

**University of Pedagogical Sciences**  
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# **MAJOR PAPER**

**Title:** Activities for the development of the independent work in the Junior High School.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This mayor paper makes a deep analysis of the most updated theory related to the importance of the independent work in the teaching-learning process and the preparation of the individuals to face the contemporary challenges the global society is imposing, due to fast development of the technologies and the spreading of almost daily theories entailed to educational topics.

For the realization of the work different scientific methods were used to support the criteria selected by the author to find the contradictions that evidence the reality of a scientific problem.

Also, this paper establishes different activities to be done by Secondary School Students that will reinforce their individual cognitive development by the realization of the independent work.

# INTRODUCTION

The present-day explosion of the science and the technology is characterized by an accelerated development of discoveries and an extraordinary increasement of the knowledge in all sciences. These conditions demand from the contemporary education, a great development of the cognitive independence on behalf of the students, but on the contrary, it has become a medullar problem in the teaching - learning process.

If it is taken into account the brevity in which humanity doubles its knowledge, and the magnitude of the problem that the present-day pedagogy is confronting, the contradictions among the possibilities of information and the need to maintain it, once the teaching process is updated. There is not other way, but the student's independent work to face the stream of information produced everyday in all science fields.

The independent work is not the paraphernalia that solves these contradictions, but it provides teachers with the possibility to educate the students in capabilities for the cognitive independence, and also prepares them for the needed active confrontation of the theory and the practice

The independent work is the one of the most effective ways of the cognitive activity. Science offers scientific and methodological information, but it is the role of the teacher to orient, control and evaluate its effectiveness in the students once it is put into practice.

The independent work creates different levels of independence and consciousness-raising of the process, where the students reach bigger levels of scientific deepening and develop general and specific abilities that in the end reinforce their knowledge and prepares them to face life.

The pedagogic practice has demonstrated that in spite of the efforts that the Ministry Of Education has conceived to design syllabuses and teaching materials to accomplish these tasks. There is not always the effect desired in that effort.

The Cuban Revolution from its establishment in January 1959 has come developing educational reforms for the achievement of more complete and integral

educational alternatives to develop social needs related with Martí's precepts. The development of psychology based on the Marxist foundation, the methodological components in the process of Leninist teaching started to transform our educational reality, evidencing the scientific character of it, for this reason, the government of Cuba has been immersed in an arduous battle of ideas taking strategic lines for the increment of the cultural level in our country, town or neighborhood. The revolution has been gestating some projects like the "Editorial Libertad", the expansion of computing clubs, the video clubs, the insertion of humanistic careers and audiovisual programs.

The teaching learning process has been evolving with these transformations, and all of them go to satisfy the requirements and needs that students face everyday.

The secondary education also has transmuted satisfactorily, it has introduced a series of changes in the English subject. The work with the video in classrooms has as objective to propitiate the deepening in knowledge, habits and abilities, in the students and also the following ones:

- Understanding the information transmitted in the English tongue.
- Expressing oneself about its social activity, professional or study in a simple form, utilizing the basic structures of the English tongue.
- Writing notes and brief messages on various topics.

The system of objectives designed for this plan would prove to be totally successful if not existing barriers, that impede the medullar realization of activities previously stipulated under the teaching learning process.

It is established that in this level the students should be able to use communicative functions and the video lessons, but this can not satisfy the students necessity, because they are not based on the reality all the students have, though they can be a point of departure to reorient the students towards the wanted activities.

It is not possible to deepen into knowledge, habits and abilities because when visualizing a video the following can be observed:

The course just uses the expositive and illustrative method. It leads only to the review lesson the possibility to develop the interchange professor-pupil something necessary for the teaching process.

The independent work is assigned from the video lesson at the end of the class. It does not propitiate the development of habits and abilities to get information to accomplish other types of independent work, something that motivates the students to learn the English language.

This author, once on his training practice noticed that the students had some problems regarding the independent work, considering them as his **problemic situation**:

- Unsolved tasks
- Problems when working independently in the exercises during the lessons.
- Problems in the comprehension of what teachers wanted from the exercises.

This investigation has as **scientific problem**: How to contribute to the development of the independent work in the English subject in ninth graders from Pedro Lantigua Ortega Junior High School?

The **Object of investigation** is the English subject teaching-learning process and the **field of action** is the independent work in the English subject.

The **objective** of this investigation is to apply a set of activities directed to the development of the independent work in the English subject in ninth graders from Pedro Lantigua Ortega Junior High School.

As **scientific questions**, there were stated the following.

1. Which are the theoretical bases that support the independent work in the English subject?
2. Which is the present-day status of the development of the independent work in the pupils from ninth grade from Pedro Lantigua Ortega Junior High School?
3. How to design activities that contribute to the development of the independent work in ninth graders from Pedro Lantigua Ortega Junior High School?

4. How to validate the effectiveness of the designed activities that contribute to the development of the independent work in ninth graders from Pedro Lantigua Ortega Junior High School?

**As Investigation tasks:**

- 1) Systematization of the theoretical bases that support the development of the independent work in the English subject.
- 2) Diagnose of the present-day status of the development of the independent work in ninth graders from Pedro Lantigua Ortega Junior High School.
- 3) Elaboration of the activities that contribute to the development of the independent work in ninth graders from Pedro Lantigua Ortega Junior High School.
- 4) Validation of the effectiveness of the activities that contribute to the development of the independent work in ninth graders from Junior High School Pedro Lantigua Ortega.

The **variables** in this investigation are the following.

**Independent variable:** Activities.

**Dependent variables:** The realization of the independent work in students

The **population** in this investigation is the ninth graders from Pedro Lantigua Ortega Junior High School, and the sample is a group of 45 students in the school.

This group has been selected intentionally.

For the application of the research some **methods** were used. Among them:

**From the theoretical level**

**Analysis and synthesis:**

It permitted to accomplish a study of the independent work and establish a comparison between the parts previously examined.

**Historic and Logic:**

It contributed to determine the background of the independent work, also to know the authors that have talked about the topic.

**Induction and deduction:**

It propitiated the elaboration of conclusions departing from the general to the particular.

## **From the empirical level**

### **Interview to teachers:**

It allowed the investigator know about this phenomenon in other subjects and gather information from experienced teachers.

### **The survey to students:**

To verify the application level of different methods in the independent work, and to check their ideas and conceptions regarding this theme.

### **The observation:**

To verify the development of the independent work in the English classes.

## **From the statistical level**

### **Percentage calculation:**

To examine the quantitative data of the investigation.

During this investigation, the following **indicators** were taken into consideration:

1. Knowledge of what independent work is
2. Degree of independence in the realization of the independent work
3. Development of abilities in the independent work

The scale to measure the indicators in on **(annex 1)**

The practical value of the research is sustained in the set of activities done with the purpose of contributing to the development of the independent work in the English subject. All the activities proposed are based on the theoretical groundings supported by the consulted authors and the experience of the author of the work.



# DEVELOPMENT

## 1.1 The independent work in the teaching learning process.

As early as 1883, our National Hero José Martí conceptualized this definition of education, which is really present in our times:

"To educate is to give each man all the human knowledge that had been gotten through the years because each man should summarize the living world, until the day in which he lives, to put it at the level of his time, to float on it, and not leave it below of his time, so that he can stay drifting on it, it is to prepare man for his life."

José Martí, from his time foresaw the need to prepare each man to be consistent with the times, flexible to changes in today's society, helping them satisfactorily for their own benefit. This person should be able to adapt himself to the new circumstances, to solve the present tasks, applying multiple skills, which is the idea of educational models that we follow in the classroom every day. At the graduation ceremony of the First Year of Emergency Primary Teachers on 15 March 2001, our Commander in Chief said:

The teacher is responsible for educating, preparing and creating the methods to educate men, is not only to work to achieve independence, but also to form values out of it, Luz y Caballero, Valera's follower from his master, said: "Training Morality is the method of education, which is selected as a matter of teaching, which is the subject of the educational work, it is an essential aim: to train men "(15)

It is important to consider the independent work as an activity organized through the educational process. That emphasizes on the need of scientific education, methods of scientific work and the independence and creative work. With independence pupils create new habits, develop their own activities and acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities that respond to the needs of the society.

The independent work should be focussed as a method, procedure, form of organization, even as a system of measures aimed at teaching:

- The conscious assimilation of course material.
- The development of knowledge
- The consolidation of knowledge.

- The training of practical skills.
- The formation of trends towards independent search for new knowledge.

Assuming that the purpose of the independent work includes the development of cognitive independence and the validity of the previous antecedents, then it is necessary to characterize the dimensions of it.

The basis of independent study for students includes:

- Achieving deep and solid knowledge about Marxist-Leninist science.
- The transformation of this knowledge for purposes and personal convictions.
- The development of independent creative thinking and creative abilities of students.
- The formation of useful and necessary habits for scientific research, the capacity to correct conclusions and use of these in the practice

In the process of the independent work done by the students, they can solve the scientific acquisition of knowledge, the transformation of the Marxist-Leninist theory in individual belief, it accurate the determination of activities towards the goal of education. From the organizational and methodological management of the independent work, the success depends on working with our students.

Experience shows that the effectiveness of independent work by students is closely linked with:

- The proper union of work and rest.
- The physical working conditions (place, order, silence).
- Hours: The hours of the morning are usually better for the independent work of the students, who receive their lessons in the afternoon, and those who receive it in the morning can do an hour after the end of lessons.
- The proper union of mental and physical activities.

The detailed planning of the independent work of students takes place in the desks, also it is done in special committees that are formed in each school, and these committees control the work in the school. The works of these are very

important and through them there is analyzed and evaluated the criteria of teachers to arrive at valuable conclusions.

The most effective forms of independent work by students are:

- Practical sessions.
- Preparation for the seminar, laboratory practices.
- Working with the textbook.
- Working with teaching, graphing.
- Implementation of assessment activities.
- Planning Software tasks in the educational software.
- Integrating and developing tasks.

Several authors consider the independent work as a teaching method, others as procedures and some of them regard it as an organizational form of the teaching process. All of the above is true, but nobody can deny that the independent work can take any of these functions. What happens is that some times it is framed within a narrow focus.

In the book written by Guillermina Labarrare and a group of specialists from the Ministry of Education under the direction of the Central Institute of Educational Sciences (1994) stated that: "the right direction of the cognitive activity creates and develops the reasons for the independent work, the system of independent work that the teachers use with their students gradually determines the development of cognitive independence". (16)

This book takes into account the definition of independent work from the Soviet pedagogue Pavel Pidkasisty: independent work "is any means of including students in the independent cognitive activity as a means of logical and psychological organization" (17)

In the text "The Independent Work and their ways of realization" from the Doctor of Science Gilberto Garcia Batista and others, independent work is also defined as "A means for the inclusion of pupils in independent cognitive activities as a means of logical and psychological organization." (18)

The definition considered in this research as "**independent work**" is "any task that requires from the student reinforcement of their cognitive activity, and it will be used for a variety of methods and procedures, with a marked tendency to strengthen the production of assimilation levels in the content of the education".

This definition highlights an aspect which is then taken into consideration by other authors, and it is declared as an independent study aimed to include the student's cognitive activity and cognitive development independence.

In this sense, a group of authors consulted in Education 2005, they defined independent work as "The activity that makes the students solve tasks assigned by the teacher or professor, in a reasonable time and with a certain mental effort."

Another important aspect to distinguish the concept of independent work is to analyze the role occupied by the teacher and student: where can be seen that any task that the teacher conceives, plans, directs and controls and it is made by the student in an established time frame, by mental effort, predominantly individual and compliance with requirements or conditions "suggested" by the teacher.

### **Analysis of the initial diagnose.**

With the application of the selected instruments and techniques to the desired sample the following results are obtained:

The interview to teachers (**annex 2**) gave as result that this phenomenon of problems with the independent work is not only in the English lessons, but also in all the other subjects, that's why this is a problem to be treated from other disciplines.

To know about what students thought about the independent work, a **survey (annex 3)** was applied, and as result:

3 students were evaluated as high level (7%), because they had sufficient knowledge of what independent work was, had some degree of independence in the realization of the independent work and developed abilities in this kind of work. 6 students were evaluated as medial level (13%), because they had a

relative knowledge about the independent work, the degree of independence is partial, and had some problems with development of the abilities to achieve independent work. 36 students were evaluated as low level (80%), because they practically couldn't say anything about independent work, they almost didn't have any degree of independence and practically didn't develop any ability in the independent work.

It was also applied an **observation (annex 4)**, to check this and the results were the following:

3 students were evaluated as high level (7%), because they had sufficient knowledge of what independent work was, had some degree of independence in the realization of the independent work and developed abilities in this kind of work. 5 students were evaluated as medial level (11%), because they had a relative knowledge about the independent work, the degree of independence is partial, and had some problems with development of the abilities to achieve independent work. 37 students were evaluated as low level (82%), because they practically couldn't say anything about independent work, they almost didn't have any degree of independence and practically didn't develop any ability in the independent work.

## **1.5 Activities for the development of the independent work in the secondary school.**

### **Activity #1 “My personal information”**

**Objective:** Express in the oral way some communicative functions related to personal information.

#### **Way of procedure:**

The teacher will ask the students:

How can you ask someone’s name?

How can you introduce yourself?

#### **Activity**

Act out a dialogue using the given communicative functions and relate them to the information you were assigned to file beforehand.

#### **Possible context:**

Imagine that you are in the park and some people ask for information related to your life and some of our heroes like: Ernesto Che Guevara, Camilo Cienfuegos, José Martí, Pedro Lantigua among others. .

#### **Suggestion (you should develop the following elements).**

- Greetings
- □Presentation.
- □to meet persons in formal or informal way.
- Talk about your family.
- □Talk about your last academic year.
- Talk about the above-mentioned heroes.

#### **Control and evaluation:**

The students will be evaluated in front of the class, in an oral way by means of a pair work.

#### **Bibliography.**

- Diccionario Bilingue. Encarta 2008.

- Encarta 2008.
- English workbook for ninth graders.

### **Activity # 2 “Speaking about family”**

**Objective:** Express orally communicative functions related to the family and occupations.

**Way of procedure:**

Mention some family members and occupations you know.

**Activity**

Look for information about your genealogical tree and its use .Make a power point where you can show your mother genealogical tree and Lantiguas´ mother one.

**Suggestions:**

- □locate full name.
- Locate the familiar relationship.

**Control and evaluation:**

The students should make a short exposition about their family in front of the class and the genealogical tree will be checked on their notebooks.

**Bibliography.**

- ❖ Software Sunrise. Colección Futuro
- ❖ Municipal museum.
- ❖ Diccionario Bilingue. Encarta 2008.
- ❖ Encarta 2008.
- ❖ Illustrated Oxford Dictionary.

### **Activity # 3 Give me an address**

**Objective:** Express in the oral and written form communicative functions to give an address.

**Way of procedure:** Mention some important historic and cultural places from your township.

### **First 1:**

In our city there are very important Historic and cultural places taking into account its building date and history you should establish a dialogue. Using the below suggestions:

- Ask and give an address taking into account an important place.
- If you are able draw a map where you can show the most important places from your township.

### **Second 2:**

Make a little summary about one of those important places taking into account:

- Period of building.
- Architectural characteristics.
- First use and actual use.

### **Control and evaluation**

The students should make a short exposition about one of those important place in front of the class and will be checked on their notebooks.

### **Bibliography.**

- ❖  Software Sunrise. Colección Futuro.
- ❖ The heritage office in Trinidad.
- ❖ Diccionario Bilingue. Encarta 2008.
- ❖ Encarta 2008.
- ❖ Illustrated Oxford Dictionary.

### **Activity#4: Personal Description**

**Objective:** To identify what question should be asked (What does...) (what is...) in order to obtain the given information taking into account physical and personality description.

**Way of procedure:** Describe yourself in from of the classroom (moral and physical)

1. Practice how to ask for the description of a person (physical appearance and personality traits)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
16



Sandra is slim, young, of average height and has red hair

2. \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Henry is friendly and talkative.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Lucy's eyes? They are blue.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Miss Richard is short, plump, and has dark eyes.

5. \_\_\_\_\_

William and George are easygoing and very nice.

6. \_\_\_\_\_ ?

No, not black. She has light brown hair.

**1.2** Describe yourself physically.

### **Control and evaluation**

The students will be evaluated in front of the class, in an oral way.

### **Bibliography**

- ❖ Dictionary Bilingual. Encarta 2008
- ❖ English workbook for ninth graders

### **Activity#5:** Likes and dislikes

**Objective:** Students should express in written form the activities they do as preferences.

**Way of procedure:** The teacher will ask the students to write a paragraph in which they express their likes and dislikes.

1. Write a paragraph in which express your likes and dislikes.

What's your parents likes and dislikes.

What's favorite actor or actress likes and dislikes.

### **Control and evaluation**

The students should make an exposition in the classroom. It will be checked on their notebooks.

### **Bibliography:**

.-Bantham dictionary

-Encarta2009.

**Activity#6: Imagine your future.**

**Objective:** Students should express in written form actions that will be taking place in the future to develop their interest for future plans.

**Way procedure:**

The teacher will ask the students:

What can they do in the future?

What will be they study after the high school?

1. Write in a short paragraph about what will you doing in fifteen years on, taking into account the following patterns:

- a) How old will you be?
- b) Will you be in the same house?
- c) Will you be married or single?
- d) Will you be still studying?
- e) Will you have the same way of thinking?

**Control and evaluation**

The students should make a short exposition in front of the class and will be checked on their notebooks.

**Bibliography**

**Activity#7: John Lennon life**

**Objective:** The students should be able to express in orally details about Jhon Lennon life to increase their cultural level.

**Way of procedure:** The teacher will ask:

What do they like to do in their free time?

Who is their favorite singer?

**Activity:**

Answer the following questions about John Lennon life

- a) Who was John Lennon?
- b) When was he born?

c) What did he do for the humanity?

d) Why was he killed?

**Control and evaluation:** The students will make an exposition in from of the classroom. After their notebook will be checked.

**Bibliography:**

- ❖ Encarta 2008
- ❖ English workbook for ninth graders
- ❖ Bantham dictionary

### Analysis of the final diagnose

With the application of the selected instruments and techniques to the desired sample the following results are obtained:

To know about what students thought about the independent work, a **survey** was applied, and as result:

30 students were evaluated as high level (67%)

12 students were evaluated as medial level (26%)

3 students were evaluated as low level (7%)

Taking into consideration the initial diagnose the final diagnose was better because we got the following results:

indicators	Before			After		
	H	M	L	H	M	L
Knowledge of what independent work is						
Degree of independence in the realization of the independent work	3(7%)	6(13%)	36(80%)	30(67%)	12(26%)	3(7%)
Development of abilities in the independent work						

## **CONCLUSIONS**

1. The theoretical systematization done through this research, allowed the author to support the field of action and its relation to the problematic situation of the research. Also, it can be concluded that in the orientation, execution and control of the independent work there exists gaps that need to be filled with more up-dated information.
2. The diagnose permitted to realize that students are not given the necessary instruments to work individually and more important. It was noticed that the orientation stage did not motivate students to do the assigned activities, because they were not related to their personal interests and likes.
3. The elaborated activities can be a way to make the students work independently and integrate different knowledge at the same time. Besides, the independent work resulted in a necessary tool for the students to attain better outcomes in classes and out of them.
4. The outcomes obtained with this research allow teachers the perfection in the creation of new activities that require from the students more independence and a good planning, orientation, execution and control of the wanted work.

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## **ANNEXES**

### **Annex 1.**

#### **Scale to measure the indicators.**

1. Knowledge of what independent work is
  - A student will be evaluated as high level if knows really well what independent work is.
  - A student will be evaluated as medial level if knows what independent work is in a partial way
  - A student will be evaluated as low level if practically doesn't know what independent work is.
2. Degree of independence in the realization of the independent work
  - A student will be evaluated as high level if can work with a high degree of independence in the independent work.
  - A student will be evaluated as medial level if can work with a medial degree of independence in the independent work.
  - A student will be evaluated as low level if practically doesn't work with independence in the independent work.
3. Development of abilities in the independent work
  - A student will be evaluated as high level if can develop all the abilities required for the independent work.
  - A student will be evaluated as medial level if can develop the abilities required for the independent work partially.
  - A student will be evaluated as low level if practically doesn't develop the abilities required for the independent work.

## Annex 2.

Entrevista a profesores. (Inicial)

**Objetivo:** Constatar qué conocimientos poseen los profesores en relación al método de trabajo independiente, así como la importancia que le conceden al mismo.

1. ¿Qué entiende usted por trabajo independiente?
2. ¿En su opinión que diferencia el trabajo independiente de el estudio individual?
3. ¿Con que frecuencia orienta usted trabajo independiente a sus estudiantes?
4. ¿Sabe usted cómo orientarlos?
5. ¿Cómo se ha ejecutado este proceso en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje?
6. ¿Ejecutan todos sus estudiantes con los trabajos independientes que se asignan?
7. ¿Se evalúan los trabajos independientes orientados?
8. ¿Considera importante la orientación de los mismos?

### Anexo 3

Encuesta aplicada a los estudiantes. (Inicial)

Estudiante, solicitamos tu colaboración para que respondas la siguiente encuesta de proyecto investigativo. Marca con una **x** según tu opinión respecto a la orientación y ejecución de los trabajos independientes.

Gracias.

Objetivo: Constatar en la práctica pedagógica la opinión de los estudiantes respecto a la orientación y ejecución de los trabajos independientes.

1. El profesor te orienta trabajos independientes.

Siempre\_\_\_\_\_ A veces\_\_\_\_\_ Casi nunca\_\_\_\_\_ Nunca\_\_\_\_\_

2. El profesor te explica con claridad que debes realizar.

Siempre\_\_\_\_\_ A veces\_\_\_\_\_ Casi nunca\_\_\_\_\_ Nunca\_\_\_\_\_

3. Se chequean los trabajos independientes.

Siempre\_\_\_\_\_ A veces\_\_\_\_\_ Casi nunca\_\_\_\_\_ Nunca\_\_\_\_\_

4. Se te orienta la bibliografía adecuada.

Siempre\_\_\_\_\_ A veces\_\_\_\_\_ Casi nunca\_\_\_\_\_ Nunca\_\_\_\_\_

5. Te sientes motivado en la ejecución de este tipo de actividades.

Siempre\_\_\_\_\_ A veces\_\_\_\_\_ Casi nunca\_\_\_\_\_ Nunca\_\_\_\_\_

## Anexo 4

Guía de observación a clases. (Inicial)

Profesor, solicitamos su cooperación a través de esta guía de observación a clases para constatar cómo se aplica el método de trabajo independiente y su impacto dentro y fuera de la clase.

**Objetivo:** Constatar en la práctica pedagógica el uso e influencia del método de trabajo independiente, en la adquisición y desarrollo de habilidades del mismo.

### Aspectos a observar.

1. Se utiliza el método de trabajo independiente.

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

2. Los estudiantes trabajan de manera independiente durante la clase.

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

3. Los estudiantes poseen habilidades en la búsqueda de información.

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

4. Los estudiantes se muestran motivados ante la ejecución de las actividades de trabajo independiente.

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5. Se incrementa la calidad de aprendizaje.

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

6. Se observan acciones de búsqueda de información por parte de los estudiantes.

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

7. Se observa una asimilación consciente de los conocimientos por parte de los estudiantes.

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

8. Se observa solidez en los conocimientos de los estudiantes

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_