

Article

Covid-19 Pandemic Literacy Learning and Intervention Methods.

Aprendizaje de Lectoescritura en la Pandemia Covid-19 y Métodos de Intervención



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Abstract

This paper identifies through social mapping a specific problem observed and intervened through participatory action research related to the learning processes in reading and writing of children in second grade of an educational institution. The main objective was to understand the academic strategies and tools used by families during the COVID 19 pandemic and to document the intervention methods to address the problems found in the territory under study. A bibliographic review was conducted in indexed databases, in order to document the theories, categories and variables that make up the subject under study, in order to implement participatory action research within social mapping and ways to implement in the classroom the educational methods explored. Within the results, the lack of knowledge on the part of the guardians and parents in teaching-learning strategies from home through a technological medium is evidenced.

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As a main conclusion, the process of identification and analysis of results allows the development of more viable and didactic pedagogical strategies to be used in the classroom and by parents at home in order to strengthen students' reading and writing skills.

Keywords: social mapping, participatory action research, literacy, territory, Covid-19 pandemic.

Resumen

El presente escrito identifica a través de la cartografía social una problemática puntual observada e intervenida mediante la investigación acción participativa relacionada con los procesos de aprendizaje en lectura y escritura de niños y niñas de grado segundo de una Institución Educativa. El principal objetivo fue comprender las estrategias académicas y herramientas utilizadas por las familias durante la pandemia del COVID 19 y documentar los métodos de intervención para abordar la problemática encontrada en el territorio objeto de estudio. Se realizó una revisión bibliográfica en bases de datos indexadas, con el fin de documentar las teorías, categorías y variables que componen el tema objeto de estudio, con el fin de poner en marcha la investigación acción participativa dentro de la cartografía social y las formas de implementar en el aula de clase los métodos educativos explorados. Dentro de los resultados se evidencia la falta de conocimiento por parte de los acudientes y padres de familia en estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje desde casa a través de un medio tecnológico. Como principal conclusión se da el proceso de identificación y análisis de resultados, permite desarrollar estrategias pedagógicas más viables y didácticas para ser utilizadas en el aula y por padres de familia en el hogar a fin de fortalecer la lectura y escritura de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: cartografía social, investigación acción participativa, alfabetización, territorio, pandemia de Covid-19.

Introduction

The year 2020 began with the news that a new virus called Covid-19 from the city of Wuhan, China, was spreading by leaps and bounds throughout the world. The seriousness of this virus led the World Health Organization to declare it a global pandemic. In Colombia, the Ministry of Health (2020) reported the first case of Covid-19 on March 6, 2020, since then, the Colombian government has taken

several measures to prevent the accelerated spread of the virus, including, closing airports, limiting land mobility and closing all types of commerce. According to the measures taken by the Colombian government with the mandatory national quarantine given with the Decree 457 of 2020 by the Presidency of the Republic, 2020, and by which instructions were given under the health emergency generated by the pandemic of the Coronavirus COVID-19 and the maintenance of public order.

This situation affected multiple scenarios of people's lives, as was the case of the educational sector that migrated its classes to virtual areas, a situation about which MINITIC (2020) highlighted the following important aspects:

This emergency has changed everyone's life. We have had to transform habits, know and take better advantage of technology and connectivity, which have shown us that they are the best tools for equity. Therefore, we have developed different actions to meet the needs of students and teachers; we enabled the "Colombia Aprende" portal (Ministry of ICT, 2020).

In this regard, Hurtado Talavera, (2020), has evidenced a series of consequences that have affected the normal learning process, such as:

The technical limitations of not having good internet access, not having a modern computer that allows the student to use all the necessary platforms for learning, distractions by students in their classes, sometimes because they are in noisy or problematic environments (p. 2).

Likewise, the way in which parents also changed the way they related to their children is also subject to analysis, since they were at home much more, being closer to their educational processes. This is why, for many parents, raising their children during the confinement of the pandemic has been difficult, since confinement can be a complicated situation, especially when it is accompanied by routines that they used to do outside the home, such as studying. Gadermann (2021) states that:

During the pandemic, many parents have experienced increased pressures and erosions in social supports as, globally, school and daycare closures and the disruption of after-school activities have added to the pressure on parents to balance responsibilities, including becoming the sole providers of supervision and education

for their children, all while experiencing increased financial and emotional stress. (pg. 1)

Because of the above, many parents did not have the necessary tools to accompany their children in academic subjects and the consequences have been observed, in the case of the second grade 201 and 202 of the Educational Institution Antonio Ricaurte of Puerto Salgar, Cundinamarca, since upon returning from classroom education different academic difficulties were evidenced, specifically in reading and writing processes, as parents failed to find appropriate strategies for their children to achieve skills such as: developing fine motor skills, phonological awareness knowledge the letters of the alphabet (sound and stroke), their communicative intention to produce messages and texts.

In view of this situation, a diagnostic evaluation of the students was performed, and the support teacher was informed and indicated that a report should be made to the disability entity UAI of the municipality. There they were evaluated by specialists and as a result, they do not present any type of learning difficulty, it refers to lack of pedagogical support and low dedication to the educational process. This situation affects the development of the subjects of the grade and the process of development of the topics that have the classroom plan for each academic period, because in each one there is a percentage of learning achievements that the child must reach in order to be promoted to the next grade, since a student enrolled in second grade must read fluently, understand the readings and his writing must be accurate without spelling, since in second grade the spelling rules must be strengthened.

Now, based on the fact that according to the techniques and instruments for the collection of information such as the focus group and the observation carried out in the framework of this study, many parents did not have enough tools to accompany their children in academic matters during the Covid-19 pandemic, in addition to the fact that it was identified that this problem affected the academic performance of the students under analysis, and that these results, In addition, it was identified that this problem affected the academic performance of the students under analysis, and that these results, regarding the low academic level, demand alternatives and teaching-learning strategies to overcome such educational and socio-demographic barriers of the territory, with the understanding that

situations such as taking classes from home with the help of technology and the Internet during the pandemic, was daily news since 2020, and that as the months went by became topics to be developed within important meetings in major governments, this in order to discuss the best way to address this political, social, economic and in this case educational challenge.

In this order of ideas, as a result of the collection of information, sufficient parameters were obtained within the review carried out to conduct an investigation through the action and participation of this latent problem, which in the same sense revolves around the question: What were the reading-writing tools implemented by parents during the Covid-19 pandemic and in turn the methods of intervention to address the problems encountered?

The answer to the question posed above is based on the premise that, although the Ministry of Education is responsible for ensuring an inclusive and quality education system that contributes to the comprehensive and lifelong learning of people and the development of the country, through the formulation and implementation of policies, standards and regulations, from kindergarten to higher education (Ministry of Education, n.d.), everything related to education on pandemic issues and what continued after it, has been a challenge for parents, teachers and students.

Now, a first approach to this problem can begin by taking into account that the faculties at national and local level for the facilitation of teaching-learning strategies in Colombia, present an evident lack in the approach of methods and strategies to be implemented in the educational instructions that have been affected by the low academic performance of their students, since the educational model proposed in the country during and after the sanitary contingency, in which the educational institutions are immersed, generate tensions at the time of clarifying which is the way to regulate teaching, with the help of methods, strategies and study habits to be used both at home and in the classrooms.

The above, taking into account that constitutionally and legally and in accordance with the provisions of Article 67 of the Political Constitution of Colombia, it is established that education is a right of the people and a public service that has a social function and that it seeks access to knowledge, science, technology, and other goods and values of culture, in addition to the fact that the Nation and the

territorial entities will participate in the management, financing and administration of state educational services. In addition, the inspection, surveillance and control of education are the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education with the help of the Office of Inspection and Surveillance of the Quality of Education, which is why the territory selected in this study should also be recognized within the mechanisms or routes offered by the State in terms of the provision of educational services that safeguard the pedagogical quality that is currently lacking.

All of the above is supported when the State regulates this practice by stating:

[Its execution comprises a set of operations related to counseling, supervision, monitoring, evaluation and control of the requirements of pedagogy, administration, infrastructure, financing and management for the provision of educational services that guarantee its quality, efficiency and timeliness and allow its users to fully exercise their right to education (Decree 907, 1996, Art. 4).]

The fulfillment of the above, hand in hand with the intervention of research such as this one, will make from participatory action research and social mapping, a way to contribute significant actions within the selected territories regarding academic and pedagogical requirements, also through monitoring, evaluation and control, derived from the academic requirements that ensure their effectiveness and guarantee and allow students to assert their right to education.

In the same way, the following pronouncements are part of the present study, which in a relevant way contribute to the line of research addressed within the three elements to be considered:

Participatory Action Research is actually a broad family that includes different ways of doing research for social change with the participation of people and that has had diverse developments in the world: from Popular Education in Denmark and Latin America to Organizational Learning in the field of business, to Participatory Rural Appraisal or Cooperative Research in the northern hemisphere, to mention just a few. What is important is that all these currents or schools share their orientation towards action, are participatory and are based on knowledge and experience (Zapata et al, 2016, p.7).

Thus, we want to make it clear that the understanding of the concept of participatory action research, allowed in the specific case, in the first instance, to identify a problem, after that to carry out an intervention from knowledge and experience using social-pedagogical mapping to be considered as a way of linking the real territory in culture, intervening in an experiential way influencing interpersonal, social, educational and political relationships; a statement that finds its support when it is stated that "social-pedagogical mapping becomes a very helpful strategy. This is a methodology that any group of teachers, committed to the quality of education and liberation, can carry out. (Barragán et al, 2014, p. 133).

In accordance with the above, and in relation to the concept of social mapping, several authors highlight important aspects such as the following:

Social mapping is a participatory research methodology that invites reflection, organization and action around a specific physical and social space. We refer to the territory as the place where we carry out various daily activities. [...]

To the extent that mapping makes it possible to identify and systematize the representations that a group, community or organization has of a territory, it is useful to advance in the organization, management and defense of this territory. In this sense, our objective with social mapping is to better understand the territory and consolidate a sense of belonging (Vélez et al, 2011, p.9).

Thus, the above theoretical underpinning has served as a guide for the preparation of this document, as explained below during the development of the content.

Materials and methods

For the specific case of this paper, based on the understanding of action research and the identification of the problems briefly described above, a social mapping exercise was carried out by linking three fundamental elements (territory, problems, feelings, representations and concepts), however, prior to this, a bibliographic review of authors was carried out by analyzing documents published at international, national and regional level that were directly related to the three categories of analysis of this paper.

All of the above, taking into account that the problem statement seeks to directly influence the community studied, taking as a reference the tools they used for the acquisition of the reading and writing code at the time of COVID 19, in addition to the fact that the type of research used allows the teacher-researcher to participate in all the processes, activities and strategies proposed, with the understanding that, as Elliot (1993) indicates, this type of research interprets what happens from the point of view of those who act and interact in the problem situation.

The population classified for the sampling is separated into three focal groups, which will be identified during the development of this research based on the academic evaluation given by the school and depending on the student's performance, they are discriminated into three academic levels: low (with grades from 1.0 to 3.0), medium (with grades between 3.0 to 4.0) and high (with grades above 4.0).

Of the 26 students enrolled in grade 201, all of the 24 parents of these students attended the presentation of reports, but only 15 parents signed the authorization form to be part of the focus group to be investigated.

As techniques and instruments for the collection of information: a technique called standard focus groups was used; an instrument that was used to know in a concrete way the perception and understanding of a reality that people have about a problem in a qualitative and evaluable way, according to Ruiz (2013), "the focus group technique is an opinion space to capture the feeling, thinking and living of individuals, causing self-explanations to obtain qualitative data" (s/p).

For the analysis of the data, the results of 8 questions of the information collection instrument were used for the focus groups under study, where qualitative analysis was used through tabulation in Excel and in this way the results were represented in pie charts, for a better understanding of the current situation regarding the tools used in learning during the course of the pandemic by parents. For the development of the action-research, 4 phases were traced, as follows:

Phase I

Preparatory: in this phase it was decided which would be the topic to be investigated based on the problems identified, in addition to the

materials and methods to be used, and the approach to the results to be pursued.

Phase II

Field work: data collection through the application of focus groups with parents in three groups, first group high performance, second group medium performance, third group low performance and as a technique for data collection the observation of students.

Phase III

Data analysis: in this phase, the analysis and interpretation of the data found was carried out in order to express the results and conclusions of the study.

Phase IV

Writing of the report and presentation and final presentation: oral and written, in this final phase an answer is given to the question that guided the investigation and consequently the investigation is culminated, the outline of the writing is elaborated and the final writing is started.

Results

The analysis by means of questions to the parents, discriminating by focal groups the learning techniques or tools, the reading-writing processes and the study habits of their children, allowed to obtain as a result that in effect the parents were not able to find adequate strategies for their children to achieve skills such as: the development of fine motor skills and phonological awareness, knowledge of the letters of the alphabet with respect to their sound and stroke, added to the communicative intention to produce messages and text, this under the understanding that the use of the computer, cell phone and internet becomes the tool most used by parents or guardians for learning from home; 34.38% of those surveyed stated that they use technological elements to develop activities, search for information, connect with teachers or tutors, and make learning more dynamic, since videos, audios and free platforms such as zoom, through the Internet, allow teaching to be more dynamic.

It should be noted that parents stated that prolonged use of the computer or cell phone for more than 2 or 3 hours, causes their children to easily lose their concentration and become distracted,

showing signs of exhaustion from being in front of a computer screen for several hours; Therefore, taking breaks during the study days, making less extensive use of technological devices has an impact on the student to better assimilate knowledge, not to be distracted and become familiar with technology, since nowadays technological tools are more abundant, easily accessible and increasingly used worldwide for distance processes.

An important finding within the surveys conducted is that some parents use more than one teaching tool for their children, and therefore the pedagogical process is more effective and timely, so that the accompaniment of parents, guardian or tutor becomes the second most effective tool when teaching students. Taking into account the population under study (second graders, between 8-11), the accompaniment of an adult is essential in these learning processes, since students at this age are more dispersed, easily lose attention and have little concentration, so the presence of a person who tells them what to do, how to do it, and also the students see the support and time that the parent is dedicating for learning to be effective.

The surveys show that 28.13% of the responses presented this tool as one of the most used at home for their children's learning, evidencing that the mixture of different teaching tools can generate better learning processes in the students, achieving a higher degree of understanding of the reading and writing concepts. A tool that reached 12.5% was to adapt a space in the house, with ambience, desk, school supplies so that the student uses it as a study area and remains familiar with the educational environment of the school, so that his classes are virtual and in this way he feels more comfortable, safe and at ease with the learning process from home.

Other tools used by parents in the learning processes, obtaining 9.8%, were the academic and didactic materials provided by the teacher and the use of an external teacher to continue the training process from home, showing other learning processes suitable for training from home. Sometimes some of these tools, such as an external teacher, are not accessible to all families (due to economic issues), but what it does indicate is that the presence of a family member or tutor/teacher in training processes increases the degree of assimilation of learning in the students since it demonstrates

accompaniment, commitment to the work of teaching, and generates discipline since there is a schedule of activities.

Finally, tools such as teaching by singing, or even using the uniform at home in their place of study were used by parents, demonstrating the great variety of instruments that can be used at home. Another important finding is that the use of several tools at the same time increases the formative process of the student, and in this way generates discipline, organization, motivation, better academic performance and therefore the return to classes is not so complex and traumatic for the student.

On the other hand, the results obtained in relation to the question "How do you observe your child's learning in reading and writing through the virtual classes?" show three main groups, the first one where they rate learning as good, and this is due to the fact that several tools were used at the same time, such as assigning a schedule for homework, being accompanied by a family member, adapting a space in the house, using weekends and technological devices generated a better learning in reading and writing, and also generated academic habits in the children.

The middle focus group shows a better use of learning tools, as seen in the student's academic performance and learning in reading and writing, only the accompaniment by the family and the technological tools are enough to achieve good academic results and more from a work at home. It is necessary to integrate more instruments to improve the student's attention, disposition and participation in their remote study so that their return to class is not affected. Finally, the group discriminated as low, evidences that the little use of tools for their children's learning affected considerably their children's reading and writing.

The use of technology alone in population groups such as the one in this study and the little accompaniment of parents or family members in the educational process is not enough to improve academically, as mentioned above, children at that age do not yet have the capacity to concentrate and pay attention enough to spend several hours on a computer, and additionally family members do not accompany the student to do their homework, or be attentive during virtual classes, and therefore the student is easily distracted and consequently does not have an effective learning process.

In this case, the activity most used (50%) by the parents is the incentive for reading and writing at home, through dictation, planas, reading with drawing or teaching with songs, and the purchase of didactic primers. In second place, with 33.33%, the playful games of spelling, with the alphabet and playful exercises such as the syllabary or graphomotor skills are useful activities at the time of reinforcing the reading and writing processes.

The process of reviewing reading comprehension and reviewing what was learned at school and later at home is the third activity (11.11%) most used by parents in the process of learning to read and write. Finally, sharing with children of the same age is also a tool that can be used at the time of reinforcing reading and writing knowledge; only 5.5% of the responses agree with this process.

Within the results found in the present social mapping exercise, methods and pedagogical strategies that strengthen reading and writing processes in the second grade children under study were also conceptualized within the analyzed territory, since more than 10 methods are known in the teaching of reading and writing, but according to the participatory action research related to the findings found in grade 201, the intervention will focus on three of them as they were found to be adequate to address the problem, which should be documented as shown below:

The Inductive-Deductive Method

The inductive-deductive method proposed by Aristotle as a tool for "research" in the field of science, consists in the first place in the creation of a theoretical body that explains through elementary principles the phenomena to be studied, "induction stage", and in a second part of the process, to deduce general laws to explain the observed phenomena, "deductive stage". (Burgos et al., 2020).

The Global method

These global methods have been applied recently, thanks to Ovid Decroly, a renowned Belgian pedagogue, psychologist, doctor and teacher at the end of the 1890s. The history dates that before 1904, this model was worked at the Institute of Special Education in Brussels directed by this pedagogue; at the beginning, the method was called the method of complete sentences and the Decroly method.

The success of the present method is that the students have a broad knowledge of the vowels and consonants with their possible

combinations, since these are the bases they will have to have in the following step, which is to acquire a pertinent literacy. Since it must concentrate on the syllable, as the only starting reference. The syllabic method has to focus on the construction of syllables in order to consolidate the literacy.

Discussion

After analyzing separately the strategies that strengthen the reading and writing processes of second grade children as a result of the proposed research, it is possible to establish clear and evident criteria and parameters in accordance with what was proposed in the social mapping exercise. Likewise, and in the light of the authors' rationale and the theories examined for each of the methods that can help solve the problem, the following discussion is then generated based on the way in which to intervene in order to contribute together with the parents to strengthen the shortcomings found in the educational processes of the children who served as a sample in this participatory action research.

The problem begins when taking into account the way in which parents changed the way they related with their children in terms of educational processes, since due to the Covid-19 pandemic, they stayed much more time at home. It is for this reason that for many of the parents the upbringing of their children during the confinement was arduous, since isolation was a complicated situation and even more so when it is accompanied by routines that they used to do outside the home, such as studying. In this regard, other authors indicated the following:

The credit system demands responsibility and commitment from the student and the professor to achieve the learning goal, since it involves to a great extent a component of independent work that must be planned by the student and directed by the professor.

It is here where study habits constitute an integrating and facilitating axis of the learning process, since they activate the cognitive, environmental and procedural resources available to the student (Monsalve et al, 2009).

In addition to the above, the accompaniment and integration of family members to the teaching-learning processes is decisive, since education, by focusing on the needs and interests of the child,

establishes a primordial element, in view of the fact that educational and pedagogical practices should focus on the needs of the different academic levels of the students, to support the different physiological, contextual, psychological and behavioral components of the human being.

Likewise, the intervention carried out with the participation of parents and students is the object of analysis within this discussion, so that the latter obtain better grades, given that if parents and teachers work together, they teach more effectively and study habits are strengthened through the construction of a line of communication with them, especially for the case under study, everything related to the strategies and methods so that children can learn to read and write, not only from the teacher but also from their parents or guardians.

This is supported by the following author:

The crucial role of parents in establishing the educability of their children, in facilitating their development and achievement, and in solving educational and developmental problems has been recognized. In addition, the rights and responsibilities of parents to influence educational programs have been emphasized. Parental involvement and education programs continue to grow, and there is now a large and compelling body of research that supports and guides these efforts.(Becher, 1984).

In this order of ideas, all the foundations developed in this paper show that the playful pedagogical strategies that were proposed beforehand were pertinent and relevant to strengthen the methods of intervention in the analyzed problem, because thanks to all the theory with which the research-action was documented, the socialization with the students and parents of the second grade was carried out through the school's mural newspaper and a brochure, the topic of study habits and strategies that can be used both at school and at home.

The above, taking into account that the objective of optimizing the academic performance of all students in the area of language and others, is likewise demonstrated in the survey applied to parents in the data collection techniques in question number 8, which referred to the importance of study habits to promote the processes of reading and writing, a question to which all respondents answered affirmatively.

Therefore, taking into account that this study also revolves around the recognition of a problem of a specific educational group, it is also necessary to mention that social-pedagogical mapping has been consolidating as an effective route to address social problems at the educational level, finding as advantages of this methodology that the different actors can intervene in the processes of social construction of knowledge and, additionally, in the possibilities of transforming their own realities, which is, in the end, the meaning of research and education.

Thus, by trying to enhance reading and writing skills, participatory action research under this precept allows linking social mapping as a tool that provides recognition activities regarding the territory and the community, allowing alliances between the institution, society and the family; and facilitating the teaching practice in Colombia.

Another aspect that is important to mention in this discussion is the need to create continuous links between teacher-family, as it was evidenced that the best combination for the student to perform outstandingly in the reading and writing processes, is the way in which families, regardless of how they are formed, have assertive communicative processes with the students' teachers, added to the shared responsibility of these nuclei to participate in the education of their children, and in this way achieve the expected learning.

In addition to the strategy of continuous links between teacher-family, we found the one proposed by other authors, which is equally appropriate in this paper by highlighting important aspects of collaborative work between students and teachers, such as those mentioned below:

The incorporation of strategies in the educational field offers the opportunity to work in a pleasant and attractive environment; collaborative work among students and between students and teachers is encouraged, strengthening human coexistence. Through the motivation generated by the appropriate strategies, a love for reading and the written practice of language is instilled, an exercise aimed at learning to think about what is read, which refines reading comprehension (Burgos & Rodelo, 2020).

In accordance with what has been indicated above, some authors give an esteemed importance to reading, for example (Barboza et al. 2014) argues that "learning to read is a process that begins before the child enters systematized education and continues throughout life."

(p. 134). On the other hand, according to a Swiss psychologist, biologist and epistemologist:

Development is articulated according to the factors of maturation, experience, transmission and balance, within a process in which biological maturation is followed by the immediate experience of the individual who, being linked to a socio-cultural context, incorporates the new knowledge based on previous assumptions (social transmission), with true learning occurring when the individual manages to transform and diversify the initial stimuli, thus balancing internally with each cognitive alteration (Piaget, 1970).

As has become evident in the development of this research, there are many questions that revolve around the approach of pedagogical strategies that strengthen the reading and writing processes in students to be used by both teachers and parents, as these have become an important ally in promoting study habits that will serve students in all academic areas; therefore, this is an issue that concerns not only the institution, but an entire educational community nationwide.

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