recreational activities that encourage imagination. Promote written expressions in various formats.

Table 10.
Percentage results of the diagnostic test.

Subcategories or characteristics	**Results obtained**	**Observations and reflection**
Give truthful answers.	It was determined that 76% of students do not justify their ideas with clear reasons. Nineteen percent use vague and unclear arguments, and 5% argue their ideas with true reasons.	Most students lack clarity and precision when justifying their answers. Need to strengthen logical and argumentative reasoning.
Clearly analyzes and interprets the situations presented.	It was identified that 78% of students lack analytical and interpretive skills. Twenty-two percent correctly analyze the situations presented.	A lack of analytical skills is prevalent, with few students able to interpret situations adequately.
It has the ability to persuade.	It was found that 100% do not use persuasion as an argumentative tool.	Students do not use effective persuasive techniques, which limit the strength of their arguments.
Convince the audience with your arguments.	It has been established that 99.5% try to convince, but because they do not	The lack of clarity in their arguments prevents students from convincing their audience. Only a small percentage are successful in this regard.

Propose alternative solutions to the problems presented.	have clear arguments, they do not achieve this goal. 0.5% convince their audience with their arguments.	Students fail to generate concrete or effective proposals. Creativity in problem solving needs to be encouraged.
Make use of argumentative resources.	It was determined that 80% of students do not make	Most students do not incorporate argumentative resources into their responses, which limits the quality of their arguments.

Analysis: In general terms, it was found that students have several difficulties at the argumentative level.

Recommendation: Work on developing argumentation skills, especially those related to oral argumentation. Encourage students to construct arguments through logical reasoning, evidence, and data.

CONCLUSIONS

Recent studies have indicated that third-grade students at Colegio Gimnasio Colombo Británico encounter substantial impediments in cultivating their proficiency in argumentative oral expression. These limitations manifest themselves in difficulty organizing their ideas, justifying their points of view, and participating in dialogues with the intention of debating. These deficiencies are indicative of not only shortcomings in their linguistic abilities but also in more complex cognitive skills such as analysis, inference, and criticism.

The implementation of an educational approach that utilizes creative questioning as a tool to promote cognitive thinking and facilitate learning has yielded favorable outcomes in the development of these skills. The meticulously designed and executed activities fostered active engagement, promoted introspective and collective reflection, and instilled in students a capacity for discerning analysis in diverse contexts. Consequently, a gradual enhancement in their capacity to formulate more organized, pertinent, and logically substantiated arguments was observed.

A salient conclusion of the present study is the validation of the use of questions as a versatile pedagogical resource. The integration of these tools into the classroom environment has been demonstrated to enhance the educational process by promoting intellectual autonomy and creative thinking among students. The creation of open-ended and meaningful questions fostered a more dialogical, collaborative, and participatory learning environment, which are essential for developing 21st-century skills.

A review of the extant literature reveals that, from an emotional and attitudinal perspective, low self-esteem, insecurity, and fear of public speaking are significant obstacles to argumentative development. Consequently, it is imperative that educators cultivate secure and respectful learning environments where students feel at ease sharing their ideas without apprehension of criticism or the potential repercussions of error. Emotional management is as crucial as educational planning.

In this sense, the pedagogical implications of the study are evident. It is imperative to redefine the role of the teacher as a catalyst for critical thinking, rather than merely as a conduit of information. It is imperative that educators receive training in the design of

teaching strategies that intentionally integrate argumentation as a fundamental aspect of the curriculum. This necessitates a reexamination of conventional teaching methodologies, the promotion of active learning strategies, and the implementation of formative assessments that acknowledge progress in oral and written argumentative expression.

It is further recommended that educational institutions systematically incorporate programs to strengthen communication skills from the early years of education. The integration of activities that require the formulation and articulation of inquiries, the examination of ethical dilemmas, and the facilitation of debates or oral simulations in the early stages of education has been demonstrated to exert a substantial influence on the comprehensive development of students, fostering their transformation into critical, autonomous, and socially committed individuals.

In terms of implications for future research, this study opens up new opportunities to analyze the effect of questioning strategies at various educational levels and in different contexts. Long-term studies are proposed to measure the continuity of improvements in argumentation over time. Furthermore, comparative research between institutions that apply different teaching methods or serve diverse populations is also recommended.

Furthermore, we underscore the necessity for additional research to be conducted on the relationships between argumentation, critical reading, and writing. These skills are interconnected and can enhance one another. Consequently, subsequent studies may benefit from incorporating technological tools, such as interactive platforms or digital resources, that seamlessly integrate question creation and argument construction. This integration has the potential to enhance educational practices through innovation.

It is recommended that subsequent studies adopt a more comprehensive approach, acknowledging the variability among individuals, their learning styles, and the sociocultural influences that shape the development of argumentation skills. This will facilitate progress toward a more equitable, relevant, and transformative education.

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