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Teaching practices in multi-grade classrooms in the rural schools of Bajo Lorenzo and Nueva Granada in Puerto Asís, Putumayo

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to characterize rural pedagogical practices in the multi-grade classrooms of the rural educational institutions Bajo Lorenzo and Nueva Granada, located in Puerto Asís, Putumayo. The study was conducted under the interpretive paradigm, with a qualitative approach and a descriptive scope, to obtain relevant information about the subject studied. The focus of this research allowed us to know the elements that teachers articulate for their didactic planning, the strategies, educational resources, spaces, and criteria they establish to evaluate the teaching processes of each student, as well as the professional and occupational profile of each rural teacher. Finally, action research was chosen because it facilitates the emergence of reflective dialogues. The results show that most of the teachers have the appropriate profile, but due to the context and the lack of personnel in the school, they have to perform other functions as well as teaching. In addition, the teachers of the multi-grade classrooms do not deal with flexible pedagogical models. Therefore, identifying the strengths and weaknesses in multi-grade classrooms, along with determining the relevance of planning and didactic implementation categories, pedagogical methods and evaluation strategies in MEFs will bring about a real change in these institutions. As a result, it is necessary to determine the relevance of teaching practices in the Escuela Nueva and Post-primaria educational models of the mentioned educational institutions.

Keywords: rural pedagogy; new school; multilevel pedagogy; pedagogical models; teacher.



Article resulting from the research entitled: *Pertinencia de las prácticas docentes en los modelos educativos flexibles inmersos en aulas multigrado de las instituciones educativas rurales Bajo Lorenzo y Nueva Granada del municipio de Puerto Asís, Putumayo*, conducted from January 10, 2020 to June 20, 2023, in the department of Putumayo, Colombia.

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Prácticas docentes en aulas multigrado de las instituciones educativas rurales Bajo Lorenzo y Nueva Granada de Puerto Asís, Putumayo

Resumen

El objetivo del este estudio fue caracterizar la práctica pedagógica rural en las aulas multigrado de las instituciones educativas rurales Bajo Lorenzo y Nueva Granada, ubicadas en Puerto Asís, Putumayo. El estudio se realizó bajo el paradigma interpretativo, con un enfoque cualitativo y un alcance de tipo descriptivo, a fin de obtener información relevante acerca de la temática estudiada. El énfasis de esta investigación permitió conocer los elementos que los docentes articulan para su planeación didáctica, las estrategias, los recursos educativos, los espacios y los criterios que establecen para evaluar los procesos de enseñanza de cada estudiante, asimismo, el perfil profesional y ocupacional de cada maestro rural. Finalmente, se optó por la investigación acción, ya que facilita el surgimiento de diálogos reflexivos. En los resultados, se evidencia que la mayoría de los docentes tienen el perfil adecuado; sin embargo, debido al contexto y a la falta de personal en la escuela, deben realizar funciones adicionales a la enseñanza. Además, los docentes de aula multigrado no manejan los modelos educativos flexibles. Por lo tanto, identificar las fortalezas y las debilidades en las aulas multigrado, y establecer la pertinencia de las categorías de planeación y ejecución didáctica, las metodologías pedagógicas y las estrategias de evaluación en los MEF propiciarán un verdadero cambio en las instituciones. A raíz de esto, es necesario determinar la pertinencia de las prácticas docentes en los modelos educativos de escuela nueva y postprimaria de las instituciones educativas mencionadas.

Palabras clave: pedagogía rural; escuela nueva; pedagogía multinivel; modelos pedagógicos; profesor.

Práticas de ensino em salas de aula de várias séries nas escolas rurais de Bajo Lorenzo e Nueva Granada em Puerto Asís, Putumayo

Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo foi caracterizar as práticas pedagógicas rurais nas salas de aula de várias séries das instituições educacionais rurais Bajo Lorenzo e Nueva Granada, localizadas em Puerto Asís, Putumayo. O estudo foi conduzido sob o paradigma interpretativo, com uma abordagem qualitativa e

um escopo descritivo, a fim de obter informações relevantes sobre o assunto estudado. O foco desta pesquisa nos permitiu conhecer os elementos que os professores articulam para seu planejamento didático, as estratégias, os recursos educacionais, os espaços e os critérios que estabelecem para avaliar os processos de ensino de cada aluno, bem como o perfil profissional e ocupacional de cada professor rural. Por fim, a pesquisa-ação foi escolhida porque facilita o surgimento de diálogos reflexivos. Os resultados mostram que a maioria dos professores tem o perfil adequado, mas, devido ao contexto e à falta de pessoal na escola, eles têm de desempenhar outras funções além da docência. Além disso, os professores das salas de aula de várias séries não lidam com modelos pedagógicos flexíveis. Portanto, a identificação dos pontos fortes e fracos das salas de aula de várias séries, bem como a determinação da relevância do planejamento e das categorias de implementação didática, dos métodos pedagógicos e das estratégias de avaliação nas MEF, produzirão uma mudança real nessas instituições. Como resultado, é necessário determinar a relevância das práticas de ensino nos novos modelos educacionais escolares e pós-primários das instituições educacionais mencionadas.

Palavras-chave: pedagogia rural; escola nova; pedagogia multinível; modelos pedagógicos; professor.

Introduction

The relevance of rural education in Colombia is a highly relevant issue in the socio-economic and cultural context of the country. Despite national educational progress, rural areas continue to face significant challenges that require special attention. This introduction explores why it is crucial to address and strengthen education in Colombia's rural areas.

In this regard, according to the National Department of Statistics (DANE, 2019), in its National Report on Formal Education - EDUC, in most rural centers of the country, children are attended by four, three, and even one teacher, who is assigned the responsibility of dealing with several grades in one classroom, regardless of the complications that this entails. The dynamics and impasses that exist in multi-grade schools have been little studied in the country, which in a way ignores the relevance of teaching practices in multi-grade classroom strategies, with the possibility that the results may not be the most appropriate.

In this sense, an antecedent that contributes to the present study is that of Molina (2019), entitled: *El quehacer del maestro y la formación*

docente en la Escuela Rural Multigrado, whose objective was to study the different characteristics of the educational institutions and their teachers in order to find keys for their improvement, considering that rurality, its complexity, and the difficulties of teaching are unknown.

In the same way, the styles of rural schools are detailed with reference to the educational modalities, emphasizing the multi-grade strategy and the post-primary educational offer as continuity to the process carried out with the flexible educational model of Escuela Nueva, whose rural educational centers are catalogued as unitary schools that lack the capacity to guarantee that children develop the basic competencies, which are defined by the quality standards in Colombian education and, metacognitive and meaningful learning.

Another important study was conducted by Marines and Flores (2021), entitled: *The influence of teaching practices on school dropout*. The general objective was to analyze the influence of teaching practices on school dropout among children of the Institución Educativa Rural Nueva Granada (IERNG) of Puerto Asís (Putumayo, Colombia), during the years 2015-2019. It was framed under a mixed

or complementary research paradigm, where the key informants were: students from elementary to middle school, addressing the three flexible educational models, namely: new school, post-primary and new rurality, with the participation of dropout students belonging to one of these flexible models.

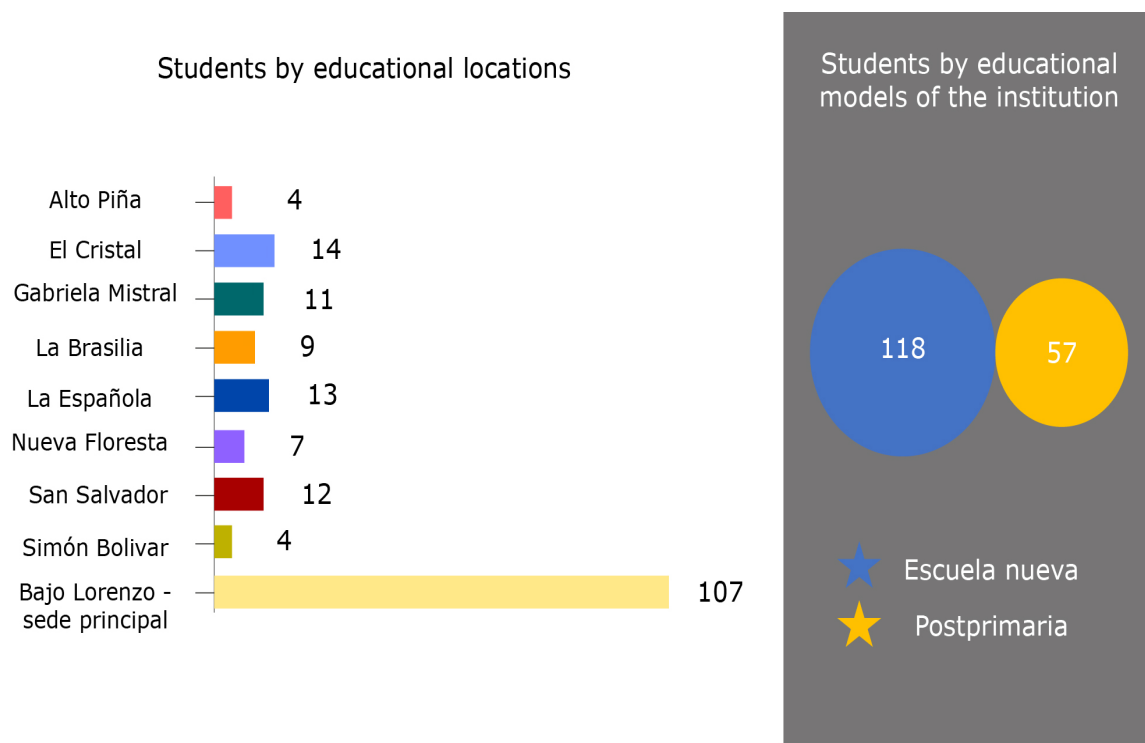
In addition, this study included the variable 'Pedagogical practices and their impact on dropout'; it was important to collect information on students' perceptions, attitudes, and preferences about the teaching and learning they received in the institution. Thus, in the dimension 'Teacher's Methodology', the authors obtained the following information: traditional 52%, playful 21%, study guides 25%, and classroom projects 5% (103 students). As evidenced, the predominant practice in flexible educational models is hetero-structuring, reflecting that teachers, for various factors, develop a methodology in the traditional teaching-learning processes with an incidence in this ability of 52%, according to the students surveyed.

The information provided is significant because it generally includes characteristics and dynamics similar to those recommended in this study, which establishes a reference for future research and makes rural education and its quality in Colombia visible locally, regionally and nationally.

This research proposal focuses on two rural educational institutions: Bajo Lorenzo and Nueva Granada, located in the municipality of Puerto Asís, in the southeast of the department of Putumayo, which have a social fabric analogous to the same problems of the international context: low test results, few teachers, complex geography, among others. Likewise, the education provided in these schools is based on the Flexible Educational Models (MEF) of Escuela Nueva and Post-primaria, in terms of different techniques, dispersed locations, and difficult access, according to the enrollment in the Integrated Enrollment System (SIMAT), as of May 2021.

Figure 1

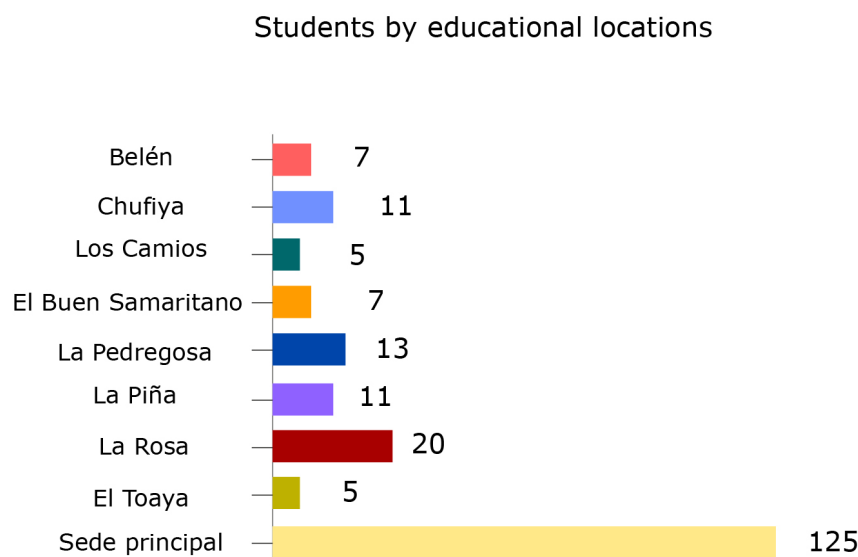
Total number of students in the I.E.R. Bajo Lorenzo



Source: SIMAT, 2021.

Figure 2

Total number of students in the I.E.R. Nueva Granada



Source: SIMAT, 2021.

As shown in figures 1 and 2, the technical relationship and distribution of the academic load in both institutions is unequal and complex, especially considering that different strategies must be used to meet the needs of students in different subjects and grades at the same time and in the same classroom. In addition, the fact of working with two educational models requires adequate articulation and cohesion in order to provide them with the necessary tools for their comprehensive education.

Taking into consideration the educational environment, the aim is to generate transformations in the teaching practices in order to promote meaningful learning. Therefore, two objectives were considered: 1) to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching task in multi-grade classrooms of the two rural schools; 2) to make a theoretical referencing to determine the relevance of the teaching practice in multi-grade classrooms, applying flexible educational models to generate a reflective discussion of educational work

and quality, to transform the circumstances of the rural formative process from pedagogical practice in a socio-cultural perspective.

Through the triangulation of information and based on the approach of Ramírez (2013), the triple entry table was applied, consisting of the categories of analysis, the sources from which information is requested, and the instruments applied to the sources. This matrix was used for the analysis, interpretation, and validation of the field results.

In this research, the development of key informants is referenced; therefore, qualitative research was used to determine the relevance of teaching practice in two rural educational institutions in the department of Putumayo, which could be interpreted as the academic support of the project. It should be clarified that this set of referents, which are part of the conceptual framework, form an articulated, coherent, and consistent unit; therefore, it is postulated according to its general categories.

Teaching practice

According to Bazdresch (2000), teaching practice is the set of actions, operations and mediations, knowledge, feelings, beliefs and powers that are developed in the classroom with an educational sense; that is, intentionally, as an educational action and therefore the practice is a carrier of intentional, reflective and rational theory that operates with meaning and knowledge of cause. Thus, teaching practice is a thoughtful and voluntary activity that acquires great importance in strengthening the social fabric, which must be developed in an intentional and planned manner. In this regard, Carr (1999) states: "It can only be made intelligible in relation to the often tacit and at best partially articulated schemes of thought in which professionals make sense of their experiences" (p. 101). In short, it is a matter of thinking about professional activity in terms of the following questions: for what and why do we teach, how should we teach, how and why do we learn? among others.

Pedagogical Model

In relation to the above, there are two concepts that guarantee the course and sequence of this research. One of them is the one proposed by Loya (2008), who argues that pedagogical models are structural modules that, due to their relationship with the content developed in the pedagogical works and/or with the teaching practices they configure, have a very close validation criterion and, at the same time, serve as a tool for analysis. Such models are descriptive-explanatory categories, auxiliary to the theoretical structuring of pedagogy, but they acquire meaning only when they are theoretically contextualized. From this perspective, pedagogical models are not only elements that determine pedagogical practice, but also make it possible to explain pedagogical practice in terms of its theoretical development.

A pedagogical model is a set of theories, objectives, teaching, documentation and experiences recognized in its empirical work. Ultimately, it is the materialization of the pedagogical discourse that reflects the

pedagogical, didactic and educational ideas of the teacher. Therefore, a pedagogical model can be considered as the exposition of an educational code, translated into conservation, either in an established and traditional order or in the possibility of being a transforming entity.

According to the approaches, learning models and teaching practice in flexible educational models, the organization of content and others must be centered on the educational model; consequently, its planning must be centered on the matrix of intervals between what it is proposed to teach, what it is possible to offer giving the available means, and the teaching practice in its exercise. Thus, multilevel planning must be designed for the diversity of students; it is therefore a planning of teaching diversification. In this sense, the organization of content is linked to a construction between theory and practice (Santos, 2021).

On the other hand, rural education articulates other alternative educational codes known as MEF. For Perfetti (2004), the Rural Education Project (PER) originated in 1996; it was designed according to what was determined in the government plan of that period, called: "Change to build peace", following the guidelines of the Ten Year Plan of that time; it outlined the itinerary to ally educational networks with the intention of implementing models compatible with the rural sector, thus guaranteeing the inclusion, accessibility and permanence in the educational system of those individuals with low probabilities in a regular school service.

The MEFs used in the PERs have become substantial, due to their increased use in rural educational institutions, since they include: students of different ages and with special needs, intrepid teachers, communities and external entities around designs and strategies that tend to a rural education with good coverage, more congruent to the context and quality. Although some adjustments have been made, the PERs appear in 1975 with the manual "Towards the New School", which consolidates all the experience of the process of implementation and feedback of the model, until the beginning

of the XXI century, where the Ministry of Education made a comprehensive adjustment to the different models, hand in hand with the quality standards established by the policies in force in the education system (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2015).

Rural education

The category of rural education was proposed based on the approach of García (2016), for whom rural education is a necessary category that must be filled with content, based on a resignification of the category of rurality itself and a recognition of the particularities of the work of educators in this environment, in addition to the new challenges of today's world that require an updated vision of the rural and its relationship with the urban. With the new conceptions of rural education, it can be noted that rural education is a category under construction that needs to link new meanings that give it a true meaning, reveal its implications in rural contexts and allow identifying characteristics of the pedagogical work of teachers to enrich the concept. Therefore, the study of teaching practices in the Escuela Nueva and Post-primaria models serves to look at the other side of education, that is, the countryside, which is so lacking in order to achieve an agrarian Colombia.

Methodology

According to the theoretical, legal and ethical bases involved in the research, appropriate strategies are proposed to achieve each objective in order to provide a solution to the problem posed. For this reason, the interpretive paradigm was used because it allows the researcher to enter the natural environment of the population. Vasilachis (cited in Martínez, 2013) defines it as: "the theoretical-methodological framework used by the researcher to interpret social phenomena in the context of a given society" (p. 1).

In this sense, the work adopts the necessary tools for a correct execution that goes beyond objectivity, since it is possible to define the reality through the interpretations of the

participants from their context and needs, which are transformed or modified during the study of the information collected; in this way, the experiences of the participants are used for the construction of knowledge, since the center of the research is located in the teaching practices in multi-grade classrooms, from flexible educational models: Escuela Nueva for Elementary School and Post-primaria for Elementary School.

As for the approach, a qualitative approach is developed based on the adaptation to the proposed needs and objectives. It is considered that qualitative studies include the understanding of the way subjects act in their nature, in the feeling of their essence and in their daily life.

The type of research chosen was Action Research (AR), in order to create reflective dialogues while applying the instruments in a subtle way to the participants. In this way, significant contributions are obtained in the search for solutions to the difficulties and social problems of the object of study, focusing on the reality of each environment according to the points of view and experiences. In the words of Kemmis (cited in Herrera, 2017): "Action research is a form of self-reflexive search, carried out by participants in social situations, to improve the logic and justice of the social or educational practices that are carried out and to understand these practices" (p. 10).

To go a little deeper, it was necessary to have the participation of the 20 teachers - twelve primary school teachers and eight secondary and middle school teachers - to whom a series of instruments were applied, distributed as follows: semi-structured interview to the teachers of the main sites of the two institutions; structured interview to the sites focused on geographical location (four sites of the IER Bajo Lorenzo and five sites of the IER Nueva Granada). On the other hand, ten bibliographic cards were prepared and a corroboration list was applied to the 20 teachers, filled out in the observation guide format.

It also included the participation of 80 post-secondary students who were given a structured survey with open-ended questions to compare with the information provided by the teachers. Considering the methodological route and the work unit, the following instruments were used: a semi-structured and structured questionnaire, a bibliographic record, a corroboration list and a questionnaire of questions.

Results

Based on the data collection techniques, we proceeded to the corresponding analysis according to each of the objectives with respect to the institutions of Bajo Lorenzo and Nueva Granada. For the development of the first objective, the interview was conducted with two scripts of questions, namely: one, semi-structured, addressed to all the sites of the two institutions, and the other, structured, designed for the focalized sites or unitary schools. Among the results, the strengths most felt by them stand out: the ability of the teachers to carry out their work despite the great gaps in educational resources and infrastructure, the courage and dedication to ensure that the students learn in the same way as those in urban areas, the management of teaching strategies based on recursion, and the organization in using elements of nature, whether for planting trees, animals near them or growing healthy food. All this allows them to learn Science, Art, Mathematics, Spanish language and other areas.

It is worth highlighting the dedication and love for their profession, which is evident in the purchase of materials from their own resources; the humanization of wanting an educated and prosperous Colombia and the sense of responsibility, despite being in distant and remote places that require education as an axis that transforms realities.

Among the disadvantages expressed by the teachers of the two institutions, the lack of educational resources (books, computers, connectivity) is worrisome because it maximizes the learning deficits revealed, whether in basic mathematical operations or in reading processes, among others. Likewise, the learning models are little known among the teachers, that is, each one constructs, from his or her own vision, what he or she considers the most effective, without considering teaching models that are in line with the Escuela Nueva and Post-primaria. Therefore, the terms MEF and multi-grade classrooms are only effective with the application of the primers; the rest is the responsibility of the teacher's didactics.

For the theoretical foundations of teaching practices in multi-grade classrooms and flexible educational models, the bibliographic record was used to condense the elements derived from the theoretical foundations of teaching practices in multi-grade classrooms and the condition of the flexible educational model. The authors studied are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Documentation studied

	Author	Title
1	Cano Ruíz (2022)	How to assess learning in the multi-grade classroom?
2	Llanos and Tapia (2020)	Teaching and assessment activities in rural multi-grade classrooms
3	Cano and Ibarra (2018)	Vulnerability, innovation and teaching practices in multi-grade schools

	Author	Title
4	De la Vega (2020)	Teaching in multi-grade classrooms: keys to educational quality and professional development
5	González-Viloria (2022)	Pedagogical practices in multi-grade classrooms
6	Castillo-Aramburu and Meza-Duriez (2020)	The Nicaraguan curriculum for teaching reading in the multi-grade modality
7	López Niño (2019)	The challenges of the multi-grade classroom and the rural school in Colombia
8	Cardona (2022)	Bibliographic review of the Escuela Nueva pedagogical and evaluation model in Colombia
9	González, Becerra and Moreno (2021)	Teaching and learning in multi-grade primary schools in Mexico and Colombia
10	González-Viloria (2020)	Multi-grade classrooms: an alternative for collaboration and cooperation in educational spaces

The following points are common to the documentation reviewed:

- Poverty is a persistent element in rural institutions.
- Teaching practices are based on the use of guides or textbooks.
- Teachers are aware of their lack of didactic training due to the lack of training.
- The state's neglect is evident in the lack of infrastructure that serves as an axis to improve teaching practices.
- Although the Escuela Nueva and Postprimaria models remedy some of the lack of schooling, it is pertinent to review some existing imbalances.
- Teachers manage their own dynamics in teaching, plus administrative activities.
- The purpose of the program is to reduce the illiteracy rate; this has been possible thanks to the fact that education has tried to reach the most remote places in the geography of the countries mentioned in the research.

Therefore, the documentation served as a support to analyze the real working, formative and attitudinal conditions that are broken down by the particularization of multi-grade classrooms. One of the challenges for educators is the context they face, to which Loya (2008) states that the logic of the social order in the face of reality must be improved from the teaching practice.

Finally, with regard to the relevance of teaching practices in multi-grade classrooms, some characteristics evaluated by students through the open-ended questionnaire were taken into account: management of subject matter, clear objectives of each thematic unit, active participation in class, effective organization between explanation, delivery and evaluation activities, feedback on what was evaluated, reinforcement and recovery spaces, creativity in each workspace, management of platforms or laboratories, clear relationship between what is studied and what is applied in daily life, and management of productive pedagogical projects.

From the answers given by the students of the two institutions, it can be concluded that the explanations are clear, except for some who state that there is a need for more clarity in the

explanations. This may be due to the individual perspective of learning or to subjects such as science that require more attention on their part.

From another category, the students highlight the kindness and good treatment of the teachers; therefore, the existence of fraternity among the teaching actors is considered, except for the moderate level of authority that should prevail in the classrooms. On the other hand, there are complications due to the lack of didactic materials and infrastructure necessary to develop innovative pedagogical projects. However, in the Nueva Granada institution, the students express their liking for the school garden. This is a response to an innovative strategy of the teachers and to the relationship that can be established between classroom learning and the daily life of the students. It should be noted that the location of the schools is very close to nature and water sources, which implies that they have a rural space.

From another perspective, the two institutions share common points: teaching practices would be better served if there were social investments in the spaces designed for the Escuela Nueva and Post-primaria models in multi-grade classrooms. Likewise, the themes should focus on cross-cutting projects that are closer to the students, so that they can find the meaning of learning and the lifestyle that will accompany them after they have completed their primary and secondary education. The students point out that the teaching methods are related to explanations on the blackboard, the teacher's laptops, some posters and simple presentations of the subject of the class. Thus, from the students' point of view, the perception of the teachers is positive and pleasant in terms of their treatment. However, there is a need to improve and deepen the autonomous and creative teaching processes.

In order to complete the hermeneutic process envisaged by the research, the corroboration list was addressed to the teachers of the two educational institutions. It should be noted that the information was considered under the parameters of privacy and with a purely academic purpose. For the evaluation of the

two schools, the statements that led the checklist were considered, which focused on the perception of the space, the communication in the classroom and the strategies used. With the first questioning, the teachers presented a limitation in the furniture, since it is not adequate and there is not enough material, although they adapt the spaces according to the activities developed in the center by grades.

Regarding the library, it is obvious that it does not have an adequate number of modules or texts designed by MEN. However, on the initiative of teachers and parents, the library has received donations of books and texts. This is a clear evidence of the neglect of the State in the remote areas of the country, although it may be a matter of management or, indifference.

Concerning collaborative work, defined by Vygotsky (as cited in Palacios, 2022) as "a carefully designed system of interactions that organizes and induces mutual influence among members of a team for the collective construction of shared meanings" (p. 3), teachers focus their response on the fact that some students work as a team without major complications; others claim that students are selfish and therefore do not work together.

Continuing with the checklist, the use of instructional sequences was questioned; therefore, a continuous improvement plan is needed, which is pertinent because of the weeks of planning used at the beginning of each school year. About the use of multiple strategies for inclusive children, teachers expressed that this is achieved through the Individualized Plan of Reasonable Accommodation (PIAR). It should be noted that, except in exceptional cases, most of them agree that they do not have children who are part of the program. In addition, the teacher does not have the pedagogical material to develop his classes as required by the flexible pedagogical models; therefore, in his practice he works with some books donated by Ecopetrol or material that he creates and carries printed. Likewise, the observation made in the classes detailed that the teacher tries to structure his classes in three moments: 'icebreaker' activity with a greeting, inquiring with questions about

previous knowledge, and approaching the subject. Consequently, it is necessary to strengthen the implementation of strategies that allow the development of communicative competencies in students of different grades.

In respect of formative evaluation, teachers were aware that the evaluation proposed for the MEFs tends towards hetero-, co- and self-evaluation; however, in practice, formats applied to students are not seen; moreover, recurrence is not high. Regarding pedagogical practices, teachers are concerned with developing communicative competencies in their students through active participation in class; however, it would be good to implement expositions and documentation of verbal projects so that they can express themselves with more confidence.

Table 2 shows the triple-entry matrix in which the fulfillment of each of the substantial elements for this research is evidenced.

Table 2

Triple entry table

Sources	Triple Entry						
	Teachers		Students	Researchers			
Instruments Categories	Semi-structured interview	Structured Interview focused seats	Check list	Questionnaire	Trend	Bibliographic review	
Didactic planning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Question 1							
Question 2							
Didactic implementation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Question 1							
Question 2							
Evaluation strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Question 1							
Question 2							
Students participation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Question 1							
Question 2							

Implementation of basic curriculum design	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Question 1						
Question 2						
Improvement needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Question 1						
Question 2						
Multi-grade teacher training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Question 1						
Question 2						

The analysis of the triple entry table shows that the categories and subcategories were satisfactorily fulfilled; that is, the instruments used allowed the particularization of the following aspects: training in the multi-grade area (it is evident as a substantive urgency, the need for improvement in terms of infrastructure, teaching materials and basic elements such as laboratories, dynamic classrooms, etc.); implementation of the basic curriculum design, since in the interviews and corroboration list conducted with teachers, plus the student survey, it is observed that many teachers do not have clarity about the basic curriculum design. Likewise, the evaluation strategies are used at the mercy of the educator; in some situations, they are very dynamic and in accordance with the environment; in other situations, there is no substantial relationship between what they explain, the evaluation itself and its relationship to what was planned.

Discussion

The work of teachers in the two rural educational institutions is a crucial issue in local and regional social development, with different dimensions and concrete challenges. The conditions and dynamics in rural areas described in this document show that they are unique and significantly influence the way teachers develop their educational work in multi-grade classrooms.

According to MEN (2018), the education system in rural areas faces the challenge of multi-grade classrooms, where a single teacher serves students of different grades and ages. This requires flexible curriculum planning and adapted pedagogical strategies to ensure quality education for all. In fact, the achievement of the first hypothesis of this research reaffirms and confirms that the rural education provided in the schools of Nueva Granada and Bajo Lorenzo has serious structural deficiencies due to the state system itself and the precariousness in terms of human development of rural communities.

The question then arises: how can quality education be made accessible in rural areas? To answer this question, educational equity should be a central concern in Colombia's multi-grade classrooms. It is essential to ensure that all students, regardless of their level or context, have access to quality learning opportunities (Cano, 2022).

At this point, although the institutions studied provide educational services and have access to the surrounding trails, for some students studying is quite an odyssey. Some of them have to walk for hours, face inclement weather, overcome trails and the dangers they entail, etc. This leads us to affirm that there is no equality in education and learning between those who live in urban areas and those who live in rural areas. This is reflected in the results of the Saber tests; therefore, the indicators of the instruments used in this research work place

the training provided by the teachers between: regular and moderately good.

As discussed, access to education in rural areas remains a fundamental challenge in the 21st century. The lack of schools in remote areas forces students to travel long distances to reach an educational center, which has a negative impact on their participation and performance. In addition, the quality of rural education is inferior due to lack of resources and inadequate teacher training; therefore, there is undoubtedly evidence of educational inequality that limits the development opportunities of rural communities.

Although the Special Plan for Rural Education (PEER-2018, cited in Castillo, 2019) states that the Colombian State has made efforts to improve coverage and reduce school dropouts at the national level, the quality of education continues to lag behind, and quality rural education is considered essential for the sustainable and equitable development of Colombia and the new rurality. Rural communities play a vital role in food production and environmental conservation. Adequate education in these areas, neglected by the State, can empower individuals and communities to improve their living conditions and contribute to the country's economic growth. In addition, rural education can be a means of preserving and promoting the cultural diversity and traditional knowledge of indigenous and Afro-descendant communities.

In spite of this gloomy panorama, it is still possible to generate new possibilities to transform the circumstances of the rural educational process from the pedagogical practice in socio-cultural perspective, welcoming the student from its human dimension and making the curriculum more flexible, prioritizing basic needs such as affection and recognition of the person, re-signifying the ways of approaching the teaching-learning process, taking into account the different extensions of the rural school scenario, and the way of planning the themes given by the ministerial in favor of the specific context of the rural educational institutions.

Even though the shortcomings and weaknesses of the teaching practices revealed in this study are more numerous than the strengths, it is essential to highlight the opportunities that arise for teachers to provide relevant and appropriate training, considering the specificities and particularities of the environment of each educational institution.

Some relevant aspects of this discussion are considered below:

- 1. Socio-economic and cultural context:** Rural educational institutions face a lack of basic resources and services that affect the quality of education. Teachers must adapt to these constraints and find creative ways to engage students; in addition, it is essential that they understand and respect local culture and traditions in order to establish a meaningful connection with students and their families.
- 2. Specific teacher training:** Participating teachers need specialized training that addresses the specific challenges they face. This could include pedagogical strategies adapted to rural contexts, approaches to addressing educational inequalities, and good access to technology.
- 3. Innovation and creativity:** Given the lack of resources and limited infrastructure in rural areas, educators need to be innovative and creative in their pedagogical approach; therefore, they can use practical methods, the natural environment and the local community as educational resources in themselves.
- 4. Community Participation:** Active community participation is critical to the success of rural education. Teachers must work closely with families and local authorities to understand needs and challenges and to design educational strategies that are relevant, flexible, and effective.
- 5. Student motivation and retention:** In rural areas, dropout and lack of motivation are common problems. Teachers must strive to create a stimulating and relevant learning environment that will keep students engaged in education.

6. Continuous training: Given that educational contexts and students' needs are constantly evolving, it is important for rural teachers to have access to continuous training opportunities. This will allow them to be aware of the best pedagogical practices and educational innovations.

Therefore, teaching practice in rural educational institutions requires a combination of adaptation, creativity, collaboration and commitment. As teachers play a vital role in the development of rural communities, their approach must be underpinned by respect for local culture and a constant search for effective ways to facilitate learning in an environment that is both challenging and full of opportunity.

Conclusions

The teaching practices and the way in which the research was carried out allow us to understand a totally qualitative component regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the Escuela Nueva and Post-primary models, where the teachers' ability to adapt to a training process that does not have sufficient educational resources or adequate infrastructure is the greatest strength demonstrated.

The teaching strategies derive from the recursion of the teachers, either by appropriating the context or by the same financing that they do to have effective didactic material in the different grades. Another of the successes is their commitment to their work; this is derived from the documentation analyzed, since these situations are similar in different Latin American countries.

The weakness most felt is the lack of an effective workspace, either due to the lack of utilities, computers, books, laboratories, among others. Decree 1290 of 2009 proposes the continuous accompaniment of the Secretary of Education, but this is not observed in reality, since teachers insist that there is no support for training and other types of accompaniment. Moreover, some of them do not know the concepts related to the teaching practice, such

as: learning models, evaluation and teaching strategies, among others.

As far as the students' perception is concerned, there is evidence of a desire to study, although the geographical conditions and the way of life do not allow a direct relationship between what they learn and the way of life. They are aware of the lack of didactic material: laboratories, vegetable gardens, language classrooms, books, computers, didactic cards and pictures, as well as transversal projects. In this context, teaching faces great challenges; however, it is in these hidden places of the country that the best didactic strategies are built.

In terms of training, the teachers say that not only they have received very little, but that it has not met their expectations and training needs, since only some of them have been oriented towards training in multi-grade techniques. Teachers, especially those at the post-primary level, believe they need more training in time management, implementing teaching strategies, managing groups, and conducting productive educational projects.

With regard to supervision and accompaniment, the educators believe that it is necessary to begin its implementation and that it should be carried out at the end of each academic period, since in this way they would be able to know the aspects in which they need to improve.

Considering that research influences the processes of teaching practice in the face of the scenarios that emerge in multi-grade classrooms, it is urgent to propose a government investment to improve the lifestyle and learning styles of students. This will contribute to the educational projections, to the transformation of the environment and to the concepts of quality education.

Conflict of interest

The authors of this article declare that they have no conflict of interest in the work presented.

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Contribution

John Gonzalo Meneses Delgado: Principal Investigator. Statistical data processing, writing of materials and methods and obtaining results.

Mayra Alejandra Rodríguez Casanova: Analysis and interpretation of results, writing the introduction, methods, discussion and conclusions.

The authors participated in the preparation of the manuscript, read and approved it.