Enhancing story writing through collaborative work: Case study in a Colombian educational institution (2022)

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Abstract The integration of collaborative work in educational processes has proven to be an effective strategy in various fields of knowledge. This study focuses on the writing of stories within the Filadelfia Educational Institution in Caldas, Colombia, with the objective of analyzing the transformations generated by collaborative work in the writing of stories and the development of students’ narrative skills. Such an objective is assumed to be an opportunity for the understanding and application of narrative theory and the basic principles of writing as a communication system. A qualitative route was adopted, involving 40 students from the institution. Data were collected through direct observation, field diaries, and narrative analysis of the texts produced by the participants. The selection of the students was carried out considering an intentional sample with writing skills for the school stage as criteria, and there was informed consent for the research. The findings indicate that students not only improved in their ability to apply the basic principles of writing and story theory, but they were also motivated to actively participate in the reading and writing processes. Collaborative work facilitated the collective construction of knowledge, improved communication between students and teachers, and promoted a dynamic of meaningful and participatory learning. This study concludes that collaborative work is a valuable pedagogical strategy to improve story writing. The results suggest that encouraging interaction and knowledge construction in groups can have a significant positive impact on learning narrative writing. These findings have important implications for the teaching of literature and writing in educational contexts, suggesting the need to integrate collaborative approaches into the curriculum.

Keywords: collaborative work, narrative skill, language

1. Introduction

Schools and colleges worldwide employ various pedagogical techniques and methodologies to strengthen writing skills, a phenomenon also observed, albeit to a lesser extent, in Colombia (De Castro Daza & Niño Gutiérrez, 2014). In this context, one tool to consider comes from the technological field, specifically information and communication technologies (ICT), according to Herrera Cano et al. (2023). Through these technologies, teachers, among other scenarios, can simulate content, while students can consult dictionaries, repositories, and a variety of information in real time, exchange ideas, and review and correct their own texts, thus improving their discourse (Santángelo, 2000).

Another highlighted aspect in this field is the implementation of didactic guides, which are valuable resources for providing clear directions and are the basis for assessing students’ skills and integrating them with those previously described. These resources introduce theoretical concepts at the beginning and then motivate students to apply the acquired knowledge in their writings, following specific guidelines. Among the elements emphasized in writing are the proper use of punctuation, the incorporation of logical connectors, spelling accuracy, mastery of grammatical bases, and the execution of multiple-choice exercises designed to assess their understanding and practical application of the learned content (Sánchez, 2018).

Furthermore, reading is an important facilitator in the teaching of writing. It is common for teachers in the classroom environment to ask students to read a brief text, and subsequently, the students use their own vocabulary and knowledge to imagine what happens to the characters and the situations described, writing an alternative ending. According to Álvarez (2021), this method is effective for assessing the students’ reading comprehension level and their ability to create a narrative based on an initial model. Collaborative work is yielding notable results as a pedagogical strategy to consider. This methodology promotes a process in which writing transcends the individual dimension to become a collective practice. In such a scenario, each participant not only contributes to their own evolution as a reader but also to the development of their peers, thus fostering a mutually enriching learning environment. Velasco (2018), in his research on collaborative work, demonstrated that...
students learn significantly more about writing when they interact and are in the company of their peers, as opposed to being alone and confined to a desk without any type of communicative exchange.

Similarly, Varas and Zariquiey (2019) arrived at comparable conclusions after analyzing the narratives of 12-year-old children who created stories individually versus those who developed short stories in groups. The findings of Varas and Zariquiey (2019) and Velasco (2018) reveal different nuances. Firstly, the collaborative work environment is filled with ideas, interaction, and stimulation. Secondly, it is observed that students with concentration problems find motivation to focus their attention on a specific goal or thought, thanks to the contributions of their peers, resulting in richer literary texts.

Thirdly, the role of the teacher transforms: instead of directing and controlling, they become another learner, stimulating the students’ curiosity and enthusiasm. The current state of the research field should be carefully reviewed, and key publications, especially recent ones, should be cited. The introduction should be comprehensible and connect the points mentioned above with a dynamic flow of reading, making it accessible to scientists outside of the specific research field. Citations should be presented in parentheses, using only the last name of the first author followed by the year, without commas or periods.

To analyze the proposed premises, this study implemented a methodology based on collaborative work to account for the narrative composition processes in seventh-grade students at the Educational Institution of Filadelfia, located in the municipality of Filadelfia, belonging to the northwestern region of the department of Caldas, Colombia. The selection of this methodological approach was based on the prior identification of deficiencies in the students’ writing skills as well as the recognition of the limited effectiveness of traditional pedagogical approaches in contributing to the academic and cultural development of the learners.

Consequently, the research was articulated around the following research question: What transformations do the dynamics of collaborative work induce on the story writing capacity and the development of narrative skills in students at an educational institution? In the context of the previous discussion, the theoretical foundations focus on key concepts such as collaborative work and writing, addressing both their general perspective and their specific application in the creation of narratives. This theoretical approach provides the necessary tools to trace the interpretative and analytical lines that guided the research.

In this sense, collaborative work is recognized as a pedagogical and didactic strategy that promotes learning both inside the classroom and in alternative spaces of educational institutions, including laboratories, sports facilities, gyms, and art studios. Its main attributes include the promotion of participation, interaction, dialogue, mutual support, and the co- construction of knowledge. This approach transforms the learning paradigm, moving from a solitary experience to a collective and collaborative experience.

Revelo et al. (2018), in their study Collaborative work as a didactic strategy for teaching and learning programming: a systematic review of the literature, argue that collaborative work is an integral part of a set of advanced educational techniques that enhance collective learning. This approach surpasses learning methods based on individualism and memorization, fostering a more dynamic and participatory environment for students.

Collaborative work is a process in which an individual learns more than they would on their own because of the interaction among team members who know how to differentiate and contrast their viewpoints, thereby generating a knowledge construction process (p. 12).

Chaljub (2014), in his work "Collaborative Work as a Teaching Strategy at the University," supports the conclusions of Revelo et al. (2014), highlighting that collaborative pedagogy focuses on students building knowledge through reciprocity and participation, as opposed to solitary learning or the mechanical memorization of content. This methodology aims for all members of the educational community, including teachers, administrators, students, and parents, to actively contribute to the knowledge construction process.

For Revelo et al. (2014), constructivism serves as the theoretical foundation of collaborative work. This theory, both cognitive and educational, views knowledge and, therefore, learning as the result of intentional sequences aimed at reinforcing the learning process. Lev Vygotsky, a prominent psychologist and pedagogue, is one of the pillars of this theory. He revolutionized education and psychology in the early twenty-first century with his innovative perspective on learning.

Around 1910, Gestalt psychology overcame atomism by recognizing the importance of the whole, tracing the origins of collaborative work back to the dawn of the twentieth century. This conception is based on understanding the set as an integrated whole and accepting that, in the learning process, not only are the learner’s individual capabilities fundamental, but also the people around them, the context, and the dynamics of the environment.

Towards the second half of the twentieth century, both in the English-speaking and Spanish-speaking realms, collaborative work began to gain ground thanks to Gestalt’s reflections. This led to the gradual implementation of this model in major educational institutions, recognizing its benefits and how it favors the learning of students with difficulties or attention problems.

To frame the meaning of collaborative work, Slavin (2011) formulates four theoretical perspectives, which are:

a. Motivational aspect: highlights the importance of the educator’s objectives being intricately linked to the assigned activities, as this encourages students to engage in the learning process.
b. Social cohesion: based on mutual support among students to facilitate collective learning.

c. Cognitive dimension: involves a reorganization of the students’ mental schemas and their predisposition towards learning, which is essential for achieving meaningful learning.

d. Developmental aspect: refers to the interaction between students of different skill levels in various areas, thus promoting autonomy in learning.

According to Fernández’s (2017) reflections on collaborative work, there are three main pillars:

a. Group formation and cohesion: Fernández (2017) argues that the group’s formation and cohesion represent the synergy that keeps the learning community united, through stages such as presentation, integration activities, trust development, and self-knowledge. From this perspective, Fernández (2017) states that learning naturally emerges from interaction, dialogue, and reciprocal teaching, with the teacher’s guidance at the beginning and evolving towards a dynamic led by the students themselves.

c. Collaborative learning as an educational resource: This approach, according to Fernández (2017), recognizes collaborative work not only as an effective methodology but also as a valuable resource and tool in the educational process, demonstrating its effectiveness and transforming it into an essential element for teaching and learning.

Collaborative work is crucial for motivation, integration, and the development of educational activities. Dillenbourg (2009) emphasizes the need for careful planning before its implementation, suggesting strategies such as defining goals, forming teams, fostering communication, and seeing the teacher as a guide. He recommends methodologies such as the flipped classroom and problem-based learning, as well as promoting debates, self-evaluation, and the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to enrich the educational experience. Santos (2019) highlights the value of ICT in creating safe collaborative environments and boosting interaction and creativity through various tools and activities.

Writing, defined as the act of recording signs and symbols to communicate messages or document events, is a fundamental human activity that reflects interpretations of the world, feelings, and historical events. This symbolic system, as Cassany (2018) points out, enables the expression of ideas and the preservation of history, adapting to various media such as paper, wood, and cloth, among others.

Cassany (2017), in The writing kitchen, highlights the importance of several competencies for writing effectively. Semantic competence, which facilitates the understanding of meanings and senses; syntactic competence, which is essential for organizing words, sentences, and paragraphs; and communicative competence, which results from semantic and syntactic mastery, are all critical in this process.

Additionally, writing involves skills such as knowledge of genre and content, the ability to perform literal, inferential, and critical readings, imagination, and a solid understanding of spelling and orthoepy. In How to Write, Ávila (2018) emphasizes that orthoepy, or the art of thinking correctly, represents a complex challenge in writing because it verifies the text’s coherence and logic.

Its profound antiquity in the origins of writing is acknowledged. Jean (2019), in his study Writing, Memory of humanity, traces its birth to ancient Sumeria, located in what is today Afghanistan and Pakistan, highlighting the rudimentary but effective means of initial registration, such as clay and chisel, for the transmission of messages and documentation of historical events.

Throughout history, writing techniques and procedures have undergone significant evolution, driven by cultures and empires that understood their potential to spread ideas. Among these, the Egyptian civilization stands out for its innovation in recording methods, with papyrus being its most notable contribution. Jean (2019) documented that the Cyperus papyrus plant, native to the Nile’s Mediterranean region, was used to make this material, like a cloth.

Similarly, the Chinese civilization has left an indelible mark on the history of writing, especially in the creation of inks and papers of exceptional quality. Writers composed fundamental Chinese literary works like Journey to the West, The adventures of the monkey king, Investiture of the gods, The romance of the three kingdoms, and Dream of the red chamber using plant-derived inks and brushes of extraordinary fineness. These advancements not only demonstrate the technical skill of Chinese culture in manufacturing materials for writing, but also have a profound impact on the preservation and transmission of knowledge and culture through generations.

Public and private schools, universities, technical institutes, high schools, and nonprofit organizations actively teach writing as a powerful communication tool. In Colombia, according to the Ministry of National Education (MEN), curricula and writing programs are designed, alongside reading, to promote the skill and ensure that most of the population can write. Similarly, events, book fairs, scholarships, and contests invite Colombians to write and express their thoughts. Focusing exclusively on the high school curriculum, specifically in the seventh grade, the Colombian Ministry of National Education emphasizes the importance of students learning to write by acquiring knowledge in grammar, semantics, phonetics, a bit of semiotics, spelling, morphosyntax (topics related to the construction of sentences whose structure is subject + verb + predicate), and reading itself, which teaches them, directly or indirectly, how the greats have written. Gabriel García Márquez is one of the masters of writing studied in high school.

The short story, from the Latin compŭtus, constitutes a genre of brief narrative characterized by a predefined structure: introduction, climax, and resolution. These written productions aim to elicit an aesthetic experience in the reader, evoking feelings such as fear, excitement, intrigue, pursuit, or an introduction to fantastic and unreal worlds.

https://www.malque.pub/ojs/index.php/msj
Roland Barthes, the renowned French linguist and semiotician, has articulated that short stories belong to the universe of literature and the art of verbal expression. They guide the reader through the world imagined by the author and along the path of written expression. Therefore, he posits that the short story is one of the earliest written manifestations aimed at entertaining, educating, and amusing (Barthes, 2014).

Julio Cortázar shares a similar view. Cortázar (2019) suggests in his essay The short story and its Surroundings that the short story is a compact narrative with a structure defined by Aristotle in the 4th century B.C. as beginning, middle, and end. Its distinction from the novel lies in its length, the psychological complexity of its characters, and the impression it leaves on the reader, which is significantly more immediate.

Hence, crafting short stories requires a foundational knowledge of writing (mastery of semantics, grammar, spelling, orthoepy, syntax, and morphology) and an understanding of a set of theories. Esteemed writers such as Horacio Quiroga, Umberto Eco, Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Italo Calvino, among others, have extensively described these in their books, lectures, and talks. Confronting the mentioned authors, it is nevertheless worthwhile to mention some of these principles. Firstly, the theme stands out, or, in other words, what the story will be about. This what can be an adventure, like the tales of Arthur Conan Doyle and Maurice Leblanc, a historical event, or simply an experience deemed worthy of sharing. Then there’s what one wishes to convey (whether it be laughter, emotion, or fear) and lastly, how it will be conveyed (whether through an omniscient narrator, characters, or both). These guidelines result in a good story, one that knows how to captivate the reader and generate a powerful aesthetic experience for the reader or readers.

2. Materials and Methods

For the objective set forth, this study is framed within a qualitative methodology, from a perspective that navigates between the phenomenological and hermeneutic, prioritizing the understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and meanings that students assign to collaborative work in story writing. This approach allows for an immersion into the complexity of group dynamics and the individual development of narrative skills, distinguishing itself from traditional quantitative methodologies by its ability to capture the depth and richness of the social phenomena studied. Following Baena (2017) and Hernández et al. (2016), qualitative research focuses on the analysis of non-numerical data, concentrating on understanding concepts, opinions, experiences, and the meanings attributed by people to their experiences.

2.1. Techniques and instruments

Table 1 summarizes the qualitative methodology employed over the course of a year to analyze the transformations generated by collaborative work in story writing and the development of narrative skills among students. It details the techniques used, the instruments for data collection, and the frequency of their application, providing a comprehensive overview of the research’s methodological approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Data collection instrument</th>
<th>Number of occasions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant observation</td>
<td>Field notes</td>
<td>20 sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Interview guide</td>
<td>40 interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Discussion guide</td>
<td>3 sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field diary</td>
<td>Notebook</td>
<td>Daily use throughout the school year</td>
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Source: Own creation.

2.2. Population and sample

The study focused on 7th-grade students from the Educational Institution of Filadelfia, located in the Filadelfia Municipality, northwestern area of the Caldas Department, Republic of Colombia. The institution, founded in 1948, has an academic community of 645 students, 34 teachers, and two directors spread across three campuses. A non-statistical purposive sample of 40 students, aged between 11 and 13 years, was selected to participate in the study.

2.2.1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The definition of inclusion and exclusion criteria is a considered element in the design of a study and determined the eligibility of participants, ensuring that the selection was aligned with the research objectives and complied with ethical principles, including the safeguarding of the rights and well-being of the subjects investigated.

2.2.1.1. Inclusion criteria
Age: Students aged between 11 and 13 years, belonging to the 7th grade, are considered eligible to maintain uniformity in the level of cognitive and academic development.

Informed Consent: It is an indispensable requirement to have obtained informed consent from the students and, as they are minors, also from their parents or legal guardians. Such consent must reflect an understanding of the research purposes, the activities involved, the expected benefits, and the potential risks or discomforts.

Active Enrollment: Students who are formally enrolled and attend the Educational Institution of Filadelfia regularly are included to ensure a common framework of educational and social references.

Voluntary Participation: Only those students who choose to participate in the study voluntarily, without having been subjected to coercion or pressure by third parties, will be included.

2.2.1.2. Exclusion criteria

Absence of Informed Consent: Students who do not have informed consent both personally and from their parents or legal guardians are excluded.

Regular Non-attendance: Students with a pattern of repeated absences will not be considered suitable, as this could compromise their effective contribution to collaborative work dynamics and data collection.

Withdrawal from the Educational Program: Students who have been dropped or are in the process of being dropped from the Educational Institution of Filadelfia during the development of the study will be excluded, as their participation would not accurately reflect the effect of collaborative work in the planned educational environment.

Limitations for Participation in Group Activities: Students who present restrictions, whether for health reasons or personal decisions, to engage in group activities that require direct interaction and collaboration will be discarded.

2.3. Information analysis strategy

The information was analyzed through narrative analysis, as described by Hernández et al. (2016), focusing on how narrators assemble and sequence events, and how they use language or visual images to convey meaning. This strategy allows for the exploration of the numerous ways to narrate experience and how the choice of these forms significantly contributes to understanding the impact of collaborative work on the development of narrative skills.

2.3.1. Algorithm for narrative analysis

Step 1: Data Preparation. Collection of all narrative texts produced by students during the study period. Digitization of texts (if necessary) to facilitate their analysis.

Step 2: Identification of Analysis Units. Initial reading of the texts to gain a general understanding. Definition of analysis units based on events, language use, and mentioned visual elements.

Step 3: Coding. Development of a coding system based on the key aspects identified, such as themes, language patterns, and visual representations. Application of the coding system to the analysis units.

Step 4: Sequence Analysis. Examination of how events are chronologically or logically organized within the narratives. Identification of patterns in the sequencing of events that reflect the narrative development process.

Step 5: Content Analysis. Detailed analysis of the content to understand how language and images are used to convey meanings. Identification of recurring themes and how these contribute to the development of narrative skills.

Step 6: Interpretation. Synthesis of findings to interpret how collaborative work has impacted the development of narrative skills. Comparison with existing literature to contextualize the results.

Step 7: Documentation and Presentation of Results. Preparation of a detailed report or article presenting the methods, analysis, and interpretations. Inclusion of specific examples from the narratives to illustrate the findings.

Step 8: Reflection and Feedback. Reflection on the analysis process and findings. Discussion of educational implications and suggestions for future research. The Figure 1 presents a concise version of the algorithm used.

![Figure 1 Synthesis algorithm for narrative analysis.](https://www.malque.pub/ojs/index.php/msj)
3. Results and Discussion

The stacked bar chart (Figure 2) presents the gender distribution of the student participants in the research, with 65% being men and 35% women, out of a total of 40 students aged between 11 and 13 years. This breakdown is crucial for understanding the demographic composition of the sample studied in the qualitative research aimed at analyzing the transformations generated by collaborative work in story writing and the development of narrative skills.

From an inferential perspective, the predominance of male students could influence group dynamics and interactions during collaborative work. Differences in interests, communication styles, and collaboration between genders might impact the way stories are developed and narrated, as well as the type of narrative skills that are enhanced through these activities. The composition of the sample provides an opportunity to explore how gender might influence collaborative learning processes and the development of narrative competencies, considering that experiences and perceptions can significantly vary between men and women. This is relevant for interpreting the research findings and generalizing the conclusions of the study.

![Figure 2] Distribution of student biological sex (stacked bar chart).

3.1. About data collection techniques

Participant observation allowed for direct immersion in collaborative work sessions, facilitating the collection of real-time data on student interaction and the creative process. The semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity to delve into individual perceptions and experiences related to group work and the development of narrative skills. Focus groups offered a platform for debate and collective reflection on the collaborative writing process, while the Field diary served as a continuous record of observations, reflections, and remarkable events throughout the study, contributing to data triangulation and a holistic understanding of the phenomena studied.

This methodological approach, combined with specifically selected techniques and instruments, underscores the richness and complexity of collaborative work in story writing and its influence on the development of narrative skills, offering valuable insights into the educational and social dynamics in the school context.

3.2. Literary analysis and interpretation of the written productions by participants in stories

Following the implementation of collaborative work and the recording of specific impressions in the field diary, as well as observing student interactions and analyzing the compositions that were bound and decorated with materials available in the classroom and school storage, two narratives from two distinct groups were selected. These narratives stand out for reflecting a notable change in the realm of writing.

3.2.1. The first narrative

The first story is titled The Village of Eduart and is bound in foam, glued with ribbons, and decorated with vignettes and drawings (the aim was for the young people to aesthetically intervene in the productions to achieve greater participation and an even more committed group work). This is the text:

“Two thousand years ago, there lived a woman named Liliana, who had a son named Eduart, the ruler of a village called Indonesia. It was a rich village, famed for its gold crafts.

One day, a man arrived who was nicknamed Rasputin because he was very ambitious and wanted to take over the entire place to sell gold, but Eduart would stop him.

After a few days, Rasputin began to work dissolving gold, but he stole a portion of the gold he was given. He started to bribe the other workers to turn them against Eduart.”
Eduart decided to hire a few soldiers and had a high-security prison built to lock up Rasputin, but Rasputin was a cunning man and would not be caught so easily. Rasputin devised another plan to steal all the gold and decided to kidnap Eduart’s mother, which failed in the attempt, and he was caught. They took him to prison and held him there for forty days; but after getting the chance, he escaped from prison and left with some friends he had made in the gold-dissolving job. A long time after Rasputin and his friends had left, the village of Indonesia received news that Rasputin had been murdered along with all his friends (subject a, 2021).”

Upon analyzing the story The Village of Eduart, it is discernible that the student has grasped the narrative structure of a story: introduction, development, and conclusion. The introduction focuses on the description of Eduart’s village, a place rich in material resources, of great antiquity, whose inhabitants excel in crafts and artisanship in precious metals, particularly gold.

The development narrates the conspiracy orchestrated by the story’s villain, Rasputin, who, according to the authors, aims to plunder and seize control of the natural resources of Eduart’s village. The attempt to thwart him falls on the protagonist himself, who seems like a kind-hearted, brave, and determined young man. He is portrayed as the legendary hero who decides to free his compatriots or avert a catastrophe.

As for the conclusion, it bears the hallmark of classic tales: the triumph of good over evil. To depict this battle, the authors explain that Eduart decides to build a prison to confine the villain of his story, who, unfortunately, is a cunning and elusive being. Nevertheless, the villain manages to escape and dies at the hands of an unspecified third party in the narrative, inviting the reader to imagine the causes and circumstances of Rasputin’s death.

This structure is precisely what Aristotle established in his rhetoric and poetics. According to the philosopher and the numerous commentators who have studied his theory, the introduction constructs an event or circumstance that acts as an entryway into a reality imagined by the author. It can be the description of a person, place, object, experience, idea, or any element that entices the reader to dive into the reading. In this case, it corresponds, as mentioned earlier, to the portrayal of a village and some characteristics of a woman who, as the story unfolds, turns out to be the protagonist’s mother.

Both classic and modern tales maintain this structure. For example, the stories of Edgar Allan Poe (1845) are built under this model, which persists to this day and is only questioned by postmodern literature. A case that long fascinated critics was The Murders in the Rue Morgue. Initially, news of cruel and ruthless murders in the Rue Morgue without an apparent explanation is reported. Then, clues reveal that an ape escaped from a circus and, mimicking its master, killed its victims. This narrative architecture is repeated in The Village of Eduart the result of collaborative work and the socialization of story principles, knowledge previously unknown to the authors.

Moreover, aspects such as spelling, orthoephy, syntax, and grammar were reviewed in the story’s writing. The findings indicate a significant improvement in these aspects, overcoming problems previously identified thanks to collaborative work and contributions from peers, who pointed out certain errors or acknowledged successes. The most critical difficulties related to the accentuation of words, the proper use of punctuation, and confusion between gender and number.

Another interesting aspect of the narrative is the source of inspiration for the authors. Given its context, it is inferred that they fed the story with their own experiences, considering that Filadelfia is a town that has been a victim of violence and attacks by lawless groups for years. In this sense, Rasputin could symbolize those same armed groups that have claimed the lives of hundreds of townspeople. However, his death, at the hands of an undisclosed actor in the narrative, could represent the enforcement of the law and the restoration of institutional order.

3.2.2. The second narrative

Alebaisa, The Supernatural Girl is the second narrative, more fantastical as it chronicles the adventures of a girl in a rest home and how her life unfolds until her confinement ends. The story’s structure also derives from Aristotelian story composition and French structuralism, which views narratives as wholes intimately connected to their constitutive parts.

The story begins when Alebaisa’s parents discover her ability to see ghosts and deceased individuals, leading them to admit her to a sanatorium under the assumption she suffers from a personality disorder. This admission is traumatic and frightening for the protagonist. However, there she befriends a feline, Mr. Black, and another patient named Lebiral.

The plot, or middle section, unfolds with events in the sanatorium involving Alebaisa, Lebiral, and Mr. Black, especially after the administration of a certain medication. The most significant event is a journey, dreamlike or otherwise, to a labyrinth where the protagonist and the feline find themselves at an apparent crossroads, culminating in their departure from the sanatorium and Alebaisa’s admission to university.

The story concludes by noting that both friends reunite at 23 years old in academia and decide to return to the rest clinic as nurses, not as patients. This represents a successful conclusion where the protagonists fulfill their dreams and achieve their projects, with Alebaisa becoming a successful business administrator and her affinity with the devil disappearing.

This narrative structure, based on Aristotle, typically includes a stressful event (beginning=confinement), factors leading to the main character’s catharsis (middle= sanatorium experience), and overcoming the adventure (conclusion=return to reality).
normal life). This format is common in fairy tales and the stories of Jacob and Wilhem Grimm, German scholars who leveraged German folklore to create numerous popular tales still beloved today.

The same structure is used by Wilkie Collins in his works, including A Terribly Strange Bed, about a gambler who enters a gambling house and, through a bizarre set of circumstances, loses consciousness and experiences a series of phenomena leading him to believe he is under a spell. However, he fortunately discovers he has been poisoned and manages to escape before a mechanically operated bed designed to crush bodies can kill him.

Similarly, Colombian writers have utilized this structure in their narratives. In Manicomio de Dioses Orlando Rivera Mejía (2008) crafts a collection of micro-stories that, despite their brevity, do not deviate from this perspective, as seen in "Short Circuit," which describes how a robot contracts an electrical transmission disease after intimate contact with an unknown computer.

Many authors, both well-known and lesser known, have employed this narrative framework established by Aristotle centuries ago, which continues to be a paradigm for short story writing and the principles taught for story composition. However, some writers have broken away from this dynamic, seeking to refresh the genre. For instance, Robert Louis Stevenson, in The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, introduces a narrative flow that diverges from the traditional beginning, middle, and end, presenting a revolutionary narrative sketch where the story's beginning is only discernible midway and at the conclusion of events narrated by Stevenson himself.

Similarly, Czech writer Milan Kundera, in his novels, adopts a postmodern structure as termed by literary critics. Firstly, because the reader encounters the novel's end at the beginning. Secondly, temporal leaps create paradoxes and a break from the Aristotelian theory's typical temporal linearity. Thirdly, instead of a common thread traversing the story, various plots intersect in different spaces. Lastly, the reader can only construct the story after finishing it, not before.

Furthermore, in terms of technique, the authors of Alebaisa the Supernatural Girl significantly improved spelling, coherence, and cohesion in the narrative. Despite some grammatical errors, they overcame confusion between subject, verb, and predicate, shaping a story where characters' actions, verbal tenses, and unique writing traits were identifiable.

The findings broadly indicate an enhancement in story writing, attributable to the dissemination of theoretical knowledge and student interaction. These results align with the research conducted by Santos et al. (2009), Morales (2019), and Cárdenas et al. (2016), who argue that it is feasible to intervene in the educational environment and learning process when there is interest, a deep understanding of educational issues, and didactic tools that can improve both teaching and student learning. In this instance, collaborative work functioned as a catalyst for group learning and the assimilation of fundamental writing principles.

Cedeño and Ochoa (2019) share a similar view, stating that by identifying didactic methods and strategies aligned with the educational needs of students, it is possible to overcome obstacles in various areas or enhance the acquisition of specific knowledge. This approach was verified in the present study as seventh-grade students were observed to author short stories following a classic structure with notable coherence, thereby facilitating effective communication and reading comprehension.

This conceptual shift appears to have been influenced by two key elements: the use of didactic guides and the implementation of collaborative work. Regarding the guides, they enabled students to internalize essential narrative structures and understand the process of creating these stories, also stimulating cognitive development and multiple intelligences in the realm of writing.

On the other hand, through collaborative work, students were able to construct knowledge together, rather than in isolation, allowing everyone to monitor both their own process and that of their peers. Consequently, thanks to the integration of the educational community, a collective awareness of learning, dialogue, affective and effective communication, and role change were fostered, leading to meaningful learning (Santos et al., 2009; Morales, 2019; Cárdenas et al., 2016; Cedeño and Ochoa, 2019; Revelo et al., 2018).

5. Conclusions

The conclusions of the educational research demonstrate that collaborative work has effectively improved both writing and narrative skills in the presented case. This assertion is based on various indicators suggesting that the dynamics integrating pedagogy and didactics enhance learning, student interaction, academic cohesion, and idea exchange. These dynamics provide numerous opportunities for teachers to socialize content in such a way that the responsibility for presenting topics or assessing student learning falls on the students themselves, who, through interaction and self-evaluation, pursue a common goal.

The following are specific examples of how this improvement was observed:

Development of narrative architecture: Through collaborative work, students were able to analyze and create more solid and coherent narrative structures, building more complex and engaging plots in their stories.

Improved writing skills: Interaction among students allowed them to share effective writing techniques, leading to improvements in clarity, cohesion, and overall fluency of writing.

Correction of spelling and grammar: Through idea exchange and joint revision, students were able to identify and correct spelling and grammatical errors, contributing to more precise and polished writing.
Coherence and fluency in narratives: The collaborative process allowed for discussions on plot development, characters, and sequence of events, resulting in more coherent and fluid narratives.

Socialization of theories and principles: Through joint work, students were able to delve deeper into literary concepts and narrative approaches, enriching their understanding of writing techniques.

Additionally, it is argued that in the context of teaching writing, a crucial skill in the academic field, traditional pedagogies are not the most effective, especially in rural contexts or with limited cultural circulation. These pedagogies can hinder learning and promote a rudimentary and less useful understanding of what it means to read and write a narrative. In this sense, collaborative work emerges as a powerful tool for socializing theories and principles that might otherwise be perceived as complex or irrelevant.

Although only two stories were highlighted for their superior composition and structure in the presentation of the results, other works also showed progress in aspects such as narrative architecture, writing, spelling, pronunciation, coherence, and grammar, among other skills. This demonstrates that the use of didactic guides, briefly mentioned here, and the implementation of collaborative work represent a significant shift from the traditional methods to which the students of the Filadelfia Educational Institution were accustomed, improving their ability to create stories.

Based on these findings, several possibilities for future research and educational practices are proposed. Firstly, it would be pertinent to explore how the implementation of collaborative work can be adapted and optimized for different areas of the curriculum and educational levels. Additionally, investigating the replicability of these results in other educational contexts could provide valuable insights into the universality of these didactic strategies. Finally, developing more specialized didactic guides that specifically address the needs and challenges of students in diverse contexts could be a fruitful path for future pedagogical initiatives, expanding the reach and effectiveness of collaborative learning in education.

Ethical considerations

Informed consent was ensured for the participants, their confidentiality was protected, their autonomy was respected by allowing withdrawal from the study at any time, harm was avoided by minimizing risks (non-maleficence), the benefit of the participants was sought (beneficence), and a fair distribution of the research’s risks and benefits was guaranteed.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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