



Playfulness: a pedagogical strategy to strengthen learning to read

La lúdica: estrategia pedagógica para fortalecer el aprendizaje de la lectura

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Abstract

Playfulness represents a kind academic process in the teaching practice because the characteristics of learning allow it to be conceived as a pedagogical strategy that promotes meaningful learning. The general objective of this research was to strengthen the learning of reading in the third grade of the Santa Ana Educational Institution through play as a pedagogical strategy. The approach is qualitative, of an interpretative type and with an action research design. The population is formed by two teachers and the proposal is implemented in third grade students. The techniques used were the interview, participant observation, diagnostic test and survey; the instruments were represented in the field diary, questionnaire and interview guide. Among the results obtained are the fulfillment of the three objectives, as well as the design and implementation of the proposal which left significant learning in the students. It was concluded that it is substantial to develop playfulness as a learning strategy that allows a style of apprehension of knowledge, to promote autonomy, since it facilitates the assimilation of new knowledge, ideas based on their own meanings and the construction of their own harmonious learning environment, in which the student is autonomous.

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Keywords: Playfulness; pedagogical strategy; learning to read.

Resumen

La lúdica representa un proceso académico bondadoso en la práctica docente pues las características del aprendizaje permiten que sea concebida como una estrategia pedagógica que promueve el aprendizaje significativo. Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo general fortalecer el aprendizaje de la lectura en el grado tercero de la Institución Educativa Santa Ana mediante la lúdica como estrategia pedagógica. El enfoque es cualitativo, de tipo de es de tipo interpretativa y con diseño de investigación acción. La población está conformada por dos docentes y la propuesta es implementada en los estudiantes de tercer grado. Las técnicas utilizadas fueron la entrevista, la observación participante, prueba diagnóstica y encuesta; los instrumentos estaban representados en diario de campo, cuestionario y guía de entrevistas. Entre los resultados obtenidos están el cumplimiento de los tres objetivos, así como el diseño e implementación de la propuesta la cual dejó aprendizaje significativo en los estudiantes. Se concluyó que es sustancial desarrollar la lúdica como estrategia de aprendizaje que permita un estilo de aprehensión del conocimiento, para promover la autonomía, pues facilita asimilar nuevos conocimientos, ideas basadas en significados propios y la construcción de un ambiente de aprendizaje propio, armonioso, en el cual el estudiante sea autónomo.

Palabras clave: Lúdica; estrategia pedagógica; aprendizaje de la lectura

Introduction

Reading is intentionally encouraged through teaching, developing a long process in terms of the time required by the child to acquire

reading competence. In this sense, in the school scenario it is a priority for the teacher to promote and encourage the development of reading skills of students in the early stages of the process, to focus their interest in cognitive development and to transcend in the didactic task from a perspective that allows the approach of the teaching process of reading with innovative and creative methodologies that encourage the child in learning to read from the motivation that drives the actions in the classroom.

In this context, play represents a kind academic process in teaching practice, since the characteristics of learning allow it to be conceived as a pedagogical strategy that promotes meaningful learning through innovation and creativity. It offers students the possibility of optimizing knowledge acquisition processes, recreates contexts and provides security to the learner. Through play, attitudinal components in learning can be framed, thus providing the motivation to generate autonomous learning, which has a meaning according to the context to transmit concepts and develop skills.

In this sense, this research addresses play as a pedagogical strategy to strengthen the learning of reading, given the difficulties that some students have in acquiring reading skills. For which, it is necessary that the teacher uses innovative strategies, and adapts them to the learning project that he manages, to make this process more effective and dynamic, and to achieve the development of competencies in the student.

Based on the above approach, playfulness is presented as a fundamental pillar in learning, this implies the link with previous knowledge, for the construction of a new one based on the meaning for the learner and the environment in which the teaching action is developed. Therefore, it is proposed as a space for the construction of knowledge, since the application of this pedagogical strategy in the classroom encourages students' motivation towards knowledge, since through the relationship between the subject and the object, it allows the acquisition of concepts in the classroom where they interact in their learning rhythm.

Reading, then, stands out as one of the basic components of human life, in general, it is part of the set of skills that allow complexifying the performance of the human being in life and, doing it well, ensures the procedural context in all fields of knowledge, having as main axis the

valuation of the stimulus that comes from the outside for the formation of an adequate educational context. In this sense, the teacher seeks to bring knowledge in an effective way, with didactic strategies that guide the formation of the student in order to achieve significant learning.

In that order of ideas, the teaching of reading is an essential part of learning, since it allows the student to appropriate the world from his or her own perception. Ehri (2003, as cited in the United States Agency for International Development USAID, 2018) points out that learning to read is a complex process for both educational actors, the student and the teacher, and achieving it is the result of an intentional process that begins in the early stages of childhood. In this regard, USAID (2018) states that in different evaluations conducted in several countries, a high percentage of children were found to have difficulties in reading and writing as appropriate for the school grade they are in, it highlights that "students who have difficulty reading in the first three school years have difficulty catching up" (p.9).

In Colombia, despite the fact that basic primary education according to Alvarez and Topete (2000, as cited in Montes, 2017), "is oriented to meet the satisfaction of basic learning needs, the establishment of the necessary bases for learning to learn, the formation of attitudes and habits necessary for lifelong learning" (p.71), there are factors that negatively impact the educational process, among them points out Zubiría (2018), the way of teaching under traditional learning methodologies, when contemporary challenges and ways of learning of students have changed a lot.

On the other hand, the delay that reading presents in school environments is correlated, among others, by factors associated with pedagogical practices, being considered a mandatory activity, imposing its practice, time, place and subject matter to develop that often do not attract the attention or interest of children, USAID (2018) adds "the difficulty of obtaining teaching materials either by high cost, late distribution or scarcity" (p.24).

This problem has become evident in several scenarios, among them in the results of the SABER tests developed by the Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education (ICFES) that measure the competencies of students in basic primary education, specifically in the areas of language and mathematics. Delgado (2014) highlights

that in the area of language for the year 2009, about 40% of students were found with a level of knowledge considered minimum and 20% insufficient.

In the period 2012 to 2015, notes the Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education (2018, as cited in Sanabria et al., 2020), the results for third grade in relation to reading, the average number of students in the insufficient category was 21%, 30% in moderate, 30% satisfactory and 18% in advanced, showing that more than half of the participating students have difficulties in reading. For the year 2018, in the PISA tests in the subject of reading in primary education Colombia significantly deteriorated, achieving in the results 412 points, a lower performance than the average among the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Referring to the context of study, in the Santa Ana Educational Institution, the learning of reading presents difficulties, particularly the third grade students, who have deficiencies in decoding information, problems of retention and subsequent comprehension of the meaning of words and phrases, and have not yet acquired the habit of reading. On the other hand, teachers express the concern of using other ways of teaching, leaving the traditional methodology through strategies that encourage the student's interest in reading, because the methodology they have been using is behaviorist and has not achieved favorable results in the progress of reading in students.

It is evident that if this problem continues in the institution for learning to read, third grade students will have problems related to the construction of meanings, their representation, in becoming aware that letters represent significant sounds, that they can articulate words and understand what they mean, with the purpose of appropriating the process of learning to read.

In this scenario, the teacher has a fundamental role, whose role should be that of a builder of an educational work oriented towards a practice, capable of mobilizing the student in terms of knowing how to be, do and learn, therefore, it is necessary that the teacher in the classroom implements motivating and encouraging learning strategies of the child's attitude towards the positive plane of the didactic activity. In this regard, Mejía (2021) states that it is necessary

a process where the teacher encourages students to build learning, so that learning becomes an individual and progressive process.

To this end, it is necessary to implement methodologies to encourage children to read with strategies that awaken their interest in learning to read in order to build a significant and progressive progress in the reading process of third graders.

Based on the previous approaches, it is worth mentioning the importance of using innovative methodologies, including play as a way of access for the acquisition and appropriation of the necessary skills to promote reading skills in children. In the case of this research, we intend to strengthen the learning of reading through play as a pedagogical strategy, taking into consideration the reality present in the third grade children of the Santa Ana Educational Institution, where teachers, although they follow the guidelines of constructivism, even the children have difficulties in reading due to problems of motivation, attention and interest.

For the above mentioned, the review of the problems related to the learning of reading becomes a fundamental aspect to have a vision of the situation that is intended to be transformed by implementing the proposal proposed in this research. This allows us to formulate the following research question: How to strengthen reading in third grade children of the Santa Ana Educational Institution through play?

In this context, the general objective of this research is to strengthen the learning of reading in the third grade of the Santa Ana Educational Institution through play as a pedagogical strategy. And the specific objectives formulated are the following: to design a pedagogical proposal based on playfulness, to implement the pedagogical proposal based on playfulness for the improvement of reading comprehension in third grade children, to evaluate the effect of the implementation of the proposal based on playfulness for the improvement of reading comprehension in third grade children.

From the above, it is highlighted that the educational scenario is facing the challenge of strengthening learning processes, including reading, as a fundamental aspect for students to develop favorably at every stage of their lives, assuming and putting into practice the new methodologies that provide innovative strategies in contexts that are familiar to children.

In this sense, the promotion of initiatives to achieve quality in education is supported by pedagogical strategies because they contribute to the development of a collaborative and autonomous learning process, since each student has its own cognitive structure for learning, in turn, allows the teacher to use creativity as a motivating and interesting element for the student. In this case, they are linked to the learning of reading, therefore, the theoretical argumentation of this aspect and the incidences it has to achieve meaningful learning is presented, having as a context of support the playfulness, a fundamental part to generate knowledge and at the same time entertainment for the learner in the teaching and learning process.

Playfulness as a strategy represents the opportunity to develop integral learning through the execution of guiding actions that strengthen the educational process and the cognitive apprehension of students. In this sense, its incorporation to strengthen the learning of reading gives teachers the possibility to argue their actions based on innovative activities where creativity, participation and entrepreneurship play a fundamental role at the time of carrying out the planning.

On the other hand, play activities are configured as strategic tools that stimulate meaningful and self-constructive learning in the different contexts where they can be put into practice, creating and shaping pleasant environments that facilitate the development of skills and competencies in the area of knowledge required by the student, in this case to learn to read. When children put into practice the game in the educational scenario, they are learning, experimenting and exploring from the experiential.

Thus, building pedagogical strategies based on play represents the design of a set of tools, activities and resources to be used by the teacher to facilitate the learning process of reading, based on the close interaction between the teacher and the student.

The researcher Barrera (2021), undertook the task of investigating how the pedagogical strategy improves reading comprehension. As a conclusion, the author states that there was evidence of a low appreciation of playful activities to facilitate the teaching and learning processes through creative, striking and innovative activities that awaken the interest of students. On the other hand

Likewise, the work of Figueroa and Farias (2018), entitled *Ludic methods in the learning of elementary sub-level reading is exposed. Guide of ludic activities*, developed in the Ecuadorian context in Guayaquil. Its purpose was to present the ludic method as an innovative tool to achieve results with respect to the shortcomings detected in the learning level of reading. The study was carried out in the facilities of the Escuela de Educación Básica Fiscal José de la Cuadra y Vargas, the studied population of the elementary sub-level of the Escuela de Educación Básica Fiscal José de la Cuadra y Vargas is formed by the director, the fourth grade teacher, a total of 32 students and 32 parents.

The methodology applied was mixed, bibliographic, with field design. Among the conclusions is that the ludic methods openly contribute to the improvement of the teaching-learning process in the area of Language and Literature, arising or the need to implement a Guide of Ludic Activities that contributes to the development of the learning of reading in the students.

The work of Ramos, Llorente and Hernández (2017) entitled *La Lúdica como Estrategia Pedagógica para Motivar la Enseñanza de la Lectura y la Escritura en los Estudiantes del Grado 5° de Primaria de la Institución Educativa Eugenio Sánchez Cárdenas del Municipio de Lorica Departamento de Córdoba*, in Spain stands out. Its objective was to propose play as a pedagogical strategy to motivate the teaching of reading and writing allowing the strengthening of competencies in the area of Spanish language.

A qualitative type of research was used, based on participatory action research, through direct observation and interviews with 28 students who made up the population of this research, it was found that the implementation of playfulness strengthened the processes of teaching reading and writing. Because the students developed study habits with a different methodology and also with the implementation of the research work it was possible to improve the academic processes.

At the national level, the study by Melo (2020), entitled *Analysis of teachers' and students' conception of the game as a didactic resource for learning: experience in primary education*, aimed at identifying and reflecting on the conception that teachers and students have regarding the game as a didactic resource in the teaching and

learning processes. It is based on the results of a survey used in the framework of a qualitative research work on the development of communication skills in a school in the city of Bogota. Emerging categories of analysis were designed for the study. The results led to the conclusion that both teachers and students value the use of games as an activity to promote learning, but they are not used due to the perception they have of them.

On the other hand, Perdomo and Rojas (2019), conducted the research entitled *La ludificación como herramienta pedagógica: algunas reflexiones desde la psicología*, developed in Bogotá, Colombia. Its main objective was to determine the relationship between the dimensions of psychological functioning and gamification as a novel pedagogical strategy. Under a documentary approach methodology, a conceptual review was carried out related to the proposed topic.

The research found that there is a close relationship between psychology and the gamification strategy, since gamification is based on multiple processes that guide the ways in which individuals develop knowledge, such as motivation, emotion and associative learning, playing a key role, since they are linked to the search for and fulfillment of goals and achievements, a fundamental aspect of this form of teaching, which places gamification as a fundamental reference in pedagogical innovation in the different areas of knowledge.

Similarly, Marulanda and Regino (2017) developed the research entitled *playfulness as a pedagogical strategy to strengthen the school environment relationship and healthy coexistence in fifth grade students of the I.E.D Isaac Newton in Barranquilla, Colombia*. Its main objective is to implement play as a strategy to improve the school environment relationship and healthy coexistence in fifth grade students of the IED Isaac Newton, to achieve this end a methodology was used within a qualitative paradigm with a socio-critical approach and descriptive research, a population comprising 65 children of which and the sample was 35 students of the fifth grade in the afternoon was handled.

As instruments or techniques for data collection we used observation, field diary, interviews and questionnaires with open questions where the child can express him/herself widely, filming with informed

consent in different activities, recreational activities, dramatizations, expert assessment and cooperative games. The results obtained show that the playfulness contributes effectively to strengthening the relationship between school environment and healthy coexistence and was reflected in the new behavior of the students, and their interest in achieving coexistence.

Changes in teaching and learning processes have given way to constructivist actions to respond to the *raison d'être* of learning, as acquisition of answers, knowledge and as construction of meanings. In that order of ideas, Barrera (2010) points out that knowledge is a construction that manifests itself in reality "that can be a reflection of facts, but of a mental nature, on which processes are organized and from which both knowledge and the reality to be known are constructed". (p.99)

Under this premise, a coherent relationship is established with the main objective of this research, given that the playful method is an essential part of human reality, and in turn, pedagogical strategies for the achievement of meaningful learning arise from the experience and knowledge of the teacher, in which a set of criteria that give shape and meaning to the daily experience in the educational context are interwoven.

In this regard, Díaz (2002) argues that constructivism has as its premise that the cognitive, social and even affective aspects of the individual are the product of his own construction that is generated day by day as a result of the interaction with the surrounding environment. Consequently, according to the constructivist position, knowledge is not a faithful copy of reality, but a construction of the human being. The instruments with which the person carries out this construction are fundamentally the schemes he already possesses, that is to say, what he has already built in his relationship with the environment.

In this sense, knowledge arises from the constructive activity carried out by an individual to assimilate and master a content, and is developed in a given socio-educational context. Hence the importance of promoting educational processes that promote personal growth, as referred to by Carretero (1989, as cited in Díaz, 2002), that lead to transformation and promote both socialization and individualization, allowing students to build a personal identity within the framework of a given social and cultural context.

In this context, the construction of knowledge is linked to pedagogical activities that must be previously designed, planned and executed according to the intentionality of learning, of certain knowledge or cultural forms in their natural context and are recreated in the form of school content, for which Serrano and Pons (2011) state that the meaning and sense of what is learned must be guaranteed, based on three fundamental aspects such as: the constructive activity as a mediating element between the student's cognitive structure and the previously established knowledge; the sense and construction of meanings made by the students must be in accordance and compatible with their meaning and represent the contents as contents as previously established knowledge: constructive activity as a mediating element between the student's cognitive structure and the previously established knowledge; the sense and construction of meanings made by students must be in accordance and compatible with their meaning and represent the contents as cultural knowledge already elaborated; the teacher's role is to ensure the proper link between the student's constructive mental capacity and the meaning, social and cultural sense represented by the school contents.

According to Jiménez (2002), playfulness responds to different dimensions of man as a social being, including personal and social relationships by interacting with others in a pleasant way and giving a sense of humor to their daily lives. Likewise, Zúñiga (1998, as cited in Echeverri and Gómez, 2009) points out that playfulness is part of daily human existence, being necessary for every moment of life, since it is a fundamental part of human harmonious development, and becomes an attitude, a predisposition of being in front of life or a way of being in life.

In the educational scenario, playfulness favors the consolidation of knowledge, acquisition of knowledge, as well as, according to Fernández et al. (2018), it generates a harmonious learning environment between students and teachers, where spontaneous situations that generate satisfaction are presented, "the playful capacity is developed by articulating global psychological structures such as cognitive, affective and emotional" (p.54). In this way, the activity performed allows the student to acquire skills and competencies for learning, as well as, to improve social and personal relationships, as referred by Perdomo and Rojas (2018) involves "motivation, emotion and associative learning" (p.164).

In this sense, Perdomo and Rojas (2019) state that the main objective of playfulness "is to motivate people to assume desired behaviors or perform actions that they would not usually do", thus encouraging the fact of performing an action for the pleasure of doing it and achieving a goal. Thus, the author emphasizes that in this context it is evident that some constructs underlie play, whose understanding encompasses, in addition to pedagogy, psychology, directly linked to motivation, emotion and associative learning.

From this perspective, the authors point out the influence that playfulness has in consideration of these links. Thus, learning motivated by means of play provides stimuli and provokes a response in those who receive it, this motivation is present when: the game facilitates the feedback of previous knowledge, the student will feel the joy of knowing what is being put into practice; if there are rewards. From, associative learning, motivation will be even greater if the contents are of interest to the student. And with respect to emotion, motivation will be activated if the playful activity minimizes the negative emotions of the students who play, decreasing fear and anger and increasing positive emotions, such as joy, sharing with friends, among others.

In the teaching and learning process, the teacher, in addition to transmitting knowledge, needs to interact with the student, in order to achieve active participation, motivate and interest him/her in the educational act in which he/she is immersed, for this the teacher has a variety of tools that allow him/her to translate knowledge into meaningful learning in his/her students, among them, according to Sánchez, et al. (2019), are the pedagogical strategies, whose design should be oriented to a specific purpose taking into account the needs and characteristics of the group.

In this sense, López (2016) expresses that pedagogical strategies are "procedures or resources that consciously and in a planned manner used by the teacher to promote the desired learning" (p. 113), therefore, they are the ways of acting of the teacher to generate learning in the student, where the planned actions will depend on the learning objectives and the psychological characteristics of the students.

In that order of ideas, the teacher in the action of the teaching process dynamizes the pedagogical strategies that will enable substantial

progress at different levels of education and therefore, in each student, from the perspective of what is to be achieved through the objectives planned to develop classroom academic activities, being fundamental that the teacher must have a solid theoretical training that leads him to recreate creative and innovative processes to attract the attention and interest of the student. In this regard, Moreno (2016) states that pedagogical strategies are made up of methods, techniques, procedures and resources organized according to the needs of the group to make learning more effective. According to this premise, pedagogical strategies tend to favor the production of knowledge, so the teacher needs to promote their application, but based on the existing reality.

Likewise, González (2008), conceives didactic strategies as a constructive, practical activity created by the teacher together with the student to put into practice all those skills and knowledge that both can contribute, but for this it is necessary that the teacher defines the moment in which they will be used to obtain the best results in learning and thus the information remains in the student's long-term memory. In addition, such strategies will support the teacher in activating the students' previous knowledge and even help to generate it if there is none.

Thus, a strategy requires steps to lead the student towards the established goal, being a process through which the action or set of actions to follow is organized, being necessary to propose a set of techniques or methods to procure learning based on collaborative and shared improvement between teachers and students. It is about forming attitudes, skills, processes, to generate self-learning and student autonomy, consequently, it presupposes broad visions to make relevant decisions adapted to the real context where the educational process is developed.

Therefore, according to Zepeda (2016), a strategy conducive to achieving the planned change involves the following conceptual components: theoretical considerations, as a harmonious and coherent conceptual support with the stated objectives; impact, generated with the action developed; sequence of action in the process, referred to the procedural content of the strategy to achieve the established end; adaptation to the context, vertex of attention in the content of actions developed in a specific place, with particular

characteristics and effectiveness in the results, with the monitoring of the actions developed, conducive to the achievement of the end.

It is then highlighted that pedagogical strategies are determined by the use given by the teacher in his or her reflection and actions, through the demonstration of mastery, professional and didactic experience, to achieve meaningful learning. Therefore, they involve multiple elements such as the age of the students, specific knowledge, attitudes, skills, classroom organization, methodology, physical plant; in addition to communication, organization, approach, feedback, supervision, among others. Therefore, they include objectives, contents, methods, form, means and evaluation that depend on the pedagogical practice of the teacher, on his or her particular way of interpreting the school reality and on the ways of knowing the context.

Methodology

The research approach is qualitative, following the approach of Teppa (2012) who expresses that its purpose is "to describe and interpret exactly the social and cultural life of those who participate in the research" (p.23), it is of an interpretative type, under the design of action research, according to Basagoite and Bru (2002) its main purpose is the dynamics of knowing to transform the investigated reality. The population under study were two teachers of the third grade of the IE Santa Ana, and two groups of students, children between 8 and 10 years of age, for a total of 60, being 35 girls and 25 boys. The technique used was the interview, the instruments used were a diagnostic test, the observation guide and the guide to implement the proposal, validated satisfactorily by the teacher, the parent and the student. To evaluate the reliability of the research, the triangulation of sources was carried out and the categorization technique was used for the analysis of the information.

Results

Two categories were established a priori as types of strategies and playful method, which are presented below and from the responses of the teachers interviewed, the subcategories corresponding to each one emerged, in order to subsequently proceed to the reflection on

the information collected. The link between the findings of the interviews, the bibliographical information and the epistemic position of the researchers is also shown, with the purpose of achieving the objective set in this research referred to strengthening the learning of reading through play as a pedagogical strategy.

Table 1. *Category type of strategy*

Subcategory: Educational games
<p>Teacher 1: Among the strategies I use is playing in the classroom, in an orderly manner and assigning the role that corresponds to each student, with clear and precise instructions so that the children can perform in the best way. Class planning should include the information corresponding to the way it is going to be developed, in order to achieve meaningful learning. Therefore, it should include all the elements of an academic activity. I believe that the important thing is to establish the strategy, objective, methodology and activity to be carried out according to the learning needs of the children. The activities should be simple, according to the competencies required by the students in the grade where they are. The educational games I use are developed based on reading accompanied by stories and tales.</p>
<p>Teacher 2: When I am in class, I find that the best way to connect with the children is through play, because it allows them to interact, to relate to each other and also to have healthy competition. For me it is the best way to teach the class, of course, but each game must have a planning and an objective to pursue, so that it can be truly effective as a pedagogical strategy. It is very important to design educational material to strengthen reading and writing, so that children learn through play, the instructional competencies inherent to the grade they are studying. The game for learning is an appropriate strategy to achieve the identification of the child with his peers and with the school.</p>
Subcategory: Group dynamics
<p>Teacher 1: The most important thing is to get students to integrate in order to facilitate learning, and cooperation is a strategy that motivates them to learn. Of course, it must be planned as an effective class, through which the objective, methodology and evaluation are established. I think that the pedagogical strategy should be established by the teacher according to the behavior and profile of the classroom, since the important thing is to achieve significant learning. The activities should be simple, well planned, because the children are young and not all of them have a good command of reading and</p>

writing. She motivated them to read by doing group dynamics, such as shared reading, directed reading and reading aloud.

Teacher 2: I have always considered that children should learn in a fun way, because that is the way they can have a meaningful learning. Therefore, I consider that working through dynamics, all in teams, is a strategy that should be used in the classroom as a facilitator of the child's learning process. I use dynamics with the children in groups, I believe that working together helps to strengthen learning, the children feel the support among them and with the teacher, learning together as friends and classmates. We read stories with the help of everyone, forming rounds and interpreting the characters of the story.

Reflection of the researchers: The pedagogical act is the result of a set of strategies that allow the assimilation of specific contents. In the case of this research, strengthening the learning of reading, so important for the apprehension of other areas of knowledge. For this reason, the teacher must be innovative in the activity of teaching, so that he/she can achieve significant learning in the school process and can be cognitively and socioemotionally useful in the student's daily life, that is, learning for life. Educational games represent a type of learning strategy that allow the acquisition of significant knowledge. In addition, they promote the development of skills and abilities, according to the instructional objectives proposed by the teacher. Normally, games based on stories, fables and cartoons are used to enhance students' imagination. It is also important to highlight the usefulness of group dynamics, since through this strategy it is possible to learn and strengthen reading through a joint process among all students in the classroom, allowing the assignment of roles and functions in which each member is responsible for an aspect of the didactic activity to be carried out.

The category types of strategies was worked through the subcategories educational games and group dynamics, which emerge as pedagogical strategies that guide the teacher to achieve the objectives related to the learning of reading and to make it a motivating and interesting process for the children.

It should be noted that what was stated by the teachers interviewed shows the importance of implementing strategies related to play in order to develop a motivating process for the child to become involved in the reading process in a harmonious way and with interest, since reading is a fundamental process for the individual, as it is part of the set of skills to interact with the world around him/her. For this

reason, in the classroom, the teacher must design and plan a suitable educational material for the child to acquire and strengthen this skill to gradually turn it into a competence that he/she will strengthen and apply throughout his/her life.

Accordingly, López (2016) states that strategies are "procedures or resources that the teacher consciously and in a planned manner uses to promote the desired learning" (p. 113); they are the ways in which the teacher acts to generate learning in the student. The planned actions will depend on the learning objectives and the psychological characteristics of the students.

Thus, strategies are determined by the use given by the teacher in his pedagogical reflection, through the demonstration of mastery, professional and didactic experience, to achieve meaningful learning. Therefore, they involve multiple elements such as the age of the students, specific knowledge, attitudes, skills, classroom organization and methodology.

On the other hand, it is noted that the use of repetitive and unmotivating strategies by the teacher has a negative impact on the learning process, since it lowers the level of motivation and in turn produces rejection of the subject under study by the students. This situation is observed when using basic and not very innovative activities in the teaching of reading, which causes the need to use learning methods consistent with the context and the needs of each student, so that in a harmonious and interactive way the creation of a collaborative learning environment is propitiated, in an efficient, pleasant and enjoyable way.

Table 2. *Category playful method*

Category: Playful method
Subcategory: Teamwork and creativity
Teacher 1: Team activities allow for a satisfactory, dynamic and fun integration between groups of students, generating significant learning during the process. I think it is important to work as a team and be creative so that the student learns in a fun way, so defining the strategy according to the objective to be achieved is fundamental. The teacher's intention should be to lead children to use their imagination, to get involved with reading. In my role as a teacher I try

to use creativity all the time, the children are enthusiastic to participate in learning, and to work collaboratively, the children feel confident to obtain results from a work done by everyone.

Teacher 2: When I am in class, I connect with the children through play, because it allows them to interact, to relate to each other and also to have healthy competition. When teamwork and cooperation among them is promoted, it gives positive results. Applying creative strategies to work together provides positive results in learning. For me it is the best way to teach the class, of course, but each strategy must have a planning and an objective to pursue, so that it can be truly effective in the learning process, it must be clearly defined so that all children participate actively, are interested in getting involved and being part of the team. Implement playfulness as a pedagogical process that offers satisfaction, team learning, creativity and autonomous learning.

Subcategory: Autonomous learning

Teacher 1: I believe that students should be encouraged to develop autonomous learning, always with the help of the teacher, to be the guide of the process, for this the child should be motivated to participate in the process, although sometimes children do not show interest in learning to read. Therefore, the strategies to be used must be clear and well defined, if a well-structured educational material is elaborated, the student can be autonomous in his learning process, and by using playfulness, a pedagogical process can be developed that offers satisfaction, team learning, creativity and autonomous learning.

Teacher 2: Children should be actively involved in the process of learning to read, be interested and participate in all the moments of the class, in such a way that autonomy is achieved at the moment of learning. The teacher should be the guide of learning, so that the child, through a collective and dynamic process, with the intervention of all, in a harmonious way, can be the protagonist of his own learning.

Reflection of the researchers: In order to achieve meaningful learning, the teacher must use innovative and creative strategies in the teaching activity, so as to develop a collective and dynamic process where students participate collectively and as a team, with activities that allow more freedom and encourage students' attention, as well as an adequate autonomous environment for interaction and achieve better results in the construction of knowledge, generating a shared responsibility in relation to their own and their

classmates' learning. In this context, playfulness should be incorporated in the activities planned to achieve the instructional objectives, as a means for the child to feel motivated to learn. We work under the principle of coordinated action between students and teachers, to promote formative and fraternal competitiveness. Teamwork is the essence of the action, where all team members are important and transcendent in light of the established objectives.

In this context, the educational game is a learning strategy conceived as a space to develop creativity in the student through recreation. Through this playful process, learning takes place in a fun way, managing pedagogical knowledge as an essential activity of the daily walk within the school. We start from the premise that a game adapted to the age and competencies of the student represents a significant learning model for him/her, as Labrador and Morote (2008) refer "the teacher needs to select the type of game, according to the objectives and the importance of the teacher in the participation and direction of the game" (p.54), as well as it must be in accordance with the educational level where it will be implemented.

Likewise, Méndez and Fernández (2011) argue that the game is gaining importance as an educational medium, as it becomes a didactic resource. Therefore, any game that is used to achieve meaningful learning in students must be inclusive, formative, innovative, participatory and creative, in such a way that it can inspire and motivate. Based on the above, the teacher considers the importance of vindicating the importance of play as a resource for learning, especially in the use of educational games, highlighting the need for it to be a suitable means to motivate students to strengthen their reading skills.

Likewise, it is essential to establish the importance of group dynamics as a strategy to motivate the participation of children in the acquisition of reading through a process that develops harmoniously, actively and together among children, as referred by Barroso, et al. (2013) "are didactic activities where the participation of learners is implicit and are intended to facilitate the teaching process and cause significant learning in the participants"(p.29), becoming a novel strategy to reinforce learning, in this particular case, reading in third graders. This process allows the assignment of roles and functions in

which each member is responsible for an aspect of the didactic activity to be carried out. Therefore, teamwork, solidarity, respect, and discipline are the foundations of this process.

Play is part of human life; every day human beings face situations that reflect play, entertainment and comfort. Based on this fact, it can be linked as a pedagogical method that currently has been recognized by social researchers due to the benefits it brings to the teaching process. It is important to point out that play has an interactive dynamic in the learning process, since it represents a stimulus and a directionality towards creativity and teamwork, because when the child plays, he/she is also learning, both rules and instructional content. According to Ramírez et al. (2011), playfulness stimulates cognitive, affective, verbal, psychomotor and social relationships, the socializing mediation of knowledge and creativity.

This is why learning strategies based on play are a potential tool for meaningful learning, since they facilitate a pleasant, attractive and creative environment. Specifically, in the field of reading, the design and application of educational material based on playfulness, which allows the acquisition of skills and competencies for reading, through a friendly, understandable and easily accessible design, is transcendental. This process suggests metacognition as an approach prone to the understanding of reality in an entertaining, creative, innovative and fun space, which has a satisfactory impact on the motivation of children to strengthen reading comprehension.

On the other hand, developing the conceptual approach of play to strengthen reading in students, it can be affirmed that it is an active methodology that adds novelty to the teaching and learning process, particularly in the learning of reading and in the acquisition of the skills to carry it out. By linking the game with the learning process, dynamics, mechanisms and rules are generated, which are adapted to the content and the instructional objectives to be achieved, creating an interactive, collaborative and competitive learning environment that seeks to motivate and engage the student through a system of stimuli and rewards, which will result in promoting their interest in learning to read to know and interact with the narrative of the plot that develops in the game.

In this regard, Castro (2020) points out that by implementing playfulness in the classroom, students achieve a higher performance in reading comprehension because when they want to reach the first places in the competition (game) they are attentive to the text they read and the interpretation they make, which influences the development of the reading habit. In agreement, Ortiz (2015) point out that using playfulness in the classroom creates commitment on the part of the teacher, as well as the student, favors the implementation of new ideas that motivate him to participate in the learning process, which has an impact on the improvement of his reading performance. Martí and García (2021) coincide with this, stating that playfulness is a resource that improves reading comprehension, since it promotes attention to reading for its adequate interpretation in order to solve the riddles posed in the game.

Conclusions

Playfulness as a pedagogical strategy made it possible to encourage meaningful and autonomous learning in the learner in a simple, clear and didactic way, with the student as the main actor in the learning scenario. In this way, the activities were designed to generate autonomous and collaborative learning, through the linking of playfulness and the use of stories, with the purpose of stimulating the child's interest in acquiring the habit of reading and thus, strengthening reading, in turn, the commitment to be an active part of the teaching and learning process that was carried out with the implementation of the proposal.

The implementation of the pedagogical proposal was carried out with dynamic and simple activities, which allowed, at first, to reinforce the children's previous knowledge and later to achieve the new ones, such as strengthening the reading habit.

It was found that the effects produced with the application of play as a pedagogical strategy to strengthen reading were significant. Each proposed activity was evaluated according to the expected achievement, allowing a procedural evaluation of the scope of its implementation, as highly positive, since it was fully accepted by third grade teachers and students, obtaining favorable results for the

children's reading skills. Likewise, it was possible to develop autonomous learning, which resulted in the strengthening of reading skills, reading comprehension, making inferences, recognizing words and sounds that favored fluent reading.

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