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A CURRENT VISION

A look at the didactic strategy from the structuring components, in the teaching practice of a preschool teacher

Una mirada a la estrategia didáctica a partir de los componentes estructurantes, en la práctica de enseñanza de una profesora de preescolar

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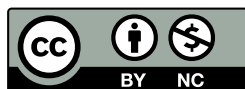
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ABSTRACT

This article proposes the analysis of the teaching practice of a transition grade teacher, through the didactic strategy, framing the learning of phonological awareness in children of the transition grade, guided by the structuring components of this and through reflection on pairs, under the Lesson Study method where Pérez and Soto (2017) understand it as a professional development process where a group of colleagues meet to analyze it.

A reflection cycle was carried out, considering the actions constituting the practice, (planning, intervention and evaluation). The instrument of the Daniel Wilson feedback ladder was used for the reflection of planning; allowing to reach some findings and later to the transformations of the teaching practice.

RESUMEN

Este artículo plantea el análisis de la práctica de enseñanza de una profesora de grado transición, a través de la estrategia didáctica, enmarcando el aprendizaje de la conciencia fonológica en los niños del grado transición, guiados por los componentes estructurantes de esta y mediante la reflexión en pares, bajo el método de la Lesson Study en donde Pérez y Soto (2017) la entiende como proceso de desarrollo profesional en donde un grupo de colegas se reúnen para analizarla.

Se realizó un ciclo de reflexión, teniendo en cuenta las acciones constitutivas de la práctica, (planeación, intervención y evaluación), se usó para la reflexión de la planeación, el instrumento de la escalera de retroalimentación de Daniel Wilson; permitiendo llegar a unos hallazgos y posteriormente a las transformaciones de la práctica de enseñanza.

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1. Introduction

Currently, something essential for the professionalization of the teacher is to objectify the practices, where the teacher takes his own teaching practice and turns it into an object of study, from this, frequent reflections are made to improve it; but as mentioned by Edelstein (2000) so that the reflections do not remain banal speeches, it is necessary to take the object of study taking into account not only the experiences, but also the strategies and learning of the students [4].

During the article we develop the didactic strategy of a teacher researcher with a degree in preschool education, in charge of the transition grade of a District Educational Institution and the changes from the components of this and the transformations of her teaching practice.

We will begin by answering the question “What is a didactic strategy?”

2. What is a teaching strategy?

It is important to understand and answer the question posed, considering the definition of Angulo, Carreño and Morales, (2020) “A didactic strategy is a process constituted by systems of actions and pedagogical decisions reflected, to achieve a clear and determined purpose, which implies a commitment to learning from the exercise of teaching practice”. Based on the above, the didactic strategy has a globalizing and broad character since it includes techniques, skills and abilities aimed at facilitating teaching and learning [1].

According to Bravo, (2008) didactic strategies are actions carried out by teachers, trainers, mediators, educational agents, etc. With the objective of facilitating the training and learning of students. “They compose the curricular scenarios of organization of the formative activities and of the interaction of the teaching and learning process where knowledge, values, practices, procedures and problems proper to the training field are achieved.” (p.52), it is evident that the teacher’s role is important since he is the one who prepares and structures all the actions to ensure that these actions fulfill clear purposes and are achieved through the implementation of this [2].

3. A look at the teaching practice through the components of the teaching strategy

Now, the main characteristics of the didactic strategy used are detailed, and an answer is given to the question:

What is the importance of each of the components? How do they influence the teaching practice? A brief reference will be made to these components and then the development of each one will be shown.

Purpose: the didactic strategy is understood as an organized, formalized, and oriented procedure to obtain a clearly established goal. The purposes are established based on the review of preschool education guiding documents, review of the concepts that structure the disciplinary knowledge, the curriculum currently implemented and its continuity.

Consequently, a learning purpose is established, which is for the whole school year and 3 expected learning outcomes (ELA) to be developed in 3 class sessions.

Table 1. Purpose of learning and expected learning outcomes.

Learning purpose	RPA
The development of phonological awareness skills for written and oral language acquisition.	Understands that words have parts or sounds.
	Understands syllabic segmentation and performs it with agility, using different sound elements.
	Acquires skills in the development of phonological awareness.

Source: own.

If the teacher is clear about the purposes to be achieved, it will be easier for him to guide his class, allowing him to reach deeper and clearer knowledge, since he directs all his actions to achieve these purposes.

Theoretical foundations: as something essential and prior to teaching, it is necessary that the teacher understands and has mastery of what he/she teaches, taking into account Shulman, (1986) “the teacher needs not only to know or understand what, but also to know why this is so, on what assumptions these justifications may be true and under what circumstances our beliefs in these justifications may be weak and even denied” (p. 9) [7]. In addition, the teacher must prepare how he or she teaches so that students arrive at their learning clearly, Barnett and Hodson (cited by Sosa and Gonzalez, 2008) state that teachers not only have or should know and understand the content of their subject matter, but also how to teach that content effectively. (p. 86) [11]

Based on the above considerations, the teacher must have knowledge of their disciplinary, didactic, and pedagogical knowledge so that they can make a good transposition of what they are going to teach.

Having established the teaching purpose, in which the didactic strategy is developed, the theoretical review pertinent to the phonological awareness and the importance for the development of this in early ages, specifying table 2.

Table 2. Theoretical details of phonological awareness.

Definition	Components of Phonological Awareness	Importance
<p><u>Phonological Awareness</u></p> <p>“It is considered a metalinguistic skill that consists of “the awareness of any phonological unit of spoken language” (Jiménez and Ortiz, 2000 p. 23). [5]</p>	<p><u>Lexical Awareness</u></p> <p>It covers the skills of identifying and manipulating the words that make up sentences.</p>	<p>“The exercise in synthesis and segmentation of syllables significantly improves decoding processes. They consider that phonological awareness training facilitates the understanding of the relationships between phonemes and graphemes, prior to the teaching of the alphabetic code, allowing a better use of the teaching reading”. (Bravo, 2004 p. 28) [3]</p>
	<p><u>Syllabic Awareness</u></p> <p>It encompasses the skills of identifying and manipulating the syllables that make up words.</p>	
	<p><u>Phonemic Awareness</u></p> <p>It encompasses the skills of identifying and manipulating the smallest units of speech, the phonemes.</p>	

Source: own.

In the proposed class session, the component of syllabic awareness was developed, “...which is an explicit knowledge that words are formed by a sequence of articulatory phonological units.

Syllabic awareness is understood as the ability to consciously identify the syllables that make up a word”. [5]

4. Context

This is a determining factor in teaching and learning, since it influences the different areas where the student and the teacher interact, we have the macro, in this case the place where they live, geographical location,

The meso, the educational institution, and the micro context, the classroom, each one of them, are based on needs and interactions, giving a different meaning to each student, which influences and determines the learning planning processes, that is why it is necessary not to ignore them, but to take advantage of them so that, based on them, learning can be generated and used in daily life.

After the above, the different contexts in which the development of the didactic strategy is immersed are made explicit.

4.1. Macro Context

In the first place, we find the macro context in the city of Bogotá, Colombia, Kennedy is one of the most populated areas of the district, allowing a great demand for places in the different schools of the locality, and thus, maintaining a fixed enrollment coverage throughout the school year, most students live in the Altamar neighborhood, belong to low-income families and belong to strata one and two; there are nuclear, single-parent, extended and blended families, and it is noteworthy that some of the students depend on their grandmother due to the absence of their parents.

4.2. Meso Context

In second place, we find the District Educational Institution, Hernando Durán Dussán, with the pedagogical model adopted, the social constructivism that is centered on the person, which is recognized as unique, unrepeatable, worthy, of inexhaustible growth and belonging to a certain context and social group.

Through this model, new knowledge is built from the person's own schemes, product of his reality and his comparison of the schemes of the other individuals around him; with a meaningful learning approach where the educational process is contextualized and related to the reality of the educational community. This approach facilitates the acquisition of new knowledge by relating it to what has already been learned, since by relating it to pre-knowledge, the scaffolding for learning new content is created.

4.3. Micro Context

Finally, there is the transition grade group that has 25 students ranging in age from 4 to 5 years old, which is characterized as a united group that establishes friendly and collaborative relationships allowing a friendly interaction among all, the main characteristics of the children are described, based on the development axes proposed by the Pedagogical and Curricular Guidelines for Early Education in the District, (2019).

Table 3. Developmental processes of children in the transition grade.

<p style="text-align: center;">Axis 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Social and Personal Development in Early Childhood.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Axis 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Expression in Early Childhood: communication through language and movement.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Axis 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Experimentation and Logical Thinking in Early Childhood.</p>
<p>In this axis, students are in the process of building their individual and collective identity through interactions in the different contexts close to the children.</p> <p>They show great constructions in the processes of autonomy, gaining independence both in their actions and in decision making.</p>	<p>In this axis students have great development at the level of movement in relation to spatial awareness, they like to interact with different objects and question about utility and exploration.</p> <p>They appropriate language by giving meaning to words, establish conversations by waiting for their turn to speak and considerably increase their attentive listening time.</p> <p>The transfer from verbal to graphic language is in process, the development of phonological awareness has been advanced at the lexical level, it is shown that awareness at the segmental and phonemic level needs to be developed.</p>	<p>In this axis, students show the development of curiosity, which has boosted their learning, because they enable exploration and discovery. Their interest in posing questions and formulating hypotheses is visible, but they need support to do so.</p> <p>They construct notions of physical objects, recognize and appreciate their qualities and group them.</p> <p>They try to make number sequences and number quantity associations.</p>

Source: own.

Actions: in the didactic strategy there are actions that the teacher performs for the teaching and learning process which define his teaching style, considering the definition of Arvayo, (quoted by Rendón, 2012) “...it is the way in which he leads his students towards knowledge. It is the set of tools used for this purpose, which include the cognitive tendency or preference,

academic preparation, intellect, motivation, strategy, energy level, interest in students, their language, the way they act (facial and body expressions) and even the way they dress” (p.179). These actions determine the scope of students’ understandings, which must be planned carefully and sequentially, making use of each teacher’s skills [10].

Table 4. Comprehension performance planning.

Type of Performance	Description	Purpose of performance
<i>Exploration Stage</i>	A game scenario “the object that I like the most” is opened where children observe and choose elements that they like and have a meaning for them, then describe the main characteristics of the object.	Observation and description of elements to give them meaning.
<i>Guided Research</i>	<p>Explanation of the game “Clapping, touching and separating”.</p> <p>From the observed and selected objects, the syllabic segmentation will begin, as follows:</p> <p>Clapping: The teacher will randomly select a student and ask them what item they selected? E.g.: Car</p> <p>Then the teacher will perform the example of the segmentation into syllables with the palms, e.g.: Ca - rro. after this the child will perform it and will be asked to say a characteristic observed of that element, e.g.: red, the segmentation of that word will also be done, so all the students will pass. After this will be done with an instrument:</p> <p>Now playing with the drum: the teacher randomly chooses a student and asks him/her what element did he/she select? E.g.: ball</p> <p>He will then ask him to divide it into syllables using the instrument musical: pe-lo-ta. Finally, they will:</p> <p>With the voice: the teacher chooses a student at random, asks him/her what element he/she selected, and asks him/her to say a characteristic of that element: e.g.: small</p> <p>You are then asked to verbally divide that feature into syllables like this: pe-que-ño.</p> <p>The exercise will be carried out with each of the students.</p> <p>At the end, students will be asked to leave the observed elements on the tables (already arranged).</p>	Exemplify through the action of segmenting words with clapping and a musical instrument.
<i>Synthesis Project</i>	<p>After leaving the elements on the table, 3 bibliographic cards will be handed out (in each one, a picture is drawn, and a series of 3 palms) where each student will be asked to make a drawing of the observed object with its respective characteristics and then select two elements chosen by two classmates and draw them with their characteristics, each one in a bibliographic card, after making the respective drawings, they will name the element and mark with an x the number of palms used to name the object.</p> <p>With the teacher’s help, the cards will be glued in the form of a booklet. When the groups’ partners finish, they will exchange the different booklets and verify that the partner has done the activity properly.</p>	To demonstrate graphically the observation of the different characteristics of the elements and syllabic segmentation.

Source: own.

Here, the action taken was planning, taking into account the teaching purpose and the RPAs to be fulfilled in the sessions, the theoretical foundation and the contexts for the realization of this, the comprehension performances were taken into account, according to

Stone (1999) are activities designed by the teacher in order for students to reach their comprehensions, This is the most important element within the framework of teaching for comprehension (TPC), understood as a teaching strategy proposed by the Harvard School’s

Project Zero, which is based on the search for students' comprehensions; This is based on the development of performances, with a constructive configuration, which is consistent with the Institution's model [6].

The performances are developed based on the progressive categories proposed by Stone (1999), Exploration, Guided Research and Synthesis Project stages.

Evaluation: Formative evaluation is taken here, according to Moreno (2016) "is a systematic process to obtain continuous evidence about learning. The data collected are used to identify the student's current level and adapt teaching to help him/her achieve the desired learning goals"(p. 157), it can be said that this is a continuous and permanent process in which all the actors involved, issue value judgments to look at the students' process and also as learning, through feedback which serves to reorient and plan the different teacher actions aimed at promoting *learning* [8].

The evaluation considered the permanent feedback of each activity carried out by the children and the development of the performance of the synthesis project, in which the children actively participated in reviewing each other's work, verifying the proper completion of the project.

5. Analysis of the reflection cycle

The analysis was based on a cycle of reflection (Planning-Intervention-Evaluation-Reflection) under the *Lesson Study* method, which Pérez and Soto (2014) understand as a process of professional development in which a group of colleagues meet to analyze it [9].

The analysis of the planning was done by exposing it to a group of colleagues where they made their reflections from the protocol of the feedback ladder of Wilson, (2012) in the steps of this ladder is: clarify, assess, express concerns and suggestions, thanks to the contributions made by the peers especially when they expressed their concerns, such as: "I consider that there are many performances raised for a session, the RPAs are not consistent with the proposed performances: I consider that there are many performances proposed for a session, the RPAs do not go in coherence with the proposed performances, these allowed a review and modification of the planning before the intervention, which made it more powerful, allowing a sequential and dynamic implementation and allowed the students to understand the development of syllabic segmentation.

6. Findings derived from the analysis of teaching practice.

The findings are referenced where the researcher teacher did not previously consider in her teaching practice:

From the review and implementation of the didactic strategy, it allowed the understanding of each of its components, enriching the teaching practice and subsequently the students' learning.

Each of the components of the didactic strategy are of equal importance and have to be combined in order to have a complete picture of all the factors necessary for planning, implementation and evaluation.

Establishing clear teaching purposes allows routing actions to achieve them. The development of the planning based on the comprehension performances, allows a sequentiality in the implementation, allowing the students to get involved in each one of them and to be participants in their comprehensions, and the teachers to have clarity in each one of their teaching actions.

The review of practice through collaborative work enriches and strengthens it, since needs are identified, and new actions are proposed in the teaching and learning processes.

Teachers have a fundamental role in generating voluntary actions and that in the collaborative exercise they constitute actions for the transformations of teaching practices.

7. Conclusions

The didactic strategy referred to encompasses different actions aimed at developing phonological awareness in a certain sequence, advancing from a limited understanding to a deeper understanding of how sounds work in words. The realization of a conscious pedagogical planning based on the design of comprehension performances, evidences a great openness to the students to the activities and motivation to carry them out, achieving an active participation allowing them to reach the expected learning results for each implemented session.

The evaluation and reflection of the didactic strategy made us aware of the importance of considering all of its components in order to guide and improve the teaching and learning process.

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