Reading and writing accompaniment for future preschool teachers

Allan Amador Díaz Rueda
Magíster en Didáctica de la Lengua UIS
Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga
Bucaramanga, Santander, Colombia
Correo electrónico del autor: adiaz95@unab.edu.co

Abstract

This document presents the systematization results of the accompaniment to the reading and writing processes of 21 undergraduate students of the Early Childhood Education program at UNAB University. The work consisted in the implementation of didactic sequences to elaborate reading cards, infographics, summaries and reviews. The pedagogical actions were evaluated based on the analysis of the teacher's field diary records, the products elaborated by the undergraduate students and the results of a survey on their learning. It was concluded that the participants showed signs of reading and writing as epistemic processes.

Keywords: Mother tongue teaching, reading, writing, pre-school teacher training.

Introduction

The "Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga" (UNAB University) stipulates in its Development Plan 2019 - 2024 that its central purpose is to integrally train autonomous, ethical and creative people who will contribute to transforming their environment to build a more prosperous society (UNAB, 2019). In this scenario, reading and writing are fundamental, since they combine key elements for learning, such as the relationship between thought, languages, emotions, interactions and the scientific development of communities. Hence the need to bet on the improvement of students' communicative processes through the articulated development of humanistic, academic and professional training.

To fulfill this purpose, the institution has, among other strategies, the "*Expression*" course in the first semester of undergraduate programs. The class is expected to train new students to strengthen their understanding and textual production in an autonomous way, through learning experiences that meet their communication needs and expectations. At the same time, through the diploma course in "*Rethinking Pedagogical Practice*", UNAB is working on the systematization of educational experiences to preserve good teaching practices and improve those that are not very effective.

With the intention of combining both efforts, there was an idea of systematizing the pedagogical actions implemented in an "Expression" course made up with undergraduate students of the Early Childhood Education program, since this program obtained the lowest results of the institution in the Critical Reading and Written Communication competences of the 2018 Saber-Pro tests.

This document reports the experience in the second semester of 2019 with 21 first-year students of the academic program in question. The questions that guided the teacher's actions were: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the students' reading and writing processes? How can the students' academic reading and writing skills be improved? What discursive genres should be worked on in the "Expression" class to optimize their skills as readers and writers? And how should the teacher accompany the development of such processes?

In order to respond to the first question, the freshmen carried out an initial exploration exercise that was designed with the objective of knowing their tastes, reading habits, ways of learning to read and write, self-perceptions as readers and writers, as well as their expectations regarding the subject. Subsequently, a written test was applied to evaluate their ability to identify discursive genres, to understand the communicative purposes of the texts, to write with cohesion and coherence, and to respect authors' rights to their production.

Based on the data obtained, we proceeded to review the bibliography that help overcome

the difficulties encountered, having as input their interests and expectations regarding the subject. As a result of this research, it was determined that the four most pertinent discursive genres for the didactic intervention were: the reading card, the infographic, the summary and the review. Likewise, the referential exploration provided theoretical guidelines for the design of an accompaniment protocol for understanding and textual production and the use of a field diary and the analysis of the apprentices' work were stipulated to document the experience.

Once the course was finished, the future teachers were asked to fill out a Google form in which they expressed their perceptions about the course. With all of the above as input, we proceeded to evaluate the intervention carried out in order to draw conclusions and make recommendations that would contribute both to the improvement of the students' learning, and to the intention of systematizing the actions of reading, writing, and speaking at UNAB. The following sections contain the theoretical exploration performed, the analytical description of the activities developed, the conclusions reached, and the recommendations made.

Problem

According to UNAB University official website, the Early Childhood Education program aims at training excellent teachers who stand out for having all the tools to become "managers of new and better educational proposals mediated by pedagogy, supported by information and communication technologies (ICT), art, creativity, play and innovation (UNAB, 2019).

However, the most recent Saber Pro test results show that future graduates have reading and writing difficulties that can cause serious setbacks in achieving the program's goals. These failures are presented in more detail in the Report of Results on the Application of Saber Pro UNAB (ICFES, 2018).

As far as written communication is concerned, the document states that 18% of the students who took the test were classified at the lowest level (1); 40% at 2; 29% at 3 and 13% at 4. This establishes that 58% of the examinees have problems making statements (thesis) or expressing their personal position, fulfilling a communicative intention, and organizing the ideas that make up their texts. Likewise, their writings show some contradictions or flaws that affect the coherence of the text. On the other hand, only 13% of the future teachers show in their productions different perspectives on a subject, make the central approach of their writings (thesis) complex, satisfactorily comply with the communicative purpose proposed in the test's guiding question and make adequate use of punctuation marks, grammatical references, connectors, among other cohesive mechanisms, which guarantee the coherence and fluidity of the text (ICFES, 2018).

With regard to Critical Reading, student performances were classified as follows: level 1: 35%, level 2: 35%, level 3: 22%, level 4: 8% (ICFES, 2018). This means that 70% of these future educators have difficulties in identifying the subject matter and structure of the texts they read, recognizing the communicative intent of the author, responding to specific questions that inquire about data provided in the writing, understanding the overall meaning from the cohesive elements that allow coherence, and identifying the textual typology, discursive strategies and functions of language to understand the meaning of the works. In fact, only 8% of the students evaluate the global content of the text from the local elements, the relationships between them, and their position in a given context from a hypothetical perspective.

In the above scenario, the university should pay greater attention to the reading and writing performance of the Early Childhood Education

undergraduate students. To that end, it is non-negotiable to know the status of these skills in first semester learners. In response to this need, the first sessions of the "Expression" course implemented the initial exploration exercise on subject expectations, tastes, reading habits, ways of learning to read and write, and self-perceptions as readers and writers. Afterwards, a written test was applied, which consisted in the writing of a summary and a review of the column *Education,* elaborated by William Ospina. The analysis of these productions made it possible to evaluate the students' ability to identify discursive genres, understand the communicative purposes of the texts, identify key ideas, synthesize relevant information, analyze the content of the readings, make an argumentative judgment about the works, write with cohesion and coherence, and respect copyright in their productions.

Thanks to the first activity it was possible to identify that the students expect to learn in "Expression" aspects related to reading and writing better, mainly regarding the correct use of grammar (85%). They prefer to read texts related to literature and showed interest in knowing documents concerning topics, such as psychology and educational issues (81%). They expressed that they almost always read works imposed by their teachers and did not have the possibility to choose a topic or author (78%); they come from educational practices where reading, writing and speaking are related to the presentation of academic works that represent a passing or failing grade (93%); it was common for their schools to have to submit written texts "in one sitting" (88%); they learn best with the use of diagrams, images and audiovisual material (92%) and consider reading and writing to be individual and private acts (94%); they like to read, but that they do not have the constancy to do so permanently (77%) and they believe that they are not good readers or writers (79%).

On the other hand, in the development of the reading and writing exercise based on prior

knowledge, it could be determined that few students understand the differences between summary and review (10%). In the case of the summary, only 32% of those examined could identify Ospina's thesis; however, 68% recognized the author's purpose. In other results, 55% of them altered the information of the base text and 77% took exact fragments of it. This indicates that the new university students have not yet developed their ability to paraphrase. Furthermore, none of them included in their writing the bibliographic reference of the document read.

The analysis of the reviews brought the following conclusions: only 13% of the students are aware of the importance of assigning a title to their writings; 5% thought about potential readers by including a paragraph that contextualizes them to the work and only 3% proposed a brief analysis of the base text. In contrast, 60% of the writers tried to include a fragment that sought to synthesize important information; however, in 33% of those cases there was no paraphrase, but they took literal ideas from the opinion column. It is interesting to note that, although 87% of the evidence shows the students' point of view, 65% of these perspectives do not have enough argumentation to help support them in an optimal way. Regarding the formal aspects of the productions, it was determined that the students tend to lean towards the limits, that is, 72% write paragraphs that are too long and 28% are incomplete. Problems of cohesion and coherence (85%), word repetition, lack of gender and number agreement (87%), among other writing flaws, were also a constant.

This gave rise to the following questions: How to improve the students' academic reading and writing skills? Which discursive genres should be worked on in the "Expression" class in order to optimize the reading and writing skills of the first semester students of the Early Childhood Education program? And how should the teacher accompany the development of such processes? The following section gives an

account of the theoretical exploration carried out to provide solutions to these questions:

Theoretical framework

The starting point of the process of theoretical inquiry was the demand to highlight reading and writing as actions strongly linked to thinking. In this sense, Lev Vygotsky (1964) points out that thought is not simply expressed in words, but exists through them. In other words, without the existence of language, it would be impossible to consider the development of thought; therefore, regardless of the different disciplines of study that converge in universities, scientific development in each of these fields has only been able to be predicted, experienced, evidenced and disseminated thanks to language; hence the importance of insisting on involving the reflexive element in reading and writing acts.

In this regard, the theoretical considerations of Donald Schön (1992) on how to train reflective professionals were adopted. According to this American researcher, higher education should be concerned with: a) elaborating a set of concepts with which professional knowledge can be rethought and debated (an approach from which various terms have emerged such as: reflective practice, reflection in action and knowledge about action); b) studying how it is produced, that is, how we learn through the reflection that the professionals themselves make in and from their activities; and, c) offering training models that students, teachers, and future professionals can follow and emulate without difficulty.

The transcendence of this reflexive component could be reinforced by Henry Giroux's (1997) ideas on the language of critical pedagogy. The American invites academics to make their professional knowledge and reflections available to society with the joint objective of contributing to a better human experience; therefore, he proposes that educational centers be constituted in democratic public spaces where teachers can (re)become transformative intellectuals who teach and practice the knowledge, habits and skills of critical citizenship, so that they stand out as workers dedicated to the interpretation and generation of social ideologies and practices.

Consequently, the teaching of reading and writing at university should be based on permanent reflections on the professions and their social, ecological, artistic and ethical implications. The results of such reflections would result in a rich, relevant and constant intellectual production that would provide society not only with a better understanding of its dynamics, but also with some alternatives to avoid and solve specific problems.

In order to achieve the above, it is pertinent to consider López and Arciniegas' (2004) proposal on how to strengthen the epistemic function of reading and writing in higher education. In this initiative, the authors emphasize the need to promote the learning processes in reading and writing from the study of a specific discipline, which should be accompanied by the preparation of students in the acquisition of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies. Thanks to this, the learners will be more aware of how they achieve their cognitive achievements and will be able to propose ways to make progress in the evaluation and regulation of these processes.

This position is consistent with the functionality of reading and writing as expressed by Rosalind Ivanic (2009). According to the former professor of Princeton University, the purpose of reading and writing in the university is to evidence and enhance students' knowledge, understanding of phenomena typical of the disciplines and skills related to them. Likewise, it is expected that both reading and writing will help learners meet their social, administrative, personal and, eventually, work needs.

With regard to action planning, the contributions provided by Project Zero of Harvard University were taken as a reference. Thus, Teaching for Understanding offers teachers the possibility of reflecting on educational practices and their re-significance, while for the apprentices it becomes the opportunity to awaken a real interest in reflecting on what they learn, in addition to helping them connect what they study in each subject with their life outside the classroom; which also allows them to establish meaningful relationships between theory and practice and between past, present and future experiences. This results in the capacity that students develop to execute a wide and varied range of mental processes (exemplify, generalize, make analogies, explain, demonstrate, among others) with what they have learned (Stone, 2005).

It is precisely these mental processes that are the key to helping students enhance their reading and writing skills. Under this premise, we proceeded to select the discursive genres that would facilitate fundamental elements of learning. The chosen ones were, in order of complexity, the reading card, the didactic infographic, the summary and the review.

According to Gallegos (2019), reading cards are a tool to manage the information read in the light of any academic activity, since they allow to organize in a methodical way the data extracted from the texts in order to effectively recover the essential ideas, to understand them better, to analyze them and even to debate with them and use them in subsequent writing exercises.

On the other hand, Nancy Reinhardt (2010) proposes a definition of didactic computer graphics, understood as a set of enunciative structures (words, icons, graphics, among others) that express a particular content, almost always specialized, with the purpose of transforming it into a knowledge

understandable by any public. This perspective involves the understanding of phenomena explained from the scientific disciplines to illustrate their implications in everyday life. Therefore, this type of infographic is the result of a thinking process, or of the design of a space of sense and not the product or result of the application of certain tools and techniques.

The summary is an academic text that logically and synthetically reproduces the most important ideas that come from a base document, whether it is written, verbal or iconic. Its preparation involves reading, selecting and prioritizing the relevant information from the original text and then writing an independent paper that gives an account of the essentials (Arenas et al, 2014). This is not an easy task since, according to Eco (1984), synthesizing is an art that requires a high capacity to abstract ideas and express them in a precise way.

Finally, in academia, a review is a writing that contextualizes, synthesizes and analyzes a work or event and then argues a judgment about it. Thanks to it, readers will be able to form a general idea about the content and quality of the object of study reviewed (CREA, 2012). As it can be seen, the process of making the review requires: the strategies for understanding the texts that facilitate the use of the reading cards; the requirement to select and organize the relevant ideas that the infographic demands; and the capacity to express the ideas in a clear, precise and well-structured way in the summary.

After determining the pedagogical basis of the experience and choosing the relevant genres for the objectives of the educational intervention, it was time to answer the question: How should the teacher accompany the development of the reading and writing processes? In short, we decided to implement didactic sequences, given that, according to Coll (1992), a didactic sequence is a teaching-learning process that pursues specific objectives

through careful planning of: a) the materials involved and the possibilities of adjusting them to achieve the objectives and contents of the teacher; b) the use of the students' expectations and actions so that, as a result of reflection, they can improve their learning; and c) the evaluation of all the elements of the educational experience in terms of the fulfillment of teaching and learning goals.

Such a decision forced the determination of two ways to analyze the experience. First, it was established that the students' learning in reading and writing would be evaluated from a formative and authentic perspective. Anijovich and González (2011) define formative assessment as the process that collects useful information to review and modify teaching and learning to meet students' educational needs. Furthermore, they point out that authentic assessment is considered a means of regulating and improving learning in different areas of life, since it transcends academics to allow subjects to use their prior knowledge and demonstrate understanding of new one. That is why it was important to pay attention to the forms of evaluation according to those who participate in the educational process, that is, self-evaluation, co-evaluation, and hetero-evaluation.

Secondly, it was necessary to define a way to evaluate the experience. Therefore, some of the recommendations of *The Five Times for the systematization of experiences,* proposed by Jara (2018), were accepted:

1. Having participated in the experience.

2. Formulating a systematization plan.

3. Reconstructing the lived process.

4. Analyzing, interrelating, and interpreting findings to identify learning

5. Formulating conclusions, recommendations and proposals.

With the previous theoretical contributions, we proceeded to plan four didactic sequences that had as a central objective to accompany 21 freshmen of the Early Childhood Education program in the elaboration of a reading card, infographic, a summary and a critical review of oral and written texts in the area of education. It is worth mentioning that the preliminary proposal lasted ten weeks, distributed in 20 sessions of 120 minutes each, and we decided to follow up the experience through two data collection techniques: notes in a field journal and analysis of the learners' productions.

It is necessary to mention that the development of the proposal required several modifications to the original design. The following section reports the complete implementation of the experience with the analysis made to the notes of the field journal and the assignements submitted by the students.

Didactic process

The following is a report of the actions developed during the thirteen weeks of the experience:

Class: Expression

General topics: reading card, didactic infographic, summary and review.

General objective: to strengthen the reading and writing skills of a group of freshmen of the Early Childhood Education program, through the production of reading cards, didactic infographics, summaries and reviews on topics related to the area of education.

Number of sessions planned: 10 weeks (20 meetings of 120 minutes each).

Number of implemented sessions: 13 weeks (26 meetings of 120 minutes each).

Resources: databases, mobile devices (smart phones, tablets, etc.), self-evaluation format, co-evaluation and hetero-evaluation, printed and audiovisual material, among others.

Evidence of learning: self-assessment, co-assessment and hetero-assessment formats completed, draft texts and student speeches during class sessions.

Didactic sequences for the elaboration of four discursive genres useful for teacher training

1. *Making a reading card about the opinion column What should children go to school for? by Julián de Zubiría.*

The process was initiated by assigning students to read the text at home to be discussed in class. However, few students complied with the instruction. In fact, they did not even consult who Julián de Zubiría is, nor did they ask themselves why it was important to read that document. So, it was necessary to encourage the students to find out about the author. Later, they proceeded to read the document in class together. During that session it was possible to recognize that the students do not read the texts carefully and that they do not bother to consult the historical, legal or conceptual references of the writings they come across; for example, most of them did not know what the General Education Law of 1994 consists of.

It was imperative to read the document with the students in class in order to explore its central ideas, recognize the author's objective, and understand the context of the work. In this work, plenary discussion was essential for these purposes. Then, the students were explained the parts of the reading card (technical information, key words, central idea, synthesis, inferences, opinion, relevant quotes and bibliographical reference) and were instructed to develop it in pairs. However, during the exercise some students raised questions about this, such as: What is a reading card and what is it for?

After answering the questions, the students said they understood more clearly what they were to develop and why. During the class, they developed a draft, which they then had to improve in order to send it by e-mail.

The review of the papers showed that the students wrote without considering their potential readers. In addition, their productions included ideas that were too extensive or incomplete. In order to meet these needs, they were asked to project in front of the course several papers with the intention of having them corrected by the whole group. In this activity, emphasis was placed on complying with the basic paragraph structure (approach, development and closure), composed of clear and precise ideas through the construction of simple sentences: subject + verb + complement. Session time was also spent explaining the importance of respecting copyright through the correct presentation of the bibliographic reference according to APA standards. With all these elements, the students were allowed to correct their cards and make the final submission via email.

This first work allowed the teacher to point out the following reflections:

- It is a mistake to assume that students know authors, works, themes and discursive genres.

- It is not convenient to assign a reading without contextualizing it (talking about the author, period, transcendence, among others) and without explaining the educational purposes it pursues.

- Short texts should be selected so that they can be read in depth in class.

- When assigning a writing exercise, it is fundamental to explain what this discursive genre consists of and what its importance is in the formative process.

- It is convenient that the texts have a different revision than the one made by the authors and the teacher.

- Both plenary and pair work help position the dialogue as a useful tool for students to generate awareness of how they read and write.

2. Elaboration of an infographic on a topic related to the educational field.

After the reflections of the first sequence, the second began with the explanation of what is an infographic and what is its importance in the training process. In this regard, it should be noted that several students had experience in the elaboration of this discursive genre and helped complement the illustration made by the teacher. In fact, they proposed to analyze some examples of infographics to highlight its characteristics. Later they were asked to work in pairs to choose a topic of interest based on which they wanted to make the infographic.

With the topics defined, students were asked to consult various sources of information to make a first draft; however, in those first productions it was detected that they were not used to looking for information in academic and scientific sources; on the contrary, those first drafts had excessive information taken from Wikipedia, blogs and newspaper and magazine websites. Then, it became necessary to explain to the students how to search for information in sources such as Google Scholar and the databases that are part of the UNAB library system; for example, EBSCO, E-book and Magisterio Editorial.

This led to the establishment of some criteria that the infographics had to meet: being clear in the message they were communicating, having quality information supported by at least four reliable academic sources, including the results of a small survey of UNAB students and adequately presenting the references consulted, according to APA standards.

The second versions of the infographics were also projected in front of the whole course; thus, the group pointed out aspects that deserved improvement, either in matters of substance (relevance of the information, logical organization of the ideas, impact of the text on the readers, etc.) or of form (colors, figures, font size, etc.) and made suggestions to enrich each work. The group corrections enhanced the quality level of the final versions.

This second product of the class motivated the teacher to propose the following reflections:

- It is absolutely necessary to explore students' prior knowledge, because when the teacher exalts it publicly, the students feel that they can adapt what they know to the new knowledge.

- One of the tasks of teaching in higher education is to show students how to look for reliable information in academic and scientific sources.

- Deconstructing examples of the discursive genres helps students understand what is expected from their work; it also provides them with references on how to develop it.

- Teachers must give very clear indications about the work they are assigning.

- It is key to explain carefully the evaluation criteria, since these guide the writing and help monitor the learning process.

- At first it was problematic for the students to choose the topic freely because they expressed no idea what to do; however, when they found the topic of their interest they put in their best efforts and worked more willingly than when they were assigned a particular issue.

3. Writing a summary about the video *Jaime Garzón talks about education.*

The starting point on this occasion was to brainstorm with the students about the questions they had about the summary. There were questions such as: What is a summary? What is it for? How is it written? What is the structure? What are the characteristics? How long should it be, among others. They were then asked to answer them based on their prior knowledge. This was done through plenary discussion and the teacher wrote the relevant ideas on the board. Afterwards, the professor confirmed the contributions that effectively gave an account of a summary and questioned those that did not have to do with this discursive genre. At the end of the activity, a consensus was reached on the essential elements that every summary should have.

In the following session, the teacher brought some summary examples to the classroom so that students could identify in a concrete way the essential elements that had been defined in the previous meeting. For this purpose, a deconstruction of each example was made, in which aspects such as the structure of the documents, the communicative intentions of each paragraph, the cohesion strategies employed by the authors, the correct way of paraphrasing, among others, were explored. As a result of this exercise, the teacher invited the students to propose what should be the evaluation criteria for a summary. At the end of the discussion, twelve criteria were agreed upon that included essential and formal aspects of gender.

The text to be summarized was an excerpt from Jaime Garzón's speech at the Universidad Autónoma de Occidente. In it, the speaker pointed out what, in his opinion, were the greatest difficulties of the educational system in Colombia. This resource was selected

because during the development of the semester's classes, the students showed a growing interest in commenting on the socio-political situation of the country and its impact on the educational sphere. This decision was correct to the extent that the future teachers expressed their pleasure in making the summary; they consulted various information about who Jaime Garzón was and what the Colombian socio-cultural context was like in 1997. They also made an effort to write their first draft clearly and precisely.

Once the first version was completed, the professor explained to the group of students an evaluation instrument designed to accompany the abstract writing process. It consisted of the twelve evaluation criteria that were defined by consensus and examined them through checklists for self-evaluation, co-evaluation and hetero-evaluation; it also included a qualitative space where each student, the peers and the teacher could make precise recommendations to improve the quality of the abstract. Here is an example:

Graph 1. *Example of a summary evaluation instrument*

Appearance	CRITERIA The summary...	Auto-evaluation		Co-evaluation		Hetero-evaluation	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Academic framework	1. Begin with a title built like this: "Summary of + discourse genre + title of the summarized text". E.g. Summary of the **film *"The Hunger Games" (0,3).***	X		X		X	
	2. Include the basic academic data of the person who prepares the summary: name, e-mail, program, institution and date of presentation of the work (0.2).	X		X		X	
	3. Make a brief presentation of the base text (author of the work, place and year of publication, acknowledgements, etc.), the topic it deals with and its main idea (0.5).		X	X		X	
Ability to synthesize and paraphrase	4. Paraphrase important ideas, without omitting key statements or adding irrelevant information (1,0).	X			X	X	
	5. Mention the conclusive ideas exposed by the author in the base text (0,5).	X			X	X	
	6. Preserve the order of appearance of the ideas in the base text (0,3).	X		X		X	
	7. Respect the ideas of the base text, that is, without modifying the content of the summarized text (0,3).		X	X		X	
Writing	8. Have a common thread and a logical connection between ideas (0.5).	X		X		X	
	9. Have cohesion between ideas thanks to the presence of connectors and text markers (0.5).	X		X		X	
	10. Have less than three spelling mistakes (0.3).		X		X		X
	11. Exceed one third of the length of the base text (0.3).	X		X			X
Respect for copyrights.	12. Present the complete reference of the source where the base text was taken, according to the rules of publication of the discipline (APA, Vancouver, etc.) (0.3).	X		X		X	
How can I improve my resume?	• Search for more information about the author. • More clarity on the main ideas. • Do not add additional information. • Spell check.						
What do my colleagues suggest?	• The ideas are not clear • More information from the author is missing • Paraphrase the main ideas better						
What does my teacher suggest?	It is mandatory to check spelling before considering the texts finished.						

Source: Own elaboration.

It should be noted that each student critically read the first version of his/her summary bearing in mind the criteria established in the evaluation instrument, filling out the checklist for the self-evaluation. In addition, they recorded their assessments in the box "How can I improve my summary? After making the adjustments, the trainees submitted the second draft for peer review.

The dynamics of Author - Co-Evaluator - Reviewer were used. This consisted of forming groups of three people to exchange, evaluate and enrich their productions. It worked in the following way: the author gave his/her summary to the co-evaluator, who after reading the text analytically, diligently filled in the second checklist of the instrument and wrote his/her suggestions in the section "What do my peers suggest?" Finally, the reviewer read the summary and the observations made by the co-evaluator for the purpose of confirming or discussing them. When different assessments emerged among the evaluators, the teacher intervened to complement the feedback on the writings. After making the adjustments, the students prepared the third draft to be evaluated by the teacher.

The teacher reviewed the abstracts and assessed each item on the checklist assigned for the hetero-evaluation, then wrote his appraisals and suggestions in the section "What does my teacher suggest?"; these helped support the numerical evaluation of the papers, in accordance with the scores assigned to each criterion. Thus, the students finished the process of writing their abstracts. However, a concern arose: once the third version was returned, the participants concentrated on looking at the score, but did not focus on the process they had developed.

The third writing of the class motivated the teacher to propose the following reflections:

- It is vital for the teacher to be aware of the topics of interest to students. In the case of this course, the five minutes prior to the beginning of the class served to recognize the conversation topics that could have links with the objectives of the subject and the integral formation.

- It is more illustrative to explain the characteristics of the discursive genres by deconstructing examples. However, students tend to repeat in their writings the form of writing and even exact expressions of the examples analyzed.

- Agreeing upon the evaluation criteria with the students is very beneficial, since they show greater ownership of the concepts and are clear about what they must do to achieve their learning.

- Students reviewed in more detail the comments made by the peers than those by the teacher. Perhaps it is because after the hetero-evaluation it was not necessary to present another version of the summary.

- In some groups the Author – Co-Evaluator – Reviewer dynamic was not as effective because some students did not attend the session where the criteria were defined and therefore did not fully understand them.

- Thanks to the use of the evaluation instrument, the students were able to note the strengths and weaknesses of their processes. Thus, they were able to reflect on what to do to overcome them and enhance them.

4. *Writing a review of an academic article that answered the question "What should a Bachelor's student know in 2019?"*

Unlike the previous texts, the students' reflections were used to justify the elaboration of reviews. The process began with an activity that asked them to share with the group some experiences of their high school teachers that they considered valuable or reprehensible.

In general, the participants pointed out that irrelevant educational practices were closely related to the lack of pedagogical updating of the teachers. They concluded that one of the capacities of great educators is dictated by infinite curiosity and the constant need to learn. As a complement, participants and teachers concluded that the reading of academic articles can help education professionals to keep up to date with developments in their field of study.

In the final moments of the activity, the professor asked the question "What should an undergraduate student know in 2019?" As a result, the students offered different topics that guided the search for an academic article published in a reliable source which would be of interest to future teachers. In order to take advantage of these documents, the professor highlighted the advantages of writing reviews in the academy. He specifically exalted its viability to promote reading comprehension in the students, to favor the ability to paraphrase, to strengthen the capacity of analysis and to stimulate the taking of a critical and argument-supported position.

Therefore, the next didactic action was to accompany the students in the selection of an article that they considered important for the training of future graduates. Once the publication was chosen, the students were asked to write the first version of their review based on their prior knowledge. Later, a plenary session was held to deconstruct several examples of the review. These sessions had two objectives: a) to answer questions together, such as: What is a review? What is it for? How is it written? And what is the structure? and b) to establish the essential characteristics of the review that would make it possible to agree on the evaluation criteria.

With this information, the teacher adapted the evaluation instrument that had been designed to accompany the abstract writing process to the fourteen evaluation criteria that were defined by consensus for the review. This format kept the checklists corresponding to self-evaluation, co-evaluation and hetero-evaluation and the qualitative spaces for feedback. Here is a sample:

Figure 2. *Example of an evaluation instrument*

	CRITERIA The review...	Auto-evaluation		Co-evaluation		Hetero-evaluation	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Title	• Choose an eye-catching title for readers (0.2).	X			X	X	
	• Select a title directly related to the subject of the work reviewed (0,1).	X		X		X	
Academic framework	• The subtitle mentions that the text is a review and includes the title of the reviewed work: "Review of + discursive genre + title of the summarized text". E.g. Review of the **film "The Hunger Games"** (0,1).	X		X		X	
	• Include the basic academic data of the person who prepares the review: name, e-mail, program, institution and date of presentation of the work (0.1).	X		X		X	
Introduction	• Present general information about the reviewed work; for example: author, type and year of publication, acknowledgements, among other data. Include also the main idea (0.5).	X		X		X	
Synthesis	• Include a paragraph that objectively and chronologically paraphrases the main ideas of the work reviewed. (0,5)	X		X			X

CRITERIA The review...		Auto-evaluation		Co-evaluation		Hetero-evaluation	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Analysis of the work	• Analyze positive and negative elements of the work in question (0,5).	X		X		X	
	Each aspect is supported by the following information: (0,5) a. Approach. b. Evidence from the base text. c. Reflection.	X		X			X
Verdict	• Present a clear verdict on the text studied. (For example, the work is excellent, good, fair, bad, and bad) (0,3).	X		X			X
	• Propose different reasons that successfully support the given verdict (0.5).		X		X		X
Writing	• Have proper wording to make it easy to understand the content (0.5).	X		X			X
	• Have cohesion between ideas thanks to the presence of connectors and text markers (0.5).	X		X		X	
	• Have less than three spelling mistakes (0.3).	X		X		X	
	• Respect copyright by the correct use of quotations and references according to a specific publication regulation (APA, Vancouver, ICONTEC, among others) (0,4).	X		X		X	
How can I improve my review?	• Provide more reasons to support the verdict						
What do my colleagues suggest?	• Change the title. • Specify the activities you name in the second strength • Do not repeat boy and girl. • What is the table named in the second strength about.						
What does my teacher recommend?	The synthesis does not record the conclusions of the study.						

Source: Own elaboration.

Again, each student critically read the first version of their review bearing in mind the criteria established in the assessment instrument, filling out the self-assessment checklist. In addition, they recorded their assessments in the "how can I improve my review" box. After making adjustments, the trainees submitted the second draft for peer review.

This time, the dynamics of Author - Co-evaluator - Reviewer had a modification. Instead of exchanging the reviews, the three members of the group were asked to focus on evaluating the texts one by one, each respecting their role. To this end, they were asked to do three readings; the first, aloud, was aimed at checking whether the text was easy to read and understand. Of course, the group could point out writing errors and their respective suggestions for correction. The second reading sought to assess whether the ideas in the document were relevant, interesting, or at least appealing to a undergraduate student; while the third reading was to check whether the papers met the evaluation criteria stated in the instrument. Based on the adjustments, the students composed the third draft to be evaluated by the teacher.

Another change that this sequence had in comparison with the previous one was that the teacher did the hetero-evaluation next to each student during the class and sustained orally his judgment on each criterion in the checklist assigned for it. Similarly, the teacher

wrote down his appraisals and suggestions in the section "What does my teacher suggest?" This situation helped the students adopt the recommendations in the final draft of the work, which resulted in greater awareness of their learning actions and, therefore, better work.

The final work of the class motivated the teacher to propose the following reflections:

- It was a good idea to use a problem question to give rise to the process of reading and writing, since it establishes a concrete horizon for the work, that is, it gives a "reason" to do it.

- The convenience of allowing students to choose the texts they will work on is reinforced, but under certain conditions that ensure the coherence of the works with the learning purposes.

- The enormous importance of the deconstruction of examples in the explanation of discursive genres and the agreement of criteria for their evaluation is confirmed.

- The new Author - Co-Evaluator - Reviewer dynamic was more effective than the previous one, because group work generates spaces for dialogue that individual reading did not contemplate.

Hence, a stronger and better argument-supported co-evaluation was perceived than the one made for the summary.

- Hetero-evaluation by the students' side is a very valuable opportunity to understand the causes of the difficulties and strengths of the students' reading and writing processes, since in this space a dialogue is generated in which the thoughts that each student has when issuing his/her statements are explored. Hence, in these conversations, questions such as: "What do you want to express in this idea?" "Why do you raise this?" "What arguments do you have to make such an affirmation?", among others.

Results

The analyses showed, among other advances, the improvement of the students' reading comprehension and written expression, the use of terminology specific to the field of education in their discourse, the selection of academic information taken from reliable sources, and a better self-perception of the students as readers and writers.

In terms of progress in the academic reading and writing processes that were explored in the initial exercise, positive results can be reported in a good number of cases upon completion of the "Expression" course.

Table 1. *Comparison of performances: Initial summary vs. final summary*

Evaluated aspects	Initial exercise	Final Summary
Contextualization of the work	5%	82%
Identification of the thesis	32%	76%
Acknowledgement of Author's Purpose	68%	79%
Alteration of text ideas	55%	28%
Paraphrase of the essential ideas of the base text	13%	77%
Copy of exact fragments of the base text.	77%	17%
Inclusion of the bibliographic reference of the document read.	0%	87%

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 2. *Comparison of performances: Initial review vs. final review*

Evaluated aspects	Initial exercise	Final Summary
Assigning a title to texts	13%	95%
Contextualization of the work	5%	85%
Synthesis of the work	60%	81%
Analysis of the work	3%	63%
	Opinion on the work	Verdict on the work
	87%	86%
	Arguments that support the opinion	Arguments supported by the verdict on the work
	35%	65%
Good paragraph writing	44%	68%
Cohesion and consistency in the texts	15%	62%
Writing errors	87%	62%
Inclusion of the bibliographic reference of the document read.	0%	92%

Source: Own elaboration.

Thanks to the analysis of the productions made by the students, it was possible to see that they improved their skills to recognize the main ideas of the texts they read and to synthesize, by means of paraphrasing, the fundamental information of the documents. Likewise, the future teachers recognized the importance of reading with a broader purpose than the academic commitment assigned by a teacher. With regard to writing, the works evaluated showed that the apprentices went from the written composition done "in one sitting" to a process production that favors the ability to be aware of the impacts that writing can achieve in the readers. In addition, the results show the contributions of dialogue, whether in small groups, in interventions during a plenary session or between student and teacher, to enrich the understanding of the works being discussed and the ability to self-regulate the written production.

On the other hand, the reviews showed the use made by the students of the terminology proper to the educational field. Evidence of this were the topics chosen by the students to select the articles they analyzed, among which the following stand out: initial training, management of educational institutions, emotional education, social networks in education, use of educational technologies, formation in values, influence of family relationships in early childhood, musical training, theater and education, arts and education, creative thinking, didactic strategies, teaching sports and civic education, dyslexia as a factor of low academic performance and teacher desertion.

As a complement, a Google form was designed to know the students' final perceptions about their experience in the "Expression" course. This instrument was filled out by ten of the twenty-one participants. In the question "About your training process, you can say that during your time in the "Expression" course you improved... (you can select several options)", the following options were reported with the greatest number of responses:

- General reading and writing skills (10 students)

- Ability to understand and write discursive genres (9 students)

- Strategies for searching and selecting academic information from reliable sources (9 students)

- Ability to use APA standards (9 students)

- Grammar and Spelling (8 students)

- Study techniques (7 students)

- Critical Thinking (7 students)

These data allow us to affirm that the "Expression" class made it possible for students to improve their self-perceptions as readers and writers, an element that gives them the necessary confidence to face the rest of their academic formation. The results also highlight the recognition that the participants make of the class as a space to promote academic literacy in the university, while, according to them, "Expression" provides tools for the search for information specific to the discipline, consolidates study techniques, promotes the use of APA standards in their university productions, and stimulates the development of critical thinking. Another interesting aspect for the analysis is that the future teachers recognized that they had improved their knowledge of grammar and spelling, an issue that is also enhanced when the didactics of the language has as a premise the development of competencies and communicative skills.

Conclusions

It is clear that an alternative to help new university students improve their academic reading and writing skills is the implementation of didactic sequences that: a) start from challenging questions for the students; b) are oriented to the elaboration of discursive genres that promote diverse mental abilities;

c) consider the prior knowledge, tastes and expectations of the students; d) involve themes that have a direct relation with their future profession; e) encourage the search for information from reliable sources; and f) allow the students to reflect on what they know and need to learn.

From this experience it can be concluded that the selected genres contributed to enhance the reading and writing abilities of the participants, since the reading card made them aware of the relevance of knowing the context of the works they read, as well as the importance of organizing the information of the texts to later give an account of it in oral and written exercises. With the computer graphics, the students understood the need to look for reliable academic documents; at the same time, they applied the techniques worked on in the reading guide to identify relevant knowledge according to their interests or duties, not to mention their initiation in the use of the APA norms. Thanks to the summary, the future teachers improved their ability to synthesize and paraphrase, while, with the review, they became more adept at contextualizing readers, synthesizing the fundamental information of the documents read, analyzing and criticizing the ideas of the authors, and evaluating, in an argumentative manner, the works that come into their hands.

With this journey, the teachers-in-training had a different perspective on what reading and writing involves, as they went from considering them an evaluation instrument to becoming the ideal ways to become aware of what, what for, and how one learns. Other conclusions were:

1. In no case should teachers assume that students know about genres, subjects, authors or works. This implies that teachers, before assigning reading and writing tasks, should look into their learners' prior knowledge.

2. Both plenary and pair work help position the dialogue as a useful tool for students to generate awareness of how they read and write.

3. Every time teachers assign a text to be read or written, they should explain why this didactic action is important for the educational process, whether it is academic, professional, citizen or scientific.

4. It is much better to read and write short documents, as they allow for an accompaniment of textual understanding and production in class.

5. It is necessary to make explicit the interdependent relationships of reading and writing to make the learners establish meaningful relationships between what they read and write.

6. It was a good idea to allow the students to select the texts they wanted to work on, as this allowed them to remain interested in developing the work. However, in the beginning, the choice was problematic, because many of them come from educational contexts where they rarely have the possibility of proposing ideas for their learning processes, so first semester trainees usually do not know what to do with the power of choice.

7. The students improved their written productions when they had clear guidance on what was expected from their texts and with what criteria they would be evaluated.

8. In order to develop didactic proposals like this, it is absolutely necessary to have the support of the teachers from the program itself, since without their advice, it would be more difficult for the students to understand or produce texts concerning their future profession.

9. The search for academic information was a direct way of explaining that every professional must keep up to date, by reading the most recent studies in their fields of study.

10. The dynamic of Author - Co-evaluator – Reviewer co-evaluation turned out to be a great meta-cognitive strategy for the students to improve the quality of their productions, while allowing them to become aware of the characteristics of the summary and the review, to recognize the strengths of their writings and to identify the aspects that needed to be corrected. Likewise, the hetero-evaluation should be done by the student's side, in order to achieve a more complete feedback.

11. The didactic sequences developed provided the students with some ideas to encourage autonomy in their reading and writing processes. Some of them were: always find out the particularities of the discursive genres assigned to them in the university, analyze some examples, write several drafts of the text based on the criteria given by the professors and submit each version to peer review, among others.

12. The students were not used to the thorough reading and writing processes that can take several sessions. As a result, they were noted to be apathetic at certain points in the work. This involves the teacher wondering how to speed up the accompaniment. In this sense, the following protocol of recommendations is proposed for teachers to guide reading and writing activities in class, at least once a semester:

Table 3. *Recommended protocols for accompanying reading and writing in the classroom*

Reading and writing exercise based on a specific text (e.g. elaboration of the summary of...)	Reading and writing exercise involving text search (e.g. elaboration of Short Argumentative Documents (SAD) on...)
Find out the students' prior knowledge about the work, the author, the context, etc. Explain why it is important to read that document and how it contributes to the academic, professional or citizen formation of the students. Read the text with the students in class. Problem-solve elements of the text so that learners can discover the contributions of the work. Explain why it is necessary to write a summary and how it contributes to the academic, professional or citizen formation of the students. Ask students to write the first draft of the summary based on their prior knowledge. Deconstruct, together with the students, a couple of summary examples. Take the opportunity to agree on the evaluation criteria. Ask students to do self-assessment using the criteria. Ask them to make adjustments. Assign a few minutes of class time for students to do the co-evaluation. Corrections can be made at home. Create tutorial spaces for feedback on abstracts. Always return the evaluations of the final texts.	Ask a question that encourages student participation. For example: How can your profession improve the quality of life of the less advantaged? Brainstorm with the students about the possible answers Ask students to come up with a possible solution. Show students how to search for reliable information from academic and scientific sources. Advise trainees in the selection of relevant ideas. Ask students to write the first version of the SAD based on their prior knowledge. Deconstruct, in conjunction with students, a couple of examples of SAD. Take the opportunity to agree on the evaluation criteria. Ask students to do a self-assessment using the criteria. Ask them to make adjustments. Assign a few minutes of class time for students to do the co-evaluation. Corrections can be made at home. Create tutorial spaces for feedback on abstracts. Always return the evaluations of the final texts. Encourage the publication or collection of student papers.

Source: Own elaboration.

References

Anijovich, R. y González, C. (2011). *Evaluate to learn*. Aique editions.

Arenas, S., Barrero, N. A., Burgos, R., Girón, S., Lizcano, C., Pataquiva, A. L., Rebolledo, H., y Suárez, C. (2014). *The summary. Department of Academic Grammar, Reading and Writing*. Sergio Arboleda University.

CREA. (2012) *The review*. Academic Writing Resource Center. ITESM of Monterrey, Virtual University.

Echo, H. (1984). *How a thesis is made: techniques and procedures of study, research and writing*. (6th ed.). Gedisa.

Gallegos, C. (2019). *Elaboration of reading cards. Support program for academic communication. Pontifical Catholic University of Chile*. http://comunicacionacademica.uc.cl/images/recursos/espanol/lectura/recurso_en_pdf_extenso/7_elaboracion_de_fichas_bibliograficas.pdf

Giroux, H. (1997) *Crossing borders. Cultural workers and educational policies*. Paidós Ibérica.

ICFES. (2018). *Report of results by application of Saber Pro UNAB*. Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education.

Ivanic, R. (2009). *Writing as social practice: The roles and challenges of writing in higher education*. Conference. Literacy Research Center, Lancaster University.

Jara, O. (2018). *The systematization of experiences: practice and theory for other possible worlds*. CINDE-International Center for Education and Human Development.

López, G. and Arciniegas, E. (2004). Meta-cognition, reading and construction of knowledge. *The role of the subjects in the significant learning*. Unesco Course for reading and writing in Latin America. University of Valle.

Reinhardt, N. (2010). Didactic Infographic: interdisciplinary production of didactic infographics for cultural diversity. *Notebooks of the Center of Studies in Design and Communication. Essays,* 31, 119-191.

Rochera, M. J., Colomina, R., Onrubia, J., y Coll, C. (1992). Actividad conjunta y habla: una aproximación al estudio de los mecanismos de influencia educativa. *Infancia y Aprendizaje, 59-60,* 189-232.

Schön, D. (1992). *The formation of reflexive professionals. Towards a new Design of Teaching and learning in the professions*. Paidós.

Stone, M. (2005). *Teaching for understanding*. Paidós.

UNAB. (2019). *Development Plan 2019 -2024*. UNAB University.

UNAB. (2019). Bachelor's Degree Program in Early Childhood Education [online]. Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga. https://www.unab.edu.co/programas/licenciatura-educaci%C3%B3n-infantil-profesional-presencial [Last access: 26 Sep. 2019]

Vygotsky, L. (1964): *Thought and Language*. Buenos Aires, Lautaro.