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CONTENTS OF THE ISSUE

- i. Copyright Notice
 - ii. Editorial Board Members
 - iii. Chief Author and Dean
 - iv. Contents of the Issue
-
1. Considerations about Teacher Education from Teacher Narratives: Teaching Knowledge in Motion. *1-8*
 2. Digital Storytelling for Teaching EFL Process Reading and Writing. *9-43*
 3. Mitigating Toxic Stress in At-Risk Youth through an Agriculture-based after School Program. *45-56*
 4. A Study on the Influencing Factors of Teaching Interaction on Deep Learning from the Perspective of Social Cognitive Theory. *57-68*
 5. Cultural Philosophical Elán of the Essay in Medardo Vitier: Towards a Necessary Ethnoeducation. *69-72*
 6. Pragmatics and Speech Act in Classroom Communicative Interaction. *73-78*
 7. Factors that Influenced Wherefore Sex Workers to Leave Out basic Education Program for Adults. *79-90*
-
- v. Fellows
 - vi. Auxiliary Memberships
 - vii. Preferred Author Guidelines
 - viii. Index



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Considerations about Teacher Education from Teacher Narratives: Teaching Knowledge in Motion

By Profa Dra Eliana Maria Do Sacramento Soares & Profa Dra Andréia Morés

Universidade Federal de São Carlos

Abstract- We present the results of a study to contribute to the reflections and discussions about the formative processes for teaching in the post-pandemic context. To this end, we conducted a piece of research, constituted by a corpus formed out of 13 pedagogical letters sent to an event that took place in June 2022, by teachers who work in schools and carry out strict sensu postgraduate studies. Considering the discursive textual analysis, emerging categories were identified that represent the aspects that emerged for teacher training. They are: training as a continuous process of reflective investigation, in partnership with their peers, in a co-responsible way, taking their teaching experiences as a starting point for the constant resizing of educational practice; the humanization of teaching practice, meaning understanding the subjectivity of the teaching subject that, by legitimizing his/her humanity, welcomes the student as a subject in his/her various dimensions, and the inclusion of digital technologies as resources that need to be integrated into teaching practice in order to constitute new possibilities in educational action.

Keywords: teacher training; teacher knowledge; evolution of the pandemic context.

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Considerations about Teacher Education from Teacher Narratives: Teaching Knowledge in Motion

Considerações Sobre a Formação Docente a Partir de Narrativas de Professores: Saberes Docentes em Movimento

Profa Dra Eliana Maria Do Sacramento Soares^a & Profa Dra Andréia Morés^o

Resumo- Apresentamos resultados de um estudo para contribuir com as reflexões e discussões acerca dos processos formativos para a atuação docente, no contexto pós pandemia. Para tanto realizamos uma pesquisa cujo corpus foi constituído por 13 cartas pedagógicas enviadas a um evento que aconteceu em junho de 2022, por professores que atuam em escolas e realizam estudos de pós-graduação strict sensu. Considerando a análise textual discursiva, foram identificadas categorias emergentes que representam os aspectos que surgiram para a formação docente. São eles: a formação como processo contínuo de investigação reflexiva, em parceria com seus pares, de forma corresponsável, tomando as suas experiências docentes como ponto de partida para o constante redimensionamento da prática educativa; a humanização do fazer docente, significando entender a subjetividade do sujeito docente que ao legitimizar sua humanidade, acolhe o aluno como sujeito em suas várias dimensões e a inclusão das tecnologias digitais como recursos que precisam ser integrados a prática docente de forma a constituírem novos possíveis na ação educativa. Ao articular esses achados com vozes de pesquisadores, tecemos uma escrita reflexiva explicitando saberes em movimento, destacando que a formação do professor não é um processo dado o priori, mas que vai emergindo a partir do cenário sociocultural e histórico da experiência humana.

Palavras-Chave: formação docente; saberes docentes; *devir da pandemia.*

Abstract- We present the results of a study to contribute to the reflections and discussions about the formative processes for teaching in the post-pandemic context. To this end, we conducted a piece of research, constituted by a corpus formed out of 13 pedagogical letters sent to an event that took place in June 2022, by teachers who work in schools and carry out strict sensu postgraduate studies. Considering the discursive textual analysis, emerging categories were identified that represent the aspects that emerged for teacher training. They are: training as a continuous process of reflective investigation, in partnership with their peers, in a co-responsible way, taking their teaching experiences as a starting point for the constant resizing of educational practice; the humanization of teaching practice, meaning understanding the subjectivity of the teaching subject that, by legitimizing his/her humanity, welcomes the student as a subject in his/her various dimensions, and the inclusion of digital technologies

as resources that need to be integrated into teaching practice in order to constitute new possibilities in educational action. By articulating these findings with the voices of researchers, we weave a reflective writing, explaining knowledge in motion, highlighting that teacher training is not an a priori given process, but that emerges from the socio-cultural and historical scenario of human experience.

Keywords: teacher training; teacher knowledge; evolution of the pandemic context.

1. CONSIDERAÇÕES INICIAIS

Estamos vivendo o segundo ano após o isolamento desencadeado pela pandemia da covid-19, que envolveu todo o planeta. Ainda estamos perplexos e todos os setores da sociedade, em seus vários contextos, estão analisando e buscando dar sentido ao que aconteceu. Santos (2021) se refere a esse cenário, discorrendo que a humanidade se envolveu em produzir o que era essencial para prevenir ou combater o vírus ou simplesmente para sobreviver. Desse modo, diversos setores da sociedade rapidamente se uniram e se organizaram para construir caminhos para o bem da humanidade. Nas palavras de Santos (2021, p. 314) “a pandemia revelou mais uma vez a nossa capacidade para respeitar princípios fundamentais para a sustentação da vida: o sentido da comunidade, o cuidado, a reciprocidade”.

Reforçamos que o cenário da pandemia reverberou na docência e na cultura escolar, evidenciando um contexto no qual os professores, alunos e familiares foram intensamente desafiados a longas jornadas de trabalho, gerando um cansaço excessivo, por vezes, com pouca apropriação tecnológica, esbarrando nos limites de cada um. Diversos aspectos podem ser destacados: como a escola e os sujeitos envolvidos se organizaram para seguir com suas atividades; como professores e alunos lidaram com as orientações referentes ao ensino remoto emergencial¹ instituído no período da pandemia, criando formas de desenvolver a prática educativa; como as famílias foram envolvidas no sentido de

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¹ O ensino remoto emergencial foi instituído por pareceres do Conselho Nacional de Educação, legislando sobre o ensino e a reorganização do calendário escolar para fins de cumprimento da carga horária mínima anual, em razão da pandemia da covid-19.

acompanharem seus filhos com a realização das tarefas e atividades propostas.

O isolamento social e as demandas para lidar com esse contexto revelaram várias mazelas da vida escolar em seus diferentes níveis de ensino. Surgiram dificuldades relacionadas ao acesso a material digitalizado para desenvolver os estudos, resultado da falta de equipamentos adequados ou de rede *wireless*. Fatores emocionais advindos de anseios e medos, dúvidas, preocupações e insegurança muitas vezes, impediram que as práticas escolares fossem realizadas de forma adequada. O contexto vivido careceu de muita força de vontade de todos os envolvidos para dar conta do que ia surgindo. Assim, diferentes formas de reorganizar a dinâmica pedagógica surgiram, fazendo uso dos recursos tecnológicos digitais disponíveis da melhor maneira possível, tanto para aproximar professores e alunos, isolados e impedidos de estarem de forma presencial no contexto escolar, como para compartilhar material didático para o desenvolvimento da prática pedagógica.

Gatti (2020), ao escrever sobre a reconfiguração dos modelos educacionais no pós-pandemia, discorre sobre o fato de que as atividades escolares, em geral, sempre estiveram sustentadas na convivência social, ou seja, na presencialidade, sendo assim, o cenário da pandemia foi bastante perturbador para alunos, professores e gestores, os quais se viram diante de um isolamento que os levou a repensar ou a reorganizar as práticas desenvolvidas. Dessa maneira, vários enfrentamentos aconteceram para viver a escola durante a pandemia, ao mesmo tempo que muito se aprendeu e muito se revelou em termos de necessidade de estudos e de redimensionamentos para o voltar à escola no pós-pandemia, a fim de que fosse possível estarmos juntos e retomássemos a vida escolar a partir do que aprendemos e do que foi desenvolvido durante a pandemia.

As transformações realizadas nas escolas, nesse período no qual o ensino remoto emergencial aconteceu, demandou por momentos de reflexão e de discussão, a fim de que os professores pudessem desenvolver as suas aulas, superando as dificuldades e os desafios que surgiam. Oliveira, Corrêa e Morés (2020) se referindo a isso apresentam resultados de um estudo sobre uma experiência vivenciada em uma escola da educação básica durante a pandemia da covid-19, levando em conta as recomendações do ensino remoto emergencial. Os autores destacam os desafios enfrentados pelos docentes, em especial em integrar as tecnologias em sua prática, revelando fragilidades em sua formação. Também evidenciam que não é suficiente apenas saber usar os recursos tecnológicos, mas é preciso ir além dele, ou seja, investir em uma formação docente que contemple a

relação com o humano, o diálogo, a emancipação, a autonomia e as tecnologias relacionadas com essa dimensão" (OLIVEIRA; CORRÊA; MORÉS, 2022, p. 12).

Desse modo autores como Schlemmer, Oliveira e Menezes (2021) e Sacramento Soares e Maschio (2017) enfatizam que apenas incluir recursos digitais nas práticas pedagógicas não é suficiente para que a aprendizagem seja desenvolvida, recomendando que é necessário reorganizar e refletir sobre práticas e dinâmicas pedagógicas com potencial de desencadear a aprendizagem, onde a mediação do professor junto ao aluno que utiliza a tecnologia possa acontecer, de forma que este compreenda e atribua sentidos às tarefas e práticas realizadas.

Seguindo com essas reflexões, trazemos as contribuições de Basso e Pierozan (2021), que realizaram um estudo envolvendo professores de escolas de educação básica do estado do Rio Grande do Sul, analisando os desafios da escola, suas incertezas e demandas no período do isolamento social. As autoras destacam a importância da família, dos professores e dos gestores, os quais, juntos e comprometidos, foram facilitadores do desenvolvimento da ação escolar nesse período. Assim, a prática educativa passou a ser uma tarefa compartilhada entre escola e família.

A experiência vivida, conforme destacam Basso e Pierozan (2021), nesse tempo, foi atípica, revelando vários elementos importantes de serem implementados e aprofundados para o período pós-pandemia: o acolhimento mútuo e a questão da parceria não só entre professor e aluno, como também entre professores, alunos, gestores e família. O planejamento pedagógico precisou e precisa ser repensado considerando as tecnologias digitais, de forma que ela possa auxiliar e potencializar o desenvolvimento da aprendizagem. Sobre esse aspecto, elas citam Nóvoa (2020, p. 8), que afirma: "As melhores respostas, em todo o mundo, foram dadas por professores que, em colaboração uns com os outros e com as famílias, conseguiram pôr de pé estratégias pedagógicas significativas para este tempo tão difícil".

Diante disso, Maturana e D'Ávila (2021) nos instigam a tomarmos a situação que vivemos e que nos desafiou como oportunidade para "uma compreensão reflexiva", ampliando nossa visão para criarmos novas formas de *ser* e de *estar* em todos nossos espaços de convivência.

Diante dessas considerações, destacamos a relevância de investir em estudos e pesquisas que acolham a formação de professores num cenário reflexivo, que promova o diálogo, a interação, a problematização, a troca entre pares, a socialização de experiências, incentivando e contribuindo para que o professor invista em sua formação. Nóvoa (2021, n.p)

recomenda que²: “O melhor que nós temos a fazer é reconhecer que no mundo – e também na resposta à pandemia – há milhares de professores, experiências e realidades educativas que precisam de ser pensadas, escritas e partilhadas para criar uma nova realidade educativa”.

Sendo assim, nosso objetivo com o texto é contribuir com as reflexões e discussões acerca dos processos formativos para a atuação docente no contexto pós-pandemia e, para tanto, apresentamos um estudo, cujo objeto de pesquisa são cartas pedagógicas enviadas a um evento que aconteceu em junho de 2022.

II. DELINEAMENTO METODOLÓGICO

O estudo que apresentamos gerou dados para constituir o corpus de pesquisa, tendo como base cartas pedagógicas submetidas por professores a um evento realizado no mês de junho de 2022, numa Universidade Comunitária do Nordeste do Rio Grande do Sul, no Brasil. O evento foi denominado *Educação e Pandemia(s)/Pós-Pandemia(s): Territorialidades nos saberes e produção de sentidos*³. Para submeter cartas ao evento deveria ser escolhido um tema dentre vários propostos, conforme orientações para submissão.

Carta pedagógica é um gênero textual proposto por Paulo Freire. Dotta e Garcia (2022) fazem referência a essa inspiração freireana, discorrendo que Freire (2000) argumenta que uma carta pedagógica poderia ser utilizada como instrumento por “professoras e professores que, chamados à reflexão pelos desafios em sua prática docente, encontrassem nelas elementos capazes de ajudá-los na elaboração de suas respostas”, (FREIRE, 2000, p. 29). Sendo assim, ao escrever cartas pedagógicas, os autores estão exercitando, por meio de uma narrativa crítica e reflexiva, sua forma de perceber e de entender seu contexto de atuação.

Dessa forma e considerando a carta pedagógica um importante legado do pensamento freireano, a escolhemos como experiência reflexiva sobre a temática educação e formação docente em um cenário de pandemia/pós-pandemia, para constituir nosso corpus de estudo. Mais especificamente escolhemos as cartas aceitas pela mesa temática 3: Educação, pandemia(s) e formação docente, cuja ementa era: O cenário da pandemia afetou a vida

planetária, trazendo consequências para as práticas educativas e para a formação docente. A presente mesa acolhe narrativas que evidenciavam estudos, pesquisas e reflexões sobre a formação docente e suas relações com a educação básica e educação superior no cenário da pandemia e pós-pandemia.

Assim, o corpus de pesquisa foi constituído por 13 cartas, cujos autores são professores que atuam na rede pública e privada de ensino e que realizam estudos junto a um Programa de Pós-graduação Stricto Sensu em Educação⁴. São elas: Carta 1: A formação continuada e da mobilização dos saberes dos docentes dos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental; Carta 2: A travessia e a abertura ao outro: o diálogo como experiência formativa; Carta 3: formação de professores para além da universidade; Carta 4: Formação permanente de professores: a pandemia e os círculos dialógicos investigativos-formativos; Carta 5: repensar a escola e seus atores no período pós-pandêmico: um dever de todos; Carta 6: a formação continuada de educadores no contexto da educação infantil; Carta 7: Um convite a pensar os processos formativos; Carta 8: Reflexões sobre formação continuada, um exercício de curiosidade; Carta 9: Macrocomponente curricular “núcleo articulador”; Carta 10: Sobre a formação continuada de professores: carta ao(à) jovem docente, para que a esperança não seja substituída pela acomodação; Carta 11: potência da formação docente em contexto na educação infantil; Carta 12: Um olhar sobre a formação de professores; Carta 13: Movimentos sensíveis na formação docente.

A análise do corpus foi inspirada na análise textual discursiva de Moraes e Galiazzi (2016), em que as categorias emergentes foram identificadas a partir de uma leitura atenta das narrativas expressas nas cartas, de forma a captar a percepção dos autores acerca dos aspectos que eles destacaram como relevantes para a formação docente, considerando as demandas e desafios da pandemia. Dessa leitura surgiram unidades de análise que foram base para a identificação das categorias emergentes: Processo contínuo de investigação reflexiva sobre a ação docente; Aspectos humanos da formação docente; Reflexão acerca do currículo e das mudanças culturais.

III. ASPECTOS RELEVANTES PARA A FORMAÇÃO DOCENTE, DE ACORDO COM AS NARRATIVAS DOS PROFESSORES

Apresentamos as categorias emergentes, com vistas a expressar os aspectos considerados relevantes

² Em entrevista dada a revista Online *Educação* sobre a temática “Aprendizagem precisa considerar o sentir”. Disponível em: <https://revistaeducacao.com.br/2021/06/25/antonio-novoaaprendizagem-se-ntir/>. Acesso em: 26 set. 2022.

³ EDUCAÇÃO E PANDEMIA(S)/PÓS-PANDEMIA(S): TERRITORIALIDADES NOS SABERES E PRODUÇÃO DE SENTIDOS. Caxias do Sul: UCS, 2022. Disponível em: <https://www.ucs.br/site/eventos/educacao-e-pandemias-pos-pandemias-territorialidades-nos-saberes-e-producao-de-sentidos/>. Acesso em: 26 set. 2022. Neste estudo, estamos considerando docente e professor como termos sinônimos.

⁴ Foi organizado um e-book com a publicação das cartas aceitas para o Evento. Ele está em processo de editoração junto a editora da instituição organizadora.

para a formação docente, na perspectiva das narrativas dos professores autores das cartas pedagógicas.⁵

A categoria *Processo contínuo de investigação reflexiva sobre a ação docente*, contempla narrativas que se referem a formação como um processo contínuo, baseado na reflexão sobre a ação docente em parceria com seus pares, em diálogo e compartilhando suas vivências, reflexões e questionamentos se co-responsabilizando por seu processo formativo. E considerando as experiências advindas das práticas desenvolvidas em sua atuação, como fonte de pesquisa e de reflexão, de forma que as ações da formação precisam ser criadas em parceria com os interessados. Algumas narrativas que representam essa categoria.

“incentivar os professores a refletirem sobre sua própria prática e, a partir disso, oportunizar para que eles possam assumir a responsabilidade sobre a própria formação continuada, percebendo-se como protagonistas do processo” (Carta 1).

“a formação é travessia que se faz na própria ação de atravessar sendo que o diálogo é sempre possibilidade de experiência formativa” (Carta 3).

“assumir um lugar de pertencimento frente aos próprios processos formativos, pois estes abarcam uma dimensão importante para a existência de uma prática pedagógica contextualizada e com intencionalidade, de maneira que o professor participe de forma ativa e crítica em um processo de mudança e transformação do seu próprio contexto” (Carta7).

As narrativas relacionadas a essa categoria evocam, dentre outros aspectos, a corresponsabilidade docente. Desse modo, cabe trazer o que Freire (1996, p. 103) diz, quando ele enfatiza que “o professor que não leva a sério sua formação, que não estude, que não se esforce para estar à altura de sua tarefa não tem força moral para coordenar as atividades de sua classe”. Esse educador evidencia a responsabilidade do professor em ser sujeito de seu processo de formação e assim, como nas narrativas, em especial na Carta 4, as vozes dos professores-autores das cartas estão de acordo com essa premissa freireana.

Ainda em relação a essa categoria, citamos as ideias de Nóvoa (2020), discorrendo que as ações dos professores – em colaboração uns com os outros e com as famílias – foram decisivas para que as ações pedagógicas tivessem continuidade no período tão desafiador da pandemia. Sendo assim, podemos inferir que agir em colaboração mútua e em parceria é um caminho para desenvolver formação docente como um processo contínuo.

As considerações acerca da formação, expressas nessa categoria, podem ser articuladas aos círculos de cultura freireanos, que são de natureza

dialógica e investigativo-formativo. São concebidos como roda de pessoas, no caso de professores, que discutem de maneira heterárquica, articulando seus saberes e em cooperação para analisar uma realidade vivida com consciência crítica e transformadora (FREIRE, 1996).

A categoria “aspecto humano da formação docente” diz respeito às narrativas que discorrem sobre a importância de contemplar, na formação, saberes relacionados à dimensão humana e à singularidade do professor e dos atores do processo educativo. Diz respeito à subjetividade do professor que viveu em tempos de pandemia com diferentes desafios e demandas e precisou cuidar de si, em sua forma de *ser* e de *estar* na prática pedagógica. As narrativas dessa categoria evidenciam a necessidade de discutir, de refletir e de trazer para a formação aspectos que emergiram nesse período de isolamento e de instigação: as crenças e bases teóricas nas quais são embasadas as práticas desenvolvidas; as dificuldades e os anseios que permeiam a vida escolar e as experiências que trazem sentido e significado para a vida. São narrativas que evocam o olhar para si e para a forma de ser de cada um, questionando suas certezas e buscando novos caminhos. Alguns recortes dessas narrativas:

“Sem esse olhar para si, sem essa análise pessoal com um olhar para seu fazer pedagógico, fica difícil enxergar qual caminho seguir, quais investimentos fazer em suas capacitações continuadas, quais habilidades precisa aprimorar ou procurar desenvolver” (Carta 13).

“Formação como movimento constante e inacabado [...] de relação intersubjetiva que se estabelece imprescindivelmente na abertura ao diálogo” (Carta 2).

“Trago, aqui, um convite, para que todos possamos reformular nossas perguntas, a fim de buscar e pesquisá-las, mesmo que, e principalmente, de forma autônoma. É gratificante sentir-se capaz e necessário a você mesmo!” (Carta 8).

“O primeiro nó se refere à concepção epistemológica [...] o segundo nó se amplia para as tecnologias ainda discutidas no âmbito do dispositivo técnico, do trabalho, da ferramenta [...] o terceiro nó é o entendimento de si como produtor (e subjetivados) de discursos ainda presos nos pressupostos do mundo dado, nos desafiando para dizer a verdade sobre nós mesmos”. (Carta 13).

“Destaco a importância de humanizar as relações, de dar espaço e ouvir os professores, fornecer apoio e suporte emocional. O professor precisa estar bem para poder desempenhar seu papel e também ouvir e dar apoio aos alunos” (Carta 13).

As narrativas relacionadas a essa categoria evocam aspectos que dizem respeito à subjetividade do professor, daquilo que o constitui: suas crenças, seus anseios, seus desejos como ser humano que escolheu atuar no contexto da prática educativa. Sob essa perspectiva, Sacramento Soares (2018) considera que o sujeito docente se constitui no fluir de suas

⁵ Neste estudo, estamos considerando docente e professor como termos sinônimos.

operações, enquanto experiencia suas práticas docentes, “no seu viver docente”, no qual sua estrutura é constantemente transformada, de modo congruente com suas interações, consigo e com seu entorno. Com isso, o ambiente de atuação docente e a dinâmica pedagógica formam uma circunstância para se refletir sobre o fazer: dessa maneira, em interações recorrentes, os professores, em seu entorno, vão se constituindo enquanto vivem suas experiências. Experiências no sentido daquilo que toca e transforma o sujeito, sendo assim, mecanismos de subjetivação (BONDIA, 2002). Desde esse ponto de vista, o professor como sujeito da experiência é aquele que se observa e que se deixa tocar pelo que observa, assim como que se envolve, busca entender e lidar com aquilo que o toca. É um sujeito que se deixa transformar pelo que experiencia.

Nesse sentido, enfatizamos a relevância da formação docente acolher o humano, as dimensões pessoais que fazem sentido à pessoa do professor, articulando os aspectos humanos da formação docente com as dimensões de vida pessoal e profissional. Os estudos de Nóvoa (2009, p. 38) tem corroborado com esse viés, enfatizando que “[...]que o professor é a pessoa, e que a pessoa é o professor. Que é impossível separar as dimensões pessoais e profissionais. Que ensinamos aquilo que somos e que, naquilo que somos, se encontra muito daquilo que ensinamos”. Neste contexto formativo permite-se que o professor olhe para si, para seu processo formativo, articulando as dimensões de vida com saberes da docência que congregam o processo educativo.

A categoria “reflexão acerca do currículo e das mudanças culturais” remete a narrativas que instigam a refletir sobre o cenário sociocultural em que se vive para pensar na ação docente. Ou seja, levar em conta os movimentos socioculturais e seus desafios, suas demandas e suas instigações para redimensionar a ação docente, num caminho em que o professor é protagonista e agente que observa e percebe o território onde atua para além da escola e do currículo. Algumas narrativas falam sobre a importância do protagonismo discente, no sentido de ser levado em conta, na formação docente, suas trajetórias e saberes. Eis alguns excertos das cartas:

“O grande desafio docente é apreender as relações e os sentidos atribuídos aos percursos protagonizados no cotidiano dessa nova estrutura curricular, por meio do diálogo e de uma escuta sensível em torno das experiências narradas pelos estudantes” (carta 9).

“E quando olhamos para algumas redes e escolas, conseguimos reforçar essa esperança e vislumbrar os primeiros movimentos. Às vezes é no varejo das relações, nas trocas de ideias, experiências e afetos que o círculo vicioso é rompido” (carta 10).

“Uma formação que permita e acolha o esperar, do professor, do coletivo de docentes, das redes e escolas

que os constituem, para assim, alavancar proposições, romper com vivências instituídas no cotidiano docente” (carta 10).

“[...] fragilidades pelas quais o sistema de ensino já passava e que vieram à tona com mais evidência, como a necessidade de práticas mais condizentes com a sociedade tecnológica e a fragilidade dos profissionais em apropriar-se desses recursos e utilizá-los como suporte para o ensino e aprendizagem” (carta 11).

“que a formação indague sobre relações com os lugares e com as pessoas [...], é olhar para as aprendizagens dos sujeitos, e compreender que esse percurso não é linear, tampouco igualitário, mas que é movimento, é sentido, refletido e participativo” (carta 7).

As narrativas desta categoria estão relacionadas ao que Gatti, 2020, se refere ao escrever sobre as reconfigurações dos espaços pedagógicos, no devir da pandemia. A autora assim se expressa:

Esquecer o que estivemos sendo chamados a repensar nesse período pandêmico será um retrocesso muito indesejável para o futuro da vida. Tudo nos chama a repensar a educação fragmentária, de caráter apenas cognitivo, e, para muitos jovens e adolescentes, sem sentido, que oferecemos. Domínio de conhecimentos imbricados com valores de vida é o vetor saudável a preservar para novos tempos (GATTI, 2020, p. 14).

Assim e atendendo ao convite da autora, carecemos levar em conta as lições aprendidas no tempo de isolamento, incluindo aspectos relacionados ao redimensionamento curricular e de tempo e de espaço na ação educativa. Além disso, acolher os alunos e professores para que eles possam relatar e refletir sobre as dificuldades, as angústias e os anseios que viveram nesse tempo, bem nos ajustes e formatos criados para lidar com o que aconteceu.

Com esse viés, destacamos que nessa categoria fica enfatizada a necessidade de a formação acolher aspectos humanos e sociais. Nóvoa (2009, p. 31), por sua vez, recomenda que a formação precisa considerar o “compromisso social”, enfatizando que essa abordagem permite ao docente ser protagonista do seu processo formativo, alavancando o diálogo e a escuta entre os atores da sociedade, valorizando o coletivo com vistas ao compromisso social docente.

IV. CONSIDERAÇÕES E RECOMENDAÇÕES: SABERES EM MOVIMENTO PARA A FORMAÇÃO DOCENTE NUM PROCESSO CONTÍNUO E REFLEXIVO

As reflexões expressas nesta escrita contemplam considerações sobre a formação docente a partir das narrativas advindas das cartas pedagógicas escritas por docentes e estudantes vinculados a grupos de pesquisa, da educação básica e da pós-graduação. Esse movimento de escrita possibilita um espaço

para pensar, pesquisar e socializar experiências e saberes vivenciados junto à educação básica, acolhendo diálogos, escutas, pronunciamentos e problematizações advindas do tempo presente, momento em que também estamos sendo afetados pela pandemia e que continua demandando repensar a prática docente.

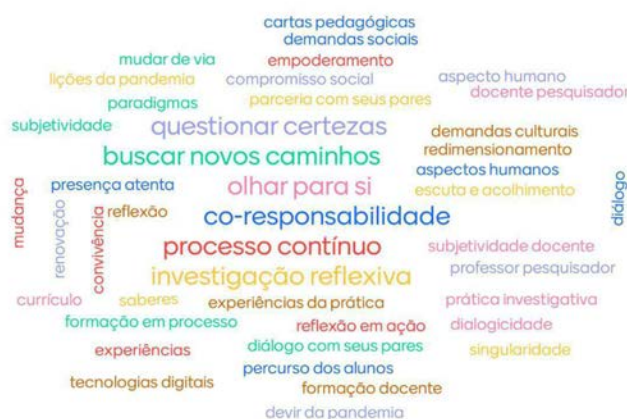
Destacamos os aspectos que emergem a partir das narrativas dos professores para a formação docente, que dizem respeito à formação como: processo contínuo de investigação reflexiva, em parceria com seus pares, de forma corresponsável, tomando as suas experiências docentes como objeto de pesquisa e de redimensão da prática educativa, no sentido de se constituírem professores-pesquisadores, que tomam sua prática como objeto de investigação;

ao docente como sujeito que questiona suas certezas, observa as demandas e os desafios do contexto sociocultural vigente como ponto de partida para reinvenção da prática docente e do plano curricular; à humanização do fazer docente, significando entender a subjetividade do sujeito docente que, ao legitimizar sua humanidade, acolhe o aluno como sujeito em suas várias dimensões e a inclusão das tecnologias digitais, buscando integrar esses recursos à prática docente, de forma a constituírem novos possíveis na ação educativa.

A seguir apresentamos uma nuvem de palavras que sistematiza essas ideias mobilizadas no decorrer da análise do corpus de pesquisa, contemplando aspectos relacionados a formação docente, a luz das narrativas de professores.

formação docente

Mentimeter



Seguindo nessa escrita e articulando os aspectos que emergiram na análise, expressos na nuvem, trazemos vozes de alguns pesquisadores que discutem saberes relacionados a formação docente. Tardif (2002, p.14) referenda em seus estudos que “o saber dos professores não é um conjunto de conteúdos cognitivos definidos de uma vez por todas, mas um processo de construção ao longo de uma carreira profissional no qual o professor aprende progressivamente [...]”. Em suas considerações esse autor recomenda que a formação precisa mobilizar os docentes a fim deles pensarem sobre a sua formação como algo para além da certificação. Instigando-os a uma constante busca pelo aprender, conhecer, criar e mobilizar saberes que contribuem com o compromisso social e científico da docência.

Sob esse ponto de vista, em seu percurso formativo, o docente carece construir e movimentar saberes num processo contínuo de investigação reflexiva sobre sua atuação, em acoplamento com seu

contexto social, sua trajetória de vida, suas experiências pessoais e profissionais. Sendo assim, os espaços de formação carecem ser ambientes de convivência para refletir e discutir com seus pares acerca de sua forma de *ser* e de *fazer* no cenário escolar, de forma que a escuta sensível possa operar transformações nos modos de *ser* dos docentes. Transformações essas que possibilitem a emergência de uma nova cultura sobre o entendimento do que seja atuar como professor e criar ambientes de aprendizagem em coparceria e legitimidade com seus alunos (MATURANA; REZEPA, 2000).

Com esse viés, Santos (2021, p. 317) enfatiza a necessidade de democratizar as relações da universidade com a sociedade, inferindo que “A universidade produz conhecimento válido, que é tanto mais precioso quanto melhor souber dialogar com os outros saberes que circulam na sociedade”. (p. 317). De modo a oportunizar a integração, a ruptura com os distanciamentos e barreiras, incentivando o diálogo

com os saberes que circulam na sociedade inerentes ao aspecto humano da formação docente, da reflexão acerca do currículo e das mudanças culturais presentes nos processos de formação docente. Propiciando assim um processo formativo voltado para a autonomia profissional e para um protagonismo docente.

Moraes, 2008, destaca que a formação docente carece levar em conta a importância de o sujeito professor desenvolver saberes para além da didática, considerando saberes relacionados à imprevisibilidade e bifurcações do território onde atua, o domínio de ação do sujeito estudante e as transformações sociais. Isso significa mapear constantemente o contexto em que realiza sua ação docente, como observador implicado que vai criando e recriando sua prática, num movimento reflexivo e recursivo, numa causalidade circular, em que cada ação atua retroalimentando e/ou modificando o contexto. Para entender isso o professor precisa ir além de suas crenças e concepções baseadas na causalidade linear e na previsibilidade determinística. Precisa atuar com uma escuta sensível atenta aos processos de seus alunos, olhando-os como sujeitos em formação e que carecem ser acolhidos em suas várias necessidades. Nesse caminho a autora nos convida a estar atento às bases epistemológicas que inspiram o fazer docente, que por sua vez está ancorado em suas concepções teóricas. Ela recomenda que essas concepções precisam ser revisitadas de forma contínua a fim de que o professor possa lidar com as emergências, as incertezas e a causalidade circular que caracterizam a realidade.

As vozes dos autores que tecem conosco esta escrita reflexiva, a partir das narrativas que tomamos como objeto de estudo, evidenciam que a docência vai sendo constituída no fluir das demandas e desafios, onde o docente ilumina sua prática com reflexão articulada a saberes e ao olhar de pesquisador, em que as questões que emergem no dia a dia do contexto de atuação é que vão norteando e inspirando o professor no sentido de ele criar sua ação pedagógica.

Refletindo sobre as lições do vírus, Morin (2020, p. 31) nos convida a “mudar de via”, tendo o pensamento complexo como estratégia, dizendo que “as ações não obedecem às intenções de quem decidiu realizá-las, mas as retroalimentações do meio em que ocorrem”. Esse emérito pesquisador nos incita a percebermos a importância de sabermos que estamos juntos enquanto humanidade e que podemos cocriar caminhos novos.

Ensejamos que as tessituras que tecemos, tendo como inspiração as narrativas dos professores nas cartas pedagógicas, objeto de nosso estudo, sejam inspiradoras para as discussões relacionadas à concepção do processo de prática formativa docente. Para finalizar e sabendo que essa reflexão é um fluxo contínuo, lembramos que o devir da pandemia nos

convoca a transformações diante dos desafios e demandas advindos das experiências que foram vividas no isolamento pandêmico. Ainda, ressaltamos que a formação do professor não é um processo dado a priori, é algo em processo, que vai emergindo a partir do cenário sociocultural e histórico da experiência humana.

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Digital Storytelling for Teaching EFL Process Reading and Writing

By Vassiliki Vavouri & Makrina- Nina Zafiri

Abstract- A 6-month action research, carried out with two classes of 6th Graders in a state primary school in Greece, investigated whether the “telling of stories in electronic form” (Reinders, 2011, p. 2) could enhance young EFL learners’ reading and writing skills in terms of the Waystage (A2) criteria of language competence specified by the State Certificate of Language Proficiency. The control group was taught through the official textbook, whereas the experimental group engaged in interactive reading and computer-assisted collaborative process writing with a view to producing the script for their digital narrations. The research findings verified the researchers’ initial assumptions concerning the favorable impact of digital storytelling on the reading and writing skills of the experimental group. Their significance lies in that they offer EFL teachers more options to enhance their learners’ reading and writing skills.

Keywords: digital storytelling, interactive reading, process writing, collaborative writing, primary school learners.

GJHSS-G Classification: DDC Code: 372.13 LCC Code: LB775.M8



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Digital Storytelling for Teaching EFL Process Reading and Writing

Vassiliki Vavouri ^α & Makrina- Nina Zafiri ^σ

Abstract- A 6-month action research, carried out with two classes of 6th Graders in a state primary school in Greece, investigated whether the “telling of stories in electronic form” (Reinders, 2011, p. 2) could enhance young EFL learners’ reading and writing skills in terms of the Waystage (A2) criteria of language competence specified by the State Certificate of Language Proficiency. The control group was taught through the official textbook, whereas the experimental group engaged in interactive reading and computer-assisted collaborative process writing with a view to producing the script for their digital narrations. The research findings verified the researchers’ initial assumptions concerning the favorable impact of digital storytelling on the reading and writing skills of the experimental group. Their significance lies in that they offer EFL teachers more options to enhance their learners’ reading and writing skills.

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I. INTRODUCTION

English 6th Grade (Efraimidou, Zoe-Reppa & Frouzaki, 2009), which is the textbook prescribed and provided by the Greek Institute of Pedagogical Policy as the core material in state primary schools. In the absence of an official syllabus to translate the abstract goals of the foreign language curriculum, into concrete objectives and specify the content to be covered, the textbook is, in effect, the syllabus. The post-use micro-evaluation of the reading and writing tasks reveals that the product approach, which is adopted by the textbook, is not consistent to the process-oriented and learner-centered guidelines of the Integrated Foreign Languages Curriculum (IFLC, 2016), which constitutes the common framework for the teaching and learning of the obligatory or elective languages in the Greek primary and secondary educational system (Presidential Decree-FEK, 2016). Moreover, the textbook does not systematically promote learning outcomes related to the interaction with, production of, and communication through various context-appropriate multimodal texts (FEK, 2016), which integrate audio-visual, linguistic and spatial modalities.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

a) Reading

Reading comprehension has been researched and interpreted through three general models: the bottom-up, the top-down (Aebersold & Field, 1997) and the interactive (Stanovic, 2000). The bottom-up model heavily relies on such lower-level, data-driven comprehension processes as word recognition, syntactic parsing, and semantic proposition formation to extract the information from the page with minimal interference from the reader’s background knowledge (Grabe & Stoller, 2013). Conversely, the top-down model makes use of such higher-level, concept-driven comprehension processes as the reader’s (socio-cultural, topic and genre) knowledge and inferencing abilities to create an internal summary of the main ideas of the text (ibid).

The interactive reading model associates reading comprehension to the efficient coordination of bottom-up processes, such as the rapid and automatic parsing of lexical, grammatical, and syntactic elements and top-down concepts such as inferencing and schematic knowledge. Sadoski’s (2009) interactive model of reading comprehension advances that the visual representation of key information improves verbal processing.

The interactive models of reading comprehension influenced the process-oriented approaches, which focus on the creation of meaning through the reader’s interaction with the text, that is from the literal interpretation of the propositional meaning, to inferring the implied meanings and to the critical analysis of the meaning (Thomas, 2013).

b) Writing

The writer-oriented or process approach to writing (Hyland, 2016) identifies writing as a “non-linear, exploratory, and generative process, whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning” (Zamel, 1983, p. 165).

According to Flower and Hayes (1981) the interactive, recursive, and potentially simultaneous cognitive actions involved in writing, namely “planning”, “translating” and “reviewing” operate under the control of the “monitor” function (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 369), which also provides access to the writer’s long-term memory, wherein knowledge pertinent to the topic, the

audience and various writing plans (for instance, informal letters or tweets) is stored (Becker, 2006).

Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) "knowledge-transforming" model suggests that skilled writers devote considerable intellectual resources to the analysis and resolution of the complexities of the writing task, such as content, form, audience, style, organization, and their own goals for writing (Hyland, 2016). The developing knowledge, which may have been changed or regenerated as a result of new insights that occurred during the act of writing, interacts with the text and transforms the ideas. Writing thereby extends and deepens learning rather than serves as a demonstration of vocabulary, syntactical, and grammatical knowledge (Raimes, 1993).

For White and Arndt (1991) the process writing teaching session typically involves the generation of ideas through instructional activities, such as, whole-class, small group or pair discussions, brainstorming, making notes, asking questions, and fast writing. Having focused on selected ideas and established a viewpoint, the writers produce a rough draft. Then they structure

(i.e. group and reorder) their information, consider the expectations of the target audience, the culture- and text-specific writing conventions as well as their own purposes for writing and individually or collaboratively produce their first drafts. Following a preliminary self-evaluation, the drafts are shared and subjected to peer review. The feedback as to the extent to which the text coheres with the writers' goals and their intended meaning informs the second drafts which are further edited, evaluated and published (ibid).

c) *Digital storytelling*

Pioneered by Lambert, Atchley and Mullen at Berkeley University in 1994, digital storytelling represents the evolution of the ancient art of storytelling, which was used to transmit knowledge, myths and values. Digital stories are brief (2-5 minute) multimedia artifacts which combine the recorded audio narration of the storytellers' voice with images, video segments, music and text (Gregori-Signes, 2008, 2014; Pardo, 2014). Figure 1 illustrates the process of creating digital stories:

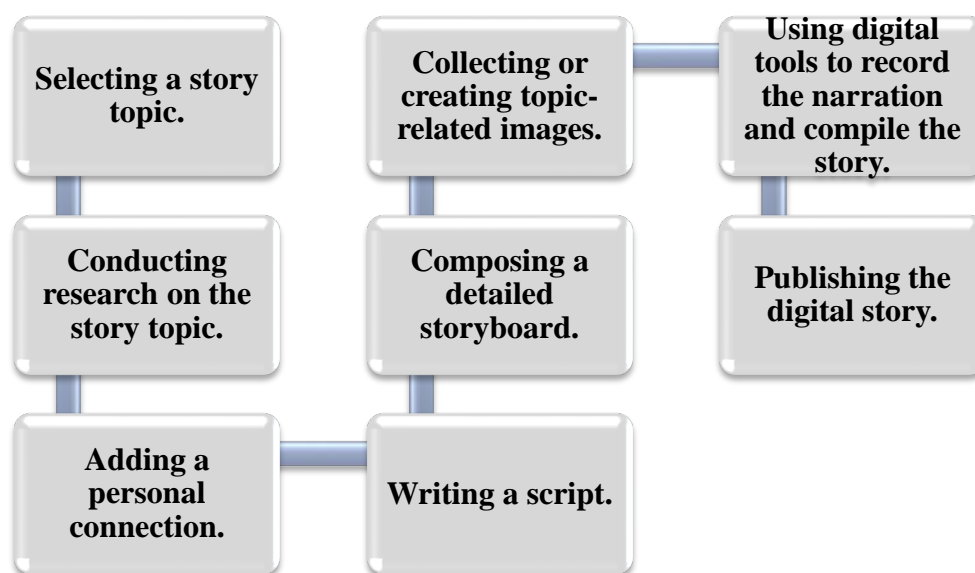


Figure 1: Digital storytelling

d) *Digital storytelling and the EFL class*

Digital storytelling as an educational strategy affords many advantages to EFL pedagogy.

i. *Motivation*

Digital storytelling seems to entwine "the personal and individual dimension with mass digital dissemination" (Gregori-Signes, 2008, p. 238). The up-to-date, interactive, attractive and user-friendly digital storytelling tools (Pardo, 2014) appeal to the young learners (Yoon, 2013) and enhance their interest in learning English (Guzman Gamez & Moreno Cuellar, 2019; Shamsulbahri & Aziz, 2020). Digital stories can

motivate mixed-ability classes and EFL teachers alike (Robin & McNeil, 2012), increase engagement (Di Blas & Ferrari, 2012) and confidence (Smeda et al., 2014) as well as improve in-class behavior (Robin, 2016).

ii. *Learner-centeredness*

Digital storytelling represents a learner-centered instructional approach, in which the use of multimodality can help the marginalized learners who are struggling to express themselves (Anderson, Stewart & Katchorsky, 2017; Bull & Kajder, 2004; Lotherington, 2017; Reinders, 2011), and to improve their psychology and interpersonal relationships (Smeda et al., 2014).

The technological novelties may cause the teachers to cooperate with (DiBlas & Ferrari, 2012) or relegate their authority to the learners and assume the role of facilitators of the learning process (Bumgarner, 2012). These reversals of roles can smooth the transition from teacher- to learner-centered instructional paradigms.

iii. *Differentiated teaching and learning*

The different and intrinsically motivating aspects of digital storytelling facilitate differentiated instruction and cater for the learners' diverse learning styles (Kieler, 2010), denoting their preferred or habitual modes of processing information. Lynch and Fleming (2007) suggest that the multiple sensory components of digital stories may actuate the learners' individual blends of intelligences (Gardner, 1983). Digital storytelling can also accommodate the learners' individual learning paces and short attention span and it can individualize the EFL syllabus (Sadik, 2008).

iv. *Collaboration*

Authentic problem-solving tasks, such as digital storytelling, can provide ample opportunities to small heterogeneous groups of learners to pool their intellectual resources (Yoon, 2013). Donato (1993) asserts that the collaborative construction of knowledge involving interaction with more advanced learners can also scaffold the learner's transition from their current level of cognitive development to the next. Moreover, it can also foster the development of problem-solving skills, accountability and interdependence (Fung, 2010).

v. *Experiential learning*

Constructing multimedia artifacts, such as digital stories, increases the learners' skills to "transform information into knowledge" (Cradler et al., 2002, p. 48). Digital storytelling promotes a constructivist and experiential approach to EFL teaching and learning (Herrera-Ramirez, 2013). The learners can inductively discover and actively "construct their own understanding or experience in a content area" (Kieler, 2010). Yoon (2013) argues that crafting storylines fosters the learners' cognitive maturity, as it helps them to "make sense of the complex and unordered world of experience" (Gils, 2005) and produce their own interpretations of it (Gregori-Signes, 2014). DiBlas and Ferrari, (2014) affirm that digital stories can help the learners retain their knowledge longer and transfer it to other contexts.

vi. *Interactivity*

Digital storytelling can be a highly interactive activity (Anderson & Chua, 2010; Robin, 2016; Yoon, 2013), in which learners create, share, respond to, critique and participate in collaborative activities revolving around their stories. The learners can test their hypotheses concerning the target language through the comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) they receive and through the comprehensible output (Swain, 1985) they

produce (Ellis, 1985). Digital storytelling thereby seems to activate the unconscious mental processes responsible for the restructuring of the learners' internal representations (interlanguage) of the target language system (Selinker, 1972). Furthermore, participation in small supporting workshops can lower the learners' affective filter (Krashen, 1985), a psychological impediment to L2 comprehension.

vii. *Lower-and higher-order thinking skills*

Utilizing the most appropriate modes of expression and sources of information to create digital stories can help the learners develop lower-order thinking skills, such as remembering content knowledge (DiBlas & Ferrari, 2014) as well as higher-order thinking skills, such as understanding, applying, analyzing, revising, and creating the new knowledge (Yoon 2013). Digital storytelling can therefore enhance academic achievement (Aktaş & Yurt, 2017), meta-cognitive reflection and problem-solving abilities (Robin, 2016).

viii. *Self-directed learning and autonomy*

Kieler (2010) suggests that digital storytelling promotes deep learning, which according to Barrett and Wilkerson (2004) is "reflective, developmental, integrative, self-directed and lifelong". Peer feedback and conscious reflection on both product and the learning processes can encourage the learners to assume ownership of their own learning and to develop autonomy and personal initiative (Jitpaisarnwattana, 2018).

ix. *Authentic learning*

In line with the principles of situated learning (i.e., contextualized learning) (Herrington & Oliver, 2000), digital storytelling projects simulate realistic contexts (Abdallah, 2015), in which learners can engage in authentic and purposeful interaction and retrieve resources from authentic cultural and linguistic environments (situational authenticity) in order to co-create meaningful digital artifacts and share them with real-life audiences (Yoon, 2013). Digital stories can also provide an authentic electronic documentation of the learners' knowledge and understanding of the educational themes (Foley, 2013) as well as their learning progress to multiple audiences.

x. *New and foundational literacies*

The systematic integration of digital storytelling into the EFL class, affords expanded opportunities for the learners to use their new literacies, which Robin (2008) describes as the combination of global, digital, media, technology, visual, and information skills, to support their foundational literacies.

Digital storytelling can increase the learners' participation and their reading skills of narrative texts (Abdallah, 2019; Alkhilili, 2018; Anggeraini & Afifah, 2017; Apriltya et al., 2016; Hamdy, 2017). The visual presentation of the information in digital stories (Adyguzel & Kumkale, 2018) can enhance

understanding of their content (Choo et al., 2017) and may also increase reading motivation (Radaideh et al., 2020; Yoon, 2012). Moreover, digital storytelling can improve vocabulary learning, which is an important component of the reading ability (Habibi & Widyantoro, 2019; Leong et al., 2019).

Digital storytelling improved the learners' narratives (Campbell, 2012; Joko Saputro, 2013; Shamsulbahri & Aziz, 2010; Tsigani & Nikolakopoulou, 2018) through their engagement in process writing in a collaborative learning environment (Castañeda, 2013; Kieler, 2010; Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017; Yee & Kee, 2017). Further studies reported improvements in terms of the number of words, text appropriacy, organization, accuracy, fluency and vocabulary range (Guzman Gamez & Moreno Cuellar, 2019; Quiroga & Toro Nieto, 2015; Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017; Yamac & Ulusoy, 2016; Zakaria et al., 2016). Collaborative digital storytelling projects can enhance understanding of peer assessment strategies (Quiroga & Toro Nieto, 2015), while the expanded audience seems to increase the learners' participation and awareness of the expectations of real audiences. Digital storytelling can introduce novelty and entertainment in the writing class (Kieler, 2010) and positively affect their perceptions of themselves as competent writers as well as their motivation to complete their writing assignments (Foley, 2013).

Rahimi and Yadollahi (2017) integrated reading as a source of comprehensible input and writing as a means to process and interpret the written text and noted the positive effects of digital storytelling on both skills. Kesler, Gibson, and Turansky (2016) showed that responding to literary works through collaborative digital storytelling projects enhanced the young learner's analytic thinking and comprehension. Shelby-Caffey, Ubeda, and Jenkins (2014) integrated digital with conventional literacies through digital storytelling and helped their learners understand and apply reading and writing skills and strategies.

e) *The research site and participants*

The research targeted two classes (n= 26) of 6th Graders, attending a state primary school located in a rural town in central Greece. With the exception of one coordinate male learner of Albanian origin in the control group, the 11-12-year-old learners were monolingual speakers of Greek and shared a similar socio-educational background. They were taught English as a foreign language in three forty-five-minute sessions weekly at school and they also attended private foreign language centers, which almost exclusively prepared them for EFL certification exams. Their language proficiency ranged from A1 to A2 (CEFR, 2018). Two male learners in the experimental group experienced undiagnosed learning difficulties and one male learner was a highly functional autistic.

III. METHODOLOGY: ACTION RESEARCH

The progressivist IFLC guidelines enable EFL teachers to use the scales of descriptors as a tool to set their own class-specific goals, select the most appropriate methods and techniques, and develop their own sur-measure differentiated syllabi and lesson plans (FEK, 2016, p. 30322). Therefore, action research, defined by Frost (2002, p. 25) as a "process of systematic reflection, enquiry and action", sought to explore the extent to which the integration of digital storytelling can improve the 6th Graders' reading and writing performance, in terms of the Waystage criteria, which are set by the Greek State Certificate of Language Proficiency. Having been randomly assigned as the control and experimental group, the control group (5 female and 5 male learners) received tuition in English through the official textbook, while the experimental group (7 female and 9 male learners) was exposed to the digital storytelling treatment.

Conforming to Mertler's (2013) cyclical methodological procedure, the researchers/teachers (Burns, 2015) planned, observed and recorded the events and processes, collected and analyzed numerical data related to the subjects' reading and writing performances, reflected on the intended or unintended outcomes of the actions undertaken and developed the next cycle of action.

The research pursued the following questions:

1. What is the contribution of digital storytelling in the teaching of English as a foreign language in the 6th Grade?
2. What is the impact of digital storytelling on the reading performance of EFL 6th Graders?
3. What is the impact of digital storytelling on collaborative process writing of narrative texts?

a) *Data collection instruments and analysis procedure*

Capitalizing on the strengths and minimizing the weaknesses of both research approaches, a mixed methods approach to research, integrated quantitative (pre-, while-, and post- KPG tests) and qualitative (the teachers' diaries and the semi-structured interviews) strategies to achieve triangulation and extract valid conclusions (Mik-Meyer, 2020).

i. *Pre-, while-, and post-tests*

Tests from the KPG exams (*The KPG exams (uoa.gr)*), were administered to both groups prior to the intervention (KPG, 2017), after two digital stories had been completed (KPG, 2018), and at the end of the intervention (KPG, 2017) provided a quantitative (numerical) assessment of the outcomes of the treatment.

ii. *Semi-structured interviews*

The individual semi-structured interviews explored and provided qualitative data on the subjects'

pre- and post-intervention attitudes, experiences, and opinions towards the instructional intervention (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). The interview questions (see Appendices A and B), which were worded in the subjects' mother tongue (Cohen et al., 2007), were divided into axes to highlight "the relationships between concepts and categories" (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019, p. 87). Their open format allowed the subjects to vocalize their perspectives in their own terms.

iii. *Teachers' diary*

The teachers' real-time and systematic entries (see Appendix C) on objective (factual) and subjective (ideas and feelings) issues in their diary (Dornyei, 2007) generated detailed and reliable interpretations of the intervention interactions and processes (Latham, 2010). The systematic description of the teaching and learning process stimulated retrospective reflection (Medina, 2013) and assisted in the analysis and interpretation of trends and recurring patterns (Bazir, 2016).

iv. *The digital tools*

The following digital tools were also utilized in the instructional intervention.

v. *The Webex platform*

The emergency remote teaching (16/11/2020-23/12/2021) through the Webex platform simulated the face-to-face educative processes and enabled the experimental group to continue the construction of the digital stories.

vi. *Google Docs*

Google Docs, the online word-processing tool, enabled the subjects to access and edit collaborative documents as well as, the synchronous or asynchronous monitoring and provision of feedback. Its word-processing capabilities, which were familiar from similar applications, assisted in introducing process writing into the text-based instructional context under consideration (See Appendix D).

vii. *The digital storytelling authoring tool*

The free version of Adobe Spark (<https://spark.adobe.com/sp/>), a Web-based design tool, supported the asynchronous collaborative creation of digital stories due to its compatibility with the operating systems in use at school (Ubuntu), and domestically (MS Windows) as well as, with Google Docs.

b) *The research procedure*

Examples of digital stories were presented in one introductory workshop (Pardo, 2014; Sadik 2008) but the technical instruction focused only on basic operations so that the subjects would not lose sight of the educational objectives (Robin & McNeil, 2012; Gils, 2005).

In view of the lack of computers for all the learners as well as, the challenge of effectively managing multiple individual projects, the subjects were asked to form four groups sharing one computer. The

groups were expected to assign specialized roles to their members according to their language proficiency, abilities and interests and to create a digital story of 25-28 slideshows, comprising written inserts, images, audio narration, and music. Interventions to thwart the formation of the homogeneous groups and rotations (Widodo, 2013) at the end of each digital story enabled subjects of different reading and writing abilities to cooperate.

The intervention conformed to an adapted version of Yang & Wu's (2012) pre-, while-, and post-production and distribution digital storytelling framework.

In the pre-production stage, the subjects were expected to read extracts from popular pre-adolescent books, produce a summary of the main events, and engage in the computer-assisted collaborative process of synchronously or asynchronously composing the scripts for their digital narratives on Google Docs.

Because effective reading comprehension combines both linguistic and schematic knowledge (Hedge, 2000), an interactive approach to the reading instruction (Garton & Pratt, 1989; Grabe & Stoller, 2013) informed the design of the proposed lesson plans.

In the pre-reading stage, pair/group activities, aiming at the pre-teaching or revision of key vocabulary (labeling pictures, brainstorming topic-related vocabulary, matching lexical items with their definitions and completing the gaps in sentence) enhanced the comprehensibility of the upcoming reading text and enabled the learners to construe the meaning of less frequent lexical items from the overall or immediate context (Anderson, 1994). Rapid word recognition eased the cognitive load on the processing capabilities of the EFL learners (Hedge, 2000) and released attentional resources for higher-level cognitive operations (Laufer, 1997; Walter, 2003). Furthermore, the "myth of perfect comprehension" (Urquhart & Weir, 1998, p. 86) during lexical processing was gradually replaced with more realistic reading goals, such as tolerance of ambiguity, educated guessing or a reasonable interpretation of the overall meaning.

Previews, questions, or predictions, concerning the content or the themes of the text, on the evidence offered by the textual and visual (illustrations) clues, activated the subjects' content schemata as well as their formal schemata, that is their prior knowledge of the genre-specific characteristics. Associated with top-down processing, this constructive and creative approach to comprehension as a process invited critical reflection, inferencing, and educated guesses, and elicited multiple or alternative interpretations.

In the while-reading stage, the information gap activities provided further opportunities for active interaction with the text and the collaborative construction of meaning. The learners, in pairs, read intensively, and exchanged the information which was

absent from their texts with the other pairs in their group. Alternatively, confirming the pre-reading hypotheses against the actual text, and annotating on the margins of the text, motivated purposeful reading, and expressed the learners' approval (or lack thereof) of the characters' actions or attitudes. The learners also hypothesized at strategic points as to what would happen next and answered questions that required making educated guesses and inferences.

The post-reading tasks encouraged the pairs or groups of learners to provide appropriate titles or place the jumbled sequence of events into the correct order to signify global comprehension. Constructing questions which challenged the main characters' attitudes or actions and answering them from the character's perspective (Clarke, 1989b, as cited in Hedge, 2000) induced the basic readers to exercise their judgment and critically analyze the implicit messages in the text, scanning the texts for synonyms and antonyms of given lexical items, evaluating the most useful vocabulary, completing the acrostic, and categorizing the temporal, cause and sequence cohesive markers, reviewed, expanded, and consolidated the new vocabulary.

Lastly, the subjects' comprehension of the reading texts was indirectly evaluated through the transfer, resynthesis, and extension of their content into the collaborative writing of the scripts of the digital stories. (Kesler et al., 2016; Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017; Reinders, 2011; Shelby-Caffey et al., 2014; Tatum, 2009).

The writing lessons proposed recursive cycles of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981), personalized instruction, within workshops (White & Arndt, 1991), and transformed knowledge through writing (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). The writing instruction, which was also divided into stages, marked a shift towards a more interactive and process-focused writing behaviour and the abstraction of transferable writing strategies.

In the pre-writing stage, a whole-class discussion on the benefits of computer-assisted, collaborative process writing as well as, a series of YouTube instructional videos, familiarized learners with the process approach to writing and sensitized them to the benefits accruing from collaborative work in learning networks. The collaborative brainstorming activities helped the learners to recall and display content-related background knowledge and previously learned vocabulary (words, phrases or sentences).

In the while-writing stage, the subjects summarized the basic points of the reading texts and collaboratively synthesized the rough draft of their story on Google Docs. Knowledge pertinent to the task environment, such as the topic, their own purposes or goals for writing, their target audience and uses of the text (Hyland, 2016) were also retrieved from their long-term memory (Flower & Hayes, 1981). In line with Nystrand's (1989) argument that meaning is co-created

through the interaction between readers and writers, the young writers also attempted to predict and respond to the "rhetorical demands" of their immediate audiences, meaning their processing needs, expectations and interests structured their texts accordingly (White & Arndt, 1991). An authentic sample text (Scrivener, 2005) afforded feedback on the structure of the learners' drafts, which is relevant to genre-specific conventions (Calfoglou, 2004) and cross-cultural variations in discourse structure (Kaplan, 1966), that is, the ways the given and new information are structured to form texts. Categorizing the highlighted cohesive markers in the text and brainstorming more, sensitized the young learners to the ways a text is held together through coherence, denoting the consistent interplay amongst the writer, the reader and the text (Carrell, 1982), and the effective use of the lexical cohesive (relationship) markers (Graham & Perin, 2007). Following the collaborative composition and the preliminary self-evaluation of the first draft of their story, the learners addressed potential inconsistencies between the content of their text and their writing goals (Hayes & Flowers, 1980; Sommers, 1982) and affected changes. Then another group reviewed their draft, detecting and correcting meaning-related defects such as, lack of clarity and information that need to be added, omitted, or reordered and appropriated ideas, which were likely to improve their texts. The processing capabilities of Google Docs facilitated in-depth modifications at any stage of the composition (Beatty, 2010; Eldouma, 2018). Consequently, the increased time and attention to "higher-order" processes (Bangert-Drowns, 1993, p. 72), such as planning, monitoring, evaluation and revision seemed to enhance the quantity, quality, and complexity of the texts (Pennington, 1996; Piper, 1987).

Conferences with each group (White & Arndt, 1991) enabled the teachers/researchers to gain access to the writers' still evolving texts, monitor their progress, and respond to problems with alternative and text-specific solutions (Florio-Ruane & Dunn, 1985; Genesee & Upshur, 1996). Following the incorporation of the feedback suggested by their peers or the teachers into their scripts, a list (Frank, 1990, as cited in Calfoglou, 2004) related to the mechanical demands of writing (usage, spelling, punctuation and capitalization) in conjunction with the integrated spell-checking system, helped the subjects to compose the final draft of their stories. Additionally, an online thesaurus and dictionaries strategically scaffolded the diversification of the developing writers' vocabulary (Eldouma, 2018).

In the post-writing stage, the teachers/researchers attempted to create a blended learning environment by pointing out the potential for synchronous or asynchronous modifications (Tsigani, 2021). Self-evaluation questions stimulated discussions on issues such as, computer-assisted composition, collaborative process writing, and writing strategies.

Individual strengths, weaknesses, and areas of difficulty, were also discussed and new writing goals were established. Retrospective meta-cognitive reflection on one's learning processes (Brewster et al. 1992) seemed to promote learner independence (Cameron, 2001; Johnson et al., 1998) and allowed the teachers/researchers to ascertain their learners' instructional needs (Chamot, 1999) and modify the design of subsequent writing sessions.

In the production stage, to avert navigational disorientation, the storyboards, that is the "written and graphical overview of the elements to be included in the digital stories" (Robin, 2016, pp. 23-24), were compiled on the same Google Docs as their scripts. Storyboarding helped the subjects to visualize and communicate their ideas to their classmates more concretely and also to identify problems and weaknesses in advance. Finally, license-free melodies from the Adobe Library or commercial soundtracks embellished and added depth to the narrations (Robin, 2016).

In the post-production stage, a list of criteria guided the collaborative assessment of the process as well as the product of digital storytelling (Reinders, 2011; Sadik, 2008). The online publication of the digital stories (My edublog (vassilikisedublog.blogspot.com) provided an authentic purpose for writing, motivated extensive content and form-related revisions and recorded the subjects' progress (Gregori-Signes, 2008).

IV. REPORT OF THE FINDINGS

A 6-month action research investigated the impact of digital storytelling on the teaching and learning of reading and writing on two classes of 6th Graders in a state primary school in Greece.

a) *The pre-intervention interview findings*

The subjects' responses to the first axis (item 16), of the pre-intervention interviews indicated that all had been receiving ICT instruction since the first grade (item 17), while 69% of them claimed to have pre-school ICT knowledge (Figure 2).

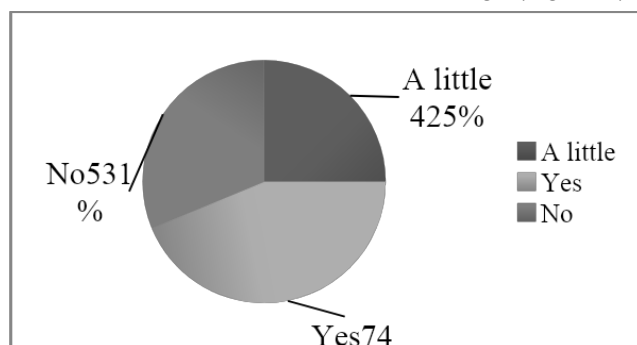


Figure 2: Pre-school ICT knowledge

However, their current knowledge of information and communication technologies, which was limited to surfing the web, exchanging messages on social networks, and playing computer games (items 21-26), served for personal entertainment only, and passive consumption, rather than the creation of content (Kennedy & Fox, 2013). The subjects' instrumental motivation (Gardner, 1979) to acquire a certificate in English (item 17) related to practical purposes such as social mobility, international communication and professional advancement.

With regard to what they lack in English (item 19), Figure 3 suggests that 63% of the participants felt confidence in their speaking abilities (barring their pronunciation) and in their knowledge of vocabulary (31%). However, only 19% evaluated their knowledge of grammar positively, and the same applied to their writing, and spelling skills, whereas they evaluated their reading and listening skills even less (13%).

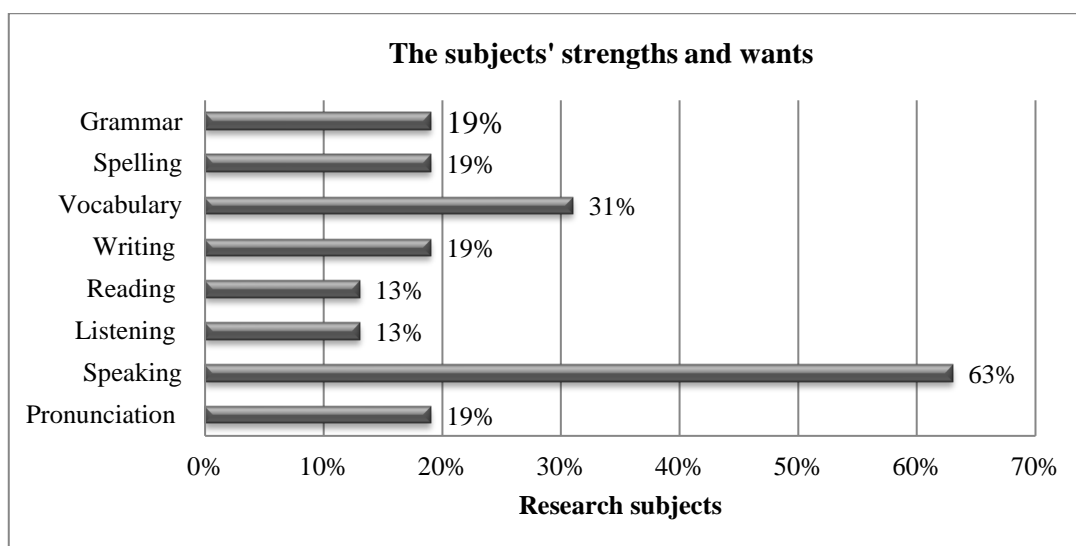


Figure 3: Strengths and wants in English

Figure 4 indicates that approximately 31% the subjects preferred to enhance their competence in English (item 31) through reading and grammar instruction as well as, by watching films, 13% through listening to songs, doing exercises and speaking, and only 6% through writing and listening.

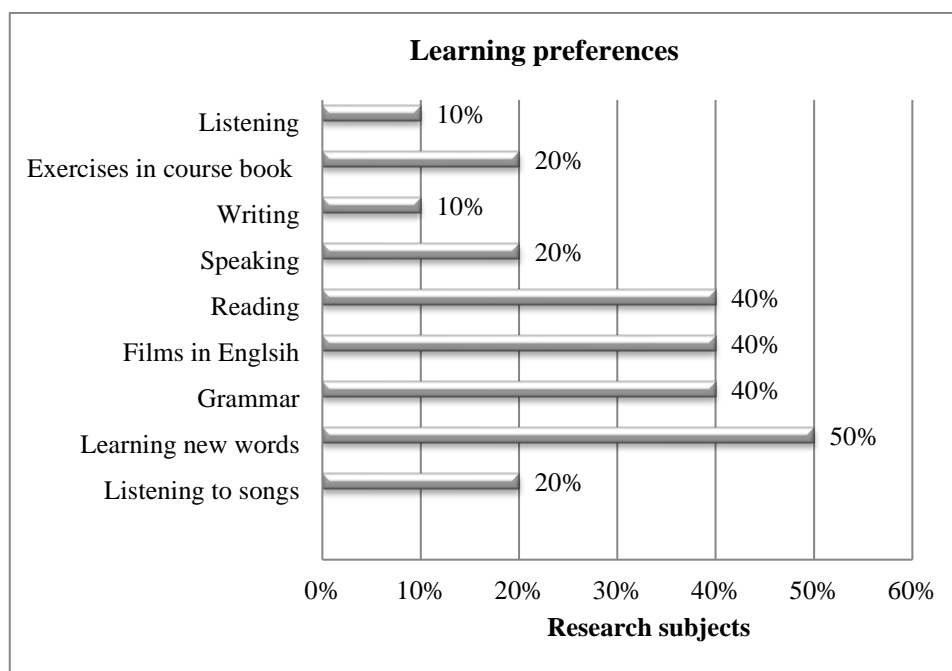


Figure 4: Learning preferences

Regarding their preferred modes of work, Figure 5 shows that 56% of the participants preferred to work alone or at home, 19% to attend the lesson with the rest of the class, while only 13% were aware of the advantages of pair or group collaboration.

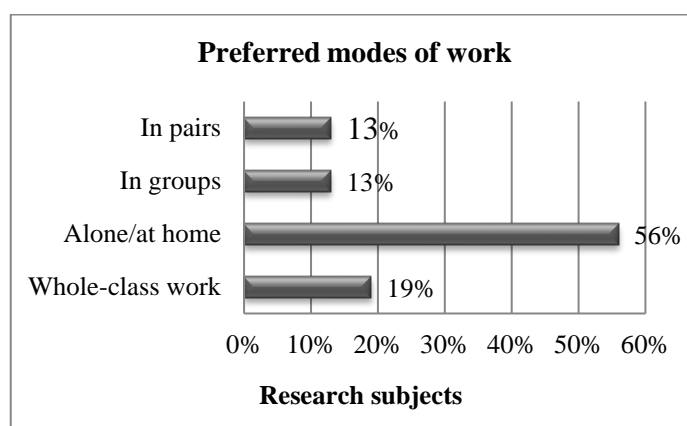


Figure 5: Preferred modes of work

b) *The post-intervention interview findings*

The subjects' responses to items 3 and 21-30 of the first axis, post-intervention interview, showed that digital storytelling motivated increased participation

(93%) in the reading of the texts (Radaideh et al, 2020) and interest in the process of reading (80%) and the reading activities (Adyguzel & Kumckale, 2018; Yoon, 2012). According to the participants (Figure 6):

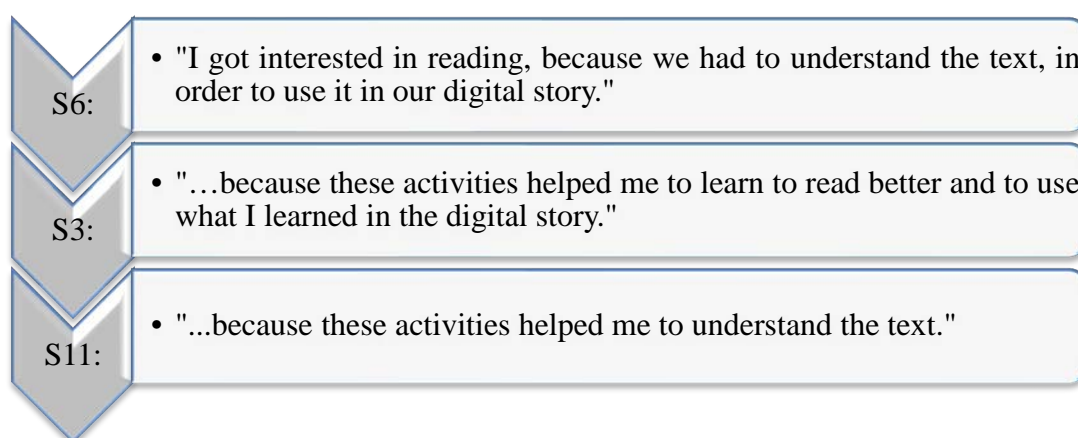


Figure 6: Increased interest in reading

Digital storytelling led to improvements (93%) in the subjects' reading skills (Abdallah, 2019; Alkhilili, 2018; Anggeraini, & Afifah, 2017; Apriltya et al., 2016; Hamdy, 2017), which was attributed to the collaborative

reading of the texts (items 5-8) as well as, the efficient processing acquisition and diversification of vocabulary (items 11-13, 19-20) (80%) (Habibi & Widyantoro, 2019; Leong et al., 2019). Figure 7 elaborates:

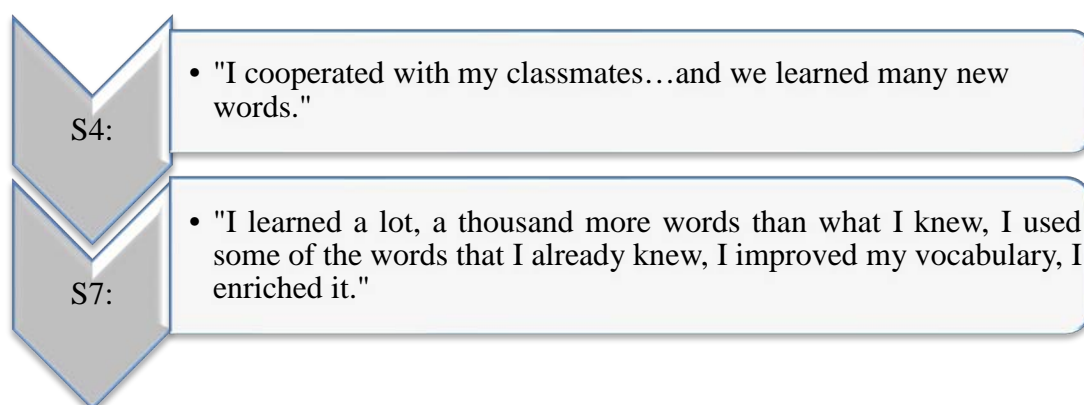


Figure 7: Collaborative learning and vocabulary improvements

Their responses to items 31-34 also implied that summarizing, as well as the combination of images, and text, increased (93%) reading comprehension (Adyguzel

& Kumckale, 2018; Choo et al., 2017; Mayer, 2009). In their own words (Figure 8):

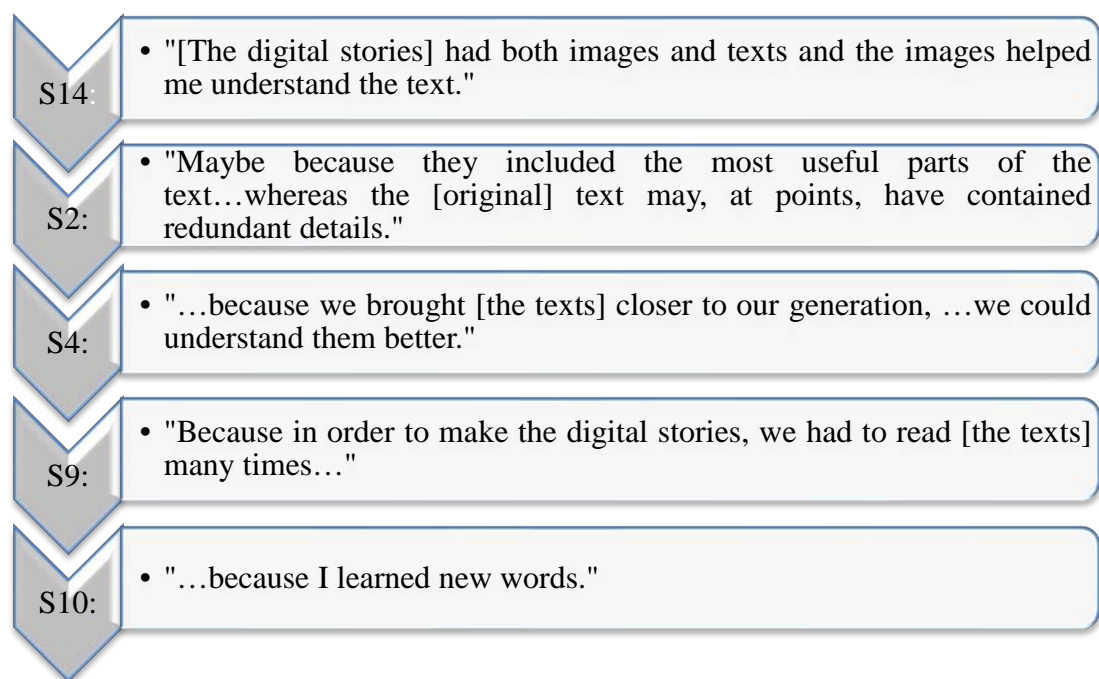


Figure 8: Improvements in reading comprehension

Summarizing the critical information of the texts (93%), and reacting to the messages conveyed (80%) expanded (93%) the participants' critical thinking skills (Gregori-Signes, 2008; Sadik, 2008; Yang & Wu, 2012),

and encouraged the expression of their personal views. The subjects' responses to items 41-44 in Figure 9 elaborate:

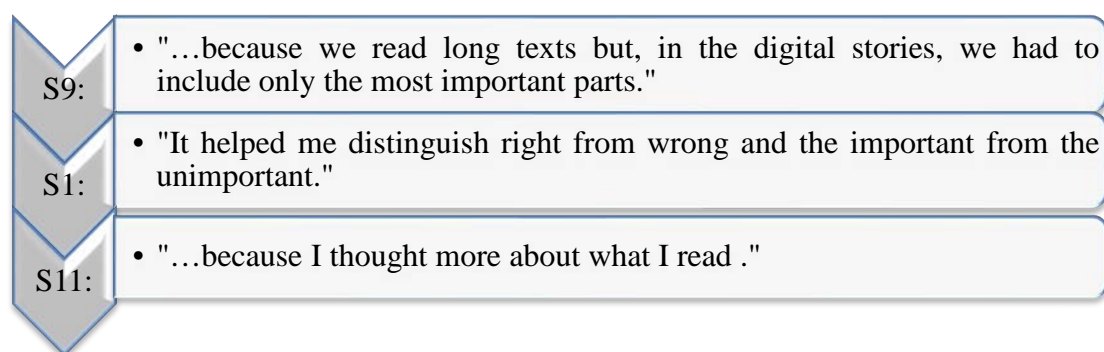


Figure 9: Critical thinking skills

Items 57-58 and 91-94 of the second axis revealed that digital storytelling increased interest (93%) (Campbell, 2012; Castañeda, 2013; Kieler, 2010; Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017; Yee & Kee, 2017), participation (80%) in the process of writing (Bumgarner, 2012), and the writing activities (Herrera-Ramirez, 2013), and motivated the participants to complete their assignments (Foley, 2013). According to the subjects themselves (Figure 10):

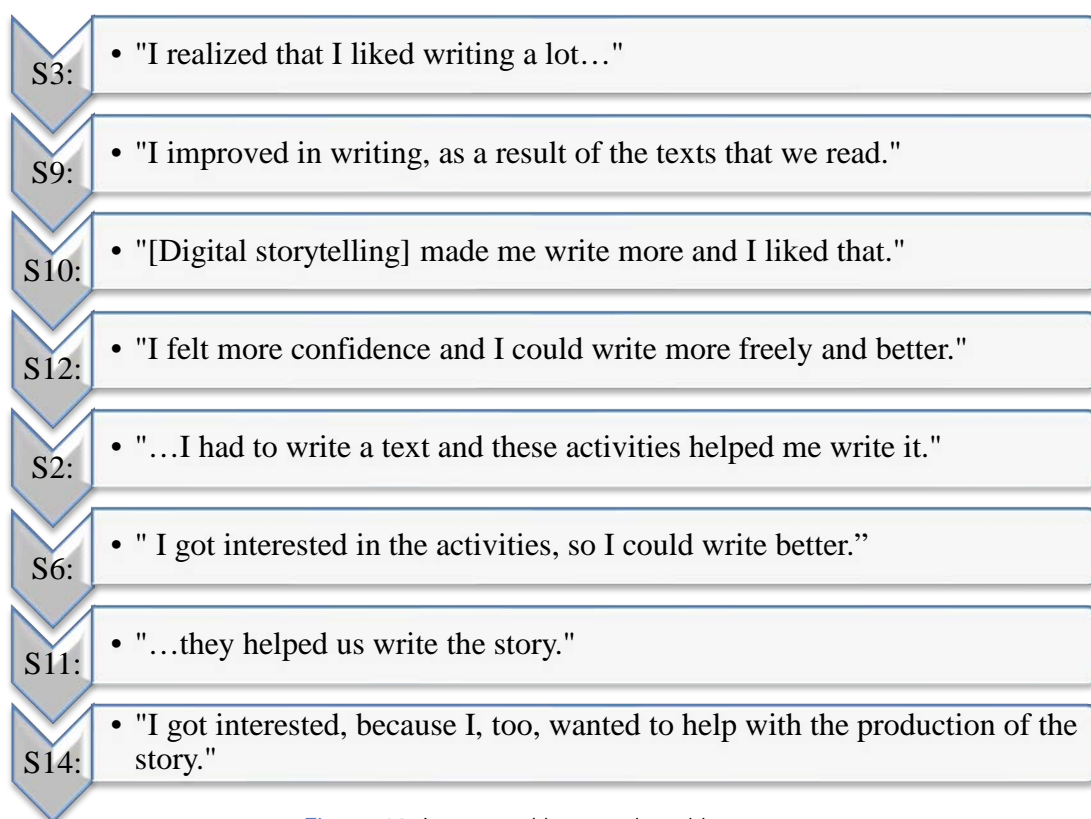


Figure 10: Increased interest in writing

Digital storytelling created a collaborative (Campbell, 2012; Tsigani & Nikolakopoulou, 2018) and supportive learning context (items 67-70), which positively affected (93%) the quality of the participants'

digital narratives (Joko Saputro, 2013), and their writing competence (Campbell, 2012; Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017; Shamsulbahri & Aziz, 2020). In their own words (Figure 11):

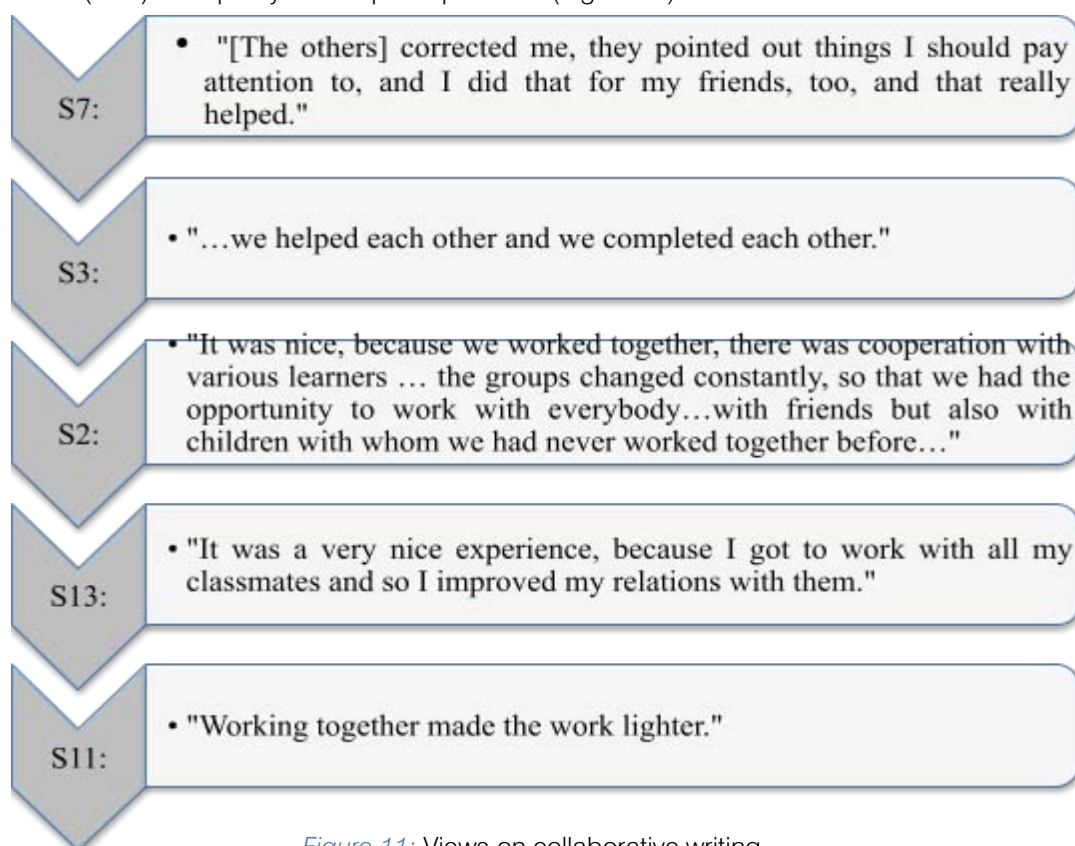


Figure 11: Views on collaborative writing

The low achieving participants attributed their lack of participation in the writing activities to their limited language proficiency and inability to detect errors (items 72-79) but claimed to have paid close attention to the strategies deployed by more advanced peers (Fung, 2010).

Digital storytelling encouraged the participants' engagement in computer-assisted process writing (Castañeda, 2013; Kieler, 2010; Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017; Yee & Kee, 2017). Figure 12 explains:

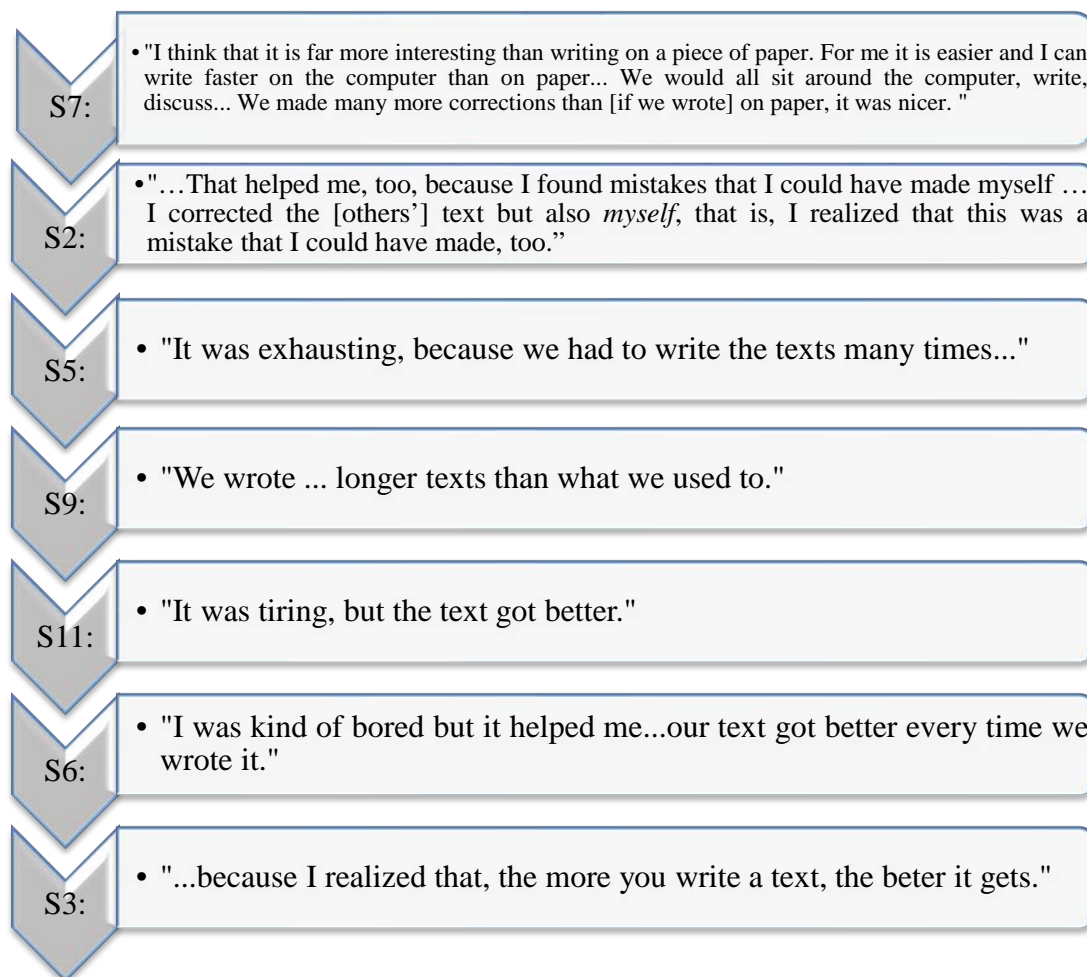


Figure 12: Views on computer-assisted process writing

Although digital storytelling raised awareness of peer assessment strategies (Quiroga & Toro Nieto, 2015), it seems that the participants prioritized the revisions (87%) and editing (93%) of their own texts over the revising (60%) and editing (67%) the text of another group (items 81xii and 81xxi). Multiple collaborative proofreading also increased the processing and understanding of the reading texts (Kesler, Gibson & Turansky, 2016), as well as the expression of personal points of view (Kieler, 2010).

The publication of the participants' digital stories (items 80xiii, 96) elicited equal measures of pride and anxiety, enhanced sensitivity to the rhetorical expectations of real-world local audiences and motivated revisions and editing (Yamac & Ulusoy, 2016; Yoon, 2013; Castañeda, 2013). Figure 13 reveals:

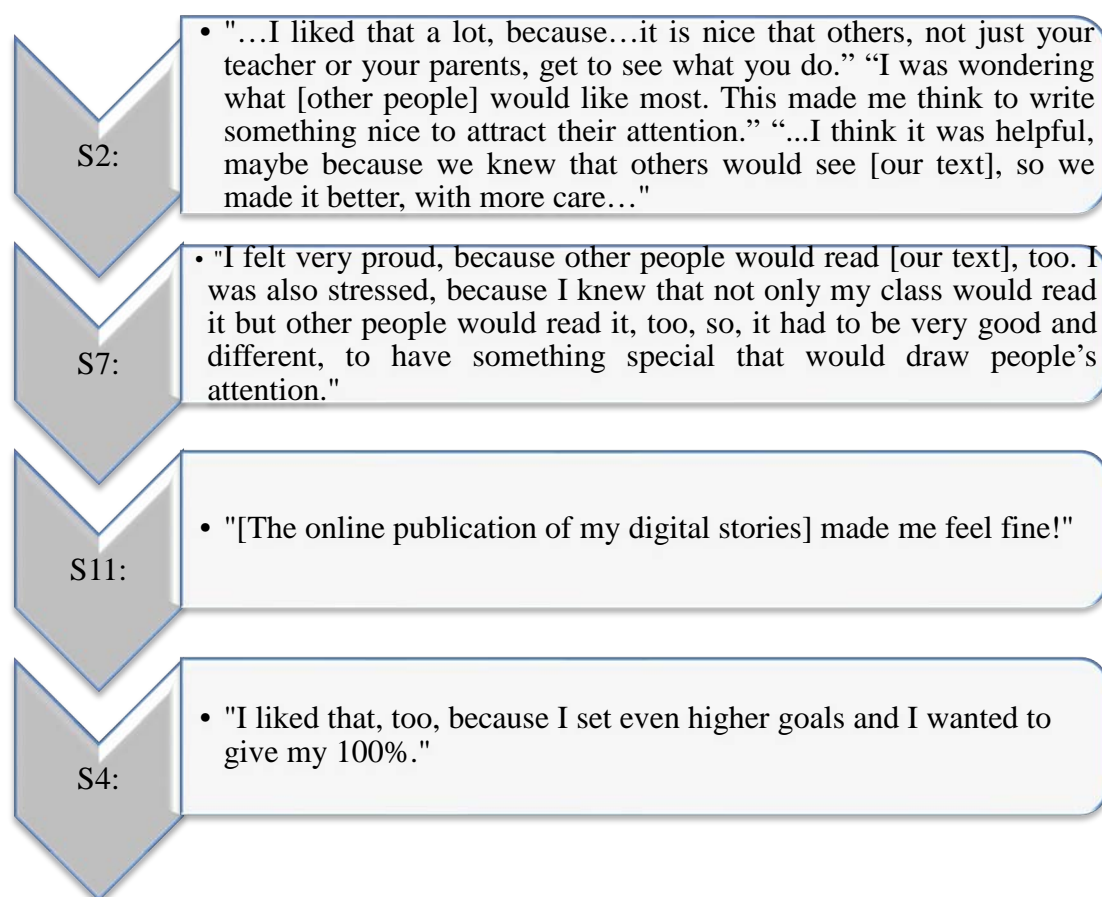


Figure 13: Views on writing for an audience

The participants' increasing (67%) reliance on their groups (item 81xiii), relates to research findings concerning enhanced independence in learning (Jitpaisarnwattana, 2018), as a result of digital storytelling (Figure 14).

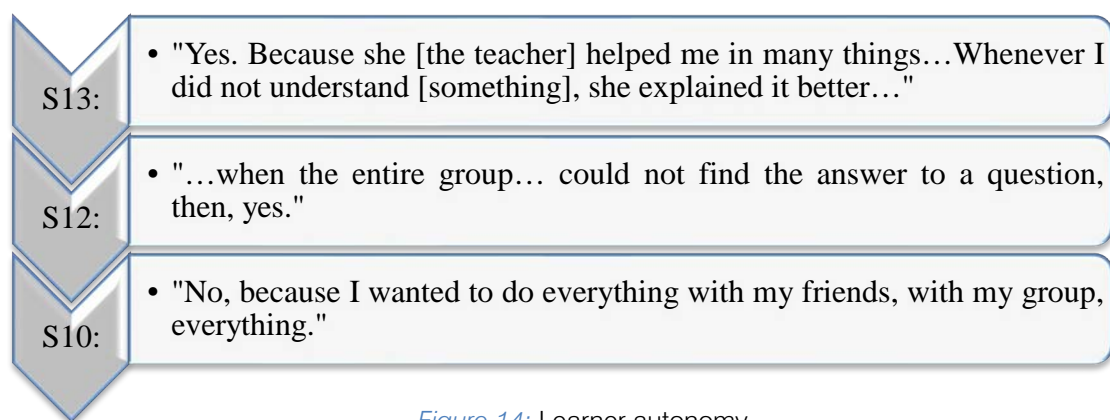


Figure 14: Learner autonomy

Items 119-122 of the third axis suggested that digital storytelling introduced novelty and entertainment into the EFL instruction (Mutalib et al., 2011). The participants' responses to items 109-117 (Figure 16) revealed their positive attitudes and increased engagement (Smeda et al., 2014):

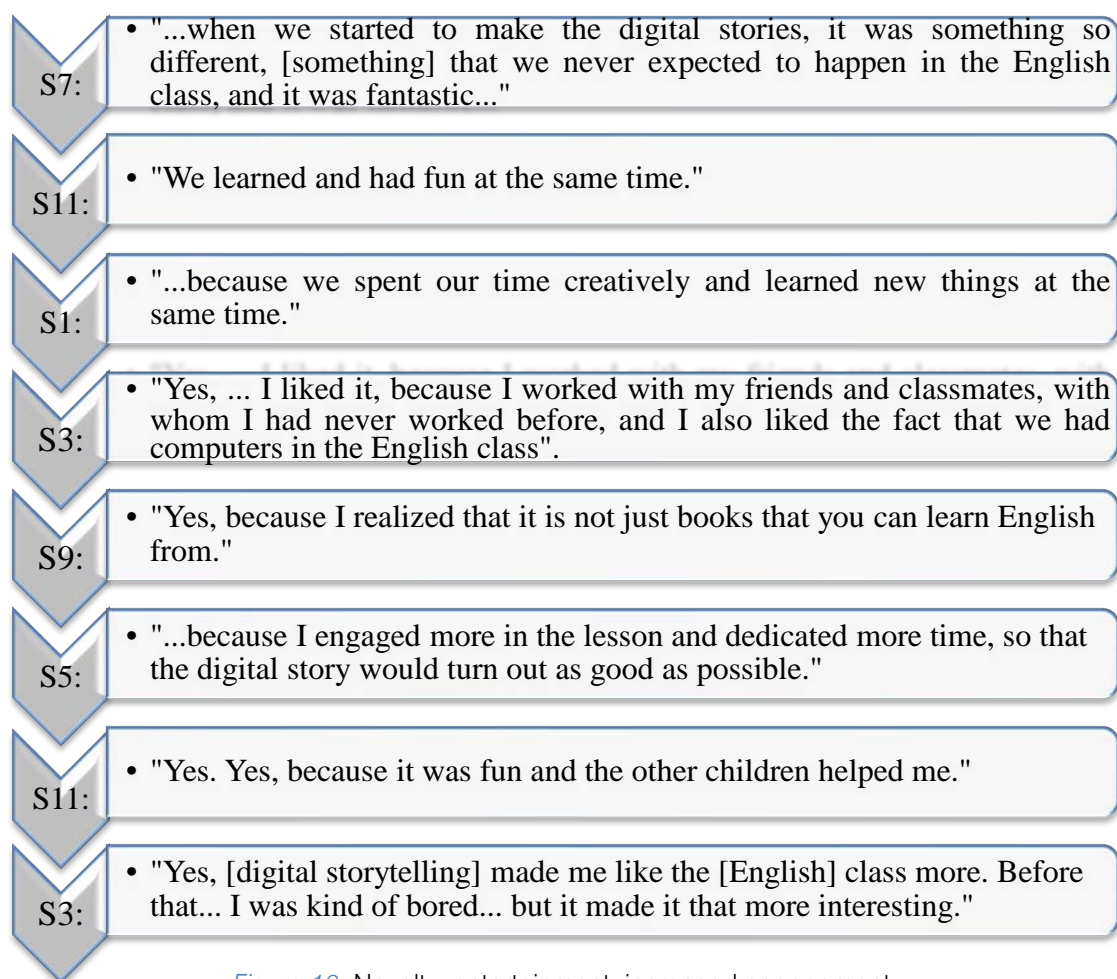


Figure 16: Novelty, entertainment, increased engagement

Moreover, the participants claimed (items 129-132) that digital storytelling improved their EFL competence (Herrera-Ramirez, 2013) in many ways, as elaborated in Figure 17:

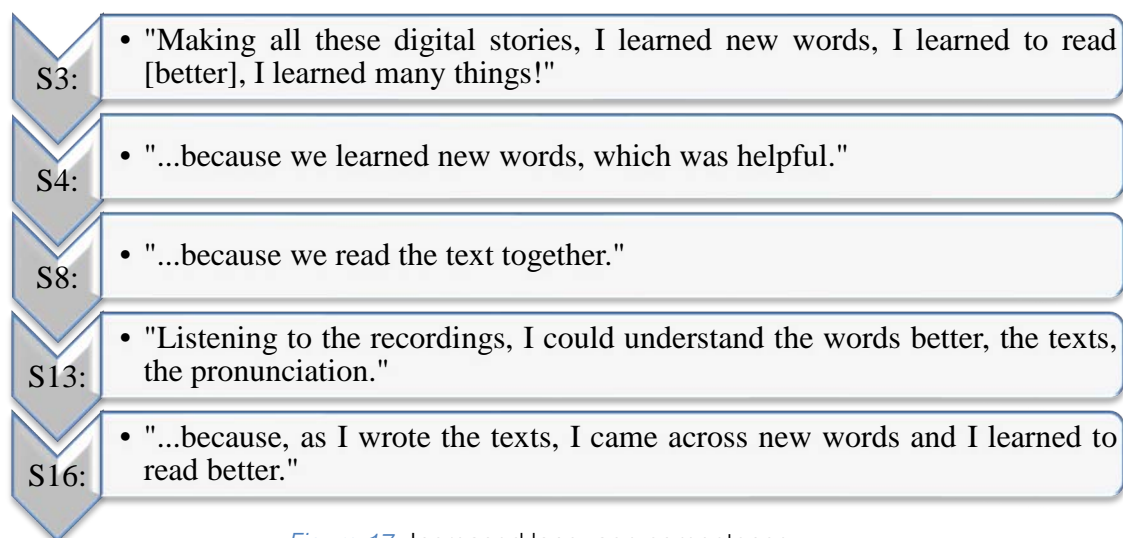


Figure 17: Increased language competence

Multimedia authoring helped the participants, with reading and writing difficulties, to express themselves (Anderson et al., 2014; Bull & Kajder, 2004; Bumgarner, 2012). The participants' group pride (Castañeda, 2013; Sadik, 2008), in their digital stories

(item 104), seemed to have connected the class (which thus seemed to have formed a more stronger bond) (Figure 18), and improved their psychology and interpersonal relationships (Smeda et al., 2014):

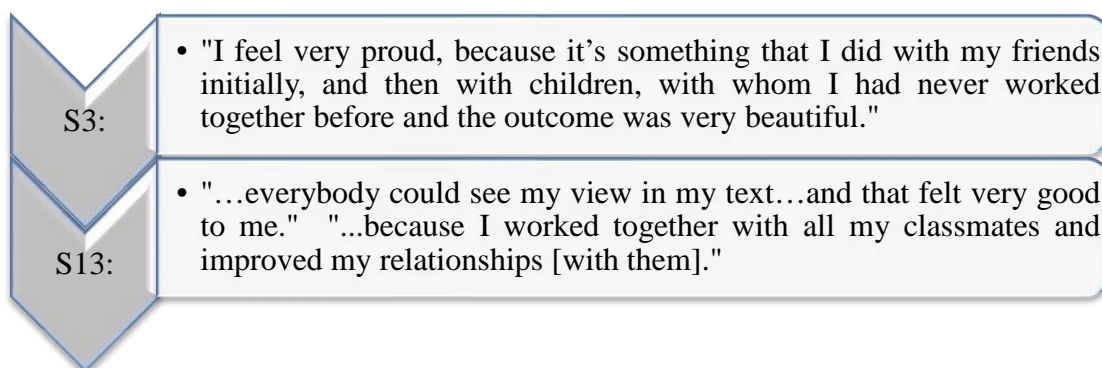


Figure 18: Improvements in psychology and interpersonal relationships

The participants' responses (Figure 19) implied that there was a development of individual and group responsibility and interdependence (Fung, 2010), as concerning their collaborative projects. Figure 19 (items 134-137) suggests improved (93%) behavior and cooperation (Robin, 2016):

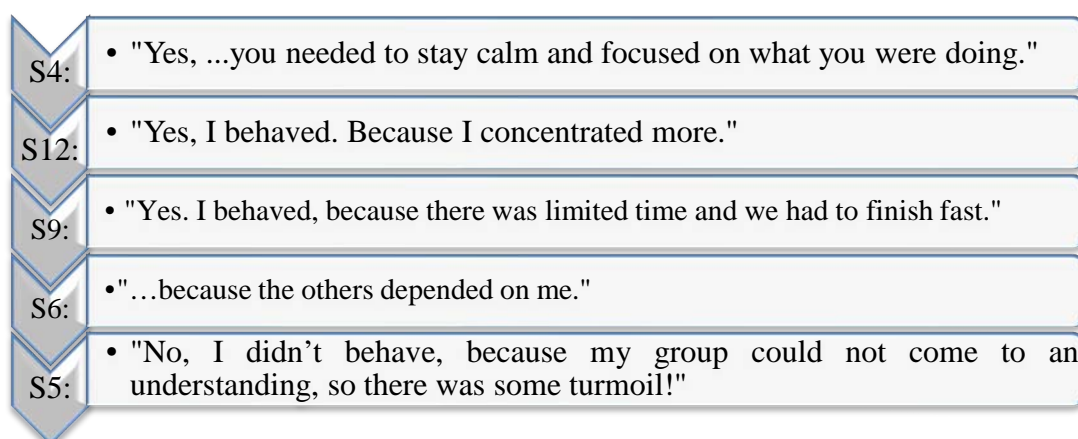


Figure 19: Improvements in behavior

The participants' responses (item 143) contradicted the teachers' entries in their diaries concerning the uneven sharing of the work (Sadik, 2008). Figure 20 suggests:

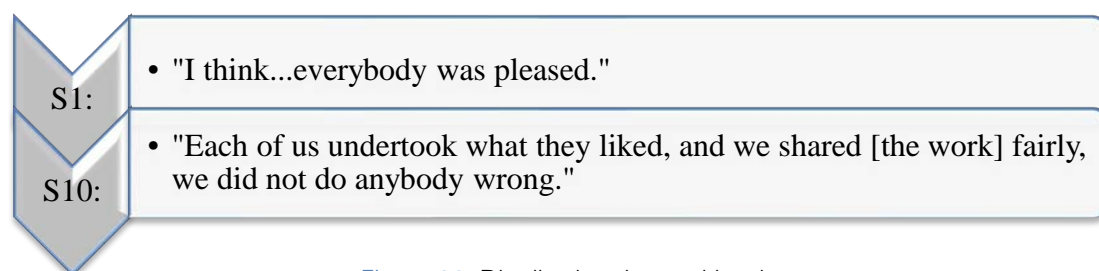


Figure 20: Distributing the workload

The participants also seemed to have acknowledged (93%) the benefits from the collaborative construction of knowledge (items 147-151), and peer feedback (Herrington & Oliver, 2004), as evidenced by their overall unwillingness to work individually (item 154). In their own words (Figure 21):

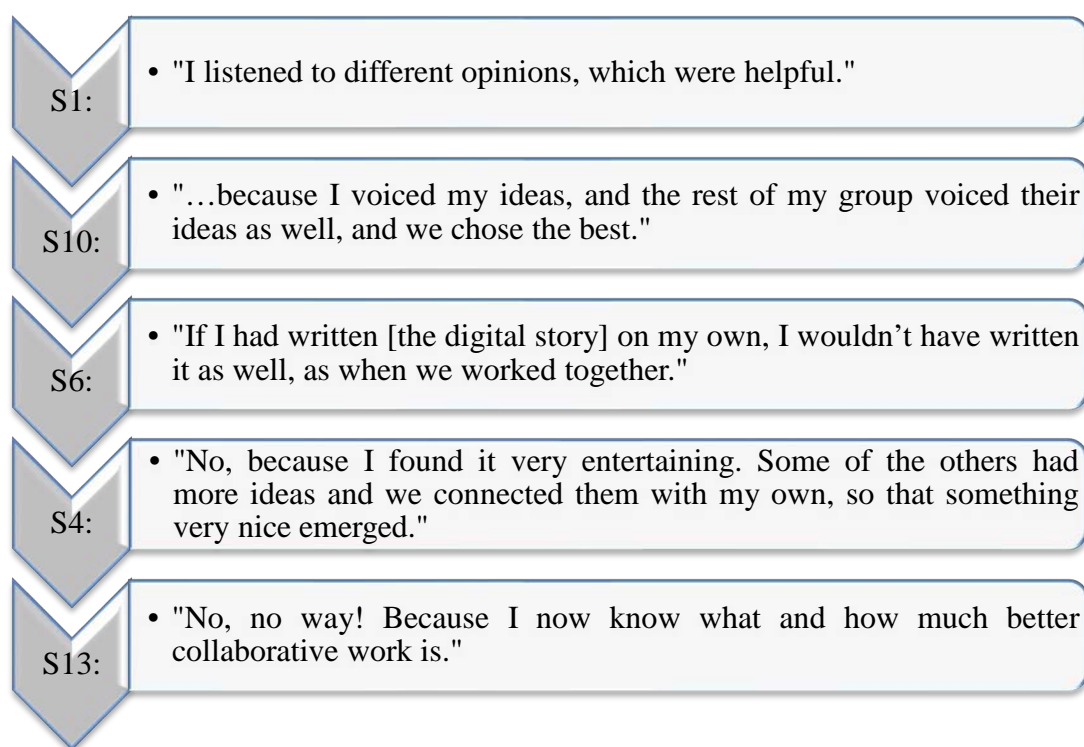


Figure 21: The post-intervention preferred mode of work

Peer collaboration, improvements in language competence, the connection of the EFL class with real-world audiences, and with technology, were cited (item

157) as the most positive features of digital storytelling (Figure 22):

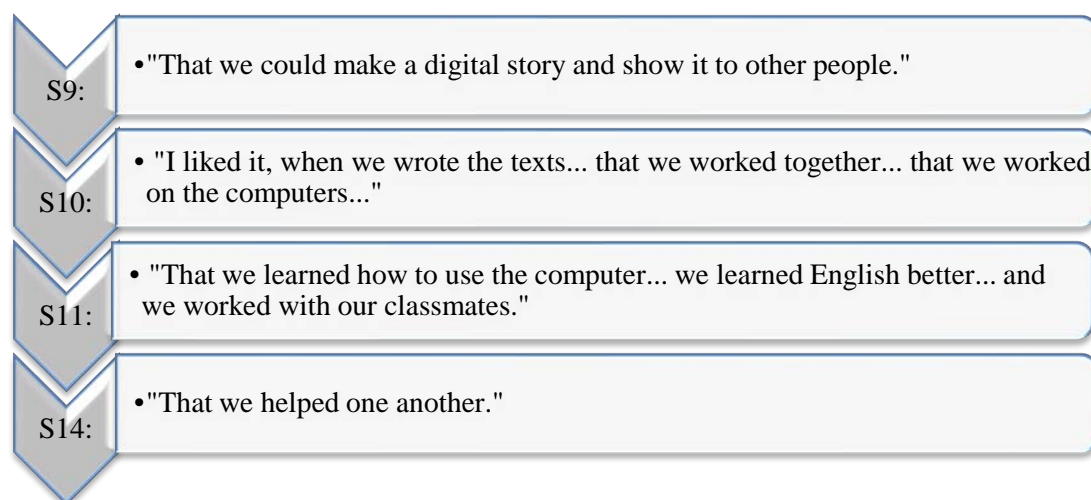


Figure 22: The positive features of digital storytelling

The main difficulties associated with digital storytelling (items 106-107) related to computer malfunctions, poor internet connection, limited access to the computer lab (Image 1), time management and difficulty in locating appropriate images.



Image 1: The computer lab

The participants' unwillingness (item 163) to continue being taught through the textbook contrasted starkly with their favorable pre-intervention descriptions (Figure 23):

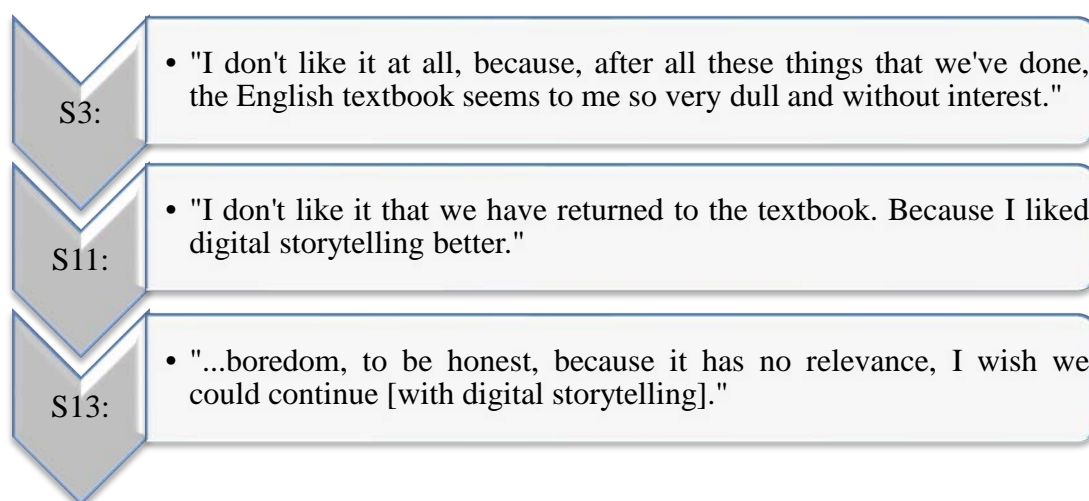


Figure 23: Post-intervention attitudes toward the textbook

Lastly, the participants expressed (items 160, 164-166) their eagerness to engage in digital storytelling either in class (100%) or on their own (73%).

c) The teachers' diaries

The teachers' entries in their diary describe digital storytelling as a highly interactive activity, which lends itself to blended or emergency remote teaching through the Webex platform during the quarantine (11/16/2020-12/23/2021). The "Breakout sessions" option on Webex resolved tensions between the methodology based on face-to-face, group, and computer-mediated interaction. The participants' intrinsic motivation, engagement (Tsigani & Nikolopoulou, 2018), and responsibility in learning (Guzman Gamez & Moreno Cuellar, 2019), is corroborated by their high attendance rates (94%), as well as the fact that all the groups dedicated considerable out-of-class time to complete their assignments. The more advanced participants sidelined their competitive and individualistic attitudes,

compensated each other's' weaknesses and assisted the less proficient members of their groups (Widodo, 2013). The teachers' observations confirm Donato's (1994) insight that peer interaction and the collaborative co-construction of knowledge through digital storytelling projects facilitated the subjects' transition to the next level of cognitive development and afforded ample opportunities for the formulation and testing of the FL hypotheses receptively, through reading, and productively, through writing. Even though the participants' limited repertoire of interactional strategies caused them to code-switch extensively, the use of the L1 scaffolded the development of their L2 critical skills (Cañas et al., 2018).

In relation to the teaching and learning of reading, the multilayered literary texts provided content for the writing of the scripts of the digital stories (Kesler, Gibson & Turansky, 2016; Shelby-Caffey et al., 2014) and modeled language structures (Lazar, 1994; Khan & Alasmari, 2018; Seo & Kim, 2020). Despite being slightly beyond the participants' current levels of language

proficiency, the quick succession of events retained their interest and motivated them to read strategically and creatively (Bakar, 2019), retell the main events of the stories (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987) but also draw inferences and incorporate their opinions (Kesler et al., 2016; Janssen et al., 2010; Sadik, 2008). The warm-up activities established links between learners' topic-related pre-knowledge or past experiences, which are organized as scripts or content schemata in their long-term memory (Hyland, 2016; Grabe & Stoller, 2013), and the text. The key vocabulary which was pre-taught alleviated the learner's cognitive difficulties in processing the text (Grabe & Stoller, 2013). Similarly, the learners' formal schemata, that is, their knowledge of discourse-specific characteristics, such as the structure, language features, and purpose (Grabe & Stoller 2013), were also activated. Furthermore, the nature, use, and application of the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies (O' Malley & Chamot, 1990) for repairing gaps, in reading comprehension, were methodically and explicitly modeled or practiced. For instance, pair or group interaction, the expression of personal attitudes, preferences or feelings and the articulation of collaborative rationales were encouraged. The learners were also given opportunities to anticipate the text content based on textual and visual cues, to summarize its main points, to generate questions, or draw inferences from explicitly stated information (Duke et al., 2010).

In relation to the teaching and learning of writing, the production of multiple drafts, wherein the teachers' suggested changes, questions, and text-

specific strategies as well as, peer feedback which was incorporated (Zamel, 1985), sensitized the greater part of the young learners to the cyclical or reiterative cognitive processes (drafting, reviewing, editing, and evaluating) thus underlying real-world writing and helping them to reinforce their narrative writing skills. Writing came to be perceived as a collaborative endeavor and the developing writers were familiarized with the interactive processes involved in the co-construction and revision of a written text by multiple authors. The generation of diverse ideas and perspectives from their background knowledge and experiences and the collaborative decisions concerning the content, structure and language of their texts fostered a sense of co-ownership in the texts produced (Storch, 2005, p. 154). However, the teachers noted that the more advanced members, in each group, actively collaborated in writing the scripts (Sadik, 2008), whereas the less proficient or engaged members cooperated in subtasks (Beatty & Nunan, 2004), such as retrieving audiovisual resources, which do not seem to promote language acquisition.

d) The KPG test results

The KPG (2017) pre- test diagnosed an 11% difference in the average reading performance of the control (52%) and the experimental group (63%). Figure 24 and Figure 25 show that one male and one female participant from the control group as well as four male participants from the experimental group, two of which experience learning difficulties, did not complete their tests.

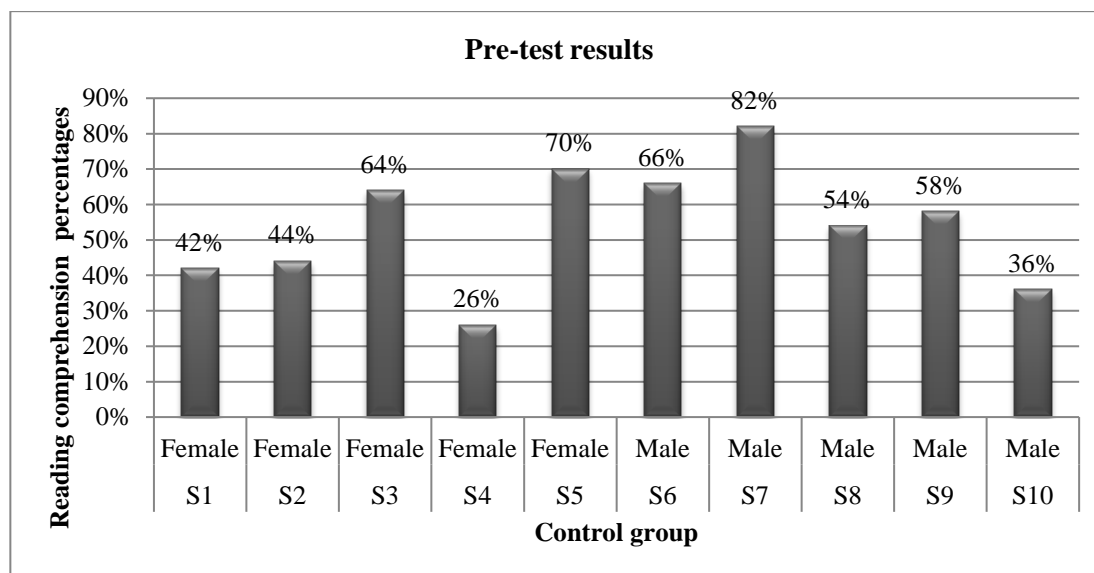


Figure 24: The pre-test results of the control group

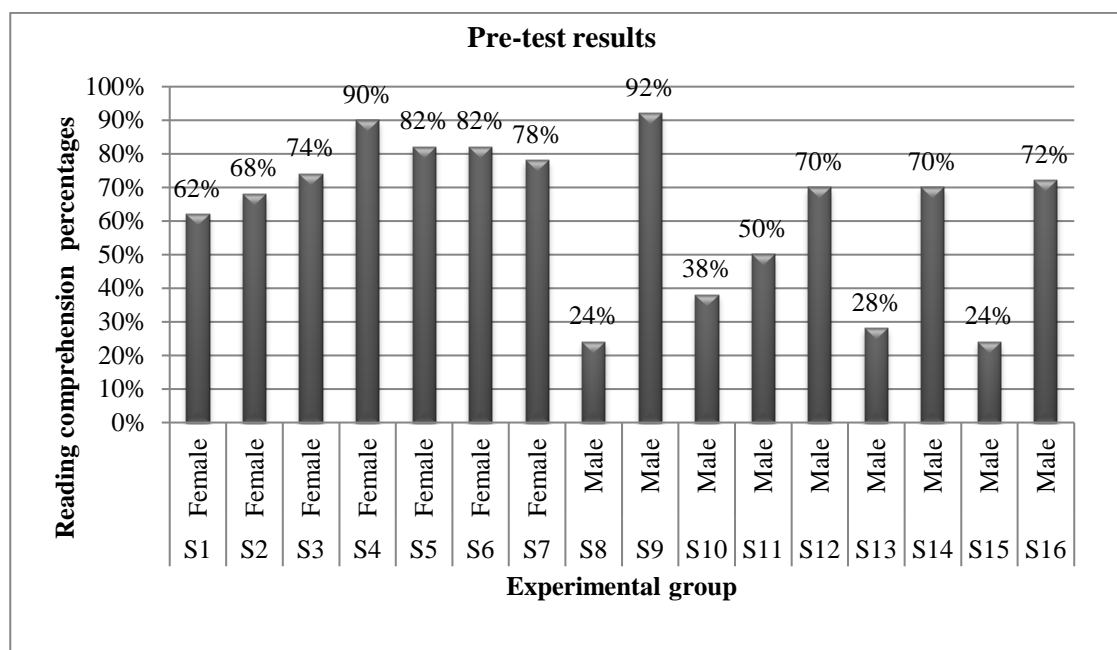


Figure 25: The pre-test results of the experimental group

The KPG (2018) while-test showed that the slightly decreased (49%), while that of the experimental average reading performance of the control group group improved (67%) (Figure 26 and Figure 27).

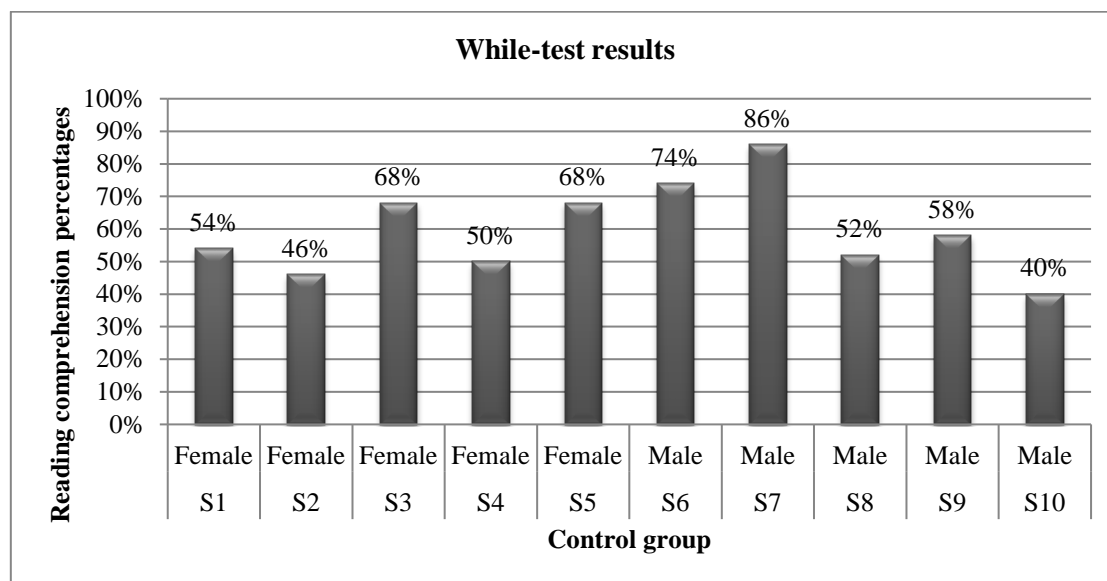


Figure 26: The while-test results of the control group

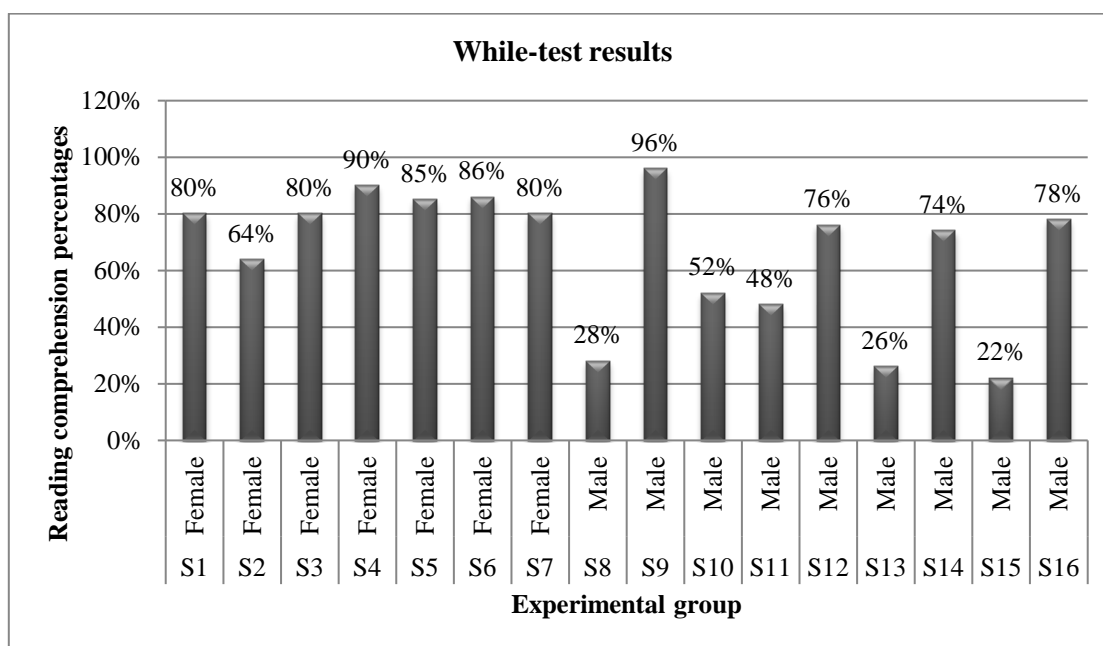


Figure 27: The while-test results of the experimental group

The KPG (2017) post-test results indicated that the average reading performance of the experimental group (69%) surpassed that of the control group (50%) (Figure 28 and Figure 29).

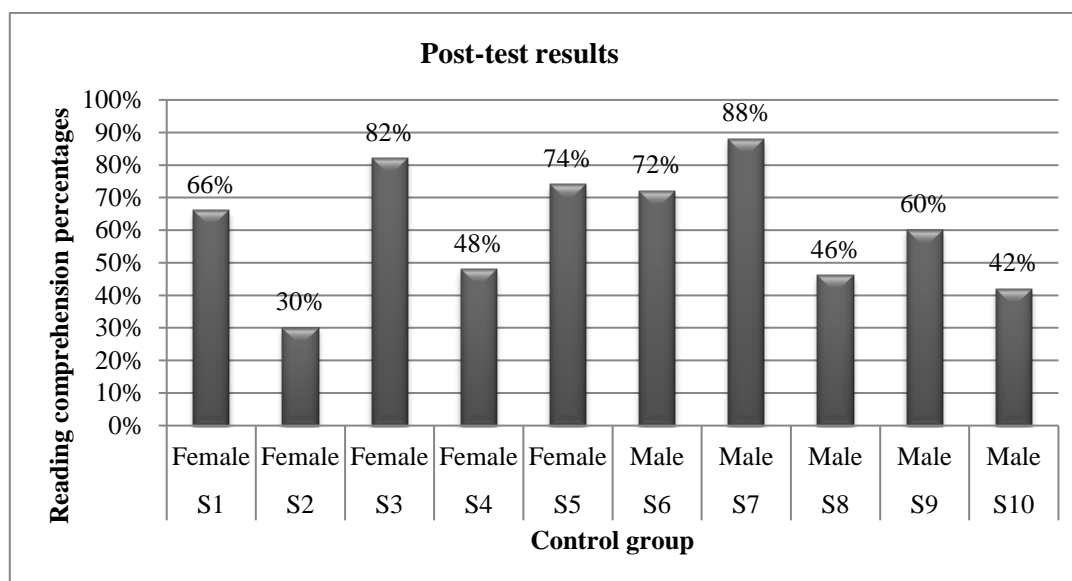


Figure 28: The post-test results of the control group

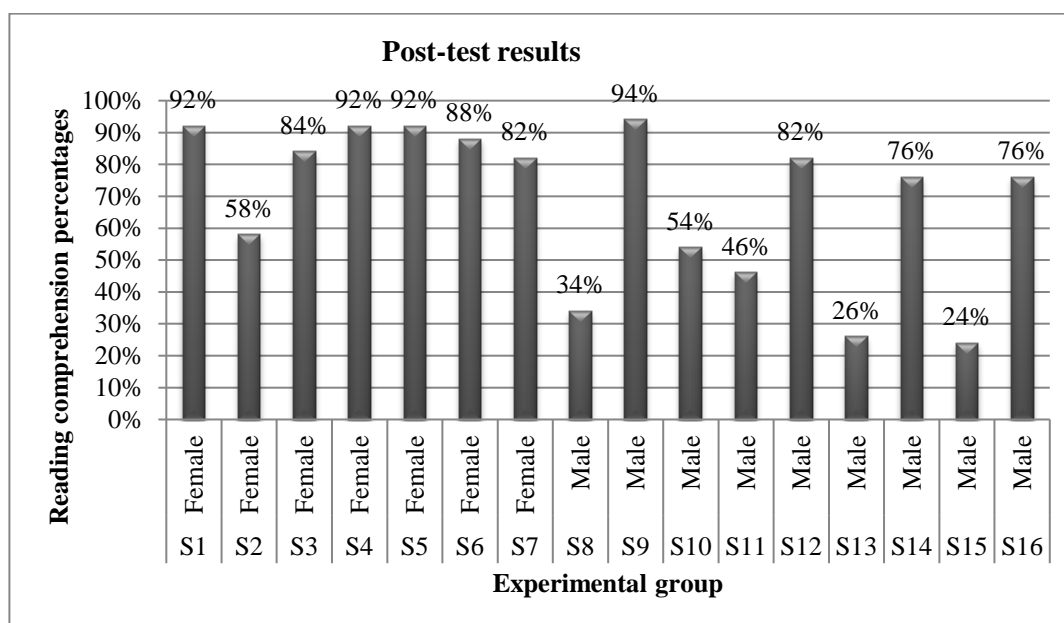


Figure 29: The post-test results of the experimental group

The independent samples t-test comparative analysis of the pre-, while-, and post-tests (Figure 30 and Figure 31), according to the t-criterion, revealed that there is no statistical significance ($p=0,887 > 0,005$) in

the means variations of the reading performance between the control and the experimental group and that the independent samples were homogeneous (Table 1 and Table 2).

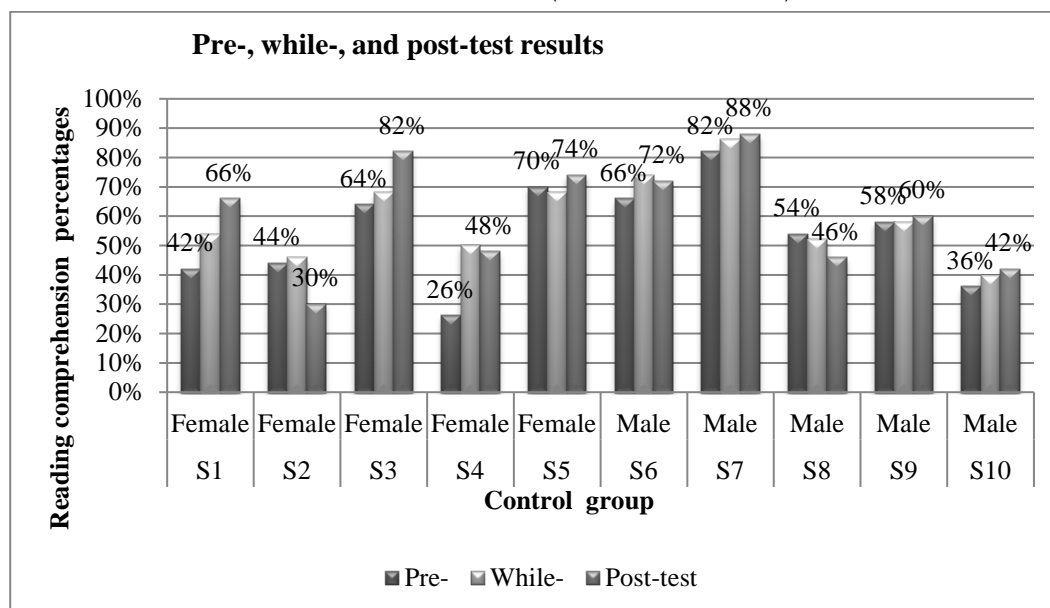


Figure 30: Comparison of the results of the control group

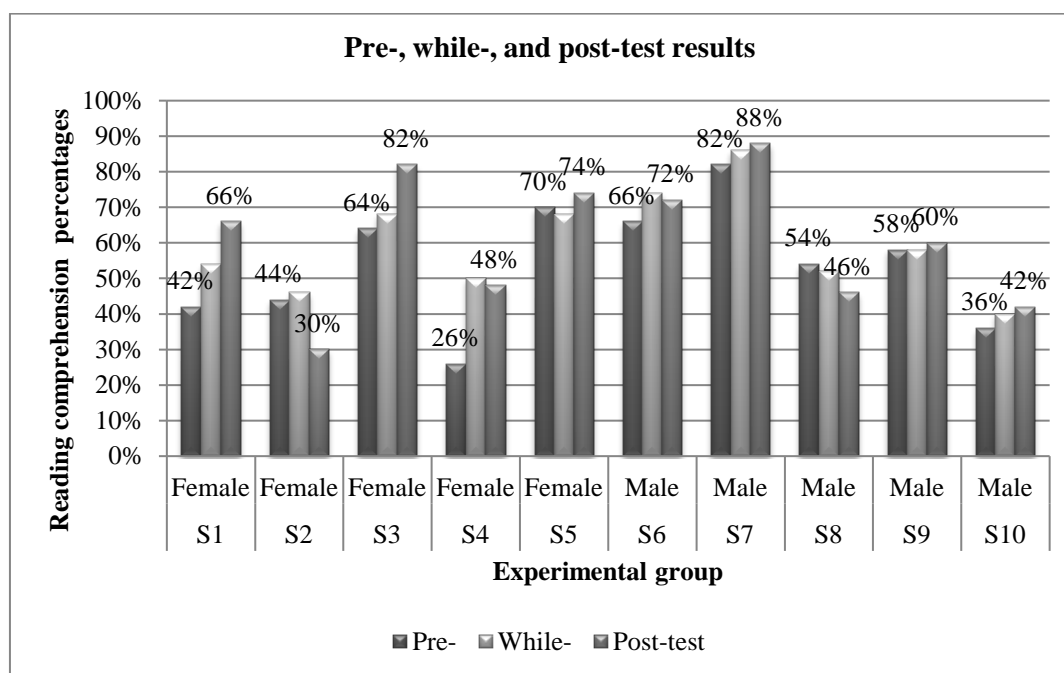


Figure 31: Comparison of the results of the experimental group

Table 1: Group statistics for reading

Group Statistics					
Variation	Group	N	Mean	Standard. Deviation	Standard. Error Mean
	Control group	10	6,60	12,186	3,853
	Experimental group	16	6,00	9,151	2,288

Table 2: Independent samples test for reading

Independent Samples Test										
Variation	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Standard. Error Difference	95 % Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
	Equal variances assumed	,713	,407	,143	24	,887	,600	4,190	- 8,047	9,247
	Equal variances not assumed			,134	15,320	,895	,600	4,481	- 8,934	10,134

The KPG (2017) pre-test measured a 4% difference in the average writing performance of the control (64%) and the experimental group (61%). Figure 32 and Figure 33 show that four male participants from the experimental group did not complete the test.

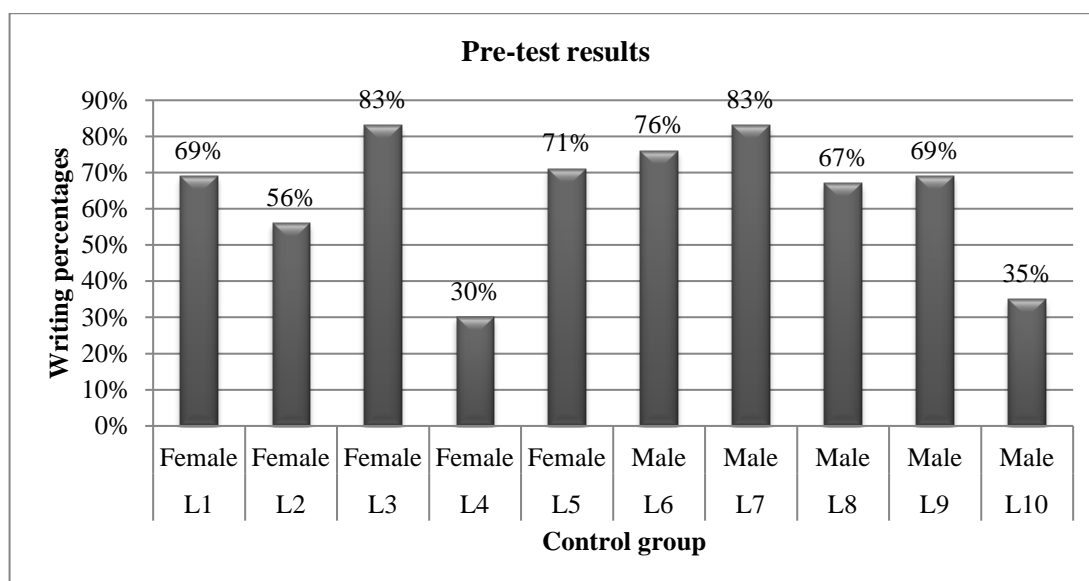


Figure 32: The pre-test results of the control group

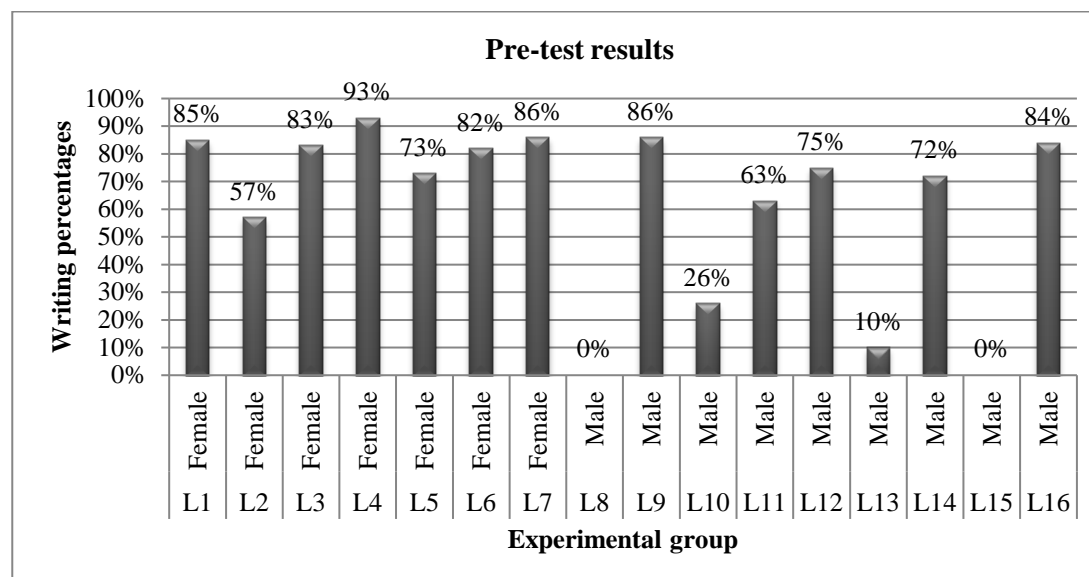


Figure 33: The pre-test result of the experimental group

The KPG (2018) while-test measured improvements (Figure 34 and Figure 35) in the average writing performance of the control (65%) and the experimental group (63%).

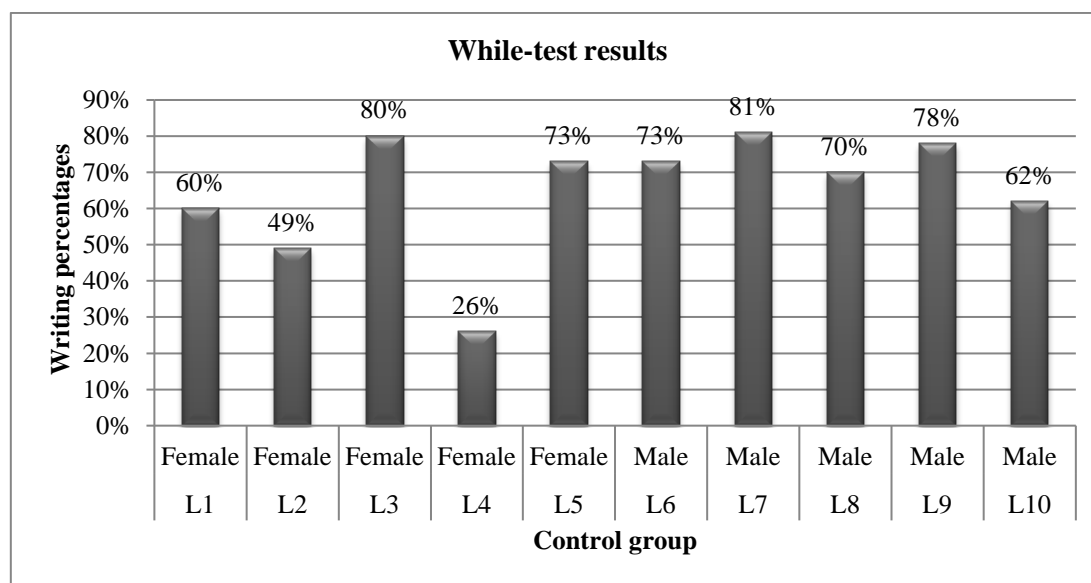


Figure 34: The while-test results of the control group

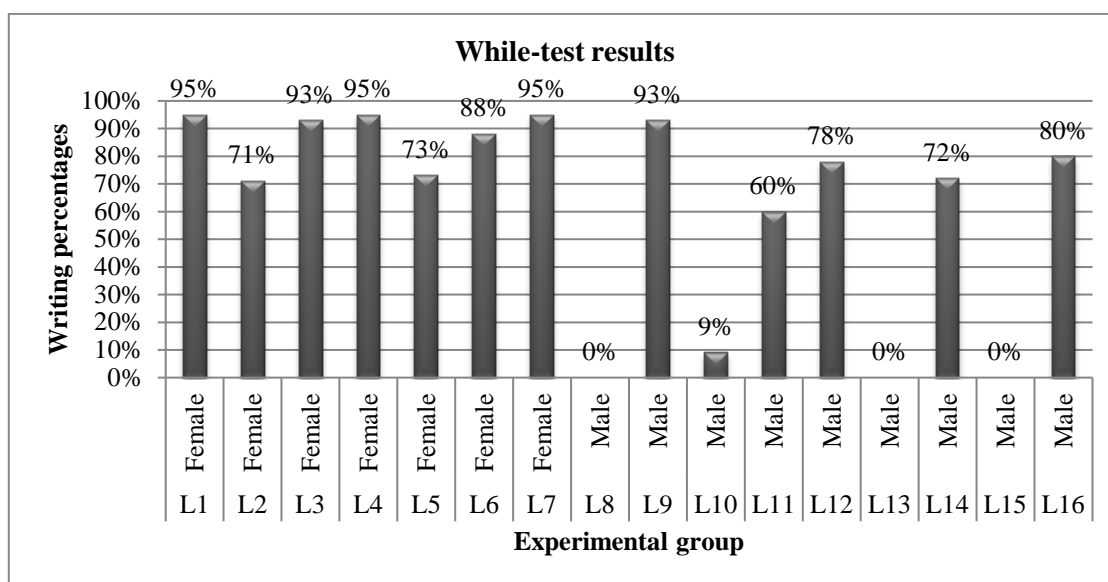


Figure 35: The while-test results of the experimental group

The KPG (2017) post-tests results (Figure 36 and Figure 37) indicated that the average writing performance of the experimental group (70%) surpassed that of the control group (62%).

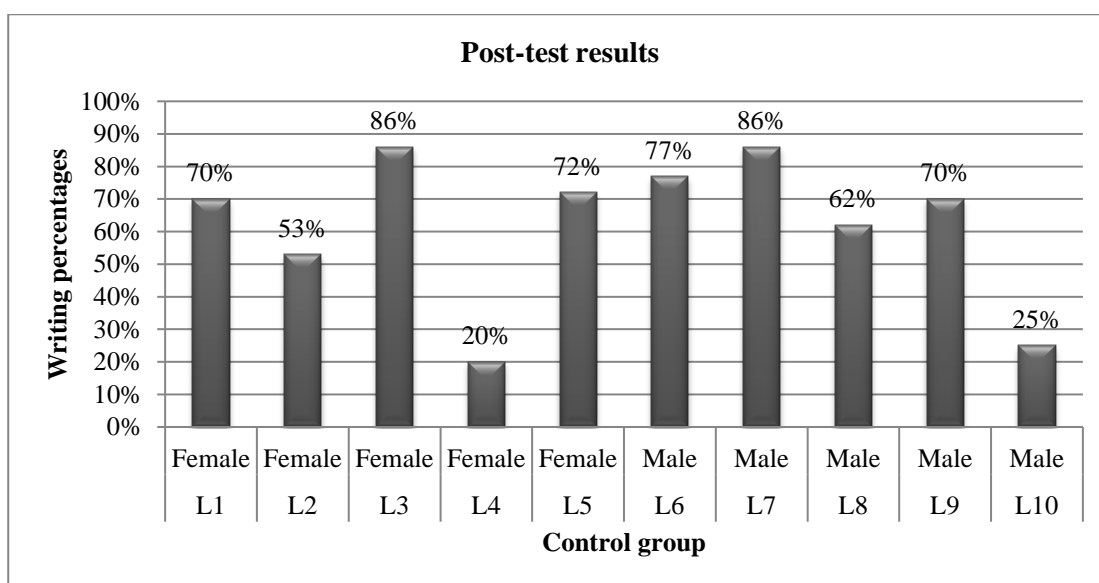


Figure 36: The post-test results of the control group

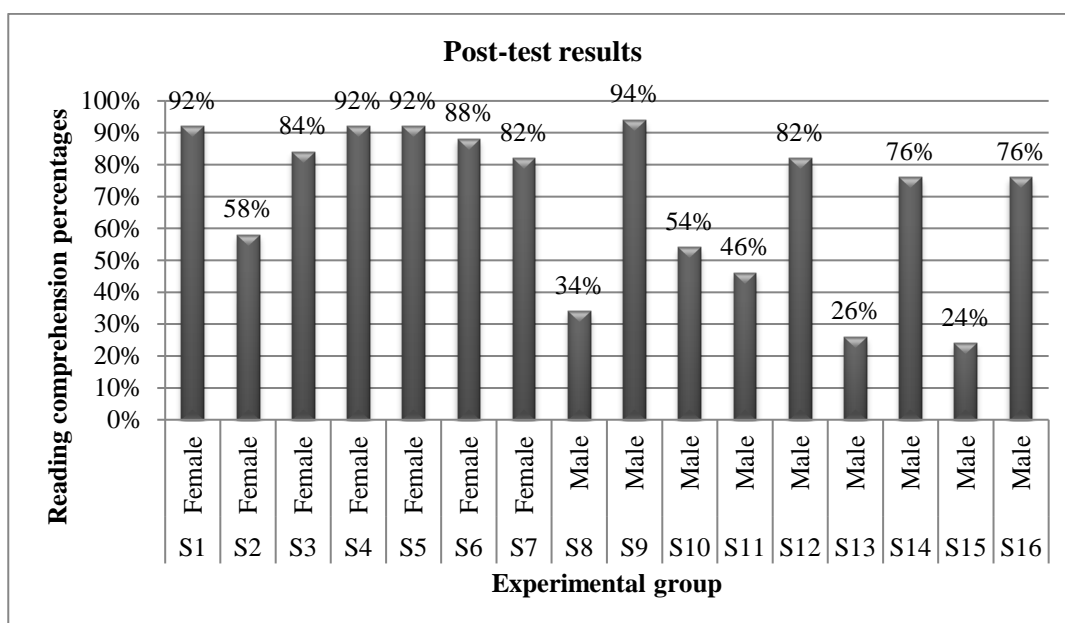


Figure 37: The post-test results of the experimental group

According to the Independent Samples Test table, the samples were homogeneous. The examination of the means, according to the t-criterion showed that the performance of the learners' writing performance was significantly connected to both groups. More specifically, the experimental group ($M = 8,81$, $SD = 8,18$) outperformed the control group ($M = 1,80$, $SD = 4,98$), $t(24) = 3,68$, $p = 0,001$ (Table 3 and Table 4).

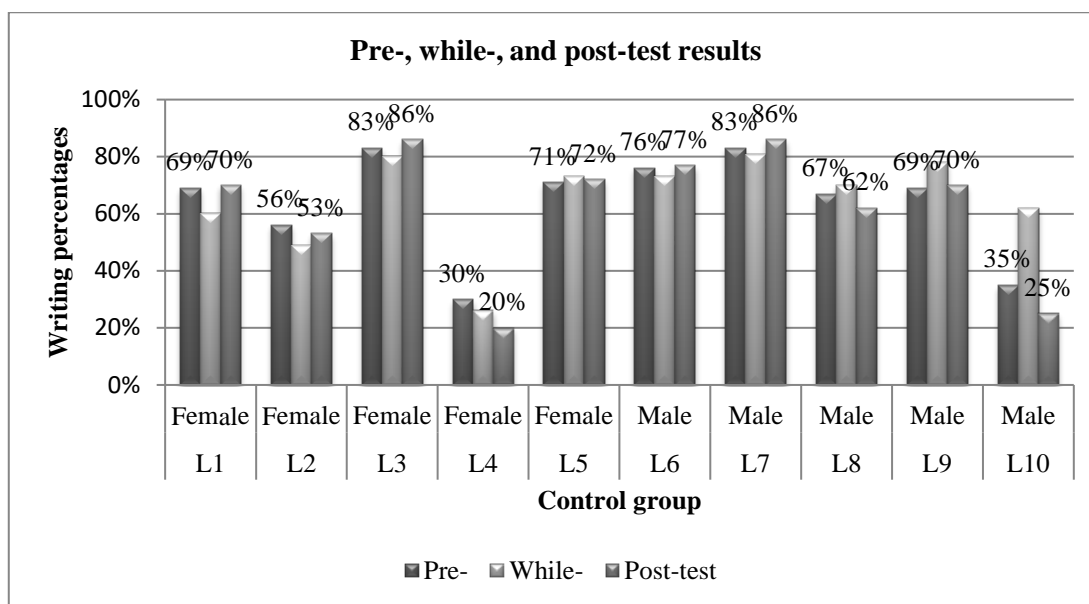


Figure 38: Comparison of the test results of the control group

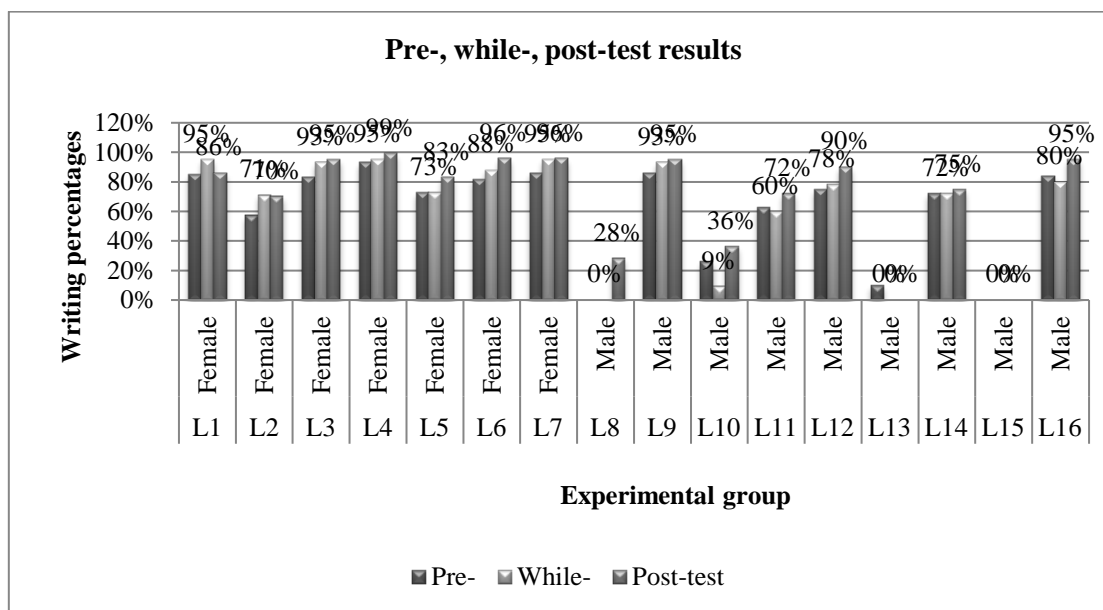


Figure 39: Comparison of the test results of the experimental group

Table 3: Group Statistics for writing

Group Statistics					
Variation	Group	N	Mean	Standard. Deviation	Standard. Error Mean
	Control group	10	-1,80	4,984	1,576
	Experimental group	16	8,81	8,183	2,046

Table 4: Independent samples test for writing

Independent Samples Test									
Variation	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Standard. Error Difference	95 % Confidence Interval of the Difference
									Lower Upper
	Equal variances assumed	,471	,499	-3,680	24	,001	-10,613	2,884	-16,564 -4,661
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,109	23,999	,000	-10,613	2,583	-15,943 -5,282

V. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Regarding the first research question, "How effective is digital storytelling in the teaching of English as a foreign language in the 6th Grade", the review and analysis of the findings from the KPG tests, the teachers' diaries and the interviews showed that digital storytelling seemed to develop the participants' language competence. The intervention seems largely congruent with the participants' preferences to learn English through reading, learning new words, and watching films in English, and indirectly catered for their listening and pronunciation deficiencies. The dynamic integration of technology as well as, the interplay with other learners, and the teacher, motivated and scaffolded their participation in transformative processes, during which the new cognitive schemata were structured or accommodated on the basis of their background knowledge, experiences and the course content and increased their autonomy (Jitpaisarnwattana, 2018). The collaborative construction of digital narratives modified the young learners' preferred modes of work, by helping them acknowledge the benefits of collaborative reading and writing and promoted learner autonomy. Digital storytelling also seemed to have created an inclusive and supporting learning environment (Campbell, 2012; Herrera-Ramirez, 2013; Tsigani & Nikolakopoulou, 2018), which afforded opportunities for self-expression (Bumgarner, 2012) even for participants with difficulties in reading and writing (Anderson et al., 2011; Bull & Kajder, 2004). The different and intrinsically motivating aspects of these collaborative projects introduced novelty and entertainment (Mutalib et al., 2011), catered for diverse learning styles and multiple intelligences (Lynch & Fleming, 2007) and accommodated the young participants' short attention span and individual learning styles (Robin, 2016) and, thereby, diversified and personalized the learning outcomes for each participant (Kesler et al., 2016).

Regarding the second research question, "What is the impact of digital storytelling on the teaching and

learning of reading in the 6th Grade", even though the KPG exams do not reveal significant variations in the participants' reading abilities (See Appendix E), digital storytelling increased their interest and participation in an interactive, process-oriented approach to reading comprehension. The recursive cycles of strategy instruction (Chamot, 1999) sensitized the participants to the fact that "textual comprehension is a constructive process in which readers are actively trying to make sense of what they read" (Janssen et al, 2010, p. 46) as well as, to the nature and effective use of reading strategies (Shelby-Caffey et al., 2014) (See Appendix F). However, further instruction and practice seem necessary, before the participants can independently transfer and apply their individual combinations of strategies to other contexts. The participants collaboratively proceeded from the literal interpretation of the meaning, of the texts, to inferring and critically analyzing their implied meanings (Thomas, 2013). Reformulating, redesigning, and transferring the original print-based narratives into another genre (multisensory digital narratives), whose form was more concrete and memorable (Reinders, 2011) seems to have further enhanced coherence and reading comprehension (Gregori-Signes, 2014; Mayer, 2009; Sadoski, 2009; Yoon, 2013).

Concerning the third research question, "What is the impact of digital storytelling on the teaching and learning of collaborative process writing for the creation of narrative texts in the 6th Grade", the test results (See Appendix E) show that the instructional intervention assisted the greater part of the participants in improving their writing performance in English in terms of the KPG criteria (Dendrinos & Karavas, 2013), namely, task completion, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling, text organization, cohesion and coherence (Campbell, 2012; Guzman Gamez & Moreno Cuellar, 2019; Joko Saputro, 2013; Quiroga & Toro Nieto, 2015; Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017; Shamsulbahri & Aziz, 2020; Yamac & Ulusoy, 2016; Zakaria et al., 2016). The digital storytelling

intervention marked a shift from the decontextualized, form-focused writing-to-learn activities, or the study of the formal surface features (vocabulary and grammar), or discourse structure of specially-written model texts (Hyland, 2016), to the participation of learners in computer-assisted process writing (Bumgarner, 2012; Campbell, 2012; Castañeda 2012; Kieler, 2010; Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017; Yee & Kee, 2017) (see Appendix G). It also prompted participants to discover the interactive, recursive, cognitive actions which are involved in process writing and the benefits accruing from collaborative work in learning networks (Herrera Ramírez, 2013). The expansion of the audience compelled the participants to analyze and resolve the complexities of the writing task, such as content, form, the expectations and interests of real-world audiences as well as, their own goals for writing (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987) and motivated peer reviewing sessions (Yamac & Ulusoy, 2016; Yoon, 2013; Castañeda, 2013). The self-regulated planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the participants' progress in achieving their writing goals seems to have enhanced the quantity, quality and complexity of their texts and honed their reflective and critical skills. The close observation and imitation of the reviewing strategies deployed by more advanced peers in response to writing problems (Fung, 2010; Herrera-Ramirez, 2013; Quiroga & Toro Nieto, 2015; Widodo, 2013), in conjunction with the real-time text-specific feedback (Zamel, 1985), reduced dependence on delayed teacher feedback and maximized its efficacy (Fregeau, 1999). Conferences with each group (White & Arndt, 1991) enabled the teachers to gain access to the writers' still evolving texts, monitor their progress, and respond to problems with alternative and text-specific solutions.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

Digital storytelling meets the participants' present and future literacy needs as well as the IFLC objective concerning the integration of technology into the EFL class. However, the current examination-oriented educational system has established educational objectives and practices which are no longer congruent with the 21st century exigencies (Kesler et al., 2016). Therefore, one important implication that arises is that digital storytelling be explicitly linked, with the IFLC, as one of the strategies which helps to improve the learners' reading and writing abilities in English. Moreover, the ICT infrastructures in schools need to be upgraded so that their learners can reap the benefits of technology-based initiatives, such as digital storytelling. Sustained training programs for in-service teachers, whose formal education had been completed prior to modern technological developments, should provide them with the technical and instructional support in selecting context-appropriate digital

storytelling tools (Abdallah, 2019; Herrera-Ramirez, 2013), redesigning the syllabus around them (Bumgarner, 2012), and in taking on new roles in a technologically enhanced class.

VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The research findings are associated with a small population sample within a specific instructional setting over a limited timeframe. It is, therefore, questionable whether the same outcomes could extend or be replicated in other teaching contexts (Dornyei, 2007). The pandemic also posed significant challenges to its implementation. For instance, the shorter Webex teaching sessions hindered the administration of while-tests at the end of each digital story cycle.

Suggestions for further research

To measure the impact of digital storytelling with greater accuracy and to draw generalizable findings, longitudinal studies with larger samples across the EFL curriculum should be undertaken. It would also be interesting to combine digital storytelling with Web Quest.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Collaborative digital storytelling projects integrating reading, as a source of input, and writing, as a means to process and interpret the written text, confirmed the researchers' initial hypotheses. The incorporation of technology and the learners' digital literacies into the EFL class fostered motivation, learner-centeredness, collaboration, experiential learning, interactivity, autonomy, differentiated learning, and authenticity. It also enhanced reading comprehension, raised the 6th Graders' awareness of reading and writing strategies and also led to improvements in their narrative texts.

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Appendix A: Pre-intervention interview schedule (English version)

Available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EQNotwjXiwBbhA4YIB_X02vDTTr4GxnY6GeiatmA4z5l/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix B: Post-intervention interview schedule (English version)

Available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1J_M8HUc0hJR9XYhRmi0DkRHZ0wOYgav1VMZK-FjYhME/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix C: The teachers' diary

Available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/124v_W_Dv46hg3nDaYdUriC07GpnCTGqn_DdEZmA-bPA/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix D: Links to the Google Docs and storyboards

Available at: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GV6mHq9G-C4JiR-F333N4Dw1mzV1Jnw555X1OILYZLU/edit?usp=sharing>

Appendix E: Pre-, while-, and post-test results

Table 5: Reading comprehension: Test results (scores and percentages) of the control group

Reading comprehension: Pre-, while-, and post-test results of the control group								
Research Subjects	Gender	Pre-test		While-test		Post-test		Variation
Subject 1	Female	21	42%	27	54%	33	66%	24%
Subject 2	Female	22	44%	23	46%	15	30%	-14%
Subject 3	Female	32	64%	34	68%	41	82%	18%
Subject 4	Female	13	26%	25	50%	24	48%	22%
Subject 5	Female	35	70%	34	68%	37	74%	4%

Subject 6	Male	33	66%	37	74%	36	72%	6%
Subject 7	Male	41	82%	43	86%	44	88%	6%
Subject 8	Male	27	54%	26	52%	23	46%	-8%
Subject 9	Male	29	58%	29	58%	30	60%	2%
Subject 10	Male	18	36%	20	40%	21	42%	6%

Table 6: Reading comprehension: Pre-, while-, and post-test results (scores and percentages) of the experimental group

Reading comprehension: Pre-, while-, and post-test results of the experimental group								
Research Subjects	Gender	Pre-test		While-test		Post-test		Variation
Subject 1	Female	31/50	62%	40/50	80%	45/50	92%	30%
Subject 2	Female	34/50	68%	32/50	64%	29/50	58%	-10%
Subject 3	Female	37/50	74%	40/50	80%	42/50	84%	10%
Subject 4	Female	45/50	90%	45/50	90%	46/50	92%	2%
Subject 5	Female	41/50	82%	42/50	85%	46/50	92%	10%
Subject 6	Female	41/50	82%	43/50	86%	44/50	88%	6%
Subject 7	Female	39/50	78%	40/50	80%	41/50	82%	4%
Subject 8	Male	12/50	24%	14/50	28%	17/50	34%	10%
Subject 9	Male	46/50	92%	48/50	96%	47/50	94%	2%
Subject 10	Male	19/50	38%	26/50	52%	27/50	54%	16%
Subject 11	Male	25/50	50%	24/50	48%	23/50	46%	-4%
Subject 12	Male	35/50	70%	38/50	76%	41/50	82%	12%
Subject 13	Male	12/50	28%	13/50	26%	13/50	26%	-2%
Subject 14	Male	35/50	70%	37/50	74%	38/50	76%	6%
Subject 15	Male	12/50	24%	11/50	22%	12/50	24%	0%
Subject 16	Male	36/50	72%	39/50	78%	38/50	76%	4%

Table 7: Writing: Pre-, while-, and post-test results (scores and percentages) of the control group

Writing: Pre-, while-, and post-test results of the control group								
Research Subjects	Gender	Pre-test		While-test		Post-test		Variation
Subject 1	Female	13.8/20	69%	12.6/20	60%	14/20	70%	0.2%
Subject 2	Female	11.2/20	56%	9.8/20	49%	10.6/20	53%	-0.6%
Subject 3	Female	16.6/20	83%	16/20	80%	17.2/20	86%	0.6%
Subject 4	Female	6/20	30%	5.2/20	26%	4/20	20%	-2%
Subject 5	Female	14.1/20	71%	14.8/20	73%	14.4/20	72%	0.3%
Subject 6	Male	15.2/20	76%	14.6/20	73%	15.4/20	77%	0.2%
Subject 7	Male	16.6/20	83%	16.2/20	81%	17.2/20	86%	0.2%
Subject 8	Male	13.4/20	67%	14/20	70%	12.4/20	62%	-1%
Subject 9	Male	13.8/20	69%	15.6/20	78%	14/20	70%	0.2%
Subject 10	Male	7/20	35%	12.4/20	62%	5/20	25%	-2%

Table 8: Writing: Pre-, while-, and post-test results (scores and percentages) of the experimental group

Writing: Pre-, while-, and post-test results of the experimental group								
Research Subjects	Gender	Pre-test		While-test		Post-test		Variation
Subject 1	Female	16.9/20	85%	18.9/20	95%	17.1/20	86%	0.2
Subject 2	Female	11.4/20	57%	14.1/20	71%	13.9/20	70%	2.5
Subject 3	Female	16.6/20	83%	18.5/20	93%	19/20	95%	2.4
Subject 4	Female	18.6/20	93%	19/20	95%	19.8/20	99%	1.2
Subject 5	Female	14.5/20	73%	14.6/20	73%	16.6/20	83%	2.1
Subject 6	Female	16.4/20	82%	17.5/20	88%	19.1/20	96%	2.7
Subject 7	Female	17.7/20	86%	18.9/20	95%	19.2/20	96%	1.5
Subject 8	Male	0/20	0%	0/20	0%	5.6/20	28%	0

Subject 9	Male	17.2/20	86%	18.7/20	93%	19/20	95%	1.8
Subject 10	Male	5.2/20	26%	1.8/20	9%	6.7/20	36%	1.5
Subject 11	Male	12.6/20	63%	11.7/20	60%	14.3/20	72%	1.7
Subject 12	Male	15/20	75%	16.5/20	78%	17.9/20	90%	2.9
Subject 13	Male	2/20	10%	0/20	0%	0/20	0%	-2
Subject 14	Male	14.4/20	72%	14.4/20	72%	14.9/20	75%	0.5
Subject 15	Male	0/20	0%	0/20	0%	0/20	0%	0
Subject 16	Male	16.8/20	84%	15.9/20	80%	18.1/20	95%	1.3

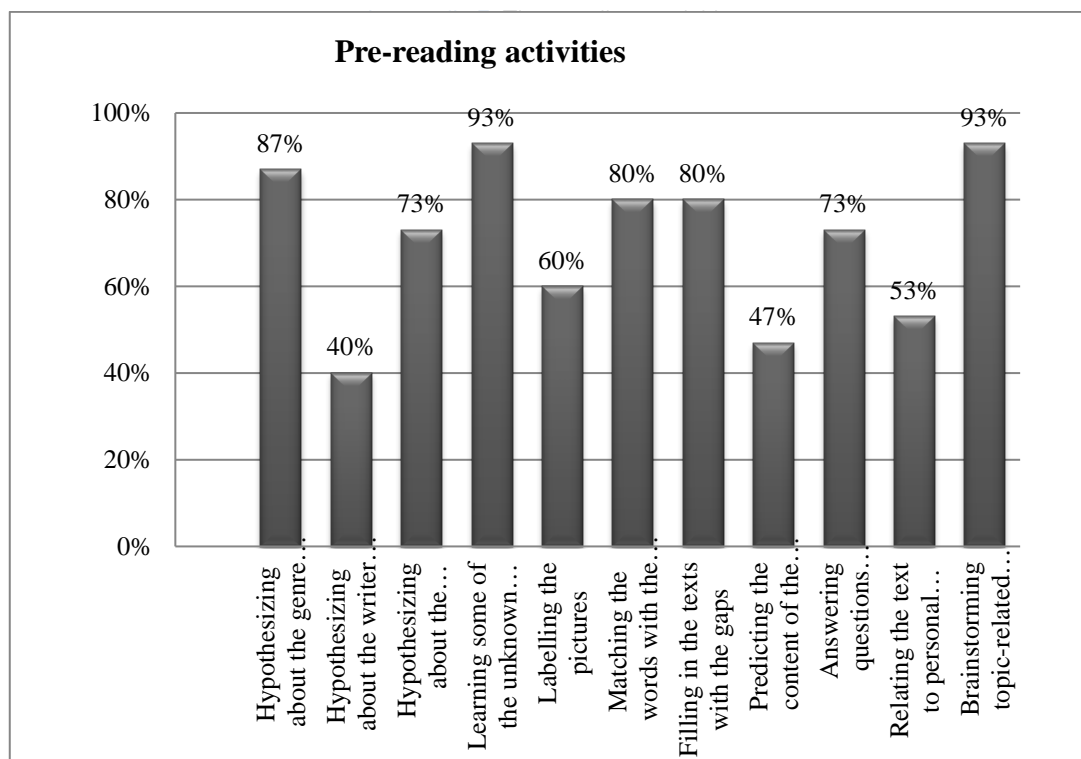


Figure 1: Pre-reading activities

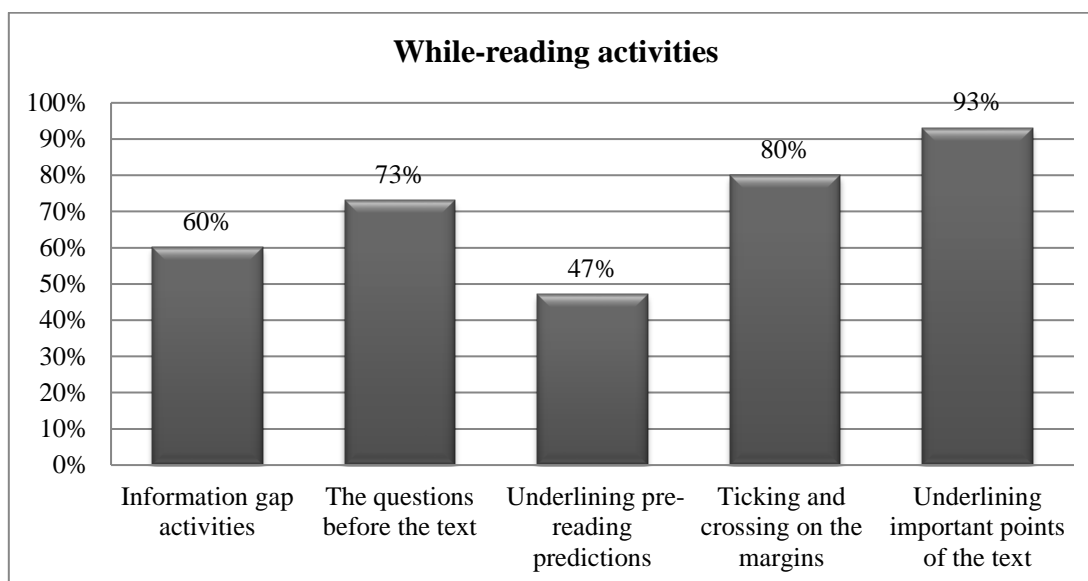


Figure 2: While-reading activities

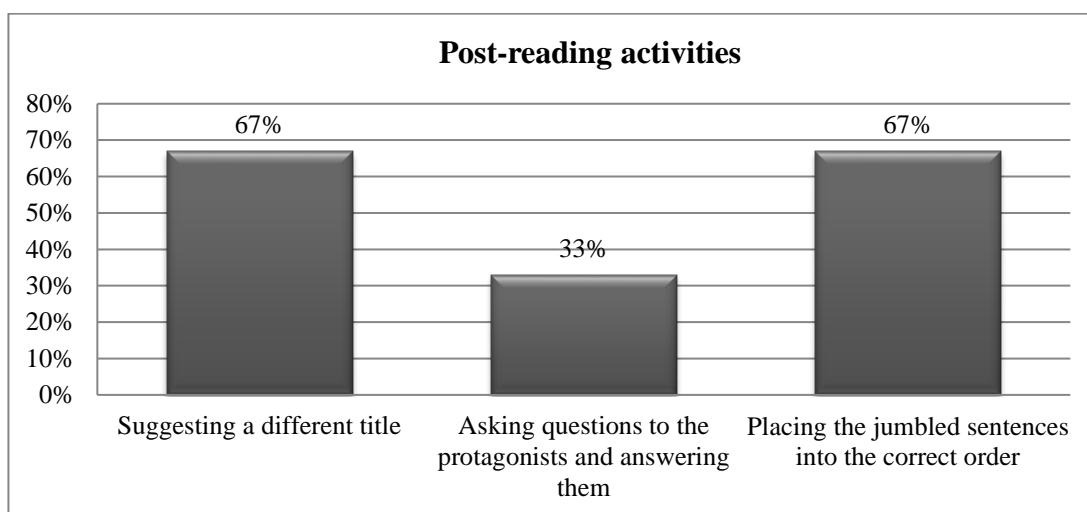


Figure 3: Post-reading activities

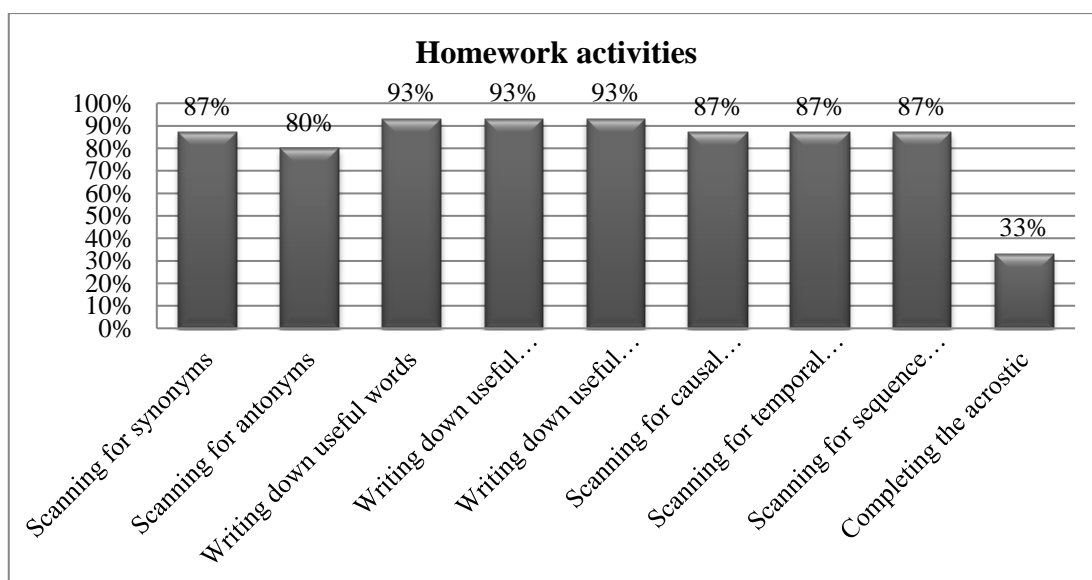


Figure 4: Homework activities

Appendix G: The writing activities

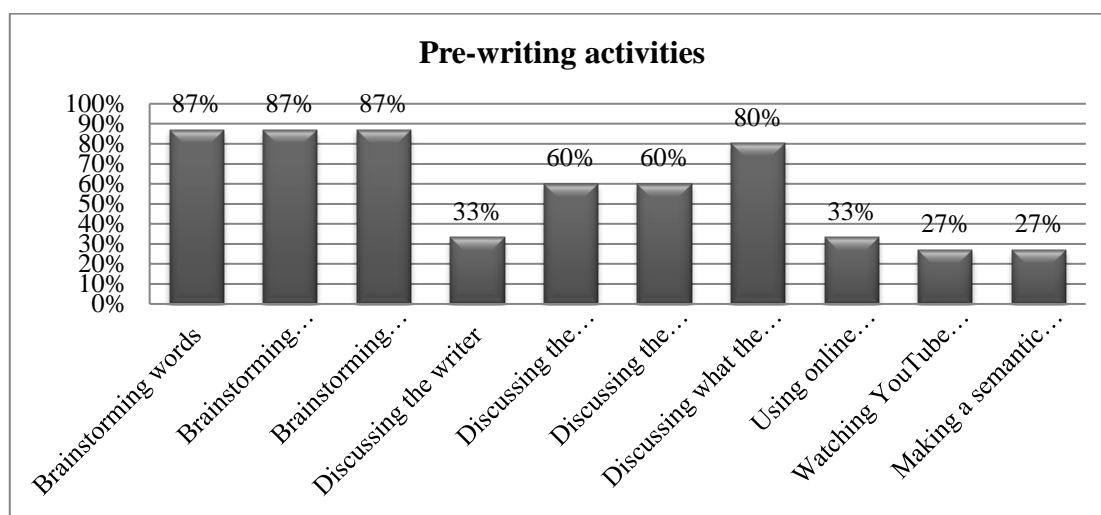


Figure 5: Pre-writing activities

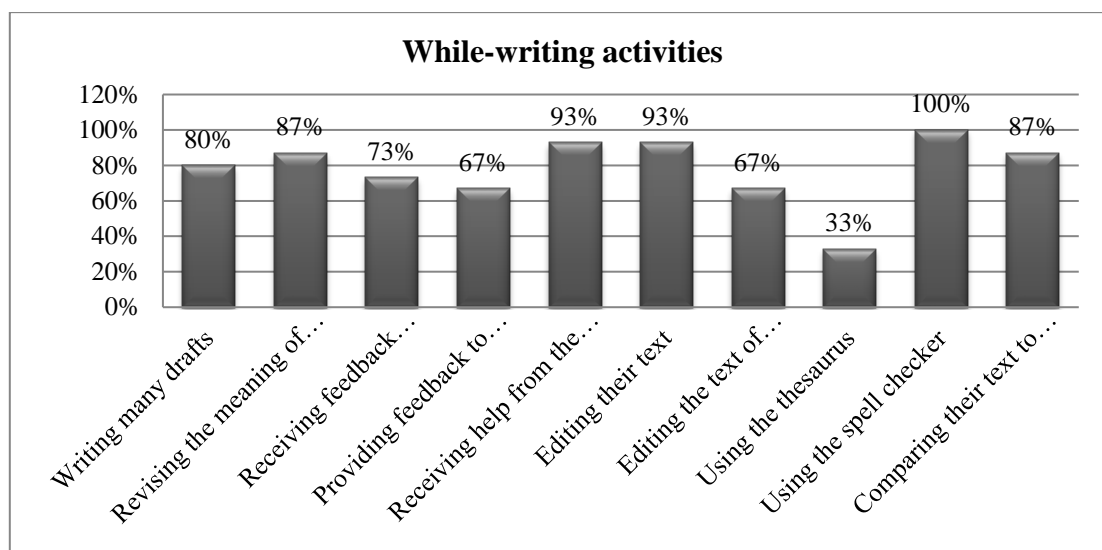


Figure 6: While-writing activities

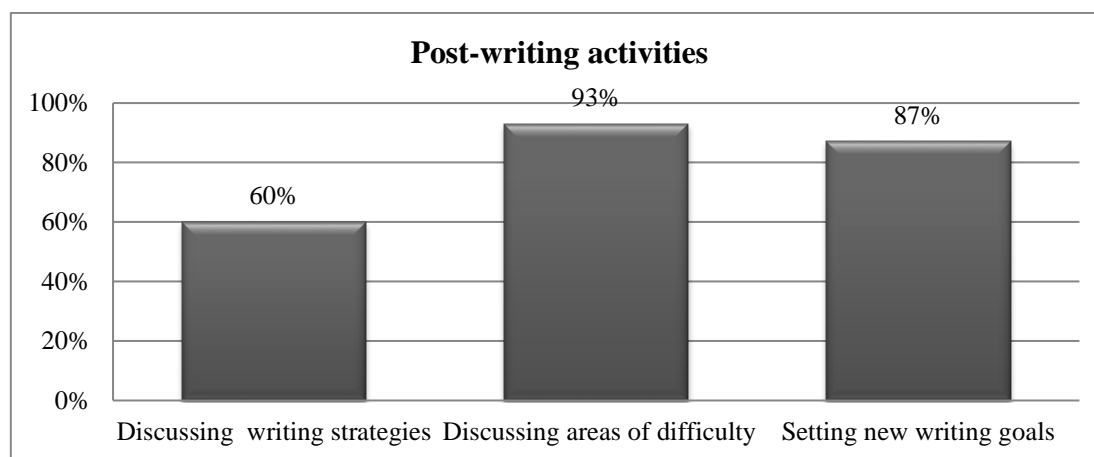


Figure 7: Post-writing activities



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Mitigating Toxic Stress in At-Risk Youth through an Agriculture-based after School Program

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Abstract- Adverse childhood experiences and accompanying toxic stress have negative impacts on children. Of particular interest, then, is identifying strategies that could help at-risk youth mitigate the impacts of toxic stress. Using a phenomenology based, qualitatively dominant research approach, this study explores dynamics of toxic stress in at-risk youth and how the On The Rise program, an agricultural-based after school program for at-risk youth, addresses toxic stress. The findings elucidate that the youth endured several social and environmental conditions that could contribute to toxic stress. Youth also described several toxic stress responses (signs) in their day to day lives. Youth comments exemplify three areas that they perceive to have experienced positive outcomes (such as school performance, family, dynamics, and peer relationships) and five program attributes collectively contributing to positive outcomes. Implications for program development targeting at-risk youth are presented and discussed.

Keywords: agriculture based programs, at-risk youth, toxic stress, mitigating toxic stress.

GJHSS-G Classification: DDC Code: 615.91 LCC Code: RA1247.C65



MITIGATINGTOXICSTRESSINATRISKYOUTHTHROUGHANAGRICULTUREBASEDAFTERSCHOOLPROGRAM

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Mitigating Toxic Stress in At-Risk Youth through an Agriculture-based after School Program

Jeanne A. Holcomb ^α, Felix Fernando ^σ, Diana Cuy Castellanos ^ρ & Kellie Schneider ^ω

Abstract Adverse childhood experiences and accompanying toxic stress have negative impacts on children. Of particular interest, then, is identifying strategies that could help at-risk youth mitigate the impacts of toxic stress. Using a phenomenology based, qualitatively dominant research approach, this study explores dynamics of toxic stress in at-risk youth and how the On The Rise program, an agricultural-based after school program for at-risk youth, addresses toxic stress. The findings elucidate that the youth endured several social and environmental conditions that could contribute to toxic stress. Youth also described several toxic stress responses (signs) in their day to day lives. Youth comments exemplify three areas that they perceive to have experienced positive outcomes (such as school performance, family, dynamics, and peer relationships) and five program attributes collectively contributing to positive outcomes. Implications for program development targeting at-risk youth are presented and discussed.

Keywords: agriculture based programs, at-risk youth, toxic stress, mitigating toxic stress.

1. INTRODUCTION

Adverse childhood experiences representative of their social and environmental conditions can cause toxic stress, which can lead to lifelong implications for behavior, learning, and overall functioning (Franke, 2014; Francis et al. 2018). Toxic stress is the prolonged activation of the body's stress management system and results from stressful events that are "chronic, uncontrollable, and/or experienced without the child having access to support from caring adults" (Williams Shanks & Robinson, 2012). Social determinants of health (SDH) could be used to describe the contributory factors and how a child's social and environmental conditions could yield toxic stress. SDH are defined as "the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age" (Braveman & Gottlieb, 2014). For youth, SDH are associated with an individual's relationship and interactions within the family, school, peer, and neighborhood environments (Currie et al., 2012; Morgan, 2010). At-risk youth who have experienced toxic stress often have a negative experience within one or several of the mentioned environments (Tome et al., 2012). The need to address

toxic stress has led to an increased exploration of possible interventions that minimize the negative outcomes associated with adverse childhood experiences (Franke, 2014).

Rodríguez-Planas (2014) contends that there's a strong need to understand how mentoring programs influence at-risk youth and/or provide opportunities to achieve better life outcomes. Programs that provide positive resources and learning environments could enhance positive moods, help youth stay healthy, and improve their wellbeing (Dickey et al., 2020), thereby counterbalancing implications of toxic stress. Community-based after-school programs could provide mentorship and safe environments where youth can express themselves (Rodríguez-Planas, 2014). Multiple studies have examined the impacts of youth involvement in community gardens or school-based gardening programs (Allen et al., 2008; Ohly, et al., 2016; Ozer, 2006). However, case studies on agricultural-based after school programs focusing on at-risk youth are sparse (Dickey et al., 2020). Therefore, this study addresses an important gap in literature by exploring the experiences of youth with On The Rise (OTR), an agricultural-based after school program for at-risk youth. Specifically, using a phenomenology based approach where semi-structured interviews were supplemented with a SDH questionnaire, several questions were explored. First, what are the social and environmental conditions that could contribute to toxic stress in at-risk youth attending OTR. Second, what are the responses to toxic stress in the day to day lives of the at-risk youth? Third, how does the OTR program helps mitigate and address implications of toxic stress.

As establishing causality between program attributes and participant outcomes require a long-term study, the aim of this study is limited to understanding and describing the perspectives of the at-risk youth. The findings discussed in this study are part of a broader research project aimed at discovering and understanding different experiential dynamics of toxic stress, perceived program impacts, and dietary behavior of the at-risk youth participating in the OTR program. Findings of the research project pertaining to dietary health are reported in authors other published work.

a) Toxic Stress Responses (signs) in Youth and Programs to Address Toxic Stress

An extensive body of literature examines various dynamics related to toxic stress and at-risk youth. The

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aim of this section is to synthesize literature on toxic stress responses and programmatic characteristics that address toxic stress, especially focusing on after-school programs. Areas of the brain that are most likely to be impacted by toxic stress include those related to learning, judgment, emotions, and impulsivity. Research that examine toxic stress responses in youth report a broad range of undesirable outcomes such as: higher levels of depression (or poor stress management skills) and reduced trust (Williams Shanks & Robinson, 2012); increased engagement in criminal activities and substance abuse, including underage drinking (Dynarski et al., 2004; Jensen et al., 2018; Mahatmya & Lohman, 2011); comparatively lower educational achievements (Weisman et al., 2003; Welsh et al., 2002); risky sexual activity (Tome et al., 2012); unhealthy lifestyles (including poor dietary habits) and higher rates of mental and physical illnesses (Franke, 2014). These responses in the long-term can lead to alcoholism, obesity, increase in suicide attempts, and other serious health implications (Franke, 2014).

Not all children who experience adverse events develop the negative outcomes associated with toxic stress, and protective factors can counterbalance adverse experiences and foster the development of resilience (Williams Shanks & Robinson, 2012). Resilience can be defined as the "skills, attributes, and abilities that enable individuals to adapt to hardships, difficulties, and challenges" (Alvord & Grados, 2005). Youth who build resiliency are more likely to overcome adversity, manage stress, and nurture an optimistic mindset (Hurley, 2018). Supportive adult-child relationships are an important aspect of negating impacts of toxic stress, as at least one stable and committed relationship with an adult is paramount for children (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Other mechanisms for mitigating toxic stress include building a sense of self-efficacy and perceived control; providing opportunities to strengthen adaptive skills and self-regulatory capacities; and mobilizing sources of faith, hope, and cultural traditions (Franke, 2014).

After school and community-based programs have become increasingly common as an avenue to address or counterbalance implications of toxic stress. The number and types of after-school and community programs has increased substantially over the past two decades. The various programs are diverse and offer a range of activities that are accompanied with adult supervision (Kremer et al., 2015). The purpose of these programs is to influence social, academic and behavioral outcomes. Programs specifically targeting at-risk youth have the potential to provide social environments that encourage a more positive perception of lived environments. The positive perception of lived environments could theoretically foster healthier behaviors and influence future outcomes. For instance, Daud and Carruthers' (2008) exploration of an after-

school program for students that reside in high-risk environments revealed four critical attributes of the program: a nurturing and enjoyable environment; learning positive values and behavior; trying new activities and learning new things; and developing a positive plan for the future.

After school and community-based programs often include mentor-mentee relationships and instructional components. The meaningful mentor-mentee relationships that are built through programs are especially important for at-risk children because they have the potential to mitigate the effects of toxic stress (McDaniel et al., 2015; Silke et al., 2019). Grineski's (2003) examination of mentor-mentee dynamics of an after-school program for youth recruited from low-income neighborhoods found that 95% of the child participants felt better about themselves because of their mentor. Other studies such as those by Kuperminc (2018) highlight the importance of mentor-mentee relationships in addressing toxic stress and achieving positive outcomes.

There has been a recent surge in agriculture and garden-based programs for youth within school and community settings. Gardening programs are intended to educate children on gardening and wildlife, which opens new areas of awareness, exploration and learning (Sparks Milling Digital, n.d.). Evaluation of these programs largely focuses on dietary and health-related outcomes, although some have examined the effects on academic performance and using gardening to address stress. Ruiz-Gallardo and Reyes (2013) found that a two-year garden-based learning program focusing on disruptive and low-performing students improved academic outcomes and reduced the dropout rates by 30%. Furthermore, research on gardening and outdoor-based programs report positive effects on academic performance, social interactions, behaviors, and dietary attitudes in youth (Ozer, 2006; Berezowitz et al., 2015). Synthesizing the literature, several points pertinent to this study can be summarized:

- A. Children experience toxic stress due to issues such as extreme poverty; abuse and parental neglect; neighborhood violence; dysfunctional family/household interaction patterns; and food scarcity (Williams Shanks & Robinson, 2012; Franke, 2014).
- B. Toxic stress responses (signs) in at-risk youth manifest through a range of behavioral (such as substance abuse, risky sexual activity, and criminal activity), emotional (such as outbursts of anger, higher stress, and anxiety), achievement related (such as lower educational outcomes), and poor health related (such as poor dietary habits) outcomes.
- C. After school and community-based programs with certain attributes and characteristics could address or mitigate implications of toxic stress.

II. BACKGROUND: ON THE RISE (OTR) PROGRAM

OTR is an agricultural-based, after school program in central Ohio for at-risk youth struggling with family, social, educational, and behavioral issues. The program serves approximately 20 youth during each calendar year. It has existed for fifteen years, and youth are referred to the program by Children's Services, Juvenile Court, county and city schools, and mental health agencies. The program seeks to promote academic success, build self-esteem, improve social skills, and provide opportunities where youth can experience success through mentorship, tutoring and agriculture-based learning in a supportive, home-like environment. Program participants are transported to OTR after school where they are greeted by the program directors. After having a healthy snack and talking about their day, the youth complete their homework and chores. Mentorship and tutoring are provided by the co-directors as well as local university students and faculty. Once all their homework is finished, the youth complete their daily chores which include cooking, cleaning, caring for animals, sewing, and gardening. Upon completion of the daily chores, everyone sits together at the table and enjoys the dinner they prepared. The youth maintain a garden through the summer and work with goats and chickens year-round. The youth use the farm goods to prepare their meals and sell surplus items at a local farmer's market to support the farm and gain entrepreneurial training.

a) Participants

A total of 18 youth ages 11-15 from the On The Rise program participated; 9 girls and 9 boys. Of the participants, 33% were Non-Hispanic Black and 66% Non-Hispanic White. The average age was 12.6 (SD: 1.35) years old. Average length of time in the program was 16.07 (SD: 9.24) months. Participating youth were referred to the OTR program through juvenile court, social services or the local school system.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study is part of a broader phenomenology based research project aimed at discovering and understanding different experiential dynamics of toxic stress, perceived program impacts, and dietary behavior of the at-risk youth participating in the OTR program. The research project methodology consisted of qualitative and quantitative methods and tools such as the Youth Behavioral Risk Survey Food Screener, a SDH based questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews.

Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie (2015) argue that phenomenological research methods work extremely well as qualitatively dominant mixed methods research. The justification for combining quantitative and qualitative methods should allow for a single research

goal: the identification of the common features of an experience (Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie, 2015). Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie (2015) prescribe the use of preliminary quantitative findings to inform the phenomenological focus in the qualitative phase of the research. The descriptive quantitative data from the SDH questionnaire provided orientation and elucidated that participants endured pertinent environmental conditions and experienced certain toxic stress responses highlighted in literature, which facilitated information rich experiential accounts as recommended by Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie (2015).

The research project design consisted of several stages. The research team made several visits to OTR for initial engagement and to understand the research context. Full Institutional Review Board approval was obtained for the project and the parents/guardians of the youth were contacted to obtain consent for study participation. Participant consent was also obtained at the time of data collection. The research team made several visits to OTR to complete the surveys and semi-structured interviews with participants. To help facilitate conversation about food environments, the youth were also provided cameras and asked to document their food environment. The pictures were then organized and used in the semi-structured interviews to facilitate dialogue that illuminated and explicated youth experiences related to food. The Food Screener and Photovoice findings are reported in authors other published work.

a) SDH Questionnaire Development

Perceptions of the social environment and health were measured using items adapted from previous survey instruments (Reininger et al, 2005; Hernandez and Blazer, 2006) to provide further context to each of the identified social environments (home, school, peers and neighborhood) and perceived health. Eight items were utilized and each item was evaluated on a five point Likert-type scale. The items related to participants' perspectives of their interactions within their social environments relating to family, peers, school and neighborhood: "How easy is it for you to talk to your father about things that really bother you?" and "Most of the students in my classes are kind and helpful." Participants were also asked to rate their health from poor to excellent and if they had experienced certain physical and mental conditions, such as headaches, feeling low, and difficulties going to sleep, over the last six months. Frequencies were analyzed to provide context to participants' descriptive perceptions of their social environment and health.

b) Qualitative Methods

Phenomenology is a research approach used to develop an understanding of the lived experiences of participants (Ashworth, 2003). Previous research examining (Morgan, 2010) social environments (family,

peer, neighborhood and school) depicting lives of youth were used to draft the interview questions and feedback was obtained from the OTR co-directors. After the participants completed the SDH questionnaire, the research team visited OTR to conduct one-on-one semi-structured interviews with participants. The semi-structured interview guide included questions aimed at understanding different social and environmental conditions of the participants, toxic stress responses of the participants, and the impact of participation in the OTR program. Follow-up probing questions were used as needed to encourage the participants to further describe their experiences. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

During data analysis, four researchers trained in qualitative analysis employed the technique of bracketing to identify their own bias and expectations. Next, all four researchers coded three interviews. The codes from the interviews were organized using a spreadsheet and researchers engaged in reflective dialogues to address any discrepancies in coding. After the codes were agreed upon by all the researchers for the three interviews, common themes were identified. The themes were then defined, thereby developing the codebook. The remaining transcripts were divided among the researchers, and the codebook was used to analyze the data and themes from the remaining transcripts. During this process, continuous discussion and expansion of the codebook occurred. Data saturation was reached before all transcripts were coded, indicated by a ceasing of codebook expansion.

Through the use of pictures taken by participants and the feedback from the OTR co-directors on the interview guide, the research team ensured that the participants engaged in a self-inquiry of their experiences and that the participants remained focused on depictions of their experience. The overall research project culminated in a creative synthesis where the research team collaborated with the OTR co-directors to verify and validate the findings. The research team believes that the numerous research tools and methods used to discover pertinent experiences of at-risk youth enables a rich understanding of the dynamics of toxic stress experienced by the participants. The research

stages used in the project are consistent with the research design stages prescribed by Moustakas (1994) to conduct a phenomenology based heuristic research study/inquiry. The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

IV. FINDINGS

Moustakas (1994) prescribes that phenomenological studies should present a systematic reflection of the essential properties and structures of the examined experience. Accordingly, the findings first describe social and environmental conditions experienced by the youth that could cause toxic stress. Second, the toxic stress responses of the youth are discussed. Third, the findings pertaining to perceptions of the impacts of the OTR program are presented and discussed. Fourth, the characteristics and attributes of the OTR program considered important by the youth are presented and discussed.

a) *Social and Environmental Conditions Faced by the At-Risk Youth (Family, School, Neighborhood and Peer Environmental Conditions)*

It is not the aim of this study to establish causality between social and environmental conditions and toxic stress; rather the overarching goal of this study is to identify strategies that help at-risk youth mitigate the impacts of toxic stress. Summaries of the SDH results related to the social environment and the data gathered through semi-structured interviews revealed several social support and environmental conditions experienced by the youth that could potentially contribute to toxic stress such as dysfunctional family relationships, bullying at school, and unsafe and violent neighborhood environments. Table 1 summarizes the SDH questionnaire responses related to participant perceptions of social support and environment. Note that for the survey question asking how easy it was for participants to talk to their mother or father the total number of responses is less than 15. This is because some participants responded 'not applicable' as one or more of their parents was not accessible to them.

Table 1: Perceptions of participant social support and environment

Parents	Easy	Neutral	Not Easy	Total
"How easy is it for you to talk to your mother about things that really bother you"	2	5	5	12
"How easy is it for you to talk to your father about things that really bother you"	5	0	7	12

School	Like it/	Neutral	Do not like it/not good	Total
"How do you currently feel about school?"	5	8	2	15
"How does your school performance compare to your classmates?"	7	6	2	15
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Most of the students in my classes are kind and helpful.	2	5	8	15
Neighborhood				
"I feel I can trust my neighbors"	9	3	3	15
"I feel safe in my neighborhood."	7	4	4	15

b) Family and Neighborhood Environment

Less than half of participants indicated it was easy to talk to their parents (29%). Family context varied significantly, with a few youth reporting warm and supportive parental relationships. For example, one participant described who they could talk to and trust in the family as "Definitely my brother Frankie. He's my older brother. He is really understanding. He has a different perspective about things which is why I talk to him about my problems. My dad – both my dads, my biological father and my step dad. My step dad really understands and bio dad, he really understands. I talk to my mom about certain things, but I think she tries to be too much of a friend instead of a parent."

Youth recognized several ways their parents and immediate family had a positive influence on their lives. For example, one participant described the influence of their mom on their health as "Probably my mom. Because she was overweight and then she started losing weight. And I felt like she was trying to be healthy for me, like trying to like keep me on the right path instead of eating junk food constantly. And that's basically the thing that made me realize and open my eyes that I need start eating more healthy because I'm going to end up being like my mom, having problems with my heart and all these health conditions." For some youth, grandparents seemed to provide an important source of consistency and care. One participant described why they trust their grandparents through the following excerpt: "My grandma because she has been there since I was born and she got custody of my younger brother and me."

Most, though, described a rotating cast of family members in which some members would come and go. One participant described the people living at home as "My brother, uncle, grandma, grandpa, other people come over like my brother Drew but he isn't from my mother. And my neighbor who is like my brother." Siblings sometimes lived in different houses, and mom's boyfriends, stepdads, and aunts or uncles were frequently mentioned as present, although not

necessarily in a positive way. Mental health concerns, drug use, and violence were mentioned. For example, one youth commented that "I can't really trust her [mom] because she has stole from me... My mom got with this idiot and we were all supposed to go somewhere, my mom, this idiot and both of my brothers and me and my younger brothers were just toddlers and this idiot was like on pills or something and we got into a car crash but we are all lucky we survived."

Youth also outlined several other hardships in the home environment that could cause stress such as financial hardships and concomitant impacts such as food hardships. One participant noted that "Because we don't have enough money to go get lunch. Once I was in 3rd grade and for breakfast I felt so bad that I got to eat lunch and breakfast and my mom didn't and my dad didn't." Another youth noted that "My grandma buys our food but right now they cut my grandma's food stamps and we are having to borrow off my aunt and uncle."

About half of the participants perceived their neighborhood as safe (46%) and most felt their neighbors were trustworthy (60%). Neighborhood context also varied greatly, with some youth reporting feeling safe in their neighborhood, with neighbors that they talked with and had positive relationships with. For example, one youth commented that "I feel very comfortable. I can always walk and feel comfortable. The neighbors are so nice. The one neighbor always thinks we have an animal lose, and he's like "I found your cat" or "I found your dog" because we have 6 dogs and 2 cats." Similarly, another youth described their neighborhood as "I live in a trailer park so it is pretty safe and there is a lot of good people there and I have a few friends there." Some youth also expressed positive perceptions of certain neighborhood characteristics such as community gardens in their neighborhood. Comparatively, others talked about hearing gunshots frequently and knowing that drug deals regularly occurred outside their homes. For example, one youth commented that "I don't like it because it is a bunch of

drug dealers and stuff...It is usually someone I know. Like it was my aunt's boyfriend's son."

c) *School Environment and Peer Relationship Conditions*

Most of the participants either responded they liked school or were neutral regarding it (87%) and felt their performance was equal or better than their peers (87%). When asked about who in their life they could talk with, many of the youth reported the school counselors or specific teachers at school. For example, one participant commented "My teachers are nice...but all together, I can trust my teachers." However, participants overall did not perceive students in their class at school as being kind (87%).

Several youth reported instances of bullying at school and the impact these experiences had on them. One youth commented that "Attendance is ugh. Last year I missed like 50+ days because I was being bullied and I didn't tell anybody. I just didn't go to school. This year there has been some bullying but they have a website to report a bully and I did and I haven't had to deal with him as much this year." Another youth highlighted that "I've dealt with being nitpicked at since I started school. Third grade was really when it hit me hard. Like I was getting picked on every single day.

About how I eat. About how I look. About how I dressed. They were just rude, but they didn't know what I had been through, they don't know the person that I am, they don't know that I'm a caring person, they don't know that I'll help them in any way." Similarly, another youth described "I don't want to get sick. I love school too much to miss school. Because like last year, it was terrible, I was getting in trouble constantly. But this year, like I feel welcome there. I haven't been bullied [different school]." Bullying seemed to be a major theme highlighted by the youth that could contribute to toxic stress. As outlined by the quotes above, peer relationships were complex; some youth reported experiencing bullying, but most could name at least one peer whom they considered a friend they could talk with.

d) *Toxic Stress Responses (signs) of the Youth*

Table 2 summarizes the SDH questionnaire responses of youth on perceptions of their overall health, physical, and mental conditions. Two participants did not respond to the survey questions related to irritability/bad temper. Most youth felt their health was fair (53%) with symptoms experienced including lack of sleep (60%), headaches (40%), feeling nervous (33%), and feeling low (33%).

Table 2: Perceptions of health, physical, and mental conditions

Health	Excellent/Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Perception of health	7	8	0	15
How often do you experience...	Often	Sometimes	Rarely or Never	
Headaches	6	3	6	15
Stomach aches	2	8	5	15
Feeling low	5	6	4	15
Irritability/bad temper	4	7	2	13
Feeling nervous	5	4	6	15
Difficulty sleeping	9	3	3	15

Several youth described experiencing irritability, feeling upset, and anger in the context of how OTR has had a positive impact on those feelings and respective social environments. For example, one youth noted "It probably impacted it a lot because I have anger issues. When I was in 2nd-6th [grade] I had a habit of punching holes in walls...And I don't feel the need to smack someone on the head a lot." Another youth commented "I'm not being rude. I'm not slamming doors. I'm not being sent to the office." Another youth highlighted the

changes by describing that "Like I haven't talked back. I haven't raised my voice. I haven't gotten overly angry. Like, I've been mad or whatever, but I've like, controlled it. And it's been really nice and my probation checkups, like my probation office is really proud of me."

Several youth described poor dietary habits and resulting health complications in comparison to the experiences of OTR. One youth noted that "Ms. Deb wants to keep us healthy. Instead of like, getting overweight, not eating healthy, and something

happening, it's all from not eating healthy." However, youth also described current or ongoing events, while acknowledging they are making progress. For example, one participant described how they are still involved with the court system: "Because in the past, I've cut my wrists, I've cut myself, but ever since like I went to counseling, it's helped. I haven't cut myself. It's helped me on through life, it's helped me get on the right path. But I'm still not on the right path all the way. I'm half on, half off. Because I'm still on probation. I'm still involved with law enforcement because of my mom and dad arguing. I'm still involved with the juvenile court. Like I'm still involved with the court system period." Another youth similarly described that "I'm more letting myself out there and trying to make new friends and not being me and just wanting to be by myself and be in my bubble. Because when I was little I didn't have many friends and I got bullied a lot and I just let it all off of me. I did nothing about it and all I did was let it block me. I did nothing. I just let my life fade away. When it was recess I just was by myself. I wanted no one in my life except my family. I still am bullied. I was shy to tell at parent teacher conferences to tell my teachers how my class mates were picking on me and how I feel." These comments demonstrate that while some youth continue to experience certain social and environmental conditions that could cause toxic stress, they are better able to cope with such conditions. This could be a sign of resilience building in the long-term in these youth.

The comments also reveal that the youth considered OTR to have a mitigating influence on toxic stress responses and their functioning across several social environments. In terms of relationships with family, many participants reported that their behavior at home had improved since starting at OTR. Not talking back as much, not slamming doors, being able to control anger, and better management of stress highlight improved emotional regulation abilities gained through participation in OTR.

e) *Impact of the OTR Program*

Analysis of the interviews revealed several key themes of how the OTR program has positively impacted the lives of participating youth relating to school performance, family dynamics, peer relationships, and overall health. Youth described in detail how OTR has positively impacted their dietary habits and associated health conditions. Participant comments such as "Ms. Deb and Ms. Kathy make me more healthy. They encourage me to eat more vegetables and healthier food" demonstrate the impact of OTR on their dietary health and food habits. Overall, the youth were able to make connections between their participation in the program and improved dietary health. The dietary health impacts are discussed in detail in other published work by these authors.

f) *Impact of OTR on School Performance and Attendance*

Many youth described how OTR has positively impacted their school performance and attendance. In discussing these changes, youth conveyed an increased sense of confidence and knowledge that doing well in school was important. One youth commented that "Before I started at On The Rise, I was absent all the time. Because before I started On The Rise, I used to skip school. I used to skip school when I lived with my mom. I used to skip school when I lived with my dad before I started coming to On The Rise." Another youth noted that "Last year, my attendance was horrible, and it is much better this year."

Youth comments also demonstrate perceived positive impacts on grades. One youth described that "Yeah, I have more confidence in what I was working on and my grades have gotten better. Umm... it's changed a lot. I didn't want to be there, but now I want to be at school." Comments such as "Yes, I've seen that my grades are increasing because I've gotten a lot of help from the Wittenberg students, and they are really teaching me. They don't give me the answers. They help me to really understand the work" demonstrate perceived improved self-confidence in school work through the academic assistance youth receive at OTR.

g) *Impact of OTR on Family Dynamics*

In addition to the comments already outlined in the toxic stress responses of the youth section, participants also reported how experiences at OTR have helped build relationships with family members. One participant's father was described as being a good cook who had a cooking degree, and the youth reported that one of the benefits of participation in OTR was telling their dad how to bake and that they baked a pie together for the dad's birthday. Similarly, another participant commented "It has helped me with my relationship with my mom... OTR has helped me like since I am not the only one with a parent like this, it helped me to connect and understand what is going on and about addiction and everything, so it helped me to connect with a lot of people." These comments demonstrate how OTR helps the youth develop a sense of empathy and better understanding about what they are experiencing in their lives.

h) *Impact of OTR on Peer Relationships*

With regard to peer relationships, many youth discussed how working together to accomplish tasks such as caring for the chickens, enabled them to develop stronger friendships. Youth also described how knowing they are all going through similar experiences helped them connect better with their peers. For example, one youth noted that "I can connect with most

people and understand what they are going through and I am learning to be more open to people for most of my feelings I was keeping inside but once I found most people do understand what I am going through I would be more open and not have these feelings all balled up like one huge ball inside of me." Similarly another youth commented that "It's helped me understand other points of views and sides because, like I haven't ever known other kids my age have other issues. I really just thought it was sometimes just me." Beyond being around other youth who are struggling with similar issues, participants reported that improved emotional regulation abilities helped them maintain friendships. For example, one participant stated that "I haven't been flipping out on my friends. It's built me up to be a better person." Overall, youth perceived that participation in OTR improved their peer relationships through getting to know others in similar situations and better emotional regulation abilities. Although there was variation in responses, youth generally described that their experiences at OTR had positive influences on family relationships, peer interactions, and school performance. Participants described greater self-confidence, greater awareness of peers going through similar experiences, better emotional regulation abilities, and greater understanding of their life experiences as contributing towards positive impacts of the OTR program. Youth comments elucidate five key characteristics and attributes of the OTR program that they liked, enjoyed, and perceived as important, as described in more detail below.

i) Importance of Nurturing Mentor Relationships at OTR

One of the significant themes that arose during the interviews was the perceived nurturing mentor relationships the co-directors of the OTR program have developed with the youth. Youth described the co-directors, with descriptions such as "She is like my third mom, I have my mom, and my stepmom and she treats us like we are her children." They also frequently named the OTR leaders as being people they can trust and talk with. For example, one youth noted that "Ms. Deb and Ms. Kathy, so even if they haven't gone through it they have had this program for 13 or 14 years and have had a lot of kids like me and they also had my cousin which was going through the same thing with his dad." These comments demonstrate that the youth felt the OTR leaders cared about their well-being and understood the experiences they were going through.

j) Importance of a Conducive Environment to Build Relationships with Peers

Several participants described how the environment at OTR was conducive for connecting and building relationships with other program participants. For example, one participant commented that "I am usually very shy around new people. When I first came here I didn't talk at all. People started talking to me so I

talked back and I made friends." Comments such as "It makes my day to come to the farm because like I like experiencing it with people I know, some of the people I used to hang out with. Knowing that they are here, and they are getting help. That is what made me build up my confidence to continue coming here" demonstrate having people they already knew also helped certain participants feel comfortable. Another participant similarly described that "At first I was nervous, it was my first day. I didn't know who all was going to be on the van. But when my cousin opened the van, I was like 'wow. My cousin is awesome.' And it made my day, because I haven't seen her in a long time." Youth perceived that accomplishing tasks together developed a sense of collective responsibility and accomplishment exemplified in comments such as "I think about how we made the food and how we all cook together. It is fun" and "We help prepare dinner, and we wash our hands before that. I think that we are learning to take care of our responsibilities and how to do one task at a time. To stay focused and not to get off track or you'll forget to do something."

k) Importance of an Emotionally Comforting Environment: No Judgement Zone

Several youth described how they perceive OTR as providing an emotionally comforting environment. Youth comments such as "It made us stronger because now we're all here and we can be more persistent and we can be a happy family" demonstrate affinity of the youth to OTR. One participant appreciated the comfortable atmosphere at OTR by acknowledging that "It's a no judgement zone. If you get judged here, they're probably really not meaning to judge you, they're probably just saying something. That's what makes me feel comfortable." Another youth commented that "I feel good about what I eat here, because I don't have people nitpicking about how I eat and how I chew my food." These comments elucidate the nature of the overall emotional environment at OTR, which made them feel comfortable and relaxed.

l) Importance of the Farm Environment and the Interactions with Animals

In particular, many of the youth appreciated the agriculture focus, farm-like atmosphere at OTR, and opportunities to interact with animals. All the youth expressed strong affinity towards farm animals and appreciated how their diligence benefited the animals. For example, one participant commented, "That's what I like about being here. We get to associate with the animals. And we get to help them...And we get to make the food...We get to experience the farm life. And I always wanted to be a farm girl...I love animals, I just don't like the way some of them are treated. And that's what ties me into this, because I don't like the way I've been treated. It just ties in together." Another youth described how interacting with animals help with certain

medical conditions by stating that “I have ADHD and I’m diagnosed with it and sometimes I just get off track and not pay attention. I was mostly excited to come here because the animals.”

m) Importance of Doing Enjoyable Tasks and Gaining Transferable Skills

The participants highlighted how they enjoyed the different activities they do at OTR such as taking care of animals, preparing food, eating healthy, accomplishing tasks, and connecting with peers build self-confidence how such skills were useful and applicable in other environments. For example, one participant noted that “Yes, because we have chickens at home. I wasn’t eating any eggs from the store. I’m the only one that takes care of the chickens. I learned how to take care of our chickens. I mix their food together. I mix their scratch grain with their chick scratch grain to help – chick scratch helps produce the eggs better so they are more healthier for us to eat.” Similarly, another participant described “since I’ve been here we’ve been eating healthier at home. We started a little earlier than that – maybe like a week or two before I started the program but mainly since I’ve been here, we’ve been eating more healthier. Youth comments such as “OTR is fun. It is better than other places I go. It is better than STARS because you do more stuff then just play, do homework, and go home. And you meet more people here” demonstrate how youth enjoyed the tasks and activities at OTR.

The data presented and synthesized above demonstrates that the youth endured several social and environmental conditions that could contribute to toxic stress. Youth also described several toxic stress responses in their day to day lives. Youth comments highlight three areas where they perceived experiencing positive outcomes (such as school performance, family, dynamics, and peer relationships) and five OTR program attributes collectively contributing to positive outcomes.

V. DISCUSSION

The at-risk youth described social and environmental conditions pertaining to family, neighborhood, school, and peer environments similar to those outlined in the literature as causing toxic stress. Dysfunctional family environments and bullying at school were the most frequently described negative social and environmental conditions of the youth. Bullying experienced at school as a perceived cause of toxic stress presents a significant implication for educators and teachers. One participant described how creation of a website to report bullies helped to reduce the bullying experienced by the participant. Educators must take all possible measures to address and minimize instances of bullying. Literature outlines certain behavioral, emotional, achievement related, and health

dynamics (such as poor dietary habits, risky sexual activity, underage drinking, substance abuse, lower educational performance, and other illnesses) as toxic stress responses. The toxic stress responses described by the youth in this study while similar in health dynamics, explicate several emotional toxic stress responses such as feeling irritated, feeling upset, acting rude, self-harming, and displaying anger. Practitioners and adults working with at-risk youth could pay greater attention to these emotional toxic stress responses. The descriptions and data demonstrate that the youth perceived the experiences at OTR helped them positively transform their relationships with family and peers. The emotional dynamics elucidated by experiences of youth at OTR such as feeling comfortable, feeling of not judged, and feeling the co-directors cared about them could be critical to mitigating emotional toxic stress responses. Future research could further identify specific program characteristics that contribute to emotionally comforting environments that could mitigate toxic stress.

Franke (2014) highlights the importance of developing screening tools that could to be used for toxic stress. This study demonstrates the usefulness of a SDH based questionnaire to screen for pertinent social and environmental conditions and for toxic stress responses. Usefulness and appropriateness of SDH based questionnaires as a pertinent screening tool for toxic stress should be explored in future research.

In the interviews, participants described numerous examples of how participating in the OTR program has mitigated toxic stress responses. Several areas were perceived to be positively impacted through experiences at OTR program such as improved school attendance and performance; improved family relationships; improved health outcomes; and better peer relationships. Further, participants noted that they are attending school more regularly, are doing better in school, and are experiencing stronger peer and family relationships. Finally, they explained that greater self-confidence, greater awareness of peers going through similar experiences, better emotional regulation abilities, and greater understanding of their life experiences as contributing towards the positive outcomes.

Youth identified five key attributes and characteristics of the OTR program that they liked, enjoyed, and perceived as important. Research suggests a nurturing environment, reinforcement of positive behavior, learning new activities, planning for the future, and a mentor/mentee aspect are important to incorporate into programs targeting at-risk youth (Daud & Carruthers, 2008; McDaniel et al., 2015). The findings of this study show the importance of nurturing mentor relationships, a conducive environment to build relationships with peers, an emotionally comforting environment, the interactions with animals, and doing enjoyable tasks and gaining transferable skills as well as

highlight how a holistic program environment could mitigate toxic stress and achieve targeted educational, behavioral, health, and relationship outcomes.

Rodríguez-Planas (2014) notes that certain mentoring programs tend to be better at improving youth's social skills than their academic performance. The two most frequently described positive program attributes were the nurturing mentorship the co-directors of the OTR program have with the youth and the opportunities to care for the farm animals. Perhaps most interestingly, participants used kinship terms to describe their relationships with the program co-directors such as "mom." As research on resilience in youth indicates, one of the most important factors in developing resilience is a supportive relationship with an adult. The OTR program demonstrates that it's possible to achieve multiple positive outcomes.

The structure, environment, and delivery dynamics of the OTR program elucidate several lessons for policy makers, practitioners, and researchers designing similar programs for at-risk youth. First, the OTR program highlights the importance of designing tailored programs to better suit the needs of particular youth when trying to address toxic stress. Findings exemplify the youth desiring happy/comfortable social environments and/or longing for adults they could trust and talk to and how the youth appreciated OTR providing such conditions. Second, the OTR program demonstrates the importance of incorporating programmatic activities that the youth enjoy doing and are transferable in other environments. Many participants of the OTR program described a close affinity to the farm animals and described how they enjoyed caring for farm animals. Several participants also described how they used such skills and knowledge gained in their family environments. In addition, participants felt they had positive relationships with peers and were productively engaged in completing chores around the farm. All these dynamics collectively created a program experience the participants enjoyed and looked forward to.

Findings of this study are also consistent with other studies such as Dickey et al. (2020) who found an agricultural program encouraged prosocial development in youth. Several studies have explored the effects of community gardens or outdoor-based programs on social, academic and emotional behaviors in at-risk youth (Berezowitz et al., 2015; Ruiz-Garllado & Reyes, 2013; Chawla et al., 2014, Dickey, 2020). Across studies, participating youth report improved academic outcomes, social relationships, and coping strategies related to stress. However, most of the studies were within a school setting and lacked the imagery of a comfortable home-like environment. The findings of this study highlight the importance of creating more farm, garden, or outdoor based programs for at-risk youth.

OTR program dynamics such as hands-on agricultural experiences, adult mentorship, opportunities to interact with animals, and promotion of peer interactions could be replicated in other settings.

Although pertinent research and the findings of this study imply that programs could mitigate toxic stress responses, there is currently a lack of empirical evidence to determine a causal relationship between program participation and mitigated toxic stress responses, as well as measures that isolate the aspects of the program that have greater effects on mitigating toxic stress responses. Therefore, a limitation of this study setting is the inability to truly measure a causal relationship and to generalize the results onto other populations. Pre- and post-measures are not feasible in the research project setting due to the timing of youth entry and exit; not all youth start and end the program at the same time or stay in the program for the same amount of time, complicating a pre-post measure design. Further, the sample size is too small to examine quantitative associations between social support, environment, and health factors. Future research should continue to explore the impact of agricultural-based after-school programming on at-risk youth in terms of building resilience, mitigating toxic stress responses, and thereby promoting resilience and overall well-being. Research design considerations could include pre-post measures, longer-term post-measures to assess long-term impact, and larger sample sizes. It could be contributory to compare similar programs and to identify what attributes or program dynamics seem particularly effective. Future research that could contribute in other ways to the identification of particularly efficacious program dynamics is also warranted.

VI. CONCLUSION

Using a phenomenology based approach, this study sought to explore multiple questions pertaining to toxic stress in at-risk youth and understand how the OTR program addresses toxic stress. The research team believes that the SDH questionnaire and semi-structured interviews complimented to discover pertinent experiences of at-risk youth and enabled a rich understanding of the dynamics of toxic stress experienced by the participants. The findings highlight that the youth endured several social and environmental conditions that could contribute to toxic stress. Youth also described several toxic stress responses in their day to day lives. Youth comments exemplify three areas where they perceived experiencing positive outcomes (such as school performance, family, dynamics, and peer relationships) and five OTR program attributes collectively contributing to positive outcomes. Future research should continue to explore the impact of agricultural-based programming for at-risk youth.

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A Study on the Influencing Factors of Teaching Interaction on Deep Learning from the Perspective of Social Cognitive Theory

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GJHSS-G Classification: DDC Code: 701.8 LCC Code: ND1489



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Lan Hong ^α, Yan Ma ^σ, Xi Mei Yang ^ρ & Ren Ju Tang ^ω

Abstract- Based on Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), a research model is constructed with teaching interaction as the independent variable, self-efficacy as the mediating variable, and Deep learning as the dependent variable. The research uses regression analysis and Bootstrap test to explore the impact of teaching interaction on college students' Deep learning and the mediating role of self-efficacy. The research results show that: teaching interaction positively and significantly affects college students' Deep learning and self-efficacy, of which material-chemical interaction has the most significant effect on college students' Deep learning ($\beta=0.431$); self-efficacy positively affects college students' Deep learning ($\beta=0.255$), and play a partial mediating role in teaching interaction and Deep learning. Finally, the research proposes to build a multi-modal interaction mechanism to promote the realization of Deep learning; to create an embodied collaborative learning context to improve the quality of teaching interaction; Learn and reference.

I. PROBLEM POSING AND CONCEPT DEFINITION

Deep learning is of great significance to the cultivation of students' higher-order thinking, active knowledge construction, effective knowledge transfer, and poor-structure problem-solving ability, and also has a positive role in promoting the comprehensive development of college students' scientific research and practical ability. The research is a key issue that colleges and universities pay attention to. In the current research on the influencing factors of college students' Deep learning, teaching interaction is generally considered to be one of the important exogenous factors ^[1], and it is a key component of the classroom teaching behavior of teachers and students. High-quality and in-depth interaction can promote learners.

The cultivation of critical thinking and knowledge construction will help learners to develop Deep learning abilities such as analysis, summary, and innovation. According to the theory of social cognition, the dynamic interaction among the external environment, individual

psychology and individual cognition act together on individual behavior ^[2]. Teaching interaction, as one of the most direct environmental factors in the course of college students' classroom learning, directly affects the learning effect of college students. Self-efficacy, as the subjective feeling of college students on whether they can successfully complete their learning goals, may have an important or critical impact on Deep learning and higher-order thinking. Although the influence of teaching interaction behaviors such as teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction on students' Deep learning has been discussed, few scholars have explored the relationship between teaching interaction and Deep learning from the perspective of social cognitive theory. Therefore, based on social cognition theory, this study constructs a model of the influencing factors of teaching interaction on college students' Deep learning with self-efficacy as a mediating variable, explores the impact of teaching interaction on college students' Deep learning, and analyzes the mediating role of self-efficacy. It is hoped that it will provide theoretical basis for the innovation of teaching mode and the construction of interaction mechanism in colleges and universities in the future, and provide reference for educational administrators to make relevant decisions, in order to realize the Deep learning of college students.

II. THEORETICAL BASIC AND RESEARCH ASSUMPTION

a) Deep Learning Concepts

The concept of Deep learning was first proposed by Ference Marton and Roger Säljö in the process of studying students' reading styles^[3]. It is believed that Deep learning is a learning method opposite to shallow learning, which mainly refers to students being able to connect new and old knowledge, truly understand and apply the knowledge they have learned to solve complex problems. Domestic scholar Li Jiahou ^[4], based on constructivism and immersion theory, believes that Deep learning is a kind of high-level learning relative to simple memory acquisition of knowledge, and more emphasis is on students' Deep-level construction of the learned content and attention to learning activities of high emotional and behavioral engagement, and proposed teaching strategies to

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facilitate Deep learning. Later, Zhang Hao, Duan Jinju, Yu Shengquan and other scholars defined the concept and connotation of Deep learning from different perspectives. Although the focus of the research is different, the conclusions are roughly the same. It is generally agreed that Deep learning can effectively promote learning. Under the guidance of mutual communication through the learning environment, teachers, peers, etc., it emphasizes the mastery of unstructured knowledge, and actively carries out knowledge construction, cultivates critical thinking and develops the ability to solve complex problems, so as to achieve the development of higher-order thinking ability. Compared with general learning, the results of Deep learning are at a higher level, and the expected results are generally complex concepts, unstructured

knowledge, or high-level problem-solving abilities. Based on this, Biggs et al. proposed the SOLO classification theory^[5], which believes that Deep learning is a high-level cognitive processing, which is mainly used to evaluate the complexity of learners' learning thinking structure. Bloom proposed a classification framework for cognitive goals, thinking that learning is a process from shallow to Deep, and it mainly measures students' understanding level and learning depth^[6]; then Nelson Laird et al.^[7] analyzed and empirically researched the Deep learning scale and proposed that, Deep learning can be deconstructed into three interrelated parts: advanced learning, integrative learning, and reflective learning. The formation process of Deep learning is shown in Figure 1.

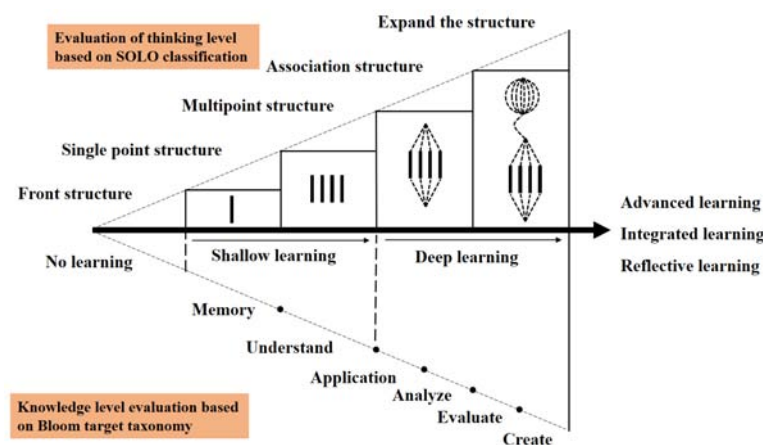


Figure 1: The formation process of Deep learning

b) The relationship between teaching interaction and Deep learning

Educator Dewey believes that the acquisition of learning experience is the interaction of the learning subject with the environment, objects, and self-dialogue^[8]. Teaching is a process of interaction among teachers, students, and teaching content, and the way and quality of their interaction play an important role in the entire teaching process. In Habermas's theory of communicative behavior^[9], the "world" can be divided into three parts, namely the objective world, the social world and the subjective world, which respectively map the three aspects of classroom teaching interaction, the cognitive subject and the objective world. The relationship is expressed as the relationship between the learner and the resource and tool platform; the relationship between the learner and the social world is the interaction between the learner and the learning peers, teachers, etc.; the connection between the learner and the subjective world is the new knowledge in the learner's mind and the Interaction between old knowledge. Anderson et al.^[10] pointed out in the Equivalent Interaction Theory that there is no less than

one form of interaction in the interaction between teachers and students, between students and students, and between students and learning content. When the interaction reaches a high level, the interaction will be higher. Supports meaningful Deep learning (as shown in Figure 2). Therefore, this study combines Habermas' theory of communicative behavior and existing research, and summarizes the process elements of teaching interaction into four factors: materialized interaction, self-interaction, teacher-student interaction, and student-student interaction, and explores the relationship between teaching interaction and Deep learning.

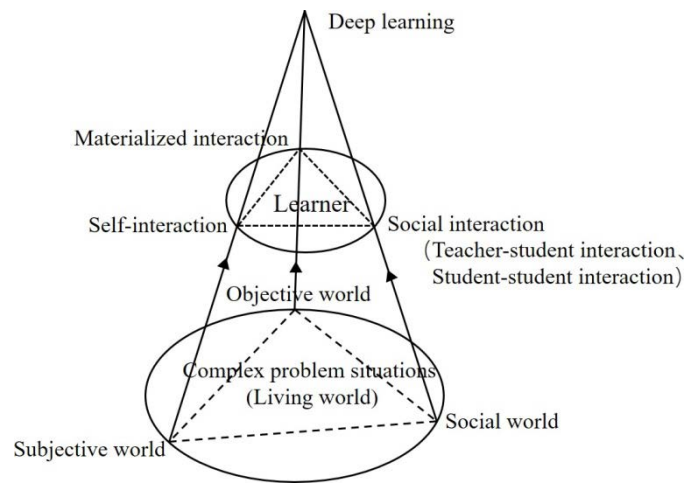


Figure 2: Three levels of teaching interaction

Regarding the relationship between teaching interaction and Deep learning, some studies have found that meaningful classroom teaching interaction can promote students' Deep learning^[11], which is an important factor in predicting learning results, and the impact of Deep teaching interaction on Deep learning is significantly higher than that of shallow learning interaction^[12]. For example, Zhan, Zehui et al.^[13] analyzed the teacher-student interaction behavior patterns in classrooms through a hysteresis sequence for visual analysis and pointed out that effective teacher-student interaction can promote better learning effects. Zhang Beilei^[14] and others studied the relationship between teaching interaction and Deep learning in smarter classrooms, designed teaching interaction strategies to promote learners' Deep learning, and found that learners' Deep learning level was significantly improved after teaching interaction through quasi-experiments. Based on this, the following assumptions are made:

H1: Teaching interaction has a positive predictive effect on college students' Deep learning.

c) The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy (self-efficacy) was first proposed by the famous psychologist Bandura in "Self-efficacy: Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Behavior Change". The subjective speculation of the result of whether a certain behavior is successfully completed^[15], mainly refers to the individual's judgment of whether he has the confidence and ability to complete a certain task or activity, which affects the individual's thinking decision, inner motivation and subjective behavior. According to the theory of social cognition, an individual's self-efficacy is affected by the environment, atmosphere and other conditions on the one hand, and directly or indirectly affects the individual's behavior on the other hand. Therefore, research suggests that self-efficacy is an important mediating variable worth considering. And exploring the mediating mechanism of teaching

interaction on college students' Deep learning will help to further clarify "how" teaching interaction affects college students' Deep learning.

The social cognition theory holds that the learning environment, the subject's cognition and the learning behavior are dynamically interacted, and self-efficacy, as the subject's antecedent cognitive factor, plays an important role in the interaction of the three^[16]. According to this theory, interaction behaviors such as materialized interaction (learning platform, course resources, etc.), teacher-student interaction (direct teaching, giving feedback, etc.) Subjective evaluation of achievement and ability judgment, that is, self-efficacy has an important impact on Deep learning through external environmental factors. On the one hand, previous studies have found that self-efficacy has a positive predictive effect on students' Deep learning level^[17], and is one of the individual factors that affect learners' Deep learning^[18]. For example, Zhou Xiaoli and Lou Zhenzhen^[19] took 920 college students as their research objects, and found through a questionnaire survey that students' learning self-efficacy positively predicted their Deep learning level, and the improvement of Deep learning level could also promote their Deep learning level. Learning about the acquisition of self-efficacy. Based on the existing research, we can propose that learning self-efficacy can positively predict the level of individual Deep learning. The higher the learning self-efficacy, the higher the level of Deep learning.

On the other hand, existing research also shows that meaningful teaching interaction in the classroom is also one of the important factors affecting learning self-efficacy. E.g. Li Lin^[20] conducted a questionnaire survey on 463 undergraduates and used hierarchical regression analysis to find that positive interaction can promote the self-efficacy of college students. And in a complex online learning environment, it is also found that efficient interaction can affect learners' self-efficacy^[21]. Therefore, high-quality and in-

depth teaching interaction plays a predictive role in individual self-efficacy. However, based on the above theoretical analysis and empirical research results, the following research hypotheses are put forward:

H2: Teaching interaction positively affects college students' self-efficacy;

H3: Self-efficacy positively affects the Deep learning of college students;

H4: Self-efficacy plays a mediating role between teaching interaction and collegestudents' Deep learning.

III. THEORETICAL MODEL

In summary, this study constructs a mediated theoretical model (Figure 3) based on social cognitive theory to comprehensively examine the mechanisms of action between instructional interaction and Deep learning and to explore the mediating role of self-efficacy between both instructional interaction and Deep learning.

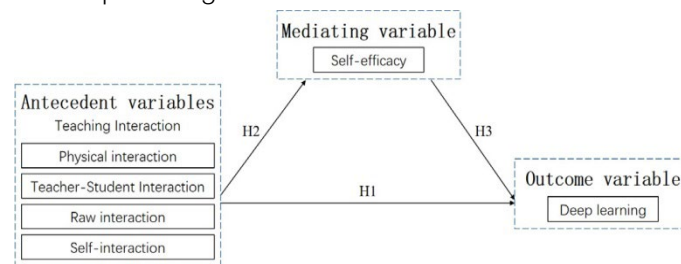


Figure 3: Research hypothesis model

IV. METHOD

a) Participants

This research selects some full-time college students in Southwest China as subjects to conduct a network questionnaire survey. A total of 592 questionnaires were recovered, 552 of which were valid, with an effective rate of 93.2%. Among the respondents, 211 (38.2%) were male and 344 (61.8%) were female. Literature and history accounted for 34.6% (191), science and engineering accounted for 54.5% (301), arts and sports accounted for 4.2% (23), and others accounted for 6.7% (37).

b) Measures

The questionnaire designed in this study consists of four parts, the first part is basic information, the second part is teaching interaction, the third part is self-efficacy, and the fourth part is Deep learning. Except for the basic information, the scales all adopt the Linkert 5-point scoring method. The scores from low to high indicate the degree to which the respondents' statements on the items are in line with their own situation. Among them, 1 represents "completely disagree" and 5 represents "completely agree". In order to ensure the validity of the questionnaire, all measurement indicators are derived from the existing literature, and appropriate modifications are made according to the research environment, and finally the design of the research questionnaire project is formed. Among them, teaching interaction was revised with reference to the scales developed by Zhang Beilei^[22], Li Zhihe^[23], etc., including four secondary indicators: materialized interaction, teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, and self-interaction. Self-efficacy^[24] (self-efficacy), referring to the self-efficacy

scale (GSES) developed by Schwarzer, R. & Aristi B in 1997, a total of 5 items. Deep learning^[25] (Deep learning) refers to the items on Deep learning in the National Student Engagement Survey (NSSE) questionnaire by Nelson Laird et al. It consists of 12 items.

c) Data Analysis

In the study, SPSS 24.0 was used for basic data processing, including reliability and validity testing of scales, correlation analysis of variables and regression analysis. Regression analysis can effectively describe, explain or predict the influence of independent variables on dependent variables. The bias-corrected percentile Bootstrap method in the PROCESS plugin was used for mediation analysis.

V. RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

a) Homogeneous variance deviation test

In this study, the Harman single factor method was used to test for homophily bias, and all question items of the three main variables were put together for principal component factor analysis without rotation, and a total of six common factors with eigenvalues greater than 0.6 were extracted, and the first common factor explained 36.187% of the total variance, which was less than the standard 40% threshold. Therefore, the data in this study did not suffer from common method bias and did not have a serious impact on the study results.

b) Reliability test

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the comprehensive questionnaire, all modules of the questionnaire were tested for reliability and validity. As shown in Table 1, the values of the Clone Bach a coefficient for all structures of the questionnaire were

above 0.8, indicating that the questionnaire has good reliability; the KMO value was 0.907, which is greater than 0.7, and the Bartlett's sphericity test results reached the significance level of $p=0.000$ (<0.5), which

synthetically indicates that the set questionnaire can measure the corresponding variables and the validity of the questionnaire is good.

Table 1: Reliability and validity tests of the questionnaire structure

Questionnaire	Dimensionality	Average value	Standard deviation	Cronbach's Alpha	KMO	
Teaching Interaction	Physical interaction	3.553	0.889	0.875		
	Teacher-Student Interaction	3.685	0.927	0.857	0.909	0.939
	Raw interaction	3.681	0.857	0.853		
	Self-interaction	3.559	0.893	0.732		
Self-efficacy	Self-efficacy	3.629	0.844	0.871		
deep Learning	deep Learning	3.635	0.700	0.895		

c) *Preliminary Analysis*

To test the correlation between each influencing factor and Deep learning, the strength of the correlation was examined using the Pearson correlation coefficient method. The results are shown in Table 2, where significant positive correlations were found between

instructional interaction and its four dimensions, self-efficacy, and Deep learning, and all were significant at the 0.01 level. The correlation pattern between the variables was consistent with the theoretical hypothesis and supported the subsequent analysis.

Table 2: Correlation between instructional interaction, self-efficacy, and Deep learning

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Teaching Interaction	1.000						
2. Physical interaction	0.735**	1.000					
3. Teacher-student interaction	0.852**	0.423**	1.000				
4. Student-student interaction	0.854**	0.440**	0.862**	1.000			
5. Self-interaction	0.715**	0.459**	0.397**	0.399**	1.000		
6. Self-efficacy	0.493**	0.479**	0.353**	0.348**	0.377**	1.000	
7. Deep Learning	0.648**	0.557**	0.459**	0.472**	0.556**	0.565**	1.000

d) *Study on the influence of teaching interaction and self-efficacy on Deep learning of college students*

To test whether the research hypotheses were valid, the path coefficients between the three potential variables of the questionnaire were measured. Using instructional interaction as the independent variable, college students' Deep learning as the dependent variable, and self-efficacy as the mediating variable, Model 4 in PROCESS, a mediating effects analysis

program developed by Hayes, was used for the analysis, and the results are presented in Table 3. first, all variables were standardized, and gender and major category were set as control variables, and when only instructional interaction was included, it significantly predicted Deep learning ($\beta=0.662$, $t=19.669$, $p<0.01$), and the research hypothesis H1 held; later, when both instructional interaction and self-efficacy were included, the direct predictive effect of instructional interaction on

college students' Deep learning remained significant ($\beta=0.495$, $t=13.376$, $p<0.01$). The positive predictive effect of instructional interaction on college students' self- efficacy was significant ($\beta=0.652$, $t=14.301$, $p<0.01$), and the research hypothesis H2 was valid; the

positive predictive effect of college students' self- efficacy on their Deep learning was also significant ($\beta=0.255$, $t=8.626$, $p<0.01$), and the research hypothesis H3 was valid. The coefficients of each path are shown in Figure 4.

Table 3: Pathways of instructional interaction and self-efficacy on Deep learning among college students

Result Variables	Predictive Variables	B	SE	t	R2	F
Model 1. Deep Learning	Gender	0.0493	0.047	1.0471	0.427	135.951
	Professional category	-0.034	0.029	-1.172		
	Teaching Interaction	0.662	0.035	19.669***		
Model 2. Self- efficacy	Gender	-0.032	0.064	-0.512	0.276	69.546
	Professional category	-0.017	0.039	-0.448		
	Teaching Interaction	0.652	0.045	14.301***		
Model 3. Deep Learning	Gender	0.057	0.044	1.303	0.049	134.226
	Professional category	-0.029	0.027	-1.083		
	Teaching Interaction	0.495	0.037	13.376		
	Self- efficacy	0.255	0.029	8.626***		

Note: Indicates significant at the 0.001 level.

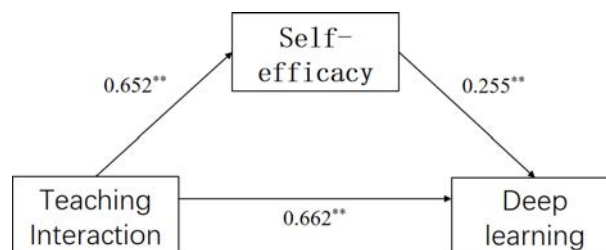


Figure 4: Pathways

To further verify the mediating effect of self- efficacy, a bias-corrected percentile Bootstrap (repeated sampling 5000 times) was used to test the mediating effect, and the results are shown in Table 4. The upper and lower limits of the Bootstrap 95% confidence interval for the direct effect of teaching interaction on the effect of Deep learning of college students were (0.442, 0.585), and the upper and lower limits of the Bootstrap 95% confidence interval for the mediating effect of self- efficacy between teaching interaction and The upper and lower limits of the Bootstrap 95% confidence interval for the mediating effect between teaching interaction and Deep learning effect are (0.108, 0.226), both of which do not contain 0. This indicates that teaching interaction not only directly predicts college

students' Deep learning level, but also predicts their Deep learning through the mediating effect of self- efficacy, and college students' self-efficacy plays a partial mediating role, and this direct effect and mediating effect accounted for 74.77% and 25.23% of the total effect, respectively, and study H4 was established.

Table 4: Decomposition of total, direct and mediated effects

	Effect Value	Boot Standard error	95% confidence interval		Relative Effect Value
			Boot CI lower limit	Boot CI higher limit	
Intermediary Effect	0.167	0.029	0.108	0.226	25.23%
Direct effect	0.495	0.037	0.422	0.585	74.77%
Total effect	0.662	0.034	0.432	0.841	100%

e) *The impact of the teaching interaction sub-dimension on the Deep learning of college students*

To measure the effects of the four sub-dimensions of instructional interaction on college students' Deep learning, the four sub-dimensions of instructional interaction were used as independent variables, college students' Deep learning as dependent variables, and self-efficacy as mediating variables, respectively, and Model 4 in PROCESS was used for analysis. After controlling for gender, major category, etc., the results are shown in Table 5, M1~M4 indicate the relationship model of the influence of the four dimensions of the independent variable instructional interaction on the mediating self-efficacy; M5~M8 indicate the relationship model of the influence of the four dimensions of the independent variable instructional

interaction on the dependent variable Deep learning; M9 indicate the relationship model of the influence of the mediating variable self-efficacy on the dependent variable Deep learning; M10~M13 indicate the relationship model of the mediating variable self M10~M13 represent the mediating effect model of the mediating variable self-efficacy in the mechanism of the influence of the four dimensions of the teaching interaction of the independent variable on the dependent variable Deep learning; the above 13 models constitute a complete verification of the hierarchical regression analysis of the influence relationship of the independent variable on the dependent variable and the mediating effect of the mediating variable in the study. The mediating effect sizes are shown in Table 6.

Table 5: The effect of four dimensions of instructional interaction on Deep learning of college students

Dependent variable		Gender	Professional category	Physical interaction	Teacher-Student Interaction	Raw interaction	Self-interaction	Self-efficacy	R2	F
Since I follow Sensitivity	M1	0.030	-0.027	0.452***					0.230	54.656
	M2	0.031	-0.043		0.319***				0.127	26.461
	M3	0.018	-0.033			0.340***			0.122	25.381
	M4	0.023	-0.027				0.354***		0.143	30.426
Deep degree Learning	M5	0.117	-0.044	0.431***					0.320	85.829
Practice	M6	0.110	-0.059		0.339***				0.221	51.791
	M7									
		0.093	-0.048			0.377***			0.230	54.567
Deep degree Learning	M5	0.117	-0.044	0.431***					0.320	85.829
	M6	0.110	-0.059		0.339***				0.221	51.791

Practice	M7	0.093	-0.048			0.377***		0.230	54.567	
	M8	0.090	-0.039				0.428***	0.315	84.157	
	M9	0.139	-0.042					0.461***	0.330	90.080
Deep	M10	0.107	-0.036	0.288***				0.318***	0.433	104.320
degree	M11	0.099	-0.043		0.218***			0.378***	0.403	92.209
Learning	M12	0.086	-0.036			0.249***		0.376***	0.410	95.204
Practice	M13	0.082	-0.030				0.308***	0.341***	0.461	116.847

As can be seen from Table 5, the four dimensions of instructional interaction have a differential effect on college students' Deep learning, in which physical interaction, teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, and self-interaction have a significant positive effect on college students' Deep learning evenly. However, in terms of effect values, physical interaction ($\beta=0.431$, $P<0.001$) has the greatest effect on college students' Deep learning, self-interaction ($\beta=0.428$, $P<0.001$) is the second, student-student interaction ($\beta=0.377$, $P<0.001$) is smaller, and teacher-student interaction has the least significant effect on college students' Deep learning.

To further test the mediating effect of self-efficacy between the sub-dimension of instructional interaction and Deep learning, Bootstrap test was applied and the results are shown in Table 6. The confidence intervals of the mediating effects of

physical interaction, student-teacher interaction, student-student interaction, and self-interaction through self-efficacy on Deep learning of college students at the sample 5000 and 95% confidence intervals were (0.100, 0.194), (0.079, 0.167), (0.084, 0.176), and (0.077, 0.172), respectively, all of which did not contain 0, indicating that self-efficacy partially mediated the influence paths of physical interaction, teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, and self-interaction on Deep learning. Among them, the strongest mediating effect is the mediating effect of self-efficacy in the path of influence of student-student interaction on college students' Deep learning, accounting for 33.95% of the total effect; the weakest mediating effect is the mediating effect of self-efficacy in the path of influence of self-interaction on college students' Deep learning, accounting for 28.27% of the total effect.

Table 6: Mediated path effects of self-efficacy

Intermediary Pathway Role	Total Effect	Direct Effect				Intermediary Effect			
		Effect Value	Effect Value	95% Confidence Interval		Effect Value	95% Confidence Interval		Percentage of
				Boot CI lower limit	Boot CI higher limit		Boot CI lower limit	Boot CI higher limit	
Self Sense of efficacy	Effect Value								
Physical interaction	0.431	0.276	0.376	0.486	0.144	0.100	0.194		33.41%
Teacher- Student Interaction	0.339	0.218	0.165	0.271	0.121	0.079	0.167		35.69%
Raw interaction	0.377	0.249	0.192	0.305	0.128	0.084	0.176		33.95%
Self-interaction	0.428	0.307	0.255	0.360	0.121	0.077	0.172		28.27%

VI. RESEARCH CONCLUSION

a) *The relationship between teaching interaction and Deep learning of collegestudents*

The results of this study showed that instructional interactions significantly and positively predicted college students' Deep learning with a direct effect of 0.495, indicating that instructional interactions have a strong explanatory predictive effect on college students' Deep learning, and that high-quality, meaningful instructional interactions are an important way to facilitate the achievement of Deep learning, which is a key factor influencing college students' Deep learning.

In addition, the hierarchical regression analysis revealed (see Table 5) that all dimensions in different forms of instructional interactions had a significant positive effect on the Deep learning of college students, and there were significant differences. The role of physical interaction ($\beta=0.431$, $p<0.001$) was more significant, indicating that teachers and students are good at using various teaching hardware devices for communication and negotiation, interactive learning, joint construction of the learned knowledge points, and continuous self-development. In the process of teaching interaction, learners actively participate in learning activities, actively transfer knowledge and self-reflect, thus promoting their cognitive and ability enhancement and ultimately achieving Deep learning.

Self-interaction ($\beta=0.428$, $p<0.001$) is second only to physical interaction in terms of its impact on Deep learning among college students, and interaction with the self as a reflective behavior promotes continuous negotiation and communication between the learning individual and the self. When learners resonate with the new knowledge learned and the old knowledge in their minds, instead of remaining in the simple memorization and understanding of knowledge, it facilitates students to reflect on what they have learned from within, to make correct predictions about learning, and thus maintain active interest in learning and desire to know, and to achieve a reconstruction of knowledge and understanding.

The influence of student-student interaction ($\beta=0.377$, $p<0.001$) and teacher- student interaction ($\beta=0.339$, $p<0.001$) on college students' Deep learning is not significant enough. The reason for exploring the social interaction (student-student interaction and teacher-student interaction) as an important part of classroom teaching activities may be, on the one hand, because there is no perfect interactive learning mechanism between teachers and students. Students' learning feedback, guidance and encouragement from teachers and other external environments do not actively evoke, stimulate and strengthen students' learning motivation; on the other hand, there may be homogeneity among students, for example, peers do

not actively share learning resources and experiences among themselves, and there are fewer collaborative learning activities such as communication and mutual evaluation among groups, which do not stimulate students' learning motivation. Therefore, in the teaching process, teachers should pay attention to the improvement of teaching level and interaction skills, and students should be more active in interacting with their peers, etc.

b) *The mediating role of self-efficacy*

Based on the validation of the relationship between instructional interaction and college students' Deep learning, this study further identified a partially mediating role of self-efficacy between the two. First, the results of this study showed that general self- efficacy positively predicted college students' Deep learning with an effect size of 0.255, which is a key factor influencing college students' Deep learning, probably because college students with high self-efficacy have higher beliefs about successfully reaching learning goals, and can choose appropriate ways to deal with bottlenecks when they encounter them, find effective strategies to solve problems, and avoid ineffective shallow learning.

Second, this study also showed that instructional interactions positively predicted college students' self-efficacy with an effect size of 0.652. When students perceived instructional help from teachers, peers, and others, it enhanced learners' willingness and motivation to learn, effectively increasing their positive perceptions of self and efficiently completing learning tasks, and thus their self-efficacy was enhanced.

Finally, self-efficacy plays a partly mediating role between instructional interaction and Deep learning, comparing the direct and indirect effects of instructional interaction on Deep learning, the size of the direct effect accounts for 74.77% of the total effect, which is larger than the indirect effect. On the one hand, it shows that it wants to indirectly influence college students' Deep learning through the external environment factor of teaching interaction, and self-efficacy is one of the important individual factors, which again verifies that teaching interaction is the result of the joint action of external environment and individual factors; on the other hand, it shows that improving college students' self-efficacy is conducive to the realization of teaching interaction on college students' Deep learning. Taken together, it highlights the importance of self-efficacy in teaching and learning, which is important for understanding the inner mechanism of teaching interaction and constructing an effective teaching interaction model.

VII. RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the data study indicate that the three elements of instructional interaction, self-efficacy, and Deep learning among college students are

interrelated and influence each other, and the internal logic among each factor provides ideas for the realization of Deep learning among college students, and the following recommendations are made based on the results of the study.

a) *Building a multimodal interaction mechanism to enhance the effect of Deep learning*

Physical interaction is a positive facilitating influence factor for Deep learning among college students, and the proportion of its influence is the highest among the four categories, so improving the level of physical interaction is an effective way to promote Deep learning among college students. Building a multimodal interaction mechanism, aiming at developing learners' Deep learning, creating complex problem situations based on real life, organizing classroom teaching activities, and interacting meaningfully with resources, tools, and the environment are effective ways to promote learners' Deep learning. Firstly, taking learners as the center of classroom learning activities and teachers as the auxiliary, taking actual problem situations as the starting point of classroom interaction activities, redefining the inner relationship between classroom teaching interaction elements, making full use of classroom resources, tools and platforms, reconstructing the interaction mechanism of classroom teaching, promoting Deep interaction of learning communities, and realizing learners' Deep understanding of knowledge. Secondly, learners achieve a comprehensive understanding of the objective world, subjective world and society through multimodal interaction, and achieve solutions to practical complexities in the internal processing of multimodal information.

b) *Create an embodied collaborative learning context to improve the quality of teaching interaction*

The effect of social interaction (student-student interaction and student-teacher interaction) on Deep learning among college students is not significant, so improving the level of interaction among students is another reliable way to promote Deep learning. Embodied cognition theory suggests that students cannot learn without the participation of the body, and environmental conditions affect the mental process of learning memory through the body. Collaborative learning is the process of developing learning habits, acquiring applied skills, and completing collaborative tasks in the process of dialogue and communication among students through collaboration in small groups or learning communities with a common learning goal in mind. By combining the two, we create an embodied collaborative learning context, support learners' embodied interaction and Deep experience, maximize learners' potential, cultivate individuals' awareness of effective independent interaction with peers, reflectively participate in knowledge construction in the process of

communicating with peers, realize knowledge construction and creation, and effectively promote interaction depth and shared communication among peers, who will actively share their own knowledge and opinions in the learning process. Knowledge, opinions, etc., which triggers learners to think deeply, improves the quality of teaching interaction, and then develops personal Deep cognitive ability and realizes the Deep occurrence of knowledge construction.

c) *Establishing a diversified interactive incentive system to enhance students' self-efficacy*

Research shows that self-efficacy can positively predict college students' Deep learning and play a mediating role in the process of teaching interaction on Deep learning; therefore, improving students' self-efficacy is an important factor to be considered to enhance their Deep learning. Based on this, it is proposed to establish an effective multi-interaction incentive mechanism to mobilize college students' learning initiative, enthusiasm and creativity during teaching implementation, to establish a fair and open reasonable incentive system, to fully consider students' individual differences, so as to establish a scientific student incentive mechanism, and to supplement the incentive mechanism on this basis. For example, during the teaching process, students are rewarded for their excellent performance (adding usual points, prizes, etc.), actively guided to actively participate in classroom activities, stimulate students' thinking and inquiry, and cultivate their creative thinking and innovative ability, which not only control students' learning load and enhance their self-efficacy, but also guarantee the quality of their teaching interactions and improve learning effectiveness. When students are in the process of high-quality interaction, they believe that their behavior and efforts are fully affirmed by teachers and students, so they will show more positive learning attitudes, take the initiative to communicate with others, rationalize their learning plans, and demonstrate higher learning quality.

d) *Data Availability*

The data used to support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Cultural Philosophical Elán of the Essay in Medardo Vitier: Towards a Necessary Ethnoeducation

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Abstract- In Latin America, the essay becomes historical-cultural urgency. Its own historical conformation and its resilient momentum by not being an echo and copy of exogenous cultures determine a critical position before its reality and the alienation that accompanies it. The men of letters and their spiritual production become self-aware of the yearning for identity, with a vocation of American roots and an ecumenical spirit. The present work derives from the study of the work of Medardo Vitier (1886-1960), considered a representative of the critical systematization of Cuban philosophical thought, while carrying out a profuse study of the essay in Latin America. The present work delves into the analysis of the contribution of this author to the study of the essay in Latin America from the recognition of the cultural philosophical elán of his discourse towards a necessary ethnoeducation.

Keywords: essay, medardo vitier, cultural studies, ethnic education, philosophy, culture.

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Cultural Philosophical Elán of the Essay in Medardo Vitier: Towards a Necessary Ethnoeducation

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Abstract In Latin America, the essay becomes historical-cultural urgency. Its own historical conformation and its resilient momentum by not being an echo and copy of exogenous cultures determine a critical position before its reality and the alienation that accompanies it. The men of letters and their spiritual production become self-aware of the yearning for identity, with a vocation of American roots and an ecumenical spirit. The present work derives from the study of the work of Medardo Vitier (1886-1960), considered a representative of the critical systematization of Cuban philosophical thought, while carrying out a profuse study of the essay in Latin America. The present work delves into the analysis of the contribution of this author to the study of the essay in Latin America from the recognition of the cultural philosophical elán of his discourse towards a necessary ethnoeducation.

Keywords: *essay, medardo vitier, cultural studies, ethnic education, philosophy, culture.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The essay basically consists of a loving critique of the immediate consequences of the liberation of Latin America, it is a concrete synthesis of the revelation of our essential being, its feelings and historical consciousness. It is a manifesto of the existential being of our America, including its prospects for development. It is a scientific program of struggle, whose model moves before two alternatives: to be or not to be. But affirming the first (to be) with optimism, based on an in-depth study and on real premises. In this writing, Latin Americanism, anti-racism and anti-imperialism are indissolubly fused to give coherence to the most advanced socio-philosophical theory of its time.

The push of the oppressive transnational culture against the culture of emancipation of peoples calls for a comprehensive cultural approach in the social sciences. In this sense, the understanding of the indissoluble unity that must exist between theory and practice must emphasize assuming society as a reference and framework for action in social learning to prepare the new generations for a changing world and learn socially from it. reality, where the essay as a genre has much to contribute in the transition towards a necessary ethno-education in institutional frameworks.

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The present work delves into the analysis of the contribution of this author to the study of the essay in Latin America from the recognition of the cultural philosophical elán of his discourse towards a necessary ethnoeducation.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a dialectical-materialist approach and necessarily has a transdisciplinary orientation. It resorts to the use of theoretical methods of scientific knowledge in the study of the complex time frame in which the essay work of this Cuban intellectual runs. This proposal aims to reveal the dialectical relationships that within the work, fundamentally Medardo Vitier's essay, allows us to understand his contribution to the study of the essay in Latin America from the recognition of the cultural philosophical elán of his discourse towards a necessary ethnoeducation.

III. DISCUSSIONS

Vitier's enriching essay work opens channels in the revelation of the essay in its most diverse cultivating possibilities of essayism. The reasons that assisted this author to affirm the pre-eminence of the essay for his 20th century, within the framework of the current 21st century, are repeated. "It seems that the essay reaches its fullness in our time. The world is reviewing our values. We are discussing everything. We want to rethink. The past is of great interest to us, for the same reason, and we try to explain it in another light (Vitier, 1945, p. 15 And it is that if at all times, the essay is an impulse of concern, in moments of crisis, according to the researcher Rigoberto Pupo (2019, p.17), it is concern of renewed apprehensive impulses to move consciences and channel purposes.

If it is intended to conform a scientific vision of the world based on the dialectical-materialist conception, it is necessary to study the personalities in their context, in their relations with the masses, with a class approach. It is necessary to take into account the dialectical relationship between the conscious factor of man, inserted in society, which acts on it from his ideas and conceptions. But that man who acts on society is also transformed by it. This process must be understood through the activity that man displays in his social future, an activity that is multidimensional.

It is then, an essential task to inquire into the peculiarities of the philosophical thought of Medardo

Vitier in the study on the essay in Latin America and in Cuba essentially and that necessarily points, among his contributions recognized by these authors, towards the recognition of ethnic education as an element essential in the formation of the new generations. Here its theoretical-philosophical production is taken as a basis when determining the character and relationship of the theoretical nuclei that comprise it. The feasibility of the analysis is considered, from the evidence of a systematic and profuse study of the essay.

In his speech, human subjectivity, with all its attributes, is inserted into the culture of the great masses as the spirit of the people, as a mobilizing force of creative energy, change and transformation linked to the formation of new generations. In the current circumstances, when historical skepticism spreads and stirs in the international arena, when there is no shortage of attempts to deny history, values, culture, tradition, reason, projects of social emancipation and progress, rationality is imposed as the need to preserve not only national identity, but also human identity. In such conditions, the Viterian paradigm acquires more than ever contemporaneity and social relevance.

Two essential features give the essay its unique character: the personal stamp of the writer and the non-systematic deployment of the theme. Both print a philosophical-cultural sense to the discourse: due to the cosmic apprehension of the matter and due to the sensitivity of expression with which it is assumed. The philosophical-cultural elán, immanent to the essay in Vitier, implies critical conscience, realistic utopian reason and culture of sensibility. The salvation of humanity and social progress, which are also in doubt today, must find their impregnable bastion in culture.

Culture, as an expression of the essential human being and measure of its ascension, will continue to illuminate the paths of the future. And the essay, due to its specific nature, is and will be an essential vehicle to carry out its noble purposes. In Vitier, thought and style agree admirably with the peculiar nature of the essay, the difficult genre of creative and interpretive literature that he has cultivated in his works. His thinking is sharp and original; but fragmentary, inductive, with an irregular rhythm, more apt to successively illuminate partial aspects of reality, than to gather them and capture them in a single beam, a characteristic characteristic of the essay as a literary genre. Mobility and flexibility are the first distinctive notes of his thought, sharp in criticism and rich in cultural and educational causes.

The essay contains reflections, comments, personal experiences or critical opinions whose content is varied. It has a teaching and cultural function, as Medardo Vitier asserts, it stirs and enlivens because by integrating various characters, the knowledge we already had on the focused topic is stirred or enlivened. It is also didactics made literature, because it replaces

scientific systematization with a critical order that in many cases can seem like artistic disorder. It is an open, suggestive discourse that proposes a way to seek the truth but a priori, or absolutes. For this reason, it is complex in itself and operates with complexities, because, according to Morín (2009), the place of the essay as a method is transcendental, no one can base a learning and knowledge project on definitively verified knowledge built on certainty. By valuing and developing a subjective discourse to discover new orientations and apprehensions and characterized by its meditative and expressive freedom, the essay is inexorably channeled into a support that is necessarily complex both in its structure and in its concretion as a genre that contains elements of other genres. .

In Medardo Vitier, the cultural meaning of the essay is apprehensible from its very genesis, its impulse of restlessness where the speech stirs and enlivens with vocation, the coherence, harmony and eloquence of the speech. The sensitivity of the writer, his growing humanity and the evolution of his cultural causes imprint on the essay that primitive cultural condition with educational apprehensions. Harmonic coherence and aesthetic taste itself as they are inserted into a culture of reason and feeling that brings beauty to the essay.

The cultural sense of the same in its purpose endows it with a worldview sense by making subjectivity its center in its various qualifying attributes: value, praxis and communication and at the same time because it conceives them embedded in culture. The human values that the essay favors so much only work when they are culturalized, that is, when they are illuminated and guided by the culture of sensitivity and reason. Two essential features give the essay its unique character: the personal stamp of the writer and the non-systematic deployment of the theme. Both imprint cultural philosophical sense to the speech by the cosmic apprehension of the subject and by the information that is treated.

Vitier's essayistic work is characterized by the impulse of stillness where the discourse stirs and enlivens with a vocation for insight and germs. The sensitivity of the writer, his growing humanity and the evolution of his cultural causes, prints aesthetic reason, inserted in a culture of reason and feelings, where the author closes all of himself with his personal restlessness, opening causes to subjectivity and ideas without giving up the educational mission. This author recommends that the essay be used in school learning, since the teaching needs to qualify with the non-rigorous didactic reading.

The essay responds to this spiritual need because it admires the judgment of the security plan to which the treaty leads it. Everywhere, his style makes his mission and office transparent, oscillating between the two desires of his literary activity: the didactic contribution and the essayistic flight, that is, through a

provocative and full of teachings and openings speech (Zamora, 2020). All this on the basis of a broad culture that denotes mastery, professionalism and erudition. His contributions as a great theoretician of Latin American philosophical essayism, recognized as a pioneer by the authorities who are currently dedicated to this profession, particularly the Mexicans. *Del Essay Americano* (1945) and *Literary Notes* (1935) are his classic works, mandatory references for scholars of the subject.

When Vitier refers to philosophical and epistemological questions of culture, pedagogy and politics in the framework of the study of his essay, he is not referring to things other than the same culture, pedagogy and politics. This, which is a mortal sin for positivism, is quite the opposite for Vitier. This author highlights in his work the cultural elán of educational work at each level.

From now on, it is not at all difficult to articulate three levels in which this basic idea is developed: the epistemological; the philosophical-cultural and the philosophical-pedagogical. These plans are not articulated in Vitier in a systematic or chronological order; they are, according to Lakatos (1983), a rational reconstruction of Vitier's thought. This has concreteness in his thought from the consideration of the following aspects:

- Establishes the conception of philosophy as a process that must be subject to revaluations from the transforming process of reality and the subjects that build it.
- Assumes philosophy as a science of sciences, which transcends the frameworks of the critical selection of the most contribution of each philosophical system, to be inserted both in the continuous scientific revalidation of those assumed conceptions, as well as in the integration of data and methods provided. for the sciences. This aspect constitutes the foundation of the first from the dialectical approach of the integration of sciences and is extended to his essay work.

It is not in vain that it recognizes that the ethno-educational processes must sink their roots in the culture of each people, according to the patterns and mechanisms of socialization of each one in particular, in such a way that an adequate articulation is promoted that takes as one of its premises the harmonious relationship between what is their own and what is foreign in the dimension of interculturality.

In this sense, we allow ourselves to affirm that intercultural education will generate significant developmental learning processes that, when intertwined with a cultural and historical environment, allow revealing the character and relationship of the elements that, in terms of coexistence between those who are actors of the same, they will reconfigure the

meaning that serves as a horizon for the understanding and interpretation of the issues that are debated and questioned. Kohan (2004) considers that educating us is in its most classic designation, a practice where thought tries to overcome the paradoxes and uncertainties that are part and are constitutive of reality. What was stated above encourages us to inquire about the educational experience in students: the complex relationships that underlie the consciousness and the imaginary that will determine ways of knowing and knowing.

In the panorama of educational practice and studies on the philosophy of education today, two contradictory trends are shown regarding the place and role of philosophy in education, one that undervalues, minimizes, misrepresents and tries to take away from it. space to the presence and role of philosophy in the educational sphere. On the other hand, there are positions referring to the relevance and need to continue resorting to philosophical knowledge to better understand the current world with its contradictions, risks and trends, especially aimed at guiding a better and more appropriate transformation and improvement of the society and the human being, an inalienable part of which education must be considered.

Within the framework of a context that pretends to be formative, an education without Philosophy would be shortsighted, and the Philosophy of Education that did not have as its main reference to positively influence concrete educational practices would be sterile. Therefore, it is necessary that teachers should acquire a greater familiarity with the rich tradition of philosophical content and procedures that are relevant to the proper exercise of their work, just as they strive to improve the practical and technical aspects of their profession.

Educators must carry out their work with a broad and diverse perspective that, without focusing exclusively on the imminent requirements of the prevailing epochal context, take into consideration the consequences of their actions in the medium and long term. Therefore, a vision is needed that takes into account the daily effort with the determination to build a better future for each of the students and for society as a whole.

Therefore, if teachers do not cultivate a philosophical attitude, their work is in danger of splintering into a kaleidoscope of erratic practices and techniques, with no sense of direction. And if the philosophers of education do not consider practical, real educational problems in their reflections, they will never see their speculation come to fruition.

By worldview foundations of educational activity we understand those theoretical-methodological conceptual foundations that are present and go through this entire process. Among them are: the principle of practice, that of development, that of contradiction, that of the correlation of the subject and the object in the

educational activity and that of value and assessment in the teaching process. (Ramos, 2005, p.4)

On the other hand, the gnoseological foundations of the educational activity refer to those essential regularities through which the process of knowledge of reality in the conscience of man passes and that are present and active in the teaching-learning process. The foregoing allows configuring how spiritual production becomes self-consciousness of the desire for identity, with a vocation of American roots and an ecumenical spirit in Vitier in such a way that it points to the consideration of valuing the cultural philosophical elán of the essay within the framework of a necessary ethnic education.

In short, the vision of human nature does not neglect the explanation of the various dimensions in which man has revealed himself, including the transition from the biological to the mental, his creative contributions in history, in culture and as a participant in the universe. creator and generator of cultural propensities. (Zamora, 2021)

For this reason, his philosophical and scientific update leads him to a critical rethinking of the conceptions and the level of development in which philosophy was found in Cuba, to consider the introduction of the contributing elements of the new philosophical currents and the latest discoveries of the sciences.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

It can be argued that in the process of understanding Medardo Vitier's essays there is a plurality of elements that, within his philosophical thought, allow us to maintain that he was the bearer of a dialectical approach referring to the understanding of the development of nature, the society, the sciences and man as a knowing subject that he places at the center of the universe of relationships and contradictions that he values in the study he carries out of Cuban philosophical thought. The relatively active character of the subject of knowledge with respect to the object, from which derives the transforming potentiality of the individual in which education has an essential role and which is related to philosophy and culture in the defense of identity and in which the essay, with its peculiarities, contributes to a new philosophical theoretical construction.

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Pragmatics and Speech Act in Classroom Communicative Interaction

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Abstract- In the present society, pragmatics and speech acts are vital linguistic compendiums that can help us in the present dispensation. This is because pragmatics has to do with the use of language in human communication as determined by societal conditions. Since human beings communicate through the use of language, it then becomes imperative to have knowledge of the pragmatic functioning of language. Also, in communication, we carry out many acts through the process of speech. In other words, we are 'doing' things with words. Whether we greet, invite, warn and so on, we are performing an act. So, in human interaction, pragmatics and speech act are vital in our communicative process since interaction will include both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors by breaking away from the strict, local paradigm of grammar. This is where the notion of context comes in. This paper, therefore, looks into the concepts of pragmatics as well as speech act so as to throw light into their functionality in the classroom setting.

Keywords: pragmatics, speech act, locution, illocution, perlocution, classroom communicative interactions.

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Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



Pragmatics and Speech Act in Classroom Communicative Interaction

Dr. Yemi Ogunsiji ^α & Dr. Mrs Oladayo Kolo ^σ

Abstract- In the present society, pragmatics and speech acts are vital linguistic compendiums that can help us in the present dispensation. This is because pragmatics has to do with the use of language in human communication as determined by societal conditions. Since human beings communicate through the use of language, it then becomes imperative to have knowledge of the pragmatic functioning of language. Also, in communication, we carry out many acts through the process of speech. In other words, we are 'doing' things with words. Whether we greet, invite, warn and so on, we are performing an act. So, in human interaction, pragmatics and speech act are vital in our communicative process since interaction will include both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors by breaking away from the strict, local paradigm of grammar. This is where the notion of context comes in. This paper, therefore, looks into the concepts of pragmatics as well as speech act so as to throw light into their functionality in the classroom setting.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Human beings are noted for performing different actions in different ways with a view to fulfilling their goals. One vital tool that man uses to carry out his assignment is language and perhaps, that is why Austin (1962) comes out with his famous book: *Doing Things with Words*. In other words, language is very functional and the practical aspect of it is very pertinent. The fact is that human beings, by their nature, sometimes do not explicitly express their intentions in communicative encounters; the study of the pragmatics of human communicative endeavors therefore becomes important if we must make sense out of the different communicative interactions among human beings. This engagement is even more crucial in a teaching-learning context, owing to the importance of communication and language used to the success of teaching and learning. Pragmatics is the study of the way humans beings make use of their languages to communicate. It can be said that pragmatics studies language use in human communication as determined by the conditions of society. The study of pragmatics explores the ability of language users to match utterances with contexts. According to Stalnaker, pragmatics is "the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed" (1972: 383). A learner of high grammatical

proficiency will not necessarily show equivalent pragmatic competence. The consequences of practical failure, unlike the case of grammatical errors, are often interpreted on a social or personal level rather than a result of the language learning process. A growing number of studies exist that describe language use in various communicative meetings, and these studies have yielded crucial information on the nature of interactions underway. However, there is lack of literature on the nature of verbal interaction in the classroom context. This is why this study sets out to look into the speech functions of classroom communicative interactions so as to facilitate the understanding of both implicit and explicit utterances of teachers and students in the classroom setting.

II. SPEECH ACT

Different scholars usually view the functionality of language from different perspectives, thereby giving room for different meanings and interpretations. The concept of speech act has been a current and interesting one in language study. However, from different ways through which this theory has been viewed, there has been what looks like a consensus in its description. Speech act has to do with certain acts performed when something is said or when an utterance is performed. *Speech act theory*, as introduced by Oxford philosopher, J.L. Austin (1962) and further developed by American philosopher J.R. Searle, considers the types of acts that utterances can be said to perform. *Speech act* is a technical term in linguistics and the philosophy of language. The contemporary use of the term goes back to Austin's doctrine of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Speech acts are commonly taken to include such acts as promising, ordering, greeting, warning, inviting and congratulating.

A Speech can be analyzed on three levels: A locutionary act, the performance of an utterance: the actual utterance and its ostensible meaning, comprising phonetic, phatic and rhetic acts corresponding to the verbal, syntactic and semantic aspects of any meaningful utterance; an illocutionary act: the semantic 'illocutionary force' of the utterance, thus its real, intended meaning; and in some instances, a further perlocutionary act: its actual effect, such as persuading, convincing, scaring, enlightening, inspiring, or otherwise getting someone to do or realize something, whether intended or not (Austin 1962).

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a) *Illocutionary acts*

The idea of an illocutionary act is central to the concept of a speech act. There are numerous opinions regarding how to define 'illocutionary acts' and these types have the examples of promising, ordering someone, and bequeathing. Searle's, "speech act" is often meant to refer to the same thing as the term 'illocutionary act' which Austin had initially introduced in his work published posthumously in 1962. According to Austin's preliminary informal description, the idea of an "illocutionary act" can be captured by emphasizing that "by saying something, we *do* something", as when someone issues an order to someone to go by saying "Go!", or when a minister joins two people in marriage saying, "I now pronounce you husband and wife." (Austin would eventually define the "illocutionary act" in a more exact manner). An interesting type of illocutionary speech act is that performed in the utterance of what Austin calls performatives. Typical instances of these are "I nominate John to be President", "I sentence you to ten years imprisonment", or "I promise to pay you back." In these typical, but rather explicit cases of performative sentences, the actions that the sentences describe (nominating, sentencing, promising) are performed by the utterances of the sentences themselves.

b) *Classifying illocutionary speech acts*

Searle (1975) has set up the following classifications of illocutionary speech acts:

Assertive: Speech acts that commit a speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition, e.g. reciting a creed.

Directives: Speech acts that are to cause the hearer to take a particular action, e.g. requests, commands and advice.

Commissives: Speech acts that commit a speaker to some future action, e.g. promises and oaths.

Expressive: Speech acts that express the speaker's attitudes and emotions towards the proposition, e.g. congratulations, excuses and thanks.

Declarations: Speech acts that change the reality in accord with the proposition of the declaration, e.g. baptisms, pronouncing someone guilty or pronouncing someone husband and wife.

c) *Indirect Speech Acts*

In the course of performing speech acts, we ordinarily communicate with each other. The content of communication may be identical, or almost identical, with the content intended to be communicated, as when a stranger asks, "What is your name?" However, the meaning of the linguistic means used may also be different from the content intended to be communicated. One may, in appropriate circumstances, request Dele to do the dishes by just saying, "Dele ...dishes!", or someone else can promise to do the dishes by saying, "Me!" if he feels that Dele is reluctant. One common way

of performing speech acts is to use an expression which indicates one speech act, and indeed performs this act, but also performs a further speech act, which is indirect. One may, for instance, say, "Dele, can you open the window?" thereby asking Dele whether he will be able to open the window, but also requesting that he does so. Since the request is performed indirectly, by means of (directly) performing a question, it counts as an indirect speech act.

Indirect speech acts are commonly used to reject proposals and to make requests. For example, a speaker asks, "Would you like to meet me for coffee?" and other replies, "I have a class." The second speaker used an indirect speech act to reject the proposal. This is indirect because the literal meaning of "I have a class" does not entail an outright rejection. This poses a problem for linguists because it is confusing to see how the person who made the proposal can understand that his proposal was rejected. Following substantially an account of H. P. Grice, Searle suggests that we can derive meaning out of indirect speech acts through a cooperative process out of which we can derive multiple illocutions; however, the method he proposes does not seem to solve the problem accurately. Sociolinguistics has studied the social dimensions of conversations. This discipline considers the various contexts in which speech acts occur.

d) *Searle's theory of "indirect speech acts"*

Searle has introduced the notion of an 'indirect speech act' which in his account is meant to be more particularly, an indirect 'illocutionary' act. Searle describes indirect speech acts as follows: "In indirect speech acts the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer." An account of such act, it follows, will require such things as an analysis of mutually shared background information about the conversation, as well as of rationality and linguistic conventions".

In connection with indirect speech acts, Searle introduces the notions of 'primary' and 'secondary' illocutionary acts. The primary illocutionary act is the indirect one, which is not literally performed. The secondary illocutionary act is the direct one, performed in the literal utterance of the sentence.

Example:

- 1) Speaker X: "We should leave for the show or else we'll be late."
- 2) Speaker Y: "I am not ready yet."

Here, the primary illocutionary act is Y's rejection of X's suggestion. The secondary illocutionary act is Y's statement that she is not ready to leave. By dividing the illocutionary act into two sub-parts, Searle

proposes that we can understand two meanings from the same utterance all the while, thereby knowing the correct meaning one is to respond to. The two meanings are very thin and difficult to separate. However, with his doctrine of indirect speech acts, Searle attempts to explain how it is possible that a speaker can say something and mean it, but additionally mean something else. This would be impossible, or at least it would be an unlikely case, if in such a case, the hearer had no chance of figuring out what the speaker means (over and above what she says and means). Searle's solution is that the hearer can figure out what the indirect speech act is meant, and he gives several hints as to how this might happen. For the previous example a condensed process might look like this:

Step 1: A proposal is made by X, and Y responds by means of an illocutionary act (2).

Step 2: X assumes that Y is cooperating in the conversation, being sincere, and that she has made a statement that is relevant.

Step 3: The literal meaning of (2) is not relevant to the conversation.

Step 4: Since X assumes that Y is cooperating; there must be another meaning to (2).

Step 5: Based on mutually shared background information, X knows that they cannot leave until Y is ready. Therefore, Y has rejected X's proposition.

Step 6: X knows that Y has said something in something other than the literal meaning, and the primary illocutionary act must have been the rejection of X's proposal.

Searle argues that a similar process can be applied to any indirect speech act as a model to find the primary illocutionary act. His proof for this argument is made by means of a series of supposed "observations".

e) Searle's theory of analysis

To generalize this sketch of an indirect request, Searle proposes a program of analysis for indirect speech act performances. He makes the following suggestions:

Step 1: Understand the facts of the conversation.

Step 2: Assume cooperation and relevance on behalf of the participants.

Step 3: Establish factual background information pertinent to the conversation.

Step 4: Make assumptions about the conversation based on steps 1–3.

Step 5: If steps 1–4 do not yield a consequential meaning, then infer that there are two illocutionary forces at work.

Step 6: Assume the hearer has the ability to perform the act the speaker suggests. The act that the speaker is

asking to be performed must be something that would make sense. For example, the hearer might have the ability to pass the salt when asked to do so by a speaker who is at the same table. Still, he might not have the ability to pass the salt to a speaker who is asking the hearer to do so during a telephone conversation.

Step 7: Make inferences from steps 1–6 regarding possible primary illocutions.

Step 8: Use background information to establish the primary illocution.

With this process, Searle concludes that he has found a method that will satisfactorily reconstruct what happens when an indirect speech act is performed. What all these have shown is that a lot of actions of different types can be performed when we make use of speech and these actions can be interpreted so as to find out the meaning or meanings that such an utterance might have. Erler (2010) is another interesting material that has dealt with the speech act of forbidding. The linguistic analysis done in the work has also corroborated what the earlier scholars have done on the function that speech act can perform.

III. METHODOLOGY

For data, audio-recordings of eight lectures were collected from the Department of English, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria. The Department of English was purposively selected because it has the largest number of students in the college and the importance of the English language to the field of study. Apart from being the language of instruction, the English Language is one the two units that form the Department of English (the second is English Literature). The audio-recordings, two from each level, were transcribed, cleaned and subjected to pragmatic analysis. The analysis was carried out using a top-down approach. This required a holistic understanding of the data and categorizations based on the features that hold across the data.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

a) Representatives

Representatives encompass speech acts that indicate the state of affairs. By uttering such speech acts, the speaker is committed, in varying degrees, to the truth of the expression. The representative speech acts found in classroom communicative interactions include stating, explaining, affirming, reminding. These will be explained and exemplified in the subsequent sections.

b) Stating

Stating here involves expressing a proposition that is generally held as accurate. Usually, the speaker recalls such propositions from generally held opinions or universal truths. The instances of stating in the data are

direct speech acts. This means that the locutionary acts as well as the illocutionary force correspond.

Excerpt 1

Mr B: Priscilla Alen defines "language testing as the practice and study of evaluating the proficiency of an individual in using a particular language effectively."

In excerpt 1 above, the lecturer, Mr B, clearly defines language testing as submitted by a particular scholar, Priscilla Alen. The definition stated here is taken mainly as truth with most scholars preoccupied by language testing; thus, Mr. B performs the speech act of stating the definition of language testing.

Excerpt 2

Dr. P: Style is a nebulous concept as it lends itself to different definitions; it is different things to various scholars...there is the notion of style as choice. This perspective is hinged on the belief that language is infinite and there are several options available for language users from which they choose a variant.

Excerpt 2 also exemplifies the speech act of stating, and similar to excerpt 1 above, excerpt two is a direct speech act of stating. Dr P conveys a popular opinion about the concept of style which is that it is enigmatic and there is no generally acceptable definition of style. He further explains by stating one of the perspectives of style (style as a choice). He states the general belief on which the notion of style as choice is premised.

c) Affirming

To affirm is to attest to a proposition or to lend credence to a statement. Affirming, as observed in the data, can be performed verbally or through extra-linguistic means such as nodding of heads.

Excerpt 3

Dr. P: First, let us have the course outline dictated... Item 7 on the course outline is "Register". Under that, we have the following items: field, tenor and mode of discourse.

Students: ((confused)) Mode or mood?

Dr P: Mode. Not mood. Some of you are wondering what have field, tenor and mode got to do with stylistics.

Students: Yes.

The speech act of affirming in Excerpt 3 above is performed by the students in their second turn. The students affirm to Dr. P that they are confused at the mention of "field", "tenor" and "mode" in a course like Stylistics which does not seem to have anything to do with the concepts mentioned. Dr. P reads the students' confusion, first, through the non-linguistic signal and second, through the students' question, "mood or mode?" Consequently, Dr. P tries to confirm his observation by saying "...some of you are wondering what has a field, tenor and mode got to do with

stylistics" and the students affirm the statement in their response "yes." Apart from the verbal means of performing the speech act of affirming, instances of performing the speech act of affirming through non-linguistic means also abound in the data.

d) Informing

The speech act of informing requires the speaker notifying his/her interlocutor of a course of event or filling in the interlocutor with information.

Excerpt 4

Mrs Y: By next week Thursday, we would have gone halfway the items on the course outline and by then, we should be preparing for our first test.

Excerpt 5

Dr. P: As a way of revising what we did in 'Introduction to Linguistic Stylistics', what is style?

A student: Style refers to the different ways people do things.

Dr. P: Yes. Right. But is that all?

Another student: Style refers to how individuals do things differently from others.

Dr. P: Yes. But there is more to style than this.

((silence))

Dr. P: I am begging to see why most of you do not get the grades you desire at the end of the day. The problem is in the way and manner you answer the exam questions. This question constitutes one of the questions you answered in the last exam. And if all you have written centers on what you are telling me now, there is no way you will have good grades. Fine. It is good you start your discussion of style by giving the everyday, non-technical definition of style. But you do not end it there. What does style refer to in stylistics? That is what you have failed to mention now...

e) Directives

Directives generally refer to the speech acts by which the speaker commits the hearer to an action. They include questioning, warning, commanding, requesting, cautioning, and so on.

f) Cautioning

This speech act which may take the form of warning, admonishing, advising, rebuking or reproof involves the speaker disapproving an undesirable act or behavior by the interlocutor. This speech act is performed directly and indirectly.

Excerpt 6

Dr. X: Would you want me to give you more time to talk, laugh and enjoy yourselves? ((pauses)) should I allow you have more time to talk?

Excerpt 6 is an example of an indirect speech act in that the structure of the locutionary act and the illocutionary act do not correspond. Though couched in an interrogative form, Dr. X does not mean to ask the

students whether they would need more time for frivolous chats. Instead, Dr. X desires a less rowdy class, thus he calls that the class be silent. The act is understood by the students as the speech act of cautioning. This is why the students keep quiet instead of giving a verbal response.

g) Questioning

Questioning is the act of demanding verbal response from a poser. Questions are asked for several reasons which may include one, to learn new things; two, to test the knowledge of an interlocutor; three, to get the perspective of an interlocutor on a particular topic. In the classroom setting, the speech act of questioning can be performed by both the teachers and the students. Usually, when asked by the teachers, questions are for the purpose of testing the students' knowledge of a topic or to ascertain the students' level of understanding. They could also be used to check students' attentiveness. On the other hand, students usually ask questions in order to learn new things or for the purpose of clarifying. This speech act is performed both directly and indirectly.

Excerpt 7

Dr. X: What are the different meanings of "bank" that you know?

Excerpt 8

Mrs D: We have defined a phrase as a group of words without a subject and a finite verb, right?

Students: Yes

Mrs D: And I have given examples such as "a woman", "Three black birds", "the cars in front of the Dean's block", "my father's friend"....so give me your own examples. Remember, do not use the examples that we have already given.

A student: "The young man in white shirt."

Mrs D: Yes. Good one.

Another student: "The woman is pregnant."

Mrs D: "The woman is pregnant. She is correct, right?"

In Excerpt 7, the speech act of questioning performed by Dr. X requires the students to respond verbally by explaining the different meanings of bank that they know. This is different from the purpose of questioning in the two instances where the speech act occurs in Excerpt 8. In the first line of Excerpt 8, Mrs D uses questioning to ascertain that she has a common ground with the students on what a phrase is. Instead of taking for granted the assumption that the students know what a phrase is, she inquired to ascertain the assumption. Also, in the last line of Excerpt 8, the ironic question asked by Mrs D is to the end of testing the students' knowledge of phrases. A student has wrongly given a simple sentence as an example of a phrase. To test whether the other students genuinely know what a

phrase is, Mrs D deliberately deludes the students with her question "she is correct, right? This is done with the expectation that those who truly know a phrase will outright disagree.

h) Requesting

Requesting is the act of demanding that specific actions be carried out by the interlocutor.

Excerpt 9

Mrs Y: Okay, stay up. Please, come over here. I want you to face your friend. I am going to give her just two minutes. She will discuss with you a particular topic I am giving to her now: the food I like best. Two minutes.

Excerpt 10

Dr P: Last week, we started our discussion on the features of dramatic conversation. Today, we are moving the context which is one of the features of real conversation as well as that of dramatic dialogue... I want two people that can act well to come out.

((One male and one female stepped outside))

Dr. P: I will give you a short script which I will want you to act out in a few minutes.... ((to the female student)). You are the wife and he is your husband. I want the two of you to be in a hot argument and some point you tell your husband "you are crazy."...

Excerpts 9 and 10 exemplify the speech act or requesting and they both require the lecturers, Mrs Y and Dr. P to ask the students to carry out some actions. In Excerpt 9, Mrs Y requests a student to discuss the topic "The Food I like Best" to her friend. Similarly, in Excerpt 10, in order to explain the term 'context' to the class, Dr. P requests two students to take up the roles of actors. In the two examples above, the speech act of requesting is explicitly stated, with the lecturers identifying the actions they want the students to carry out.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper examined the speech functions of the utterances made in the context of teaching and learning in the Department of English, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria. The academic endeavor is based on the fact that the utterances of humans in communicative encounters perform specific functions which may or may not be explicitly stated. The study identified the specific speech acts of stating, informing, affirming, cautioning, requesting, questioning and promising which are classified under representatives, directives and commissives. Of all the categories of speech act, the representative category of speech acts dominates classroom communicative interaction in Adeyemi Federal University of Education. In addition to this, the data is also replete with questioning which falls under directive category of speech acts. The preponderance of questioning and

the representative category of speech acts resonates the goal of the discourse under discussion. In the classroom setting, the teachers who control both the topic and turn-taking and who largely dominate the classroom discourse use expressions that enable them to instruct, educate, teach, assess teaching and learning and get feedback.

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Factors that Influenced Wherefore Sex Workers to Leave Out basic Education Program for Adults

By María Inés Flecha

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The results shows that the reasons or factors because they leave off or abandonment is due to external to the course, related to the living conditions of the participants, poverty, the need to work, family situations of instability and precariousness, as well as personal, social, cultural circumstances, concerning to the field of health, and a real lack of accompaniment from the associations that bring them together. Therefore, there must be educational proposals for young people and adults that are sufficiently flexible, open, pluralistic, especially for those in a situation of exclusion.

Keywords: adult education, sex workers, school dropout, situation of exclusión.

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Factors that Influenced Wherefore Sex Workers to Leave Out basic Education Program for Adults

Factores Que Incidieron en el Abandono de las Personas Trabajadoras Sexuales Beneficiarias de un Programa de Educación Básica Para Adultos

María Inés Flecha

Resumen- Este artículo refiere a la investigación realizada sobre las circunstancias del abandono de las personas trabajadoras sexuales beneficiarias de un programa de educación básica para personas jóvenes y adultas, planteado para esta población. Para ello se recurrió al diseño narrativo de la investigación cualitativa, se recolectaron los datos a través de entrevistas a los distintos protagonistas involucrados en la experiencia.

Los hallazgos dan cuenta que el abandono se debe a factores externos al curso, relacionados a las condiciones de vida de las participantes, la pobreza, la necesidad de trabajar, situaciones familiares de inestabilidad y precariedad, así como circunstancias personales, sociales, culturales, concernientes al ámbito de la salud, y una falta real de acompañamiento de las asociaciones que las nuclean. De ahí que se debe contar con propuestas educativas para las personas jóvenes y adultas suficientemente flexibles, abierta, pluralista, especialmente para aquellas en situación de exclusión.

Palabras clave: educación de adultos, trabajadoras sexuales, abandono escolar, situación de exclusión.

Abstract- This article talk about the research among the circumstances why sex workers who are beneficiaries of a basic education program for young and adults people, leaves out their studies program. The method selected to answer the question was narrative design of qualitative research used data was collected through personal interviews with the different protagonists involved in the experience.

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Keywords: adult education, sex workers, school dropout, situation of exclusion.

INTRODUCCIÓN

La política pública paraguaya de educación de personas jóvenes y adultas tiene como objetivos estratégicos “ampliar la cobertura en los servicios de alfabetización, educación básica y media, formación

profesional, garantizando condiciones adecuadas para el acceso, la permanencia y la culminación oportuna de las diversas poblaciones, poniendo énfasis en aquellas en situaciones de vulnerabilidad”. Asimismo, “asegurar que los servicios educativos sean aceptables y adaptados a las realidades, las condiciones particulares de las comunidades, sectores, grupos e individuos, incluyendo el usos de diferentes tecnología de información y comunicación” (Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, 2012, p. 66) Sin embargo, los resultados actuales indican que todavía operan mecanismos de discriminación y exclusión al interior del sistema educativo debido a las características personales, culturales y socioeconómica de las personas (Elías y Molinas, 2008, p. 414).

En ese sentido un grupo recientemente incorporado como beneficiario de los programas del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias de Paraguay-MEC-, ha sido el de las mujeres y personas con diversidad sexual, trabajadoras del sexo nucleadas en la Asociación trans Panambi¹ y Asociación Unidas por la Esperanza-UNES²-, a quienes se les brindó un programa educativo destinado a la culminación de la educación básica para aquellas personas que durante su infancia y adolescencia no pudieron realizarlo. Los resultados finales del programa arrojaron que de 20 trabajadoras sexuales inscriptas, 6 culminaron la propuesta educativa y 14 abandonaron el curso. Esto implica que de alguna forma nuevamente se generaron condiciones educativas inadecuadas que llevaron a que la mayoría de las participantes abandone el programa.

Teniendo en cuenta esta situación se ha considerado oportuno estudiar los aspectos, que incidieron en el abandono de las personas trabajadoras sexuales del proceso de implementación del programa educativo, desde las percepciones de los actores involucrados.

¹ Panambi es una asociación de travestis, transexuales y transgénero que promueve y defiende los derechos de las personas trans en Paraguay.

² La asociación Unidas en la Esperanza –UNES- es la primera organización de mujeres trabajadoras sexuales del Paraguay, iniciaron el activismo para luchar por la reivindicación de sus derechos.

Este estudio resulta relevante para todas las personas que se hallan abocadas al trabajo con personas jóvenes y adultas en distintos contextos, atendiendo que la educación de grupos minoritarios como el de las personas trabajadoras sexuales no es un asunto marginal, sino que reviste una importancia crucial para lograr una equidad social y acabar con la exclusión para el desarrollo de sociedades más integradoras con educación de calidad para todos.

1. EJES TEMÁTICOS

a) *Exclusión social y discriminación*

La exclusión social hoy abarca todos aquellos fenómenos que impiden la participación digna de las personas en la vida política, económica y cultural de los países; tiene que ver con cuestiones tales como: seguridad, empleo permanente, ingresos, propiedad, acceso al crédito, o a la tierra, educación, habilidades, capital cultural, estado de bienestar, ciudadanía e igualdad legal, participación democrática, bienes públicos, familia y sociabilidad, humanidad, respeto y entendimiento (Fachelli et ál., 2012, p. 49-70).

De ahí que se puede decir que la exclusión social es un conjunto de factores sociales, económicos y culturales vigentes, que limitan las oportunidades de participación social, cultural y económica para determinadas personas, por tanto, la exclusión es diferencial en relación de las personas y los grupos sociales a los que pertenecen y su origen se encuentra en procesos sociales, económicos, políticos y culturales de largo plazo (López et ál., 2012, p. 35-40). La exclusión social va más allá de la pobreza ya que tiene que ver con la ausencia de participación en la sociedad y con la falta de acceso a bienes básicos y redes de bienestar social, lo cual conduce a un número cada vez mayor de personas a quedar fuera de la sociedad y a vivir por debajo de los niveles de dignidad e igualdad a los que todos tenemos derecho (Blanco, 2008, p. 5-14).

Para Castel (2001) citado por Hernández (2010) la exclusión es: "el proceso por el cual a ciertos individuos y grupos se les impide sistemáticamente el acceso a posiciones que les permitirían una subsistencia autónoma dentro de los niveles sociales determinados por las instituciones y valores en un contexto dado". La exclusión social es un fenómeno creciente tanto en los países desarrollados como en desarrollo. Una de las tendencias más fuertes de la nueva economía es el aumento de las desigualdades, la segmentación espacial y la fragmentación cultural de la población (Tedesco, 2004 citado por Blanco, 2008, p. 5-14).

Hernández (2010) toma lo expresado por Castel (2001), donde manifiesta que la exclusión social entendida como un proceso, puede cambiar dependiendo de la educación, las características demográficas, los prejuicios sociales, las prácticas

empresariales y las políticas públicas, de forma tal que los incluidos y excluidos varían con el tiempo. El mismo autor citado señala que aunque el mecanismo clave en la exclusión social es la falta de trabajo regular como fuente de ingresos, existe una multiplicidad de factores asociados con dicho proceso, además sostiene que existen relaciones sistémicas entre la globalización, desigualdad y exclusión social.

b) *Trabajo sexual en Paraguay*

El trabajo sexual no es reconocido como un trabajo legal en los países de Latinoamérica y el Caribe incluyendo el Paraguay, las mujeres que se dedican a esta actividad no pueden elegir dónde trabajar ni en qué condiciones. La vulnerabilidad en la que viven como trabajadores sexuales se da por las malas condiciones en las que trabajan todo el día, es así que se hallan expuestas a la violencia y los abusos, más la situación de clandestinidad en la que realizan el trabajo.

El trabajo sexual en el Paraguay aún es un tema escasamente abordado. En el país, la denominación "trabajo sexual" es el resultado de una larga batalla ideológica y política que, en el marco de la concepción de los derechos humanos y el respeto por la libre determinación de las personas involucradas, reemplaza al término "prostitución" (Otazú, Cabañas y Portillo, 2013, p. 137-144).

Si bien la Constitución Nacional vigente, en el artículo 86 expresa claramente que "todos los habitantes de la República tienen derecho a un trabajo lícito y libremente escogido. La Ley protegerá el trabajo en todas sus formas, y los derechos que otorga él al trabajador/a son irrenunciables", en Paraguay no existe ley que regule el trabajo sexual, tampoco existe una ley que conceptualice el servicio sexual como trabajo, ni tampoco el Código Penal lo tipifica como un hecho punible, por tanto las personas mayores de edad pueden ejercerlo libremente (Unidas por la Esperanza, 2013).

Dados los prejuicios y la visión moralizante que predomina hacia la actividad, las escasas normas jurídicas que existen menoscaban de alguna manera los derechos de las mujeres trabajadoras sexuales (Otazú, Cabañas y Portillo, 2013, p. 137-144). La mayoría de las trabajadoras sexuales reportaron que nunca realizan denuncias cuando no se respetan sus derechos. El principal motivo para no hacerlo es el miedo, seguido de la falta de confianza en el proceso, discriminación de quienes registran la denuncia, amenazas y desconocimiento sobre el proceso judicial, además del temor a que las familias conozcan su doble vida, por la estigmatización que representa dentro de los distintos roles familiares y profesionales (Juliano, 2005, p. 81).

Al decir de Juliano (2005, p. 83) la falta de legislación específica para el trabajo sexual ubica a estas mujeres en situación de especial desventaja, ya

que suelen padecer además de un déficit de medidas de protección legal e institucional, un incremento enorme de estigmatización que incluye la violencia simbólica de negarle a su actividad la condición y dignidad de trabajo. Por su parte Rodríguez (2012, p. 45-46) refuerza la idea que el trabajo sexual se configuró fuera de la legalidad económica como una estrategia de sobrevivencia para muchas mujeres vulneradas socioeconómicamente, pero que hoy día, cada vez más, se configura como una rentable alternativa para muchas mujeres excluidas del mercado de trabajo formal. Además Rodríguez (2012, p. 45-46) indica que el trabajo sexual está marcada por la doble cara de la exclusión: Por un lado, la estigmatización social de las trabajadoras sexuales; y por otro, un trabajo caracterizado por la precariedad.

c) *Educación como derecho*

La Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos adoptada por las Naciones Unidas en 1948 es enfática al afirmar que: "Toda persona tiene derecho a la Educación. El derecho a la educación se base en tres principios fundamentales: el de la igual dignidad de todos los seres humanos, el de la no discriminación, y el de la participación democrática.

La finalidad del derecho a la educación se basa en el empoderamiento de las personas para ejercer a cabalidad sus otros derechos humanos y construir una comunidad humana regida por el principio de la paz. Por ello se puede decir que el derecho a la educación está relacionado con todos los otros derechos humanos y es indivisible e interdependiente de los otros derechos. La razón de ser del Derecho a la educación, es aspirar a una sociedad en que todas las personas tengan igualdad de oportunidades para vivir una vida digna (Instituto Nacional contra la Discriminación, la Xenofobia y el Racismo-INADI, 2012, p. 10-12).

Se entiende así que el derecho a la educación fundamental es para todos sin distinción, esto implica la no discriminación, por tanto no está limitado por la edad, ni el sexo, la raza, las ideologías o creencia religiosas; se aplica a niños, niñas y personas jóvenes y adultas, incluidas las personas adultas jóvenes y adultas mayores que están fuera del sistema educativo. Dado que la educación es un derecho humano, todos los seres humanos son igualmente sujetos de ese derecho (Hevia, 2010).

Garantizar el derecho a la educación implica para los Estados la responsabilidad de asegurar el acceso universal a las instituciones educativas, así como la progresión y la conclusión de los distintos niveles educativos a lo largo de todas las etapas. Asimismo un enfoque de derechos humanos implica colocar al estudiante en el centro del proceso educativo, significa que no es solo el mero receptor de un servicio de transmisión de destrezas y conocimientos, sino un sujeto pleno, con voz para

opinar y deliberar, con mayor autonomía y respeto a su identidad personal en el proceso educativo, sin discriminación por género, raza, etnia, condición social u otro rasgo distintivo (UNESCO, 1985).

El derecho a la educación comprende además la alfabetización y educación para personas adultas en la perspectiva de aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida, siendo la educación de personas jóvenes y adultas-EPJA- un derecho humano fundamental, es punto de partida para la discusión y puesta en marcha de políticas y programas en este campo. El derecho a la EPJA supone, que se haga efectivo el derecho a una educación básica y a un aprendizaje significativo y sostenido, sin discriminación, en ese sentido deben superarse todas formas de exclusión en y a través de la educación incluidas aquellas basadas en la edad, creencias, nacimiento, clase social, raza, conciencia, cultura, discapacidad, origen étnico, género y orientación sexual (Instituto de la UNESCO para el Aprendizaje a lo Largo de Toda la Vida, 2013, p. 1-3)

d) *El abandono del sistema educativo*

Entre los problemas que tradicionalmente afectan a los sistemas educativos, se encuentran la deserción y reprobación escolares, múltiples investigaciones han arrojado como resultado que estos se deben a diversos factores que se hallan fuera del control de los planificadores del sistema escolar (Muñoz et ál., 2005, p. 222). El abandono escolar se ha convertido en un problema educativo y social de primer orden en los países que han superado el reto inicial de la escolarización obligatoria, debido al aumento de la demanda de cualificación y al incremento de la relación entre exclusión del sistema educativo y exclusión social (Salvà, Oliver, y Sureda, 2011, p. 10).

Lazo y Villa (s.f.), señalan que por deserción escolar se entiende el abandono del sistema educativo por parte de los alumnos, provocado por una combinación de factores que se generan, tanto en la escuela como en contextos de tipo social, familiar e individual. Estos son los llamados "desertores" del sistema educativo, carga estigmatizante muy fuerte, según lo planteado por Acuña (2013, p. 55).

Elías (2008, p. 409-462) define la deserción escolar como el "proceso de alejamiento paulatino de la escuela que culmina con el abandono por parte del niño, niña o adolescente", la palabra rezago es sinónimo de atraso. El rezago educativo se refiere a que los niños, jóvenes y adultos que no alcanzaron a completar su educación, impide la buena aceptación en la sociedad en la que vivimos actualmente. Las personas de 15 años en adelante que no han terminado con su educación básica son consideradas con rezago educativo.

Salvà, Oliver y Sureda, (2011, p. 10) hacen mención a Rumberger (2004), en una revisión de la investigación sobre el tema, agrupa las diversas teorías

explicativas del abandono escolar en dos, consideradas complementarias: (a) Desde una perspectiva individual, centrada en las características de los estudiantes (valores, actitudes y conductas) y en cómo éstas contribuyen a su decisión de dejar la escuela. Entre los factores individuales figuran los malos resultados académicos y las bajas aspiraciones educativas y ocupacionales. (b) Desde una perspectiva institucional, se estudia la influencia en la conducta de los estudiantes de los contextos en los cuales se desarrollan.

Al preguntarnos cuáles podrían ser las causas que lleva a un niño, adolescente o joven a abandonar la institución educativa, las respuestas de esta pregunta, nos dicen que los determinantes de la deserción son multicausales, es decir, no existe una única razón/causa de abandono de los estudios. El proceso que finalmente conduce a una ruptura con el sistema educativo se inicia casi siempre mucho antes de la misma. El fenómeno de la deserción no puede ser simplemente entendido como un acto individual de dejar de asistir a un establecimiento educacional (JUNAEB, 2003 citado por Walder, 2009, p. 5). Tal como señala García-Huidobro (2000), la deserción es el último eslabón en la cadena de fracaso escolar. La deserción escolar debe ser entendida como proceso, es decir, un fenómeno con historia con un inicio poco claro o conocido, y con un final, reflejado en la acción de abandonar el sistema escolar (JUNAEB, 2003 citado por Walder, 2009, p. 5).

El abandono escolar afecta de manera emocional y cognitiva, ya que el menor se ve obligado a iniciar una vida laboral a temprana edad, poniendo en riesgo su condición física y social. La deserción escolar genera elevados costos sociales y privados. La baja productividad del trabajo, y su efecto en el (menor) crecimiento de las economías, se considera también como un costo social del bajo nivel educacional que produce el abandono de la escuela durante los primeros años del ciclo escolar (Lazo y Villa, s.f.).

e) *Situación educativa de las personas jóvenes y adultas en Paraguay*

En Paraguay, la política educativa de jóvenes y adultos forma parte del Sistema Educativo Nacional dependiente del MEC, pero existen otras instituciones fuera del sector público como iniciativas privadas, organizaciones no gubernamentales que, colateralmente, realizan educación de jóvenes y adultos. La población meta de la educación de personas jóvenes y adultas en Paraguay está conformada, en su mayoría, por mujeres de sectores populares, jefas de hogar, trabajadoras independientes, campesinas y obreras, así como por jóvenes y adultos trabajadores de los niveles inferiores de la economía formal e informal, campesinos de las áreas rurales más empobrecidas, minorías étnicas, desempleados

migrantes de las áreas urbano-marginales (Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, 1999, p. 103).

Los últimos datos disponibles revelan que 94 % de la población de 15 años y más está alfabetizada (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2019). La definición metodológica de la tasa de alfabetismo se basa en la autodeclaración de las personas que responden la pregunta "¿Sabe leer y escribir?" (Zarza et ál., 2014). En los datos estadísticos cohorte 2005-2016, se puede notar que aún no se han logrado completar los 12 años obligatorios de educación. Las tasas de egreso del 9º grado de la educación básica se mantienen en torno al promedio nacional del 58.4%, mientras que las tasas del promedio nacional de 12 años de escolaridad, al 41.3% (Juntos por la Educación y Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina, s. f., p. 59). Además, se puede verificar un alto porcentaje de niños y niñas matriculados y que asisten a una institución educativa entre seis y 12 años de edad, lo que implica que más de 90% de la población paraguaya tiene al menos seis años de escolaridad. Sin embargo, el porcentaje de adolescentes que abandona la educación formal sigue siendo alto (Instituto de Desarrollo, 2013).

El Observatorio Educativo Ciudadano (2020) da cuenta del aumento constante y alarmante del analfabetismo en Paraguay en los últimos cinco años, en los que la tasa de analfabetismo a nivel nacional se ha incrementado de 4.4% en 2015, a 6.8% en 2019. Arias (2019) destaca los datos de la Encuesta Permanente de Hogares 2017, donde se resalta que, de la tasa de analfabetismo en Paraguay, el grupo de personas de 30 a 64 años en condiciones de analfabetismo del área rural duplica a sus pares del área urbana. En tanto que las mujeres analfabetas representan 56% de la población, constituyéndose así en el grupo en condición de mayor vulnerabilidad. Además, que los analfabetos del grupo denominado "adulto mayor" (65 años y más), representan 37%. Según el Observatorio Educativo Ciudadano (2020), en 2019 la diferencia de analfabetismo entre el quintil de la población con menores ingresos y el quintil de la población con mayores ingresos en Paraguay es de 12 puntos porcentuales. Es decir, 14 % de toda la población con menores ingresos es analfabeta, en contraste con el 1.93% de la población con mayores ingresos.

Cuando se habla de educación en Paraguay, el idioma es una variable que no puede rehuirse. La situación de analfabetismo en las zonas rurales no sólo debe ser observada desde una cuestión geográfica, sino también desde la perspectiva del idioma que se utiliza para la enseñanza (castellano), que contrasta con el idioma utilizado mayormente en el hogar (guaraní) y se constituye en un elemento clave. Estudios anteriores indican que los niveles más bajos de alfabetismo se dan dentro de aquellas poblaciones cuya lengua

materna es el guaraní³. Los datos del Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2019) indican que 12.9% de las personas que hablan guaraní la mayor parte del tiempo en sus casas son analfabetas; 2.8% para las personas que hablan castellano y guaraní la mayor parte del tiempo en sus casas; 9.7% para los que hablan otro idioma, y 1.4% para los que hablan castellano. Las estadísticas muestran que los menores niveles de alfabetismo se encuentran en la población femenina, rural, de lengua materna guaraní, con menor ingreso y adulta mayor.

II. METODOLOGÍA

El estudio se enmarcó en el diseño narrativo de la investigación cualitativa, para poder disponer de prácticas materiales e interpretativas que hacen visible al mundo y lo transforma, lo convierte en una serie de representaciones que incluye las notas de campo, las entrevistas, las fotografías. En términos de Denzin y Lincoln, (2011) la investigación cualitativa implica un enfoque interpretativo y naturalista del mundo, lo que permitió al investigador estudiar el caso en el escenario natural donde ocurrió el fenómeno a interpretar.

El trabajo evaluó una sucesión de hechos y acontecimientos que incidieron en el abandono escolar de las personas trabajadoras sexuales participantes de un programa educativo de jóvenes y adultos, desde la percepción de los actores educativos involucrados, reivindicando así el abordaje de las realidades subjetivas e intersubjetivas como objetos de conocimiento científico como bien lo expresa Sandoval (2002, p. 27-29), además teniendo en cuenta que las perspectivas de los entrevistados son valiosas ya que no se buscó conocer “la verdad” o “la moralidad” sino tener una comprensión de la mirada de las personas involucradas en la experiencia (Taylor y Bogdan (2000, p. 19)

Esta investigación se nutrió de dos fuentes de información; una consistente en una revisión documental de los materiales elaborados en el marco del programa educativo estudiado como: el programa de estudio, el material de orientación al docente y el módulo del participante; y la otra una serie de entrevistas semiestructuradas dirigidas a las personas que vivenciaron la experiencia educativa: participantes del programa, docentes, técnicos referentes del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias, así como referente de la organización cooperante del programa y de la

organización de mujeres trabajadoras sexuales; y la observación.

a) Participantes

La muestra del estudio estuvo conformada principalmente por los actores involucrados directamente en la experiencia estudiada, compuesta por 2 personas trabajadoras sexuales entre 15 a 45 años que culminaron sus estudios en el programa implementado; 3 personas trabajadoras sexuales entre 15 a 45 años que abandonaron el programa; 3 docentes de las distintas áreas académicas del programa; 2 referentes del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias que participaron en el diseño e implementación de la propuesta educativa; 1 referente del organismo cooperante y 1 representante de la organización de las personas trabajadores sexuales que participaron en la experiencia de implementación del programa.

La muestra para la recogida de datos fue aleatoria, un criterio que se tuvo en cuenta para la selección fue haber aceptado participar en el estudio y encontrarse disponible al momento de las entrevistas. Además se optó por tomar una muestra diversa, de manera a tener distintas perspectivas del fenómeno estudiado, ya que al decir de Denzin y Lincoln (2011), la triangulación refleja un intento por asegurar una comprensión en profundidad del fenómeno en cuestión, como una estrategia que potencia el rigor, la amplitud, la complejidad, la riqueza y la profundidad de una investigación, atendiendo a que cada narración refleja una perspectiva distinta sobre el incidente.

b) Entrevistas

Para esta investigación los datos fueron recabados mediante la técnica de entrevista semiestructurada cualitativa, entendidas como aquellas que se basan en una guía de asuntos o preguntas que el entrevistador tiene la libertad de introducir preguntas adicionales para precisar conceptos o mayor información sobre los temas deseados. La entrevista siguió el modelo de una conversación entre iguales y no de un intercambio formal de preguntas y respuestas (Taylor y Bogan, 2000), en una atmósfera en la cual los entrevistados se expresaron libre y auténticamente. Antes del encuentro, se les explicó el trabajo, los objetivos de la investigación y la entrevista; para el registro se utilizó la grabadora, previa autorización de los consultados. Se acordó con los seleccionados los días y horarios de las citas, que se llevaron a cabo en el contexto natural del desarrollo de la experiencia educativa, lo que potenció comprender sus puntos de vista y la valoración del contexto.

Se elaboró un cuestionario guía con preguntas abiertas, las mismas fueron confeccionadas, atendiendo a los objetivos de la investigación sobre la base de las principales dimensiones que se abarcó, se basó en temas relacionados con las características de

³ El Paraguay es un país bilingüe (castellano-guaraní). El guaraní en el país es un idioma indígena hablado por una población no indígena, la población indígena representa alrededor de 2 % del total, cerca de 90 % de los paraguayos habla el idioma guaraní (ya sea como idioma materno o como segunda lengua); así también es utilizado por los descendientes de paraguayos que viven en otros países.

la población beneficiaria y de la experiencia educativa implementada, el desempeño de los actores educativos involucrados y las condiciones económicas, culturales y valorativas que influyen en el abandono de los participantes. Se dividió el guión en seis grandes dimensiones: 1) Diseño del programa educativo; 2) Implementación del programa; 3) Desempeño de las personas participantes; 4) Desempeño de los docentes; 5) Desempeño del Equipo Técnico; 6) Causas económica, cultural y valorativa que influyeron en el abandono de las personas trabajadoras sexuales. Para ello se construyó una matriz cuya organización partió de objetivos específicos y dimensiones. Los instrumentos de recolección de datos fueron sometidos a una prueba, donde se evaluó la validez y confiabilidad de los resultados, se realizaron los ajustes necesarios al instrumento antes de su aplicación a los sujetos de estudio.

c) *Análisis de datos*

La fase de procesamiento, organización y análisis se inició con la transcripción de las entrevistas, las mismas fueron codificadas con miras a la organización de los datos y a la construcción de categorías significativas. La primera etapa del análisis cualitativo arrancó con la lectura ingenua de las entrevistas –un primer contacto con el material recogido– como señalan Wetherell y Potter (1996, citado por Antunes, Montalbán y Signorini, 2017, p. 85), en el que se analizaron los resultados brutos, para volverlos significativos y válidos para la interpretación futura. El material de texto obtenido fue segmentado y se extrajo el contenido temático asociado directamente con las categorías genéricas que agrupaban las preguntas y respuestas de la entrevista aplicada, cuidando mantener la perspectiva de los entrevistados, y controlando las lecturas realizadas para la investigación.

La codificación de los datos se realizó mediante la identificación de frases textuales de los entrevistados. En el análisis se tuvieron en cuenta los pasos que propone Ricoeur (2006): cada historia se leyó ingenuamente, y los apuntes de todas las historias ingenuas se compilaban en una comprensión sencilla de los textos como un todo. Así se convirtieron en una declaración estructurada y coherente; más tarde, los códigos derivados del análisis estructural y las notas de toda la comprensión sencilla se fusionaron en una comprensión única de los textos, que recogió, en partes, las palabras de los entrevistados, además de las del investigador, pero sin traicionar su auténtico significado.

En una segunda etapa, se procedió a agrupar las informaciones recogidas en cuatro dimensiones específicas que representan bloques temáticos, como lo plantean Hernández Sampieri, Fernández y Baptista (2010, p. 439). Las descripciones narrativas se

organizaron por temas, según las características comunes que presentaban, los temas en destaque se mezclan tanto en los discursos como en las experiencias de vida, que de alguna manera respondían a los cuestionarios de la investigación. Los contenidos de las áreas se entrecruzaron en los discursos de los entrevistados, pasando así del análisis del relato individual, al análisis del relato social, lo que llevó a desarrollar categorías de análisis. Todas las categorías, por lo tanto, están compuestas del cruzamiento de los bloques temáticos y de sus temas centrales, para intentar responder a las cuestiones realizadas por el investigador y profundizar en la comprensión del tema.

La tercera y última etapa consistió en el análisis propiamente dicho; para ello se elaboró una matriz de análisis de las entrevistas, con el fin de exponer las categorías y los códigos en un mismo plano visual, lo cual permitió su accesibilidad al facilitar la selección de los datos y poder hacer la transferencia de datos codificados, a datos significativos. El estudio hizo uso de la técnica de la triangulación que buscó converger los relatos de las experiencias y fuente de datos para poder desarrollar una interpretación global del fenómeno objeto de la investigación y visualizar un problema desde diferentes ángulos

III. RESULTADOS Y DISCUSIÓN

La investigación se concentra específicamente en conocer las percepciones de los actores principales de la propuesta educativa de “Culminación de la educación básica” para persona jóvenes y adultas desarrollado en Paraguay, destinado a las mujeres y personas con diversidad sexual, trabajadoras del sexo, constituido por las participantes que culminaron como aquellas que abandonaron el curso, las docentes, el equipo técnico del Ministerio de Educación y los referentes de las organizaciones que apoyaron la propuesta. Los temas analizados a partir del relato de las propias voces de sus protagonistas, fueron: la propuesta educativa implementada, las condiciones socio económicas y culturales de las participantes, el desempeño de las docentes y del equipo técnico del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias, así como los motivos que impulsaron al abandono del programa; varias voces entrecruzadas con diferentes enfoques e interpretaciones sobre las vivencias compartidas construyeron el discurso colectivo tal como lo señala Pujadas (2002, citado por Antunes, Montalbán y Signorini, 2017). En esa línea se apunta el desarrollo de la investigación, saber qué dicen los actores principales sobre los temas abordados y entender de qué manera las distintas narrativas individuales se relacionan y complementan entre sí.

a) *La condición socioeconómica y cultural de las participantes*

Las participantes del programa de "Culminación de la educación básica" destinado a las personas trabajadoras del sexo, son en su totalidad personas de escasos recursos económicos, que viven en la precariedad, y la carencia económica, se dedican o se dedicaron al trabajo sexual, además de tener otra actividad laboral que en algunos casos está relacionada con las Asociaciones que las nuclea. Las que aún se dedican al trabajo sexual manifestaron no sentirse cómodas con dicha actividad pero, que el dinero que perciben realizando otras labores no les alcanza para solventar sus gastos y los de su familia; ya que las mujeres en su mayoría son madres de varios hijos, algunas señalaron que sus parientes están en conocimiento del trabajo sexual que desempeñan. Si bien las entrevistadas declararon que viven en Asunción, la capital del país y su área metropolitana, la mayoría proviene del interior, todas indicaron que hablan las dos lenguas oficiales del país (castellano y guaraní), pero que se comunican más en guaraní por lo que se resalta que su lengua materna es esta.

Participante 1: *...ahí tengo como un viático (en UNES), también soy trabajadora sexual, ahí tengo como un monto fijo de ingreso, estoy contenta con el trabajo que realizó en UNES y con el otro trabajo no... Vivo con mis hijos, tengo 4 criaturas, ahora mismo estoy viviendo cerca de la casa de mi mamá.*

Participante 2: *Al trabajo sexual llegué por la necesidad, porque tengo varios hijos, y los hijos no esperan ni un mes para comer... tengo 8 hijos, fui madre desde los 15 años y desde muy joven me dediqué al trabajo sexual... Yo soy de Gral. Artigas pero, ahora vivo en San Lorenzo... cuando hablo con ellos (en referencia a sus hijos) lo hago en los dos idiomas (castellano y guaraní) y con mis compañeras y amigas también en los dos idiomas.*

Participante 5: *Usha es transformista de show, yo me visto de mujer para hacer show... los viernes y sábados de noche... de día trabajo en una lavandería de 8:00 de la mañana a 6:00 de la tarde pero, no cobro un salario mínimo, cobro muchísimo menos... primero tenía que trabajar para poder sobrevivir... Soy oriundo de Caaguazú, pero, al poco tiempo que nací... mi mamá vino acá en Asunción a trabajar, yo vine con ella... Entre mi familia hablamos con una mezcla del guaraní y castellano, pero más el guaraní...*

Las participantes entrevistadas manifestaron haber pasado por la experiencia escolar en su infancia, la mayoría con dificultades relacionadas al factor económico y/o la inestabilidad familiar, razón por la cual tuvieron que abandonar sus estudios a temprana edad, algunas conservaban algún tipo de documento académico que avala los estudios realizados. A pesar de la vida dura que llevan las entrevistadas revelaron estar conforme con lo que son, pero también destacaron que una deuda que tienen con ellas era poder continuar sus estudios, todas querían estudiar con la idea de poder superarse.

Participante 3: *Lo que me motivó a estudiar fue que yo siempre quise terminar, siempre quise ser alguien más.*

Participante 4: *Yo estaba en la escuela República de Bolivia, que estaba en el centro de Asunción, luego empecé a trabajar y pase a estudiar... en la escuela nocturna... luego seguí un curso acelerado privado y no figuraba mis notas que yo rendí todo el básico... dejé de asistir porque no tenía certificado.*

Participante 5: *Yo hice mi primer grado porque mi mamá me mandó pase al 2° grado pero, ya no pude hacer, ya dejé de lado, luego de haber tenido 10 años mi madrina me mandó otra vez a hacer mi 2° grado hasta el 3° grado, luego dejé otra vez y luego empecé otras vez cuando tenía 16 años en alfabetización para adultos donde hice lo posible y terminé mi 6° grado. ...me siento muy orgullosa de mi misma... me gusta mucho lo que soy porque no tengo nada que ocultar llevo la frente en alto por ser gay, prefiero ser gay antes de ser un ladrón un asaltante o cualquiera de esas cosas malas... Veía que yo necesito más saber... empecé a pensar yo necesito estudiar, necesito relacionarme.*

b) *La propuesta educativa*

El proyecto surge a partir del pedido que realizaron la Asociación Panambi y UNES para que sus asociadas puedan culminar sus estudios básicos, el equipo del MEC toma la propuesta y atendiendo a un trabajo similar que habían realizado con la Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos, planteó utilizar la experiencia efectuada con el grupo de mujeres trabajadoras domésticas, que había ofrecido muy buenos resultados. La propuesta educativa se caracterizó por ser un proyecto innovador dentro de la modalidad por su carácter semipresencial y modular, utilizar la metodología de educación popular y apoyarse en el uso de materiales no solo impresos sino también audiovisuales, que fueron facilitados tanto a las estudiantes como a las docentes. Así también una novedad fue que el desarrollo de las clases no se dio en un centro educativo de la modalidad, sino que se realizó en el local de una de las asociaciones, a fin de que las participantes se sienta más cómodas, para ello se dotó al lugar del mobiliario adecuado para el abordaje de las clases, se les provechó de útiles escolares, insumos para el desarrollo de la formación profesional inicial en la especialidad de cotillón e incluso una pequeña merienda para las participantes, se trató de prever todos aquellos elementos que desde la perspectiva del que brinda el servicio puede influir para que las participantes pudieran concluir su educación.

Otro aspecto resaltante en el proyecto fue la posibilidad que se les proporcionó a las estudiantes de determinar los días y hora del funcionamiento del curso, así como la especialidad de formación profesional inicial que deseaban realizar, estas facilidades permitieron que las personas beneficiarias puedan retomar su formación académica, ya que para ellas la prioridad estaba dada en las actividades del ámbito laboral, familiar y las propias de la asociación. En lo que

respecta a la evaluación de los aprendizajes se utilizaron varios instrumentos y procedimientos evaluativos, situación que las participantes consideraron positiva, ya que la mayoría se presentaba a la evaluación con miedos e inseguridades a raíz de los años de abandono de sus estudios. Si bien las entrevistadas declararon estar muy motivadas para continuar con sus estudios, también dejaron entrever que al principio les costó volver a retomar las actividades académicas de aprendizaje formal.

Por su parte las docentes al ser consultadas sobre los materiales proveídos por el proyecto señalaron que los mismos eran interesantes, pertinentes y útiles, pero que también ellas complementaban con otros materiales que consideraban oportuno de acuerdo al tema y las necesidades del grupo meta, asimismo manifestaron haber recibido capacitación, no solo para la utilización de los materiales, sino también para entender y comprender a la población con la cual iban a trabajar.

Participante 1: *Yo estuve en el proceso cuando se decidió la organización del curso, la verdad que me gustó como estuvimos trabajando, venir algunos días y llevar tareas... lo que no me llevaba muy bien es con los trans porque ellos no respetaban el horario de estudio, mientras que se nos explicaba algo en la pizarra ellos empezaban a cuchichear, eso me incomodó... pude rendir aunque tuve un poquito de miedo en el examen, pero la profesora me dio la oportunidad de estar tranquila, me dio tiempo bastante.*

Participante 2: *Se decidió que sería por la tarde... me pareció bien que sea en ese turno, fueron dos veces a la semana nomas... Lo que no me gustó fue que las compañeras no eran cumplidas, no venían ellas... la falta de responsabilidad... Con relación a los exámenes me sentía un poco incómoda porque no estaba muy segura de lo que estaba completando...pero también hacíamos trabajos en clase que tenían puntos y cuando hacía los trabajos también me ponía nerviosa.*

Participante 5: *...Porque imagínate que yo agarré otra vez el lápiz después de 30 años, empecé otra vez a escribir en un cuaderno... El libro que nos dieron explicaba muy bien, me gustó los materiales fue muy lindo.*

Docente 2: *Iniciamos con mucha expectativa, con unos materiales muy lindos... A parte de la guía usábamos páginas escolares, bajamos información de internet, usábamos ficha, hice también un trabajo con ellas de trabalenguas, rimas... con guaraní utilicé el audiovisual del material...La metodología de las capacitaciones era muy participativa...no solo para la parte académica sino también tuvimos entrevistas, conocimos a algunas personas líderes de esa población.*

Docente 3: *Se propuso trabajar con los módulos que también se trabajaron en el proyecto trabajadoras domésticas pero, buscando que eso se adecue a la realidad de las trabajadoras sexuales...yo complementé los materiales... En la capacitación estaban incluidas las personas del grupo meta que contaban sus experiencias y sus necesidades...se trabajó como llegar a esta población específica...*

Técnico 2: *El proyecto se inicia con el pedido de una organización para que sus participantes culminen su educación básica...para las mujeres, trans y personas con diversidad sexual...El enfoque metodológico utilizado en la propuesta fue participativo de educación popular...donde el docente fue un facilitador, un par que acompañaba el aprendizaje... se les repartió un equipamiento como pizarras, reproductor de DVD, radio grabadoras, aparte se les dio un Kits escolar a cada participante, y... calculadoras... se les dio también los módulos que utilizan los otros participantes que acuden a los centros de jóvenes y adultos,... desarrollaban un módulo a la vez luego rendían y comenzaba otro módulo a excepción de formación profesional inicial que desarrollaban un día a la semana durante un año...*

Referente 2: *Surgió la propuesta a raíz de la insistencia de las chicas, de la mujeres trabajadoras sexuales y las trans... para poder completar su proyecto académico ya que la mayoría no había terminado su primaria, tenían interés de completar su ciclo académico para tener una trascendencia a nivel de profesión... me sentí gratamente sorprendida por las profesoras ellas venían con una apertura tal que todos los temas aterrizaban con temas trasversales como derechos humanos, la libre expresión; hicieron un gran esfuerzo, tuvieron una mirada antropológica... traían otros materiales, materiales muy oportunos...se implementó en el turno tarde porque las participantes tenían dificultad para asistir en el turno noche y también en el turno mañana... No se dio en un centro educativo común y corriente...*

c) *El desempeño del docente y del equipo técnico del MEC*

Tanto las estudiantes, técnicos y referentes de las organizaciones entrevistados destacaron la calidad humana, el buen trato y la cordial predisposición de las docentes, además de la preparación académica de estas, que se reflejaron en las clases impartidas. Los técnicos del MEC y las referentes de las organizaciones, señalaron que todas las docentes contaban con su planificación de clases, asimismo que las cátedras se caracterizaron por ser participativas, activas y desarrollar estrategias que facilitaron el aprendizaje de las participantes, lo que a criterio de las consultadas, fue la más oportuno atendiendo al tipo de personas que constituía la población, frágiles en el manejo de sus emociones por lo que requirió un doble esfuerzo por parte de las docentes. Lo expresado por las educadoras concordó plenamente con los actores antes citados en lo que respecta a la metodología utilizada.

Al decir del trabajo que realizaron los técnico del Ministerio de Educación las participantes y las docentes aludieron que éstos observaban y evaluaban la implementación del proyecto, además consideraron una tarea muy importante y pertinente para la marcha de la propuesta educativa, la situación no les generaba ningún tipo de incomodidad, al contrario las participantes y las docentes destacaron sentirse conforme con el seguimiento y monitoreo realizado.

Participante 3: *Las profesoras fueron muy buenas y enseñaban muy bien, si no entendíamos le preguntábamos y nos explicaba..., ellas nos tenían paciencia, a todas... No me molestaba que vengan (en relación a los técnicos del MEC) porque era eso su trabajo.*

Participante 4: *La forma como enseñaban era muy buena y también en el trato y a uno le hace sentir bien, por eso uno está tranquilo y a gusto en su clase, porque te llega como persona primero.*

Participante 5: *...cuando llegué y le visto a la profesora Wil de castellano, ella me abrazó, me besó, me recibió, ya me metió ahí me puso un cuaderno, un lápiz... me explicaron en el pizarrón, todos los profesores para mí 10 puntos... Se iban observaban...anotaban las cosas (en relación a los técnicos del MEC)... luego al terminar las clase nos llamaban a solas y...nos preguntaban siempre que hacía falta para ir mejorando, esa palabra me encantaba escuchar.*

Docente 1: *...levanto primero el autoestima...una vez que ellas saben, ya se les levanta el autoestima y ya les es fácil. Las actividades más frecuentes eran el desarrollo de los ejercicios en forma grupal e individual...además de las pruebas tenía puntaje el cuaderno, la asistencia, el ejercitatorio, nunca hago un examen final único...porque a eso ellas le tienen miedo.*

Docente 3: *Con relación al enfoque yo le fui agregando temas que tenían que ver con otras producciones con temas más de orientación, con derechos humanos, género, ciudadanía, básicamente dialógica, la metodología empezar con un caso, hablar de eso...La evaluación fue por trabajos...y eso iban acumulando puntos, luego tome la prueba final básica... Me pareció importante el trabajo del equipo del MEC.*

Técnico 1: *El monitoreo y seguimiento se realizó con dos instrumentos uno de observación y otro meramente administrativo, durante la observación del desarrollo de las clases iba mirando, chequeando, apuntando y luego pasaba a la parte administrativa...se realizaba cada 8 o 15 días.*

Referente 2: *...todas las docentes planificaban sus clases... La metodología en general fue súper participativa, las chicas tenían su libros, leían, las profes les aclaraban, ellas preguntaban, había muchísimo diálogo... me pareció muy útil el monitoreo (en relación al trabajo de los técnicos del MEC)... para el trabajo con los docentes porque se organizaba más y el trabajo se hacía más eficiente*

Las docentes relevaron la buena relación que se estableció con las participantes, incluso después de finalizar el curso siguieron manteniendo contacto con las estudiantes no obstante, señalaron que al principio el relacionamiento fue difícil, esto lo atribuyeron a aspectos relacionados con las condiciones de vida y las experiencias vividas por las beneficiarias del proyecto. Igualmente las maestras dieron a conocer algunas estrategias de retención que utilizaron con las que se ausentaban, para poder recuperar las clases, lo que demostró el compromiso que tenían con el grupo.

Docente 1: *Mi relación con las participantes era buena, en especial con las trans que eran más abiertas, las mujeres no eran tan abiertas eran más cerradas... eran muy recelosas, yo me sentía bien igual... Cuando ellas no venían yo le*

comunicaba a la coordinadora y ella les llamaba, habíamos quedado que eran dos clases obligatorias y la tercera era especial para las chicas que faltaban.

Docente 2: *Al comienzo la relación con el grupo fue un poco difícil porque yo siempre las veía a ellas a la defensiva, ellas estaban siempre tan heridas que en todo momento estaban a la defensiva, pero después tuvimos una buena relación hasta ahora estamos en contacto, siempre me llaman y nos quedamos con una amistad muy grande... Cuando yo estuve dos chicas dejaron de venir y yo les llamé por teléfono para que vuelvan.*

Docente 3: *...hubo una chica que faltó mucho porque tuvo un problema de salud, y una compañera le llevaba los trabajos de proceso para que ella me pueda entregar... yo le hice los escritos de las preguntas generadoras, le envié las fotocopias que tenía que leer.*

d) Motivos del abandono

En las entrevistas que se hicieron a las participantes que no pudieron concluir la propuesta educativa, estas señalaron que no fue por falta de interés, ni porque las clases no les resultasen interesantes, sino más bien atribuyeron el abandono escolar a factores externos al curso, especialmente aquellos relacionados a las características de sus familias (madres jefas de hogar, familias disgregadas), también se mencionaron aspectos relacionados al ámbito de la salud (cirugías, accidentes, embarazos de alto riesgo), no obstante expresaron su deseo de poder continuar con sus estudios y concluirlos. Asimismo las docentes como los técnicos y los referentes consultados manifestaron que el abandono del curso se dio por las mismas situaciones señaladas por las estudiantes, concordaron en señalar que fueron factores relacionados a las condiciones de vida de las participantes (pobreza, necesidad de trabajar), así como a situaciones familiares, expectativas personales y una falta real de acompañamiento de la asociación de las trabajadoras del sexo.

Participante 1: *...lo que yo no pude cursar es el módulo de matemáticas los otros pude terminar, en ese tiempo perdí mi bebé y estuve de reposo por eso no pude venir más pero, quiero terminar mis estudios.*

Participante 2: *Dejé el curso por mi cirugía, no porque no quise continuar, ni porque el curso era malo, fue solo por la cirugía y cuando comenzó el módulo de matemática yo ya tenía un reposo y no podía sentarme mucho tiempo.*

Participante 3: *En ese momento también mi hijo, el más chico, vino a rendir y yo estaba sola, su papá no estaba en ese momento y era el examen final y tenía que llevarle a la escuela y esperarle, porque hacía todo su examen y tenía que traerle otras vez, por eso, solo por eso no pude concluir el curso.*

Docente 1: *Las que faltaban a las clase al volver decían que no pudieron asistir por problemas en sus casas, con sus parejas o porque no tenía para su pasaje.*

Docente 2: *Creo que hay varios factores dentro del grupo que les motivó a abandonar, había conflictos grupales entre*

ellas, por un roce que tenían tanto entre una mujer trabajadora sexual con un trans ya no venían...la chica que abandonó mi grupo salió por un problema que tuvo con una de las compañeras.

Referente 1: *Son varias cosas, por un lado estas chicas tenían otros trabajos además de ser trabajadoras del sexo, tenían otras responsabilidades como monitoras como facilitadoras... porque las chicas entre irse al curso de culminación de la básica e irse a hacer la sensibilización sobre el tema Sida que le pagaban... se iban a donde le pagaban.*

Referente 2: *Categorico fue el tema económico y la percepción que ellas tiene de la vida y del trabajo porque las que dejaron de venir no tenían la perspectiva de cambiar de vida y del trabajo sexual...*

Se puede señalar que las participantes, tanto las que concluyeron como las que abandonaron el curso, son personas que han vivido proceso de exclusión social, no se puede ignorar en este análisis las grandes desigualdades al interior del país, el desarraigo producido por las migraciones o el éxodo rural, la dispersión de las familias, la urbanización desordenada o la ruptura de las solidaridades tradicionales que forman parte de la serie de fenómenos que denotan una crisis aguda del vínculo social (Blanco, 2008, p. 5-14), este grupo de participantes es un claro ejemplo de esta situación, atendiendo que la gran mayoría de ellas son provenientes del interior de país que han emigrado en busca de mejores oportunidades. A esto se suma la violencia de género que ha llevado a estas mujeres y a las personas con diversidad sexual a ingresar al trabajo sexual desde muy temprana edad, ofrecimiento sus servicios sexuales en la calle, manteniendo en muchos casos oculta su actividad laboral, constituyéndose así en un factor de vulnerabilidad que además perpetua la impunidad de los hechos punibles cometidos en contra de ellas (Unidas por la Esperanza, 2013).

Con relación a la propuesta educativa queda claro que esta surge de las propias organizaciones de mujeres y personas con diversidad sexual, trabajadoras del sexo ante la necesidad de que sus asociadas puedan concluir sus estudios, para ello se recurrió a la propuesta utilizada con otra población de mujeres vulnerables, que constituyó una innovación para el Ministerio de Educación por la metodología planteada y el grupo meta a la cual iba dirigida, por lo que se consideró una opción válida también para esta población, debido a sus características particulares. Igualmente se dispuso de la provisión de materiales didácticos, útiles escolares e insumos para la formación profesional, así como se contó con el seguimiento y monitoreo cercano por parte del equipo técnico del MEC, como un factor crucial en el desarrollo de la experiencia.

IV. REFLEXIONES FINALES

El propósito del estudio fue determinar los factores que incidieron en el abandono del programa educativo "Culminación de la educación básica" para personas jóvenes y adultas, dirigido a las mujeres y personas con diversidad sexual, trabajadoras del sexo; la comparación y contrastación de las percepciones de los sujetos consultados arrojaron como un factor determinante del abandono escolar, la situación de exclusión social que han vivido, y que actualmente continúan viviendo las participantes, ya sea por su condición de migrantes del área rural, su procedencia social, su lengua materna, su género y hasta por no haber alcanzado una mínima formación académica, situaciones que se hallan relacionadas directamente a las condiciones de vida de las mismas, caracterizadas por la inestabilidad, la pobreza, la precariedad, la necesidad, la falta de viviendas dignas y otras circunstancias plagadas de problemas complejos que configuran desigualdades y diversidades en un escenario sumamente complicado. Lo que hace que estas personas no logren romper el círculo de pobreza y exclusión social, a lo que se suma la actividad laboral que desarrollan, y en el caso de las personas trans por su orientación sexual, esto les impide sistemáticamente el acceso a la participación en la sociedad, a bienes básicos y redes de bienestar social, lo que conduce, como bien lo señala Blanco (2008, p. 5-14), a quedar fuera de la sociedad y a vivir por debajo de los niveles de dignidad e igualdad.

Un segundo factor, que se halla muy relacionado al anterior, es la heterogeneidad del campo de acción de la educación de jóvenes y adultos que se encuentra constituido por contextos muy complejos y diversos, lo que requiere a su vez, que las propuestas educativas para personas jóvenes y adultas, sean proyectos flexibles en cuanto a sus horarios, modalidades, contenidos, etc., que se adecuen a las necesidades y posibilidades de sus beneficiarios, teniendo en cuenta la vida real y las dificultades (económicas, sociales, familiares, laborales, etc.) que enfrentan estas personas que desean continuar sus estudios. Esto implica propuestas educativas respetuosas y pluralistas, que tenga una mirada autocrítica que permita reconocer y confrontar pautas y prácticas arraigadas en los actores educativos. Si bien hay que reconocer que se han hecho esfuerzos por plantear ofertas que puedan responder a las necesidades de la población demandante, estos aún no son suficientes. Esa realidad queda de manifiesto con esta experiencia que si bien constituía una innovación dentro del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias por su carácter semipresencial, modular, la metodología diferencial utilizada y por el grupo meta para el cual fue inicialmente pensada (mujeres trabajadoras domésticas), no dio los mismos resultados al extrapolar

la experiencia a la población de mujeres y personas con diversidad sexual, trabajadoras del sexo.

Si bien las condiciones de vida de las participantes pudieran constituirse en factores determinantes del abandono de la propuesta educativa, esta debe ser lo suficientemente flexible, abierta y tener la capacidad de contextualizar el proceso de formación a las particularidades de la población. Lo que pone de relieve que no siempre las mismas estrategias, contenidos o abordajes pueden ser utilizados con dos grupos vulnerables, lo que implica que el sistema educativo debe ser lo bastante crítico, reflexivo y amplio para dar cabida a los distintos tipos de población. De ahí que se debe plantear la construcción de ofertas educativas con la participación y validación con las diversas poblaciones a las cuales va dirigida la propuesta, de manera, a ir incorporando la mirada del otro desde el interior del proyecto, a fin de contar con la decisión directa y participativa de los beneficiarios. Sin este cambio de lógica se caería nuevamente en conceptos y prácticas educativas tradicionales y finalmente se terminaría responsabilizando al estudiante del abandono o fracaso escolar, en tanto que el sistema educativo continuaría siendo una instancia que legitima la desigualdad y la exclusión social.

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Lista de abreviaturas utilizadas

DVD	Disco Versátil Digital
EPJA	Educación para Personas Jóvenes y Adultas
INADI	Instituto Nacional contra la Discriminación, la Xenofobia y el Racismo
JUNAEB	Junta Nacional de Auxilio Escolar y Becas
MEC	Ministerio de Educación y Cultura
UNES	Unidas por la Esperanza
UNESCO	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura

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Acknowledgments

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Manuscript Style Instruction (Optional)

- Microsoft Word Document Setting Instructions.
- Font type of all text should be Swis721 Lt BT.
- Page size: 8.27" x 11", left margin: 0.65, right margin: 0.65, bottom margin: 0.75.
- Paper title should be in one column of font size 24.
- Author name in font size of 11 in one column.
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Structure and Format of Manuscript

The recommended size of an original research paper is under 15,000 words and review papers under 7,000 words. Research articles should be less than 10,000 words. Research papers are usually longer than review papers. Review papers are reports of significant research (typically less than 7,000 words, including tables, figures, and references)

A research paper must include:

- a) A title which should be relevant to the theme of the paper.
- b) A summary, known as an abstract (less than 150 words), containing the major results and conclusions.
- c) Up to 10 keywords that precisely identify the paper's subject, purpose, and focus.
- d) An introduction, giving fundamental background objectives.
- e) Resources and techniques with sufficient complete experimental details (wherever possible by reference) to permit repetition, sources of information must be given, and numerical methods must be specified by reference.
- f) Results which should be presented concisely by well-designed tables and figures.
- g) Suitable statistical data should also be given.
- h) All data must have been gathered with attention to numerical detail in the planning stage.

Design has been recognized to be essential to experiments for a considerable time, and the editor has decided that any paper that appears not to have adequate numerical treatments of the data will be returned unrefereed.

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The full postal address of any related author(s) must be specified.

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The abstract is the foundation of the research paper. It should be clear and concise and must contain the objective of the paper and inferences drawn. It is advised to not include big mathematical equations or complicated jargon.

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One must be persistent and creative in using keywords. An effective keyword search requires a strategy: planning of a list of possible keywords and phrases to try.

Choice of the main keywords is the first tool of writing a research paper. Research paper writing is an art. Keyword search should be as strategic as possible.

One should start brainstorming lists of potential keywords before even beginning searching. Think about the most important concepts related to research work. Ask, "What words would a source have to include to be truly valuable in a research paper?" Then consider synonyms for the important words.

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Numerical methods used should be transparent and, where appropriate, supported by references.

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Authors must list all the abbreviations used in the paper at the end of the paper or in a separate table before using them.

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Authors are advised to submit any mathematical equation using either MathJax, KaTeX, or LaTeX, or in a very high-quality image.

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TIPS FOR WRITING A GOOD QUALITY SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH PAPER

Techniques for writing a good quality human social science research paper:

1. Choosing the topic: In most cases, the topic is selected by the interests of the author, but it can also be suggested by the guides. You can have several topics, and then judge which you are most comfortable with. This may be done by asking several questions of yourself, like "Will I be able to carry out a search in this area? Will I find all necessary resources to accomplish the search? Will I be able to find all information in this field area?" If the answer to this type of question is "yes," then you ought to choose that topic. In most cases, you may have to conduct surveys and visit several places. Also, you might have to do a lot of work to find all the rises and falls of the various data on that subject. Sometimes, detailed information plays a vital role, instead of short information. Evaluators are human: The first thing to remember is that evaluators are also human beings. They are not only meant for rejecting a paper. They are here to evaluate your paper. So present your best aspect.

2. Think like evaluators: If you are in confusion or getting demotivated because your paper may not be accepted by the evaluators, then think, and try to evaluate your paper like an evaluator. Try to understand what an evaluator wants in your research paper, and you will automatically have your answer. Make blueprints of paper: The outline is the plan or framework that will help you to arrange your thoughts. It will make your paper logical. But remember that all points of your outline must be related to the topic you have chosen.

3. Ask your guides: If you are having any difficulty with your research, then do not hesitate to share your difficulty with your guide (if you have one). They will surely help you out and resolve your doubts. If you can't clarify what exactly you require for your work, then ask your supervisor to help you with an alternative. He or she might also provide you with a list of essential readings.

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7. Revise what you wrote: When you write anything, always read it, summarize it, and then finalize it.

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10. Use proper verb tense: Use proper verb tenses in your paper. Use past tense to present those events that have happened. Use present tense to indicate events that are going on. Use future tense to indicate events that will happen in the future. Use of wrong tenses will confuse the evaluator. Avoid sentences that are incomplete.

11. Pick a good study spot: Always try to pick a spot for your research which is quiet. Not every spot is good for studying.

12. Know what you know: Always try to know what you know by making objectives, otherwise you will be confused and unable to achieve your target.

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Verbs have to be in agreement with their subjects. In a research paper, do not start sentences with conjunctions or finish them with prepositions. When writing formally, it is advisable to never split an infinitive because someone will (wrongly) complain. Avoid clichés like a disease. Always shun irritating alliteration. Use language which is simple and straightforward. Put together a neat summary.

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15. Never start at the last minute: Always allow enough time for research work. Leaving everything to the last minute will degrade your paper and spoil your work.

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17. Never copy others' work: Never copy others' work and give it your name because if the evaluator has seen it anywhere, you will be in trouble. Take proper rest and food: No matter how many hours you spend on your research activity, if you are not taking care of your health, then all your efforts will have been in vain. For quality research, take proper rest and food.

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Refresh your mind after intervals: Try to give your mind a rest by listening to soft music or sleeping in intervals. This will also improve your memory. Acquire colleagues: Always try to acquire colleagues. No matter how sharp you are, if you acquire colleagues, they can give you ideas which will be helpful to your research.

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22. Upon conclusion: Once you have concluded your research, the next most important step is to present your findings. Presentation is extremely important as it is the definite medium through which your research is going to be in print for the rest of the crowd. Care should be taken to categorize your thoughts well and present them in a logical and neat manner. A good quality research paper format is essential because it serves to highlight your research paper and bring to light all necessary aspects of your research.

INFORMAL GUIDELINES OF RESEARCH PAPER WRITING

Key points to remember:

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- Write your paper in the form which is presented in the guidelines using the template.
- Please note the criteria peer reviewers will use for grading the final paper.

Final points:

One purpose of organizing a research paper is to let people interpret your efforts selectively. The journal requires the following sections, submitted in the order listed, with each section starting on a new page:

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- Submitting a manuscript with pages out of sequence.
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- Align the primary line of each section.
- Present your points in sound order.
- Use present tense to report well-accepted matters.
- Use past tense to describe specific results.
- Do not use familiar wording; don't address the reviewer directly. Don't use slang or superlatives.
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Reason for writing the article—theory, overall issue, purpose.

- Fundamental goal.
- To-the-point depiction of the research.
- Consequences, including definite statistics—if the consequences are quantitative in nature, account for this; results of any numerical analysis should be reported. Significant conclusions or questions that emerge from the research.

Approach:

- Single section and succinct.
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The introduction should "introduce" the manuscript. The reviewer should be presented with sufficient background information to be capable of comprehending and calculating the purpose of your study without having to refer to other works. The basis for the study should be offered. Give the most important references, but avoid making a comprehensive appraisal of the topic. Describe the problem visibly. If the problem is not acknowledged in a logical, reasonable way, the reviewer will give no attention to your results. Speak in common terms about techniques used to explain the problem, if needed, but do not present any particulars about the protocols here.



The following approach can create a valuable beginning:

- Explain the value (significance) of the study.
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- Present a justification. State your particular theory(-ies) or aim(s), and describe the logic that led you to choose them.
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Use past tense except for when referring to recognized facts. After all, the manuscript will be submitted after the entire job is done. Sort out your thoughts; manufacture one key point for every section. If you make the four points listed above, you will need at least four paragraphs. Present surrounding information only when it is necessary to support a situation. The reviewer does not desire to read everything you know about a topic. Shape the theory specifically—do not take a broad view.

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Materials may be reported in part of a section or else they may be recognized along with your measures.

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- Report the method and not the particulars of each process that engaged the same methodology.
- Describe the method entirely.
- To be succinct, present methods under headings dedicated to specific dealings or groups of measures.
- Simplify—detail how procedures were completed, not how they were performed on a particular day.
- If well-known procedures were used, account for the procedure by name, possibly with a reference, and that's all.

Approach:

It is embarrassing to use vigorous voice when documenting methods without using first person, which would focus the reviewer's interest on the researcher rather than the job. As a result, when writing up the methods, most authors use third person passive voice.

Use standard style in this and every other part of the paper—avoid familiar lists, and use full sentences.

What to keep away from:

- Resources and methods are not a set of information.
- Skip all descriptive information and surroundings—save it for the argument.
- Leave out information that is immaterial to a third party.



Results:

The principle of a results segment is to present and demonstrate your conclusion. Create this part as entirely objective details of the outcome, and save all understanding for the discussion.

The page length of this segment is set by the sum and types of data to be reported. Use statistics and tables, if suitable, to present consequences most efficiently.

You must clearly differentiate material which would usually be incorporated in a study editorial from any unprocessed data or additional appendix matter that would not be available. In fact, such matters should not be submitted at all except if requested by the instructor.

Content:

- Sum up your conclusions in text and demonstrate them, if suitable, with figures and tables.
- In the manuscript, explain each of your consequences, and point the reader to remarks that are most appropriate.
- Present a background, such as by describing the question that was addressed by creation of an exacting study.
- Explain results of control experiments and give remarks that are not accessible in a prescribed figure or table, if appropriate.
- Examine your data, then prepare the analyzed (transformed) data in the form of a figure (graph), table, or manuscript.

What to stay away from:

- Do not discuss or infer your outcome, report surrounding information, or try to explain anything.
- Do not include raw data or intermediate calculations in a research manuscript.
- Do not present similar data more than once.
- A manuscript should complement any figures or tables, not duplicate information.
- Never confuse figures with tables—there is a difference.

Approach:

As always, use past tense when you submit your results, and put the whole thing in a reasonable order.

Put figures and tables, appropriately numbered, in order at the end of the report.

If you desire, you may place your figures and tables properly within the text of your results section.

Figures and tables:

If you put figures and tables at the end of some details, make certain that they are visibly distinguished from any attached appendix materials, such as raw facts. Whatever the position, each table must be titled, numbered one after the other, and include a heading. All figures and tables must be divided from the text.

Discussion:

The discussion is expected to be the trickiest segment to write. A lot of papers submitted to the journal are discarded based on problems with the discussion. There is no rule for how long an argument should be.

Position your understanding of the outcome visibly to lead the reviewer through your conclusions, and then finish the paper with a summing up of the implications of the study. The purpose here is to offer an understanding of your results and support all of your conclusions, using facts from your research and generally accepted information, if suitable. The implication of results should be fully described.

Infer your data in the conversation in suitable depth. This means that when you clarify an observable fact, you must explain mechanisms that may account for the observation. If your results vary from your prospect, make clear why that may have happened. If your results agree, then explain the theory that the proof supported. It is never suitable to just state that the data approved the prospect, and let it drop at that. Make a decision as to whether each premise is supported or discarded or if you cannot make a conclusion with assurance. Do not just dismiss a study or part of a study as "uncertain."



Research papers are not acknowledged if the work is imperfect. Draw what conclusions you can based upon the results that you have, and take care of the study as a finished work.

- You may propose future guidelines, such as how an experiment might be personalized to accomplish a new idea.
- Give details of all of your remarks as much as possible, focusing on mechanisms.
- Make a decision as to whether the tentative design sufficiently addressed the theory and whether or not it was correctly restricted. Try to present substitute explanations if they are sensible alternatives.
- One piece of research will not counter an overall question, so maintain the large picture in mind. Where do you go next? The best studies unlock new avenues of study. What questions remain?
- Recommendations for detailed papers will offer supplementary suggestions.

Approach:

When you refer to information, differentiate data generated by your own studies from other available information. Present work done by specific persons (including you) in past tense.

Describe generally acknowledged facts and main beliefs in present tense.

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References	Complete and correct format, well organized	Beside the point, Incomplete	Wrong format and structuring



INDEX

A

Alleviated · 21
Ambiguity · 8
Artifacts · 5, 6

C

Coherence · 9, 29, 63,
Conducive · 46, 60
Congruent · 29, 30
Consolidated · 9
Constitutive · 65

D

Discursive · 1
Dissemination · 5

E

Efficacious · 48
Emancipation · 63, 64
Ethnoeducation · 63

H

Heuristic · 42

I

Illocutionary · 67, 68, 69,
Impregnable · 64
Imprisonment · 68
Impulsivity · 40
Intrinsically · 6, 29

P

Persistent · 46
Premises · 63, 65
Probation · 45
Prolonged · 39

R

Recursive, · 4, 30
Relevance · 64, 65, 69
Replicated · 30, 48
Rigorous · 65

S

Scaffolded · 10, 20, 29
Slamming · 44, 45
Starkly · 20



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