

## Strengthening literacy skills in fifth-year EGB students through the area of social sciences



**Fortalecimiento de la lectoescritura en los estudiantes de quinto año EGB, desde el área de ciencias sociales**

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### Abstract

This study addresses the strengthening of reading and writing skills in students in the fifth year of General Basic Education (EGB) through the area of Social Sciences. The research is based on the diagnosis of difficulties in text comprehension and production, identified in evaluations of the Ministry of Education, which revealed deficiencies in the skills of analysis and relationship. The main objective is to design and implement didactic strategies that integrate reading and writing in the History and Identity block to improve academic performance and student participation. In terms of methodology, the qualitative-descriptive approach allowed understanding the learning processes through observations, surveys and content analysis. Didactic interventions were carried out based on critical reading, analysis of primary and secondary sources, as

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well as discussions and essays. The results indicate an improvement in students' comprehension and written expression, as well as an increase in their motivation and participation in class. It is concluded that integrating literacy in Social Sciences not only enhances linguistic skills, but also critical thinking and historical understanding, thus facilitating meaningful learning.

**Keywords:** literacy, social sciences, basic education, critical thinking, didactic strategies.

## Resumen

El presente estudio aborda el fortalecimiento de las habilidades de lectoescritura en estudiantes de quinto año de Educación General Básica (EGB) a través del área de Ciencias Sociales. La investigación parte del diagnóstico de dificultades en comprensión y producción textual, identificadas en evaluaciones del Ministerio de Educación, las cuales revelaron deficiencias en las destrezas de análisis y relación. El objetivo central es diseñar e implementar estrategias didácticas que integren la lectoescritura en el bloque de Historia e Identidad para mejorar el rendimiento académico y la participación estudiantil. En cuanto a la metodología, el enfoque cualitativo-descriptivo permitió comprender los procesos de aprendizaje mediante observaciones, encuestas y análisis de contenido. Se realizaron intervenciones didácticas basadas en la lectura crítica, el análisis de fuentes primarias y secundarias, así como en debates y ensayos. Los resultados indican una mejora en la comprensión y expresión escrita de los estudiantes, además de un aumento en su motivación y participación en clases. Se concluye que integrar la lectoescritura en Ciencias Sociales no solo potencia las habilidades lingüísticas, sino también el pensamiento crítico y la comprensión histórica, facilitando así un aprendizaje significativo.

**Palabras clave:** lectoescritura, ciencias sociales, educación básica, pensamiento crítico, estrategias didácticas.

## Introduction

Literacy is an essential tool in the educational process, forming the basis on which learning is built in various areas of knowledge. According to UNESCO (2006), literacy involves not only the mastery of mechanical reading and writing skills, but also the ability to understand, analyze and produce texts effectively. This complex process of acquisition and development of linguistic skills is

fundamental for academic and professional success, being a pillar in the cognitive and social development of students.

The importance of integrating literacy into all areas of the curriculum has been widely recognized in education, particularly in the area of social sciences. This area offers a rich opportunity to foster critical reading and writing skills, as social science texts challenge students to understand and analyze cultural, historical, and geographic complexities, thus promoting meaningful and reflective learning.

However, it has been observed that there are significant difficulties in reading and writing among students in the fifth year of General Basic Education, at the time of analyzing the results of the Ser tests taken by the Ministry of Education this year reflect the following results in the block of History and Identity students do not master the skill of Analyzing presenting a result of 49.20 % which requires an immediate reinforcement of the mentioned skill, in the same way the skill of Examining should be worked on immediately because its equivalence is 57.00%, for which teachers should make their respective intervention and be able to reach the desired percentage, as for the skill of relating with a percentage of 42.90% the students should be leveled in a timely manner and thus be able to overcome in the most didactic way the said results, negatively impacting their academic performance, especially in social sciences. Faced with this panorama, the present research seeks to investigate didactic strategies and techniques that can be used to strengthen reading and writing in the area of social sciences, with the objective of improving the comprehension and textual production of students and, consequently, their academic performance, designing a methodological proposal which includes activities and didactic strategies in the History and Identity block of the social studies area in 5th Grade of EGB in which the Ministry has indicated that an immediate intervention is required, which allows teachers to strengthen their practice in the classroom.

This study is justified by the need to provide teachers with effective tools that allow them to integrate literacy in the area of social studies, thus overcoming the barriers that limit student learning. In addition, it is hoped that the findings will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on interdisciplinary teaching and offer practical insights for addressing literacy challenges in similar educational contexts.

### **Background on literacy**

Educational methodology has undergone major changes, allowing to work in direct contact with students, who in traditional

methodologies assumed a passive role based on the practice of memorization (Forteza, 2016). Currently, interactive, motivating and inclusive sessions are sought. Torres and Argentino (cited in Santiago and Capitillo, 2017) state that, “Methodology is a very important element in the process of design, implementation and evaluation of the class, because it guides the implementation of activities in a systematically organized, sequential and step-by-step manner, using sufficient resources that allow achieving quantitative and qualitative results, that is, directing the work, showing the path that allows progress towards the goals achieved in education”.

Ruiz Flores (cited in Forteza, 2016) points out that literacy has ceased to be an exclusive knowledge of some to become a fundamental need for social integration. Education has as one of its main objectives the acquisition of knowledge through reading and writing. According to Segers (1950), “reading is so common in today's society that it is no exaggeration to say that an illiterate person is maladjusted or handicapped”. This justifies the constant efforts to combat illiteracy because of the crucial role it plays in developed societies. Likewise, Goodman (cited in García, 2021) argues that reading and writing skills are not innate, but are acquired through meaningful experiences that allow the reader to model and adopt new learning strategies.

Literacy is taught from preschool through high school, fostering the relationship between reading and writing (García, 2021). However, difficulties may arise in the first years of primary education due to the increased complexity of the contents, which highlights the importance of having solid educational foundations to face these challenges. In addition, the methodology, understood as the joint activity of the teacher and the student during the teaching-learning process, must be flexible enough to adapt to the specific needs of the context (Forteza, 2016).

### **Syllabic method**

The syllabic method is based on the idea that the syllable is the basic and generative unit of literacy, allowing the formation of words and sounds that are subsequently combined into phrases and sentences. This methodology seeks to internalize in the student's thinking the awareness of the syllabic structure of language. However, one of its main challenges is that it tends to promote constant repetition, which can limit the construction of deep meanings and reduce teaching to a mechanical process focused only on shapes and sounds. In this sense, Ramos and Tejado (2011) state that “the syllabic method

begins with the teaching of vowels, then consonants, combining them with the five vowels to form syllables, and these are used to form words and then sentences” (p. 45).

This methodology offers the advantage of organizing content gradually and systematically, although it is also noted that it does not usually stimulate the senses through visual tools, but focuses mainly on memorizing phonetic patterns, which can limit reading comprehension and creative writing (Ramos and Tejado, 2011). Farfán (cited in Fortea, 2016) attributes the creation of the syllabic method to Federico Gedike and Samuel Heinicke, who conceived it as an inductive process. In this approach, students progress from the specific to the general, which allows them to progressively develop reading and writing strategies. As complexity increases, syllables become words and words become sentences, facilitating the development of cognitive structures to comprehend and produce texts.

### **Global method**

The Global method is presented as an alternative for teaching reading and writing according to the demands of modern society as well as the constructivist model that governs the entire Ecuadorian educational system, as Rosano (2011) points out “The global method allows the intervention of the senses, especially the visual memory which allows them to relate a figure with its meaning and therefore recognize words, phrases or sentences”. This method achieves an intelligent, efficient and realistic literacy that starts from their own external interpretation towards the construction of much more advanced cognitive structures in the sense that it forces them to think, relate, analyze, argue, i.e. a series of mental constructions that contribute to the realization of meaningful learning. In his postulates, Chartier (2004) states that “The global method is defined as the method of visual recognition of words, without analysis, without separation of words into syllables and without construction of systematic relationships between letter and sound”, i.e., it is located in a “global method”, that is to say, it is a method of visual recognition of words without analysis, without separation of words into syllables and without construction of systematic relationships between letter and sound. that is, it is located in a specific space of the morphology of letters and words in an integral way as a single indivisible concept that nevertheless allows the structuring of a conceptualization of the message it conveys and its relationship to a specific environment.

For Agudo (2013) the global method “is a natural method, since it follows the same process as language learning, which is based on repeating the words that we hear continuously” in this sense it becomes a tool that is related to the daily development of children, that is, it replicates a process as the cited author calls “natural” so it is easy to apply in the educational system taking into account that it is necessary to start from the experience, from the students' own capabilities and potential to achieve new and better learning products. One of the main characteristics of the global method is that it is based on the need to initiate the learning of reading and writing based on the individual's orality, that is, on the expression of what he/she observes, feels, needs and, based on this, to relate them with objects and figures of his/her environment that will later be expanded with meanings with texts prepared according to the age and educational needs.

For the application of this method, five phases are highlighted: the first is comprehension that requires the relationship of words with objects that necessarily must be of the immediate environment, as Hendrix (2009) points out “This stage seeks that students establish a first approach with the words of their environment, become familiar with the shape of words and relate them to objects” that is, it is required to work with words and objects or vice versa so that more than the structure of the text, the student establishes the meaning of the word as a structure of analysis and synthesis; the second is imitation, which according to what is pointed out by Rosano, M. (2012) “The imitative stage develops graphomotor ability to achieve the ability to draw letters and words”, i.e.. students can draw using signs after identifying objects and words and connect and recognize them. and symbols made of letters.

The third is refinement, where the need increases and naturally raises the level of complexity of understanding, associating and writing new words that suddenly no longer belong to our immediate environment, but were once part of the word. student experience; the fourth is production. This is the last stage of the global method, where students can apply their literacy knowledge in other activities that are not only related to learning, such as games, different subjects or activities that, in other words, are especially interesting to them, they must apply their new knowledge, and the fifth is the visual strategy, which is not a step of the global method.

### **Phonetic method**

The phonetic method represents an alternative based on the initial stages of letter recognition from sounds and of course pronunciation, which are then converted into diagrams and patterns, so authors like Bransford (2009) say that: “The phonetic method begins with the teaching of vowels, then the teaching of consonant sounds and with an image, fruit, object: whose name begins with the letter to be taught. “This method activates sensory perceptions and the ability to gather information through the senses, i.e., sight, hearing, smell and all possible senses work simultaneously depending on the creativity of the teacher to achieve visualization, internalization and interpretation of the students. image and sound of the letters beginning with vowels.

Another proposal related to the teaching of reading and writing is the so-called phonetic method, which according to a study by Quevedo (2015) “This method is based on e.g. teaching letters by their sound”, which means that the name of the letters is no longer used, but it is about teaching the sound of the sounds through drawings containing pictograms that begin with letters.

According to Alvarez (2009), “Borel-Maisonny's gestural method and Lemaire's mime-gestural method were built on the basis of the phonetic method” (p. 64), where each phoneme is associated with its corresponding sound using gestures. For Lemaire, Maisonny relates it to the position of the speech organs for the transmission of sound, while for Lemaire the gesture has enough affective value for the child. In this regard, Maldonado (2008) “The phonetic method consists of teaching the letters independently of their names” which means that; In this method, students use the individual sounds of the letters and then synthesize those isolated sounds into syllables and words, with an inductive construction until gradually and systematically arriving at general concepts. According to numerous studies (Freire 1998, García, M., and Sánchez, J. 2023) reading and writing are an essential part for logical thinking, autonomy, affective communication and deep understanding of interdisciplinary concepts of each individual, literacy is the process by which a student learns to read and write, this process is achieved through a system that begins at the age of 4 to 7 years. “The acquisition and mastery of reading and writing have become conceptual foundations that determine the cultural development of the individual” (Montealegre and Forero, 2006). It is clear that reading and writing are the union of two interrelated processes: reading and writing are cognitive processes that should be initiated in the first years of life.

The use of effective methods is essential in this process because learning to read ensures that students acquire knowledge about all subjects. Students should be encouraged to understand that reading and writing are the most important tools for acquiring, creating, and communicating new knowledge.

It is now clear that students in many schools have reading and writing deficits, causing problems in reading and writing comprehension, which directly affects their communication skills. However, this lesson is taught every year in basic education, where the level of complexity gradually increases, which if not corrected in time, generates problems in later studies (Avendaño et al., 2017) . It is worth mentioning that the development of reading-writing involves several stages of a cognitive process characterized by the passage from ignorance to the relationship between writing and spoken language; and combining written with spoken language. In addition, we need to move from the process of conscious operations such as recognizing phonemes, representing them with letters, synthesizing letters with words, ordering words to their automation. action and mastery of written text and written language. For this reason, the process of acquiring reading and writing takes into account the definition of the level of mastery of written language; levels of data processing when reading; the cognitive phase, of mastery and automation of reading; searching for meaning when understanding a text; declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge (Montes and Imbernón, 2018).

### **Theoretical foundation**

Literacy defined by UNESCO in 2006 is the ability to read and write adequately, a learning process that begins in early childhood education and develops until complete mastery is achieved. Hence, for Freire (1998), reading and writing are skills for constructing knowledge and actively participating in society. The author argues that literacy includes not only decoding letters and words, but also understanding and thinking about a text, providing students with the ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate information, which are essential skills for academic success in any field of study. Therefore, literacy is a fundamental skill for academic and professional development. In the social sciences, literacy is essential for the comprehension of academic texts, the production of written work, and participation in debates and discussions. García, M., and Sánchez, J. (2023). Literacy is a skill that we use to approach text comprehension as a teaching-learning strategy, focusing on the intrinsic interrelation of reading and writing, and we use it as an



integrated communication and metacognition system; reading and writing are inseparable elements of the same mental process.

Reading and writing are inseparable elements of the same mental process. Reading and writing is a process by which a learner learns how to read and have the ability to interpret a text and write using an alphabet, in itself is the ability to read and write, this occurs from 4 to 6 years. Children are set various tasks that involve literacy activities. Literacy represents the union of two methods that are totally connected: reading and writing. Literacy is the ability to know how to read and write texts for different purposes, literacy is based on interpretation and creation, not on deciphering codes.

Reading and writing are complex but fundamental activities on which the fact that human beings continue learning for the rest of their lives will depend. Reading and writing allow us to build important knowledge, but also provides the opening of new ways of communication between students and the social environment in which they develop. It is important to emphasize that both tools, reading and writing, should be introduced to the child in a motivating way that attracts their attention and that they enjoy. Interesting activities that promote fine motor skills and visual-motor coordination, such as working with play dough, chopping or using the brush and paint to create their own works resulting from the imagination and creativity of the student, the students learn to read and write in a dynamic, motivating and practical way, through the sounds of the letters, phonemes are minimal units of the language, different from each other, that all speakers know and when we use them we do it in the form of sounds or letters, the learning of reading and writing is a process that is achieved when the child is in an optimal degree of maturation and with the rest of their emotional conditioning factors (family, friends, environment ...) do not suffer any anomaly, everything is in the same way. ) do not suffer any anomaly, every child will learn to read sooner or later, it is a somewhat complex skill that requires many different abilities.

According to Vigotsky (1978), reading and writing is not a simple process of deciphering letters and words, but a complex social and cultural activity that involves understanding and interpreting meanings. The author emphasizes that literacy learning is developed through social interaction, in an environment that provides support and guidance to the child during the process of acquiring written language, and that literacy is not a simple process of deciphering letters and words, but a complex social and cultural activity that involves the understanding and interpretation of meanings. The

author emphasizes that learning to read and write is developed through social interaction, in an environment that provides support and guidance to the child during the process of acquiring written language. According to Vigotsky (1977), literacy is not restricted to a process of decoding letters and words, but is a social and cultural process that involves the understanding and interpretation of meanings; literacy learning originates from social interaction, in an environment that offers support and guidance to the child in the learning process. Vigotsky argues that literacy learning is not a unique and homogeneous process, but occurs in different stages and levels of complexity. He also stresses the importance of the relationship between spoken and written language, and how both complement each other in the learning process, and has had a great impact on education, especially in early childhood and primary education. His ideas have led to a re-evaluation of literacy teaching, highlighting the importance of the social and cultural environment in the learning process and the need to adapt teaching methodologies to the individual characteristics of each child.

Piaget's theory of reading and writing focuses on children's cognitive development and how it influences their ability to learn to read and write. According to Piaget, learning to read and write is a process that occurs in different stages and depends on the mental maturity of the child. In the first stage, known as the pre-reading stage, children are in a period of exploration and experimentation with written language. They learn to recognize shapes and symbols, and to associate them with sounds and meanings. At this stage, reading and writing are playful activities that have no clear communicative purpose. The second stage, known as the decoding stage, is when children begin to associate sounds with letters and words. They learn to pronounce words and understand their meaning, but are not yet fully familiar with the grammatical and orthographic rules of language. In the third stage, known as the comprehension stage, children have already acquired a more advanced knowledge of language and are able to understand more complex texts. At this stage, reading and writing become more formal and structured activities. Finally, in the fourth stage, known as the reflective stage, children are able to reflect on language and use it creatively. At this stage, reading and writing become tools for critical thinking and self-expression.

All these skills together lead to the ultimate goal of reading: "Reading comprehension", opens a great door to learning and information management ensuring a form of communication that can endure over time and develop imagination and creativity improves

attention and concentration, developing skills such as understanding and reflection and in turn improves and expands the vocabulary, through writing can capture and convey ideas or thoughts. The child is constantly learning and every aspect of his life that he masters will cultivate self-confidence, self-esteem and independence. Therefore, we can affirm that these processes are essential in the development of a child.

### **Development and stages of reading and writing**

Different authors make proposals about the stages of reading and writing, taking into account that in learning to read and write, a child goes through several stages until he/she is able to acquire the written and spoken code. Being aware of these stages is very important to be able to identify and know the students' previous knowledge, and on the other hand, it helps us to determine where they are in their learning process. Díez Vegas, Pardo de León, Anula Alameda and González Arechavala (1999) are based on the research of Ferreiro and Teberosky (1979), creating a series of stages, emphasizing five levels or stages of code learning, written. Level 1: undifferentiated, differentiated, syllabic, syllabic alphabetic and finally alphabetic.

Level 1: Indistinguishable/undifferentiated  
At this stage, children already distinguish between writing and drawing, they understand that, using straight lines, curves or dots, they can both write and draw. “The shape of the letters has nothing in common with the shape of the object to which they refer, and their order has nothing in common with the order of the parts of the object” (Ferreiro, 1991). Children use their own spelling that only they understand; no one else can interpret what they write. Children often rely on the properties of objects when they write a word. At an integrated level, the child learns two main characteristics of writing: arbitrariness, i.e., unlike drawings, writing does not repeat the shape of the object or the linearity of the writing. Attempts are made to imitate the formal qualities of gestures and written text during writing. As the child progresses, he/she will understand how many spellings a word should have and that the spelling should be different. Literacy development is underpinned by fundamental skills that enable children to learn to read and write effectively. These include Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Figura 1

*Primer ejemplo de escritura indiferenciada*

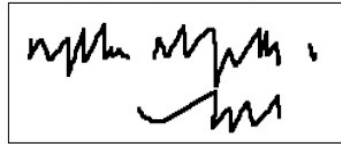
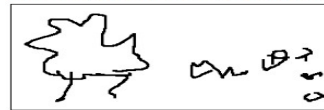


Figura 2

*Segundo ejemplo de escritura indiferenciada*

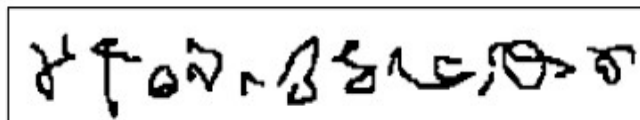


## Level 2: Differentiated

At this level, students are aware that drawing is a form of representation and writing is a form of communication. Although children imitate or recognize some letters of the alphabetic code, they do not yet assign a phonetic value to them, creating pseudo-letters. At this stage, the child develops three very important hypotheses for the development of writing. The first hypothesis is the internal variation, the child understands that there must be different graphic signs in the text. We also find the quantitative hypothesis, which is that a word must have a minimum number of letters. It has meaning, and finally we find the external hypothesis, because both words have different meanings, they must have different spellings (Figure 3).

Figura 3

*Ejemplo de escritura diferenciada*



## Level 3: Syllable

At this level, the student begins to associate writing with sounds. At this stage, the child develops two hypotheses, the first hypothesis is a quantitative syllable, for each syllable the child hears, he assigns a grapheme to it, and the next hypothesis is a qualitative syllable, which usually includes one of the sounds in each syllable. “The resulting sound-letter correspondences are not conventional, but for the first time children understand that written alphabetic representation must focus almost exclusively on the sound pattern of words” (Ferreiro, 1991). As Figure 4 indicates.

Figura 4

*Ejemplo de escritura silábica*

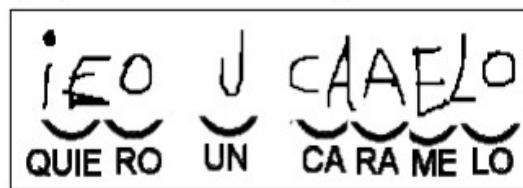


#### Level 4: Syllable-Alphabet

The child develops leaving behind the syllabic hypothesis and begins to learn to read and write. Figure 5 as an example. At this stage, “some letters continue to replace syllables, while others continue to replace small sound units (phonemes)” (Ferreiro, 1991).

Figura 5

*Ejemplo de escritura silábico-alfabético*



#### Level 5: Alphabetic

At this level, children already know that each word consists of phonemes that represent each letter. Children write complete words, although they have not yet mastered the specific orthographic rules of writing, such as punctuation, spaces, uppercase and lowercase letters, etc. Therefore, we can say that this stage is not the end of literacy development, but new cognitive skills related to the orthographic code are still emerging (Figure 6).

Figura 6

*Ejemplo de escritura alfabética*



Students begin to develop the literacy process from level 4 (syllable-alphabet) because at this level students begin to read and write, therefore already at this level we can speak of reading comprehension, at a very low level, We emphasize level 5 (alphabetic) because at this level the students already know the spelling rules, since this is one of the weaknesses that we have found in the students of 5th grade EGB of the Princesa Paccha School, since they read and do not understand what they are reading and do not have an analysis of their reading because they do not know the spelling rules that should be applied in reading, so that it is profitable for the student. Learning to read and write is a complex and multifaceted process that begins in early childhood and continues throughout life. It is essential to provide children with the opportunities and support they need to develop these fundamental skills for success in school and in life.

### **Literacy Skills and Learning**

Teaching reading and writing requires certain skills without which learning would be very difficult. When a child understands that each letter corresponds to a sound and each sound corresponds to a letter, he or she can access the meaning of the word formed by those letters. To do this, you must memorize the sounds of the letters until you can read the word automatically. To adequately develop this process, the child must have phonological, cognitive and language skills. Phonological skills are those that allow distinguishing elements of spoken language such as syllables and phonemes. From the age of three or four, children can separate words into syllables with the help of games or nursery rhymes, but it is very difficult for them to separate words into phonemes. Phonemic awareness or knowledge is acquired when a child begins to read and write articulately, it does not emerge spontaneously as syllabic awareness. Phonological skills also include lexical awareness, that is, the ability to separate the words that make up a sentence. In general, three- and four-year-olds find it more difficult to separate words in a sentence than to separate them into syllables, so lexical awareness begins to develop when sentences need to be written. Thus, phonological skills develop at certain stages, and although there is an indicative age for their acquisition, each child follows his or her own learning process.

Knowing whether two words rhyme or not and dividing a word into syllables are skills that are developed before learning to read and write and facilitate this process. According to González (2010), phonological awareness plays a crucial role in learning to read. This skill allows children to identify and manipulate the sounds of

language, which is essential for the development of reading fluency and comprehension.

Similarly, a child must have cognitive skills to learn to read and write. With the help of these skills, the child can understand whether or not he understands the word or text he is reading, and both are important at the beginning of the process at age five, in the last year of early childhood education . . . and in their studies. the first year. Elementary school, when the teaching of clear literacy and then the acquisition of new learning begins. Working memory and naming speed are two of the most important skills to achieve this learning, especially for children with difficulties. Working memory allows the child to retain the sounds of the letters he reads in his memory and eventually make connections with them, access the meaning of the word he reads and retain the meaning in memory. of the sentences that make up the text to understand the reading. According to Piaget (1976), children's cognitive development plays a fundamental role in the acquisition of literacy skills. Phonological awareness, memory and attention are crucial elements in this process.

### **Literacy and its relation to the area of social sciences**

Freire (1998) and García M. and Sánchez J. (2023) discuss literacy as an essential tool for constructing knowledge and participating in society, highlighting its importance in the social sciences for understanding academic texts and participating in debates.

### **Problems in literacy learning**

As Gallego and Rodriguez (2001:158) say, “literacy is a tool whose significance is evident; therefore, the difficulties that may appear in it are considered a basic special educational need that should be detected as soon as possible and treated adequately. It is necessary to change the organization of schools, so that everyone works and learns from their possibilities, as Maruny, Ministerial and Miralles (1997) say. This does not mean that everyone learns equally, but that no one feels excluded; a teacher must take into account the pace of each child and show a motivating attitude towards teaching and learning. Literacy requires a series of consolidated skills and abilities that are acquired through multidisciplinary experiences through movement, which allows the child to develop mental functions and organize their perceptions, leading to learning, with the implementation of active methodologies related to literacy, teachers should no longer only impart knowledge, but also guide the construction of learning. Literacy should be the basis for learning because it is the main foundation for acquiring knowledge and

improving oral expression. In Ecuador, there has been a lack of concern for the development of oral expression in children.

Before reaching fifth grade in relation to reading and writing, students should develop skills such as identifying the main idea of what they have read, explaining how the author uses facts and evidence to support the text, comparing texts from different cultures, understanding information presented in graphs, taking notes, organizing data, using figurative language, word relationships and nuances in the meaning of words.

The influence of literacy problems in all areas of children's lives, from spelling errors to difficulties in structure and organization, and how the family, the school, and the therapist play an important role in their development (Pisco and Navarrete, 2021). Lack of literacy skills can hinder comprehension of texts in mathematics, science, social studies, and other areas, which in turn can limit students' ability to solve problems, interpret data, and communicate their thoughts clearly and coherently. For this reason, literacy problems in children have repercussions in all areas and environments of their lives, from spelling errors to difficulties in structuring and organizing paragraphs, syntax and punctuation; the family, school, therapist and student play a preponderant role in the process of developing reading and writing skills. Pisco and Navarrete (2021)

We will mention some reading and writing problems that have been detected in society:

- There is a low reading rate in students, in parents, in teachers, in the community because they have not been formed with a good reading-writing habit.
- There is a lack of vocabulary and writing, and little use of the dictionary, which is why there is poor spelling.
- The values of interest, encouragement and self-esteem need to be developed more in order to take into account what the student does in the field of reading and writing; in other words, the affective element needs to be worked on more because there is no clarity between the teacher and the student about the language of the areas.
- Reading and writing have repercussions in the oral expression of the individual; therefore, there are deficiencies in oral expression, incoherence in the handling of ideas and inability to have dialogues, because there is a lack of literacy or training of teachers so that they



can develop elements that tend to improve the differences between reading and writing; this literacy applies to all areas.

- In reading and oral expression we find low levels of comprehension, interpretation, analysis, synthesis and explanation, which makes the students' reading not understandable.

- Somehow, the use of notebooks has been neglected to fulfill the function in benefit of reading and writing. Because reading is done out of obligation, but not for pleasure. Obligation causes anxiety, and anxiety can never be a faithful companion of reading and writing. Reading and writing should be made a pleasurable act that leads to recreation in the different areas of the curriculum.

#### Strategies to strengthen reading and writing through social studies

In order to strengthen literacy through social sciences, various didactic strategies can be implemented to promote reading comprehension and written expression in the context of this discipline. Below are some suggested strategies: Comprehensive reading of social science texts: Select relevant texts from history, geography, sociology, among others, so that students practice reading comprehension and can extract key information. In their book *La comprensión lectora en el contexto de las ciencias sociales* (2016), Cárdenas Cárdenas, Salazar Obeso and Cárdenas Ortiz examine the challenges and strategies for teaching reading comprehension in the social sciences. They emphasize the need to choose texts that are relevant, engaging, and appropriate for the students' developmental level. They also suggest different strategies to guide students in comprehending and analyzing texts, such as summarizing, identifying key concepts, making inferences, and evaluating information.

Analysis of primary and secondary sources: Working with historical documents, academic articles, research reports, among others, so that students develop analysis and synthesis skills. Writing essays on relevant social science topics is a basic educational activity that fosters the development of higher cognitive skills, such as organization of ideas, coherence and reasoning. According to Dewey (1910), he emphasized the importance of essay writing as a basic tool for learning and expressing critical thinking. Debates and discussions: Promote debates on social science topics so that students practice written and oral argumentation, substantiating their opinions with evidence. Conducting a debate has many advantages, especially for students. Debate and discussions are crucial for students' academic success because they enhance their

research skills by using electronic sources and written media (Delago, 2018; Mayoral et al., 2018). Therefore, various pedagogical and didactic perspectives recognize that discussion has formative value and allows students to develop oral argumentative discursive strategies. Essay writing: asking students to write essays on relevant social science topics, encouraging the organization of ideas, coherence, and argumentation.

In his book *Estrategias de lectura* (1992), Solé emphasizes the importance of writing as a means of understanding and acquiring knowledge. He emphasizes the role of essay writing in helping students organize their thoughts, analyze information, and understand complex social science concepts. Concept mapping and outlining: Using visual tools to help students organize information and understand relationships among concepts in social studies. Novak (1990) argued that concept maps are an effective tool for representing knowledge and facilitating meaningful learning. By allowing students to visualize relationships between concepts, concept maps promote a deeper understanding of topics.

Guided Investigations: Pose research projects in which students are required to search for information, analyze it and present their findings in writing, developing research and academic writing skills. Guided inquiry is an educational method that allows students to actively construct their own knowledge. According to Dewey (1938), learning should be experiential and guided inquiry provides students with opportunities to explore and solve real-world problems.

Use of multimedia resources: Incorporate videos, podcasts, infographics or other multimedia resources related to social sciences to enrich understanding of topics and motivate students to express their ideas creatively. Mayer (2001) has shown that coherence and signposting are key principles in designing effective multimedia materials. By incorporating videos, podcasts, and infographics into social studies lessons, we can enhance student understanding and facilitate meaningful learning. These strategies can be adapted according to the educational level of students and the specific goals of social studies instruction. By combining reading and writing with the study of this discipline, we promote comprehensive and meaningful learning.

Meaningful learning. Freire (1998) and García, and Sánchez (2023) assert that reading and writing are essential for logical thinking,

autonomy, affective communication and deep understanding of interdisciplinary concepts of each individual. Therefore, the need for an explicit and systematic teaching of literacy within the area of social sciences and how this can improve not only students' linguistic skills but also their ability to understand and analyze the world.

## **Materials and methods**

Method is defined according to Lebrero and Lebrero (1999:13,14) as “the skill chosen by the teacher for the organization/structuring of the work, so as to achieve the objective as directly and efficiently as possible”. For a procedure to be strong, the following conditions must be met: - That it contributes to the total development of the student; - that it encourages the activity of the student in the learning process as well as the intercommunication of the students; - that it adapts to the rhythm of the advancement of individual typologies; - that it motivates intrinsically; - that it takes place in a relaxed atmosphere of controlled freedom; - that it makes possible in the students the knowledge of their progress and their self-evaluation of learning; - that in its development it allows the transfer to other areas and learning. Regarding the choice of teaching method for reading, Cuetos et al (2003:133) say that “it is one of the most important decisions that schools have to make, since it is undeniable that school success depends to a great extent on the mastery of reading”. These writers tell us that the choice of one procedure or another is usually determined by practice (the teacher teaches with the method he/she was taught) and in many cases the method is chosen following the proposal of the publishers. Salmon (2009:64) believes that “literacy programs for young children have a tendency to overemphasize the systematic instruction of isolated reading and writing skills [...] minimizing key elements such as comprehension, vocabulary, and motivation”. Domínguez Chillón and Barrio Valencia (1997:55) have found that when you ask teachers about the advantages of the method they use, there tends to be a series of coincidences “...” (Domínguez Chillón and Barrio Valencia, 1997:55).

This paradigm seeks to understand how students construct meaning from their experiences and cultural contexts. It focuses on analyzing how they interpret texts, connect new information with their prior knowledge, and develop critical skills through reflection and analysis (Coll, 1990). The teacher acts as a guide, encouraging

dialogue and the construction of meanings. During the research, activities such as debates, discussions and essays were carried out that promoted the exploration of personal interpretations and the development of literacy.

### **Qualitative Approach - Descriptive Research**

The qualitative approach provided insight into the unique processes and contexts of literacy learning through observation, interviews, and text analysis (Patton, 2022). The research focused on current teaching and learning practices in fifth grade EGB, identifying patterns, strengths, and areas for improvement (Bernal, 2006; Tamayo & Tamayo, 2006).

### **Phases of the research**

**Diagnosis:** A diagnosis was carried out to identify students' strengths and weaknesses in literacy. This facilitated the creation of personalized activities that fostered the construction of meanings. According to Coll (1990), it is essential for students to understand abstract concepts and causal relationships from an accurate diagnosis.

**Instrument design:** Questionnaires, tests, and observation guides were designed as tools to collect relevant data. The validity and reliability of these instruments were fundamental to guarantee the quality of the research (Solé, 1998; Cassany, 1993).

**Data analysis:** The data collected were analyzed to find patterns, trends, and areas of improvement in students' literacy. The findings confirmed that reading comprehension is an active and constructive process (Solé, 1998).

### **Techniques used**

**Surveys:** Surveys were administered to teachers and students, using Google Forms to expedite data collection. The surveys provided useful information on literacy skills and allowed identifying behavioral patterns and attitudes (Siegel, 2016).

**Observation:** Observations were conducted to analyze students' behavior during literacy activities. Observation allowed capturing more subtle aspects of the learning process that were not detected through surveys. Gambrell and Almasi (2006) emphasized the importance of observing students to adjust instruction according to their needs.

### **Content analysis**

The teacher's lesson plan was reviewed, revealing that traditional strategies predominated, which diminished student interest. The lack of didactic resources also negatively affected their literacy performance, as evidenced by low test scores. It was recommended to urgently level the students in order to develop analytical and relational skills.

### **Study population**

The research was conducted with students from the “Princesa Paccha” Educational Unit, located in the province of Orellana. The sample included ten students in the fifth year of EGB, selected to evaluate their reading and writing skills. According to Tamayo and Tamayo (1997), the population is a set of individuals who share a common characteristic relevant to the study.

### **Results**

The main results obtained from the survey conducted with the students of the fifth year of general basic education allowed us to know the level of knowledge they have about the object of the research, and the assessment and interpretation of these.

The results of the second question, according to the respondents, 90% say that they have knowledge of the four activities of the first settlers and 10% do not have knowledge of the first activities.

The results of the question according to the literals answered by the respondents gives us the following result 77% of the respondents answered the questions correctly and 23% did not answer correctly.

In question 4 the following result was obtained from the responses of the literals in general, 75% of the respondents got an excellent mark and 25% was a deficit in the question.

According to the respondents to question 5, 66% know the archaeological sites found in our Ecuador and 34% have no knowledge of them.

66.67% have knowledge about the tribes in the aboriginal society and 33.83% do not.

### **Results of the fifth grade teacher**

This is the culmination of the whole diagnostic process. Once we have analyzed the data, it is time to transform that information into concrete actions to improve the literacy skills of our students. Developing an intervention proposal is a creative and flexible process. It is important to adapt the proposal to the specific needs of each group of students and to the context in which the teaching takes place. Solé, I. (1998). *Estrategias de lectura*. Barcelona: Graó. Solé offers a wide range of strategies to improve reading comprehension.

### **Guide of methodological strategies for social sciences**

The organization and orientation of questions, exercises, explanations and classroom management are influenced by teaching methods or strategies. If participation is encouraged, teacher-centered expository methods may work best. Interactive approaches, in which the student is at the center of the activity (cases, problem solving, simulations, investigations or projects), base learning on peer interaction and cooperation. The organization and orientation of questions, exercises, explanations and classroom management are influenced by teaching methods or strategies. If participation is encouraged, teacher-centered displays can be optimized. interactive techniques, in which interactive approaches, in which the learner is at the center of the activity (cases, problem solving, simulations, investigations or projects), base learning on peer interaction and cooperation.

What are they? Teaching strategies:

It is how we teach social sciences are an explanation by the teacher or the resolution of cases by the student body. We understand “method” or “strategy” as the path that has been chosen to reach the proposed goal. This goal may include the development of intellectual capacities of social thinking or of communicative and social skills, the learning of concepts and procedures, the interpretation of historical and geographical issues, and the acquisition of values, attitudes or habits. In fact, the methods guide the social management of the classroom, questions, exercises, explanations and evaluation activities in a given order.

A useful criterion for classifying the various methods is to identify who is at the center of the activity: if it is the teacher, then expository methods predominate; if it is the student and peer interaction and cooperation are favored, then interactive methods predominate; if the student learns individually through self-learning materials, which

are now abundant thanks to telematics, we are dealing with individual methods, peer interaction and cooperation. It is evident that there is permeability among the three methodological modalities, although the orientation and procedure vary in each of them. Thus, in an expository class, participation and interaction can be promoted, while the resolution of cases by students usually requires some explanation by the teacher.

#### Strategies for cooperation, interaction and participation in Social Sciences

- Even in classes where teacher exposition predominates, give priority to strategies based on cooperation, interaction and participation, because these strategies facilitate the social construction of knowledge.
- Revive the methods so that the new generations learn in social science subjects to reason, question, criticize and work with cases, problems, simulations, etc.
- The social sciences are a construction in constant renewal because their own evolution, the formulation of new questions or the raising of new issues incorporates other approaches and the emergence of other themes and interpretations. Therefore, the use of primary sources in the classroom.
- Different skills through social thinking (interpreting, classifying, comparing, hypothesizing, synthesizing, predicting, evaluating) and critical thinking (evaluating ideas and points of view, understanding in order to act, making decisions, producing alternative ideas and solving problems). In addition, recovering the notion of social sciences as sciences that help students to understand, situate and act.

#### Participatory strategies for the expository class

The expository class in which the teacher is the center of the activity is still a very popular method for teaching social sciences. Expositions usually include, to a greater or lesser degree, questions that students answer and the performance and correction of exercises or other complementary tasks that allow them to process information and apply knowledge, stimulating routine thinking, or they may propose more creative situations that encourage the development of critical thinking.

#### How learners learn in an expository class

As long as the students meet certain conditions, knowledge can be acquired by reception.

- To connect new information with what they already know, they use their previous knowledge. To understand and comprehend new content, it is necessary to have learned certain concepts and methods, i.e., to have certain learning requirements.
- Listen attentively and with interest, which is not always easy or may even be impossible in some contexts or for some students who are not very motivated by the subject or studies.
- Retain the most significant and crucial part of the explanations. We know that we remember about 40% of the main points immediately after listening to a lecture, and only 20% are left after a week. Note-taking or any other recording system can help to fix and remember, but it is a process that must be learned and not all students have automated it.
- Perform out-of-class work to systematize and structure the information collected to facilitate its assimilation and memorization. This stage is crucial to store data in the semantic memory, which lasts a long time and allows adding meaning to new content.

#### Resources to encourage student participation

Getting students to participate is a way to liven up the class and keep attention alive. In an expository class, it is convenient to use simple resources, which do not require a lot of money for their preparation and management, and to divide students into pairs or small groups, focusing more on the proximity of the participants than on other criteria.

- The class should begin with a question, encourage conversation and discuss the answers.
- A slightly more complex technique is to propose a question to find out what the students know or think, and form groups of three or four students.
- Each group should express itself quickly and freely, without restrictions, expressing everything that comes to mind in relation to the topic. Criticism is not allowed, everything is valid. It is convenient to take note of what was mentioned.

#### Discussion

Integrating literacy into the area of social sciences is an essential strategy for improving the academic performance of fifth grade students. On the one hand, this integration facilitates a deeper understanding of historical, geographical and social processes. At the same time, it allows the development of fundamental cognitive



skills such as analysis, synthesis and interpretation of relevant information.

In addition, this strategy not only strengthens communication skills, but also promotes the ability to collaborate and participate in group discussions. In fact, working on literacy through debates, essays and projects contributes to the development of critical thinking, which is key to problem solving. Likewise, by fostering social engagement and civic participation, students not only acquire knowledge, but also tools to interact effectively in their environment. On the other hand, the study shows that explicit and systematic teaching is essential to overcome the difficulties identified. In this sense, it is essential that teachers adopt innovative teaching strategies that integrate reading and writing in their classes, in order to offer a more meaningful and contextualized education.

Finally, the strengthening of literacy skills has a positive impact on all areas of knowledge, not only in social sciences. Therefore, this methodology contributes to the integral development of students, improving their academic performance as well as their social and communicative skills. Thus, it is evident that an interdisciplinary education that promotes literacy not only guarantees better school performance, but also forms critical citizens who are prepared to face the challenges of the future.

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