
Development of Writing Processes in Students with Intellectual Disabilities through Teacher Training

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Received: 15 January 2025

Revised: 27 January 2025

Accepted: 27 February 2025

Abstract

Introduction: The research aims to enhance writing in students with intellectual disabilities through a teacher training program. Based on references of didactics, inclusive education and the Didactext model, it follows a qualitative and critical approach. The results show that it is possible to develop inclusive projects that encourage the participation of all students, strengthening writing through narrative texts and the exploration of emotions.

Objective: Strengthen the development of writing skills in students with intellectual disabilities through a teacher training program.

Methods: From a qualitative approach, the research follows a systematic and rigorous process that allows reflection on educational practices in their historical and social dimension. It is part of the critical paradigm (Jiménez and Serón, 1992) and is based on the Didactext model, which highlights the importance of cognitive components and their relationship with culture, context, the individual and the didactic approach in the production of texts. Results: The findings show that it is possible to develop inclusive projects in which all students participate according to their abilities, favoring the strengthening of writing through the proposal of narrative texts and the exploration of emotions.

Conclusions: The study shows that teacher training is key to improving writing in students with intellectual disabilities. In addition, it highlights the importance of didactic approaches that integrate culture and the context of learning. Finally, it is concluded that inclusion and creativity in the teaching of writing favor active participation and the development of communicative skills in all students.

Keywords: teacher training; inclusive education; intellectual disability; written production.

1. Introduction

Although the issue of educational inclusion has been addressed for many years at both the international and national levels and Colombia has established standards and guidelines for its implementation, deficiencies still persist in some territorial entities. In particular, the Ministry of National Education has not managed to guarantee quality inclusive education in all regions.

This problem is also evident in the municipality of Tuluá, which, although it is a pioneer in the region in programs to support inclusion, has not achieved significant results. This may be related to changes in the municipal administration, which hinder the continuity of key processes, such as awareness-raising and teacher training to serve students with diverse abilities.

For example, teams of professionals are often hired to provide support in educational institutions; However, this intervention does not generate a significant impact for various reasons:

- Contracts are intermittent and there is no continuity in the processes that they start, because there is no guarantee that they will renew the contracts every six months and, that, in the case that there is a contract. In this year 2024, the professional supporting inclusion arrived in May, date on which the contract was formalized.
- Most of the professionals are from the health area, but not all have pedagogical training. Between the years 2019 and 2024, the following were assigned to the institution: a psychologist, a social worker, a speech therapist and only 1 graduate.

- The contractors feel pressured to present minutes and evidence, so they are more concerned about filling out forms and collecting attendance signatures than about providing real support to teachers, in carrying out the individual reasonable adjustment plan (PIAR).
- The orientations or training provided to teachers are general. Between 2019 and 2024, emphasis has been placed on training teachers in caring for blind and disabled students, and in 2020, at the request of the principal's office, training was carried out on the subject of intellectual disabilities, which was guided within the term of one hour by a professional from the inclusion team hired by the municipal education secretariat of Tuluá.

At the national and local levels, in the integrated enrollment system (SIMAT), all children from different institutions must be registered and characterized according to their stratum, ethnicity, type of population, age, disability or exceptional talent, among others. Although each establishment, including the Aguaclara Educational Institution in the municipality of Tuluá, Valle, knows who and how many boys or girls enter the classroom with diverse abilities, there are no strategies, resources, and much less, adequate teacher training to teach a child with an intellectual or psychosocial disability. There are students who have graduated from 11th grade without knowing how to read or write; cases have occurred in several years in which children and young people learn to live with their classmates, but do not develop cognitive skills, nor is there any progress in their academic processes, so they go from year to year through coexistence; in terms of written production, they dedicate themselves to transcribing and perfecting their spelling, but they do not understand what they write, and their classmates sometimes give them copies of their assignments out of solidarity.

Table 1. Statistics of students characterized in simat municipality of Tuluá

Year	Disability	Intellectual	Psychosocial (mental)	Physics	Multiple	Low vision	Blindness	Autistic	Total
2022	# students	563	88	24	152	27	24	15	913
2023	# students	450	73	19	133	14	10	25	737

Source: own elaboration

Table 2. Statistics of students characterized in simat Aguaclara Educational Institution

Year	DISCAPACIDAD	INTELLECTUAL	MENTAL-PSICO	FISICA	MULTIPLE	SISTEMICA	VOZ Y H. V.	BAJA	CEGUERA	TEA	TOTAL
2019 (OCT 30)	# ESTUDIANTES	133	6	4	20	11	13	4	3	0	194
2020 (NOV 05)	# ESTUDIANTES	111	4	5	13	ELIMINADA DEL SIMAT	1	3	0	137	
2021 (MAR 31)	# ESTUDIANTES	105	5	6	15	ELIMINADA DEL SIMAT	1	1	1	134	
2022 (MAR 02)	# ESTUDIANTES	86	5	6	16	ELIMINADA DEL SIMAT	0	1	1	115	
2023 (MAR 31)	# ESTUDIANTES	67	3	2	13	ELIMINADA DEL SIMAT	0	1	2	88	
2024 (MAR 31)	# ESTUDIANTES	56	4	1	17	ELIMINADA DEL SIMAT	0	0	1	79	

Source: own elaboration

It is important to mention that there are 18 official educational institutions that provide educational services and have students with special learning abilities; probably, some do not have enough places or do not receive them to have fewer commitments and so that they do not take state tests on their behalf.

Thus, comparing the statistics, it is observed that the Aguaclara educational institution is one of those that has more students characterized with special learning abilities and in this case with a percentage of 15.27% in 2022 and 14.88% in 2023 of the total population characterized with intellectual disabilities in the municipality of Tuluá.

Some teachers consider that this was not the work for which they were appointed and that it is difficult to serve students with any type of diverse ability, so they suggest that students be served in special centers, not in the regular classroom, also arguing that there are too many students in a classroom to dedicate only to a few. Similarly, each child must be given a PIAR, which defines, among other aspects, the expected learning according to their

abilities and the evaluation criteria. However, on many occasions, what is proposed in these plans is not reflected in practice or does not respond to the specific needs of each student.

Frequently, activities are designed that are not related to the topics or, on the contrary, the same activities are programmed for everyone, without making the pertinent adjustments according to the diversity of abilities. This situation may be due to the lack of appropriation of the topic and the lack of support to guide teachers in this process. In addition, the responsibility has fallen on school counselors, who, due to their multiple functions, do not have enough time to guarantee effective implementation.

From these approaches, the following research question arises:

From what pedagogical-didactic and normative foundations is it possible to structure a teacher training program that encourages the development of writing in students with intellectual disabilities?

2. Methods

This qualitative research is assumed to be a complex, systematic and rigorous process that allows reflection on educational practices in historical and social action, generating its own scientific criteria in search of creating and/or applying strategies to intervene and transform real contexts. It is part of the critical paradigm, according to the classification developed by Jiménez and Serón (1992) based on the contributions of Habermas and from the practical interest with an interpretive hermeneutic approach:

Practical interest, which provides knowledge that serves to understand and clarify the conditions of meaningful communications and dialogues, generates knowledge in the form of interpretive understanding, capable of informing and guiding practical judgment. The means to construct knowledge is the interpretation of the language of meanings. In this case, it is about the hermeneutic or interpretive sciences. (p.121)

According to Ñaupas, et al, (2014), Martínez, et al (2022) and Martínez (2024), qualitative research is interpretive; that is, it is based on a hermeneutic conception, its collection methods allow it to access data to be observed, described and interpreted. Its application has been developed preferably in the social sciences, and its interest is not to measure the component variables of a social phenomenon, but to understand it, to interpret it.

The research was carried out at the Aguaclara Educational Institution of the municipality of Tuluá, Valle del Cauca, located in the Aguaclara district, in a rural context with a socioeconomic stratum between 1 and 2 and displaced population and to boys and girls from the Wounaan Phobor García council.

The institution has 6 educational centers and provides service to a population of more than 1,500 students from preschool, primary basic, secondary basic and technical secondary levels.

The educational institution employs 9 administrators, 5 teaching directors, 78 classroom teachers, 2 guidance teachers, and 1 PTA tutor teacher, of which 6 are preschool teachers, 31 are primary school teachers, and 41 are secondary school and high school teachers, from whom a representative sample will be taken for the development of the research. The majority of the teachers have a degree and some have a master's degree in some area of education, 56 women and 22 men between the ages of 28 and 69.

In order to meet the proposed objectives and the particularities of the study, the following phases are proposed:

Table 3. Procedure

PHASES	PROCEDURE
I	Review of the state of the art, a tour of various investigations on educational inclusion, teacher training, development of written production and normative references.
II	Design and validation of research strategies (questionnaire and focus groups)
III	Socialization of the project and informed consent of teachers participating in the research process.
IV	Application of questionnaire to participating teachers.

V	Conducting focus groups with participating teachers
VI	Design of an intervention proposal based on the diagnosis, the UDL and the Didactext model, in addition to the use of cognitive, metacognitive and motivational strategies.
VII	Development of an intervention proposal with primary school teachers at the Aguaclara Educational Institution in the municipality of Tuluá.
VIII	Observation and recording of the proposed activities and situations that arise during the development of the intervention and research.
IX	Description of results obtained in the implementation of the intervention proposal
X	Conclusions and recommendations that arise through reflection on the development of the intervention proposal and research.

Source: own elaboration

For the collection of information and development of research, the following research strategies are used:

Questionnaire.

For Bisquerra (1989) it consists of a more or less extensive set of questions or issues relevant to the trait, characteristic or variables that are the object of study.

The elaboration of questionnaires to carry out surveys requires a technique and some requirements if we want to ensure the representativeness of the data collected. The design of the questionnaire must be clear and unambiguous.

Field Diary.

Vásquez (2002) presents it as a tool for research, which participates in narration and reflection: as a diary it is related to personal, intimate and subjective writing, putting daily events into writing and as a field, it is related to a written mediation that collects or resumes a long tradition from painting and art to ethnography. It is about taking a record of an exteriority, outlining it, retaining it in its essential lines.

Observation.

“Observation is the process of knowing the factual reality, through the direct contact of the knowing subject and the object or phenomenon to be known, through the senses, mainly sight, hearing, touch and smell” (Ñaupas, 2014, p. 201).

Focus Group.

Ruiz (2019) states that it is traditionally understood as a way of collecting qualitative data, which essentially involves involving a small group of people in a discussion or informal group discussions, focused on a topic or a series of specific topics. Their purpose is to record how participants elaborate their reality and experience as a group, like every communicative act, it has a cultural, social context; and then the researcher must give priority to understanding these communicative contexts.

The focus group is proposed for this research since a teacher training process is proposed around inclusive practices and written production, where it is important to know the perception that educational actors have regarding the topic.

Documentary Review.

This research strategy is of great support for the collection of data in the present research, taking into account Valencia's (2015) approach on its usefulness:

It allows to identify previously developed research, the authors and their discussions; to outline the object of study; to build starting premises; to consolidate authors to elaborate a theoretical base; to make relationships between

works; to track research questions and objectives; to observe the aesthetics of the procedures (approach methodologies); to establish similarities and differences between the works and the ideas of the researcher; to categorize experiences; to distinguish the most addressed elements with their observational schemes; and to specify unexplored areas.

This research project followed the lines of ethical commitments that reflect the social responsibility that any research implies in respect for human dignity, the right to a good name of the participants, the adequate and careful handling of the data and the reliability and veracity of the research process.

As regards the protection of information, the privacy and good name of the participating teachers are respected at all costs; the real names and identifications of those who know the results of the investigation will not be published.

3. Results

The interpretation and analysis of the different stages of the methodological process began with a review of the state of the art, a review of various investigations on educational inclusion, teacher training, development of written production and normative references, and continued with the thematic analysis, which has been a source for identifying study categories. It is expected that this interpretation not only reflects the voice of the participants, but also offers a broader understanding of the context in which the experiences of the teachers at the basic primary level of the Aguaclara I.E. are situated.

The description and analysis of the results of the didactic proposal are presented from the implementation of a training program with teachers at the basic primary level of the Aguaclara educational institution in the municipality of Tuluá Valle del Cauca, Colombia, through

Six (6) study categories:

Category 1: Inclusion

Inclusive education is a dynamic process that requires changes in teaching methodologies and teacher training. The implementation of inclusive strategies not only improved the teaching and learning process, but also promotes a school environment that is respectful of and in diversity.

The training program has made it possible to raise awareness among primary school teachers at the Aguaclara Educational Institution and to help them understand that inclusive education goes beyond simply talking about integrating or receiving children or young people with learning disabilities to provide an educational service; it implies that the school and the institutions that are part of it must become aware and inclusive, recognizing and supporting vulnerable populations and, although a specific population was focused on, educational inclusion is not limited to disabilities, but rather encompasses the diversity and individual needs of each person.

It is not about guiding everyone in a homogeneous way, but about providing each person with what they really need. Thinking that the student should adapt to the group or the school is not an inclusive position; on the contrary, the task is to eliminate the barriers that prevent learning and participation; It is the school that must adapt to the needs of the student.

Promoting inclusive education requires not only a change in pedagogical practices, but also a sustained commitment on the part of teachers, guidance counselors, tutors and school directors to adapt and evolve paradigms regarding inclusive education.

Category 2: Intellectual disability

During the development of the training program, it was evident that expressions such as “little sick person”, “mentally retarded”, “the special child”, “the crazy one”, “the one with special needs” have gradually disappeared from the institutional context, highlighting the importance of constantly using the appropriate terminology on differential learning capacities and in this case intellectual disability or diversity. The elimination of derogatory terms indicates a move towards greater sensitivity and respect towards students with intellectual disabilities, which is essential to promote a positive and updated educational environment in accordance with the concept of

intellectual disability proposed by Schalock, Luckasson and Tassé (2021) and differential learning capacities cited by Ruiz (2021)

Category 3: Regulatory Framework

This category was evident during the development of the intervention proposal designed and applied; the importance of identifying, recognizing and applying current regulations regarding education in general, inclusion and teacher training is highlighted. Although it is not easy to memorize and/or reference all the laws, decrees, resolutions, conventions and other documents that regulate education, inclusive education, the teachers of the Aguaclara Educational Institution have been willing to know and apply it, a process that requires feedback and permanent reminder.

Category 4: Didactics.

During the development of the program, spaces for discussion and contributions were established, in which they agreed that the exchange of experiences and proposals within the teaching group. This collaborative learning not only strengthens trust between teachers, but also creates an environment conducive to planning interdisciplinary projects that enrich classroom practices. The teachers expressed their agreement with sharing their experiences and experiences among peers.

Regarding Universal Design for Learning (UDL), external entities and support professionals hired by the Ministry of Education had conducted extensive training, highlighting its importance. This meant that teachers had prior knowledge when addressing it, which meant that it was a more dynamic process and emphasis was placed on the activation of neural networks, strategic networks, guidelines and verification points for UDL learning, and thus being able to improve pedagogical practice, not only in the area of language, but in all areas of knowledge.

While the DIDACTEXT model was new to the group of teachers, they made associations with other writing models and demonstrated acceptance by explaining their rationale, as well as each of its phases. They also recognized its contribution in the planning and execution of classroom projects that arose from the teacher training program to enhance writing processes in students with intellectual disabilities. The results of the implementation of classroom projects in the focus groups were positive, and the teachers proposed to continue and improve them.

Category 5: Teacher Training

From the beginning of the program, teachers demonstrated a willingness to learn. The teachers under investigation recognize that the process of unlearning and at the same time learning and recognizing theoretical references, concepts, regulations, teaching strategies and sharing pedagogical experiences on educational inclusion can be complex, which requires not only awareness, but also ongoing training and practices accompanied by willingness, attitude, motivation, commitment to education, collaborative work and the strengthening of learning communities by levels and areas, which can also help reduce the resistance that some might experience to changes in their methodologies.

Commitment was also highlighted and emphasis was placed on the value of a teaching director being on the path to promoting spaces for the ongoing training of teachers, with pedagogical, didactic and normative bases and foundations, which means that each teacher can feel supported in their effort to improve the teaching and learning process.

Category 6: Written Production

During the implementation of the program, a presentation was made on writing, writing processes and a proposal to implement the Didactext model. It was indicated that it was initially focused on the production of academic texts and that although in 2014 it was implemented for the writing of expository and narrative texts, it would be the first time that it would be applied in the development of intervention proposals to enhance the writing of students with intellectual disabilities, which became novel because it was also addressed from an institutional need based on a real and concrete problem, the difficulties presented in classroom practices, the experiences lived with students and parents, the importance of students with differential learning abilities to write and feel included in the classroom. It should be noted that the results were positive and at the same time it is highlighted that one of

the groups of focused students where the intervention was carried out was from a multigrade classroom, it was made up of students with differential learning abilities, including intellectual abilities, and at the same time they belong to an indigenous council.

It was shown that projects can be carried out where each and every student can participate from their abilities and strengthen in this case writing through the proposal of narrative text and emotions; without feeling excluded with assigned activities different from those of the others, according to Echeita (2015) who emphasizes that inclusive education must address the needs of all students, not only those with learning difficulties and proposes that the classroom should be a space where all students have the same opportunities.

4. Discussion and Conclusions.

Understanding that the main objective of this research proposes a teacher training program to enhance the development of writing skills of students with intellectual disabilities, it is important to highlight that the teachers demonstrated a good attitude and willingness to participate not only in the research process by signing and expressing their consent, but also voluntarily agreeing to be part of the training program designed and implemented.

The research shows a defined structure that sensitizes and empowers teachers of the Aguaclara Educational Institution at the basic primary level from each of their roles, profiles and competencies on the possibility of promoting the development of writing of students with intellectual disabilities, demonstrating the importance of being promoters, facilitators and mediators of an inclusive education, in accordance with the UNESCO approach where it establishes that one of the objectives of inclusive education is to achieve that "teachers and students feel comfortable with diversity and perceive it not as a problem, but as a challenge and an opportunity to enrich the ways of teaching and learning" (UNESCO, 2005, p.14).

As a result of the development of the research and at the same time of the training program with the teachers of the Aguaclara I.E. it can be said that it is possible to promote the development of writing of students with intellectual disabilities from pedagogical-didactic and normative foundations where the need for teacher training programs to be continuous and sustained over time and that inclusion is not a parallel curriculum, that there is no magic formula or recipe, since everyone has different ways of teaching and learning, the dynamics occur in context, it is about improving in praxis and generating favorable learning environments where everyone can be and learn.

The research shows that it is possible for teachers at the Aguaclara Educational Institution at the primary basic level not only to understand from the theoretical concepts referenced by authors such as Ruiz (2021) about what it means to talk about inclusion and differential learning capacities, and the intellectual disability proposed by Schalock, Luckasson and Tassé (2021), but also from the attitude and implementation of didactic strategies that can be developed in the classroom with the characterized students. In addition, appropriate vocabulary and terminology are being implemented, which demonstrate respect, empathy and commitment in inclusive processes.

Regarding historical and current regulations at the international and national levels, it was observed that, although there had already been approaches with some decrees, there had not been a space in the institution to speak in detail about what is intended with each resolution, decree, law or convention in favor of inclusive education. However, it will not be enough, since it is necessary to include in daily life not only the names and years of a regulatory framework, but also to appropriate it in such a way that its application becomes a habit.

Regarding didactics, the results of the research respond to its actions and objectives set forth by different authors, including Camps (2001), such as the transformation of knowledge, teaching practice; training teachers, innovating in language teaching and researching in areas of the subject. It was evident that through the teacher training program, teachers designed and implemented didactic interventions based on theoretical and normative references; as well as models such as UDL (Universal Design for Learning) and DIDACTEXT (2015), which become tools that make possible didactic transposition, a better teacher-student relationship, a transformation of practices in search of continuous improvement in the teaching and learning processes, taking into account the importance of culture, the individual and the cognitive, social, structural and contextual implications that

surrounds the school and the student, contributing to the promotion of inclusive education and empowerment in this case, of writing processes. The proposed strategies not only aim to meet the needs of all students, but also promote a school environment that values diversity, which is essential in the Aguaclara educational institution, in the groups where they are implemented.

The ongoing training of teachers at the Aguaclara educational institution can become a key tool to advance towards inclusive education, where all students have the opportunity to learn and develop fully with or without differential learning abilities, with or without a disability characterization.

The learning communities made up of grade teams have shown that resistance to change can be reduced, that collaborative work not only strengthens trust between teachers, but also creates an environment conducive to mutual support, for planning interdisciplinary projects and at the same time to enrich classroom practices.

The implementation of the Didactext model in teaching writing to students with intellectual disabilities has proven to be an innovative and effective strategy, through the production of narrative texts, the specific needs of a diverse group of students were addressed, including those in a multigrade classroom with differential learning abilities. The positive results obtained not only reflect the success of the program, but also highlight the importance of inclusion and the active participation of all students in the educational process. This study shows that it is possible to develop teaching proposals that respond to the realities and challenges of the classroom, promoting an environment where each student can express their emotions and thoughts through writing.

The proposed objectives were met through the development of the research and the phases proposed in the methodology, which allows us to propose that it is possible to structure and implement a teacher training program that encourages the development of writing in students with intellectual disabilities from pedagogical-didactic and normative foundations, in response to the research question that arose from a problem and a need in a real and concrete context of an official educational institution, which is why it can be concluded that the research has had satisfactory results and especially in what corresponds to the scope of the teacher training program to enhance the writing processes of students with intellectual disabilities.

It is recommended to continue the implementation of the teacher training program at other educational levels and to invest in different educational contexts, that is, other public or private institutions, especially in classrooms with students with differential learning abilities. It is advisable to conduct additional research to evaluate the long-term impact of these interventions on the academic and emotional development of students. In addition, it is suggested to promote the continuous training of teachers in inclusive and adaptive methodologies that allow them to meet the diverse learning needs, thus ensuring that the Institutional Educational Project is strengthened and at the same time that all students can fully benefit from their educational process. Therefore, collaboration and support with parents and communities is also essential to create a more inclusive and enriching educational environment.

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