

Emancipatory education as an educational model Educación emancipadora como modelo educativo

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the research is to analyse emancipatory education as an educational model through a systematic documentary study of specialised literature published between 2005-2025. Based on the analysis of 25 academic references, five fundamental conceptual categories are identified: i) theoretical and epistemological foundations, ii) historical references and thinkers, iii) transformative pedagogical practices, iv) inclusive education and diversity, v) social and educational transformation. Consequently, emancipatory education as an educational model is configured as a dynamic and multidimensional epistemological field, with solid theoretical foundations, a rich historical tradition, innovative pedagogical practices, a strong commitment to inclusion and diversity, and a clear horizon of social transformation.

Descriptors: education and culture; educational anthropology; educational philosophy. (Source: UNESCO Thesaurus).

RESUMEN

La investigación tiene por objetivo analizar la educación emancipadora como modelo educativo; mediante un estudio documental sistemático de literatura especializada publicada entre 2005-2025. A partir del análisis de 25 referencias académicas, se identifican cinco categorías conceptuales fundamentales: i) fundamentos teóricos y epistemológicos, ii) referentes y pensadores históricos, iii) prácticas pedagógicas transformadoras, iv) educación inclusiva y diversidad, v) transformación social y educativa. En consecuencia, la educación emancipadora como modelo educativo se configura como un campo epistemológico dinámico y multidimensional, con sólidos fundamentos teóricos, una rica tradición histórica, prácticas pedagógicas innovadoras, un fuerte compromiso con la inclusión y la diversidad, y un claro horizonte de transformación social.

Descriptores: educación y cultura; antropología de la educación; filosofía de la educación. (Fuente: Tesauro UNESCO).

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articles section



INTRODUCTION

Emancipatory education is a pedagogical paradigm of growing relevance in the Latin American context, taking shape as an epistemological alternative to hegemonic educational models. This approach, based on principles of liberation, conscientisation and social transformation, has generated a significant theoretical corpus that requires systematisation from contemporary curricular perspectives.

The present research examines the main conceptual categories that structure the field of emancipatory education as an educational model, with an emphasis on its curricular implications, which is pertinent in the current Latin American educational context, characterised by structural inequalities and the search for contextualised pedagogical alternatives.

Methodologically, this research is based on a systematic documentary analysis of 25 scientific articles related to emancipatory education, published in the period 2005-2025, with an emphasis on Latin American contributions. Based on this analysis, five fundamental conceptual categories have been identified: i) theoretical and epistemological foundations, ii) historical references and thinkers, iii) transformative pedagogical practices, iv) inclusive education and diversity, v) social and educational transformation.

Consequently, this literature review article aims to analyse emancipatory education as an educational model.

Emancipatory education as an educational model

The systematic analysis of the literature reveals a multidimensional epistemological field with deep roots in Latin American pedagogical thought and significant implications for the curricular transformation of contemporary educational systems. The results are examined below, organised into five categories identified through the documentary analysis carried out:

Theoretical and epistemological foundations

The theoretical constructs of emancipatory education are mainly based on the Epistemologies of the South (García, 2023), which problematise hegemonic educational paradigms and propose epistemological alternatives based on historically subalternised knowledge. This perspective establishes significant correlations with the conceptualisation of free knowledge proposed by Aguilar (2011), who postulates that educational emancipation inexorably requires the democratisation of the processes of access, production and distribution of knowledge.

The results of the documentary analysis coincide with the postulates of Vera-Rojas et al. (2020), regarding the imperative need to promote epistemological debates in the faculties of education sciences from Latin American perspectives, which shows that curricular transformation must begin by questioning the epistemological foundations of pedagogical knowledge. As Sánchez-Pástor (2024) argues, this questioning must incorporate the paradigm of complexity, particularly in university contexts where rigid and fragmented curricular structures prevail.

In this sense, Latin American pedagogy, as Gómez-Sollano (2021) points out, is characterised by its dialectical articulation with hope, a differentiating element that distinguishes emancipatory education from other educational models focused exclusively on the transmission of disciplinary content or the development of instrumental competences. This hopeful dimension constitutes not only a theoretical construct but also a fundamental axiological component to sustain long-term curricular transformation processes.

Historical figures and thinkers

The figure of Paulo Freire is the central epistemological reference point for emancipatory education, and his theoretical corpus has been analysed from multiple perspectives, such as Latin American pedagogy (Rodríguez et al., 2007), in its application to higher education (Varona-Domínguez, 2020) and in its contribution to curriculum theory (Nayive-Angulo & León, 2005). However, the documentary analysis reveals that emancipatory education draws on a broader constellation of Latin American thinkers who make up a diverse theoretical corpus.

The pedagogical thinking of Simón Rodríguez (Moreno & Mendoza, 2023) and the liberating education of Leónidas Proaño (Oviedo-Oviedo, 2018) represent fundamental historical antecedents that demonstrate the existence of an emancipatory Latin American pedagogical tradition prior to Freire's work. This tradition is enriched by contributions such as those of the Escuela Moderna (Nadal-Masegosa, 2023) and the theoretical contributions of José Martí and Hugo Zemelman (Rodrigues-Telles-Almeida, 2021), especially in their reflection on technological mediation from an emancipatory perspective. These results suggest that, contrary to certain reductionist interpretations present in pedagogical literature, emancipatory education is not a monolithic model associated exclusively with Freire, but rather a pedagogical tradition with multiple epistemological aspects and historical expressions in the Latin American context.

Transformative pedagogical practices

The literature analysed shows that emancipatory education transcends the theoretical level to materialise in concrete pedagogical practices with specific curricular implications. Critical pedagogy articulated with social justice (Holmos-Flores et al., 2023) emerges as a fundamental methodological approach that allows us to address structural inequalities from the curricular sphere. Complementarily, the pedagogy of emotions (Pineda Martínez & Orozco Pineda, 2023) incorporates affective dimensions that are frequently marginalised in traditional curricular models.

On the other hand, a significant discovery is the integration of technological mediations in Popular Education practices (Garelli et al., 2023), which contradicts the false epistemological dichotomy between emancipatory education and technological mediation. These experiences demonstrate that technological tools, when inserted in critical curricular frameworks, can enhance processes of social transformation.

The role of teachers in the configuration of inclusive environments (Vera-Rivera et al., 2024) and institutional experiences such as the CCH educational model (Pereyra, 2021), show that emancipatory education requires institutional transformations and new professional profiles for teachers. This proposal coincides with the postulates of Prieto-Hernández (2013) regarding the need to constantly update emancipatory practices in order to respond to educational contexts in permanent transformation.

Inclusive education and diversity

The intersection between emancipatory education and educational inclusion constitutes a particularly significant thematic nucleus in the analysed literature, teaching competencies for the implementation of inclusive models (Borja-Ramos, 2025) and the development of problematising curricula (Aldana-Zavala et al., 2023) emerge as fundamental elements for materialising emancipatory principles in contexts of diversity.

The results of the documentary analysis reveal that emancipatory education offers conceptual and methodological frameworks that are particularly relevant for addressing contemporary challenges such as migration integration (Aldana-Zavala et al., 2023) and education in indigenous contexts (Delgadillo Zerda, 2018); these studies suggest that emancipatory principles allow diversity to be recognised and valued not as an obstacle to curriculum implementation but as a source of pedagogical enrichment.

Attention to specific aspects such as reading comprehension (Dewendt, 2021) demonstrates that emancipatory education does not neglect the development of fundamental cognitive skills, but rather recontextualises them in broader processes of awareness-raising and social transformation, which has direct implications for curriculum design.

Social and educational transformation

The specialised literature confirms that emancipatory education transcends the strictly pedagogical sphere to become a project of social transformation with specific curricular implications. In the first instance, the role of the teacher as a transforming agent (Cacay et al., 2023) is fundamental in this process, which implies reconfiguring the models of teacher training and professional development from critical perspectives.



Therefore, the integration of cross-cutting themes in the university curriculum (Ianni-Gómez, 2024) and attention to emerging professional issues (Garrido-Pimenta et al., 2023) show that emancipatory education must constantly adapt to new contexts and social challenges through curricular updating. Particularly relevant is the articulation between Health Education and Popular Education (Garelli et al., 2023), which demonstrates the potential of emancipatory approaches to address concrete social problems from integrative curricular perspectives. These contributions suggest that emancipatory education, far from constituting a utopian model detached from educational praxis, offers concrete curricular tools to face contemporary social challenges from transformative perspectives.

CONCLUSION

From this analysis, five fundamental conceptual categories have been identified: i) theoretical and epistemological foundations, ii) historical references and thinkers, iii) transformative pedagogical practices, iv) inclusive education and diversity, v) social and educational transformation. Consequently, emancipatory education as an educational model is configured as a dynamic and multidimensional epistemological field, with solid theoretical foundations, a rich historical tradition, innovative pedagogical practices, a strong commitment to inclusion and diversity, and a clear horizon of social transformation.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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