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Editorial

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The central thesis that guides this editorial is the following: The development of communicative writing and reading skills based on reading comprehension, text typologies and writing logical elements for the development of critical abilities in university students.

The Saber Pro tests are one of the systems for measuring the quality of higher education in Colombia. Through a test of generic and professional competencies, university students who are about to graduate are evaluated. Special mention of the subjects evaluated are the communicative competencies in aspects such as reading comprehension, argumentation and critical capacity. The concerns about the communicative abilities of university students are clearly exposed in the increase of courses related to communicative competences, and paradoxically, the decrease of courses related to logic.

The courses of communicative competences are elaborated with the intention of improving the reading and writing practices. The courses are usually taught by the departments of the degree in Spanish and Literature or teachers of these areas. Also, given the nature of the Saber Pro tests, the topics covered in them are reflected in the contents of these courses. Examples of this are textual typologies, structural elements of a text (micro and macro), the link between sentences and paragraphs, and also the development of critical capacity.

In relation to the latter, the understanding of argumentative texts, their structure and composition are recurrent themes. However, it is increasingly evident that the contents of argumentation are moving away from models in which the textual typology is identified and some examples of arguments are presented without resorting, rigorously, to the formalization of argument schemes, the determination of the validity or probability of the argument and, in general, rationality as priority criteria to be taken into account.

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It seems that part of this happens because of the absence of the study of the logical component of the arguments.

Two problems of the subjects on reading and critical argumentation in which the use of the logical component is notorious are the following: 1. Developing skills for certain communicative competences, but not rational evaluation capacities. 2. Knowing how to read is a process that involves several levels. Recognizing text typologies allows the identification of texts and their parts, including the ways in which they are constructed, but it is not enough for the reader to understand the meaning of what is read, to make inferences or to present a critical stance. Both aspects, rational evaluation and a critical stance, are related to elements that are encouraged by the study of the logical components of the arguments.

One difficulty when teaching argumentative skills would be that argumentation needs to be understood from different approaches: logical, rhetorical and dialectical. However, it seems that from the areas of the classes of communicative competencies, the logical component of the arguments has slowly been dislodged as a fundamental element of the argumentation. Although many universities also teach courses in logic, it seems necessary that these courses and those for communicative competences allow both teachers and students to evaluate arguments in a more complete way, including the logical component of argumentation.

The understanding of argumentation as a critical activity and the exercise of it requires skills in the use of arguments, in the identification of the values and hierarchies of values that the audience holds and an adequate use of rhetorical aspects to persuade. However, a good argumentation cannot be qualified only because it is successful or persuasive, but because of some criteria of rationality. In this sense, the teaching of logic, in its formal aspects, as well as its use in informal contexts or logic, becomes a priority and, at the same time, partially forgotten in the courses of communicative competences.

In part, the difficulty of the subject and a possible prejudice about logic as an obscure and impractical knowledge, leads to less appreciation of its usefulness in the field of argumentation. On the other hand, training in Spanish and Literature may not have as its strong point the understanding of the logical components of arguments, so that teachers who teach argumentation do not address the subject in the proper depth. The courses are not intended to

be logical, since that would be to reduce the argumentation and critical capacity to the field of logic and, in that way, exceed its importance. Rather, it is to give adequate value to the argumentative components that promote a critical attitude.

The various theories on argumentation, whether from the rhetorical approach and based on the already classical theories of Chäim Perelman, or the pragma-dialectic, even informal logic, indicate the value of logic for the formulation of arguments. This is clearly seen in the identification of the criteria of validity, in the clear formulation of arguments through argument schemes, and in the identification of the ruptures of rationality we are faced with when we accept a fallacy as a good argument. For these reasons, if we want to develop communicative abilities that promote reading and critical argumentation, it is necessary that there be greater cohesion in the subjects that seek to develop these basic abilities and to impart greater elements of logic, whether formal or informal, related to argumentation.

The issue of Sophia journal that you have in your hands presents various education issues. All of them related, to a greater or lesser extent, to the improvement of the quality of education. Six articles present topics related to higher education.

In the article *Preparing for College: A Conceptual Model for Student Pathways to Higher Education*, the need for training in some skills that ensure the permanence, transit and completion of undergraduate programs by students is presented. Although the research data are a few years old, 2013-2014, they are still valid, since the current Colombian reality shows high rates of impossibility to access higher education and a high rate of desertion. We hope that our readers, teachers and researchers find elements that allow them to improve or reflect on the issue of transition to higher education.

Another concern common to studies on higher education is related to the role of creativity and the criticism of educational models aimed only at training for work that leave aside humanistic training. The articles *Genealogy of creative thinking and its necessity in the university reality* and research on *Education and modernity in Colombia: a reflection based on the postulates of Fernando Cruz Kronfly* show the mentioned concern for higher education. In the first, the interest in identifying the value of creative thought in the formation of teaching models and the criticism of a flexibilization of education aimed at both the transmission of content and the formation of work stand out.

Likewise, the document expresses a current problem: the difficulty teachers face in motivating students to study in an environment that is full of distractions and aimed at satisfying their immediate desires. On the other hand, the research based on the documents of Fernando Cruz Kronfly presents elements that are already classics in the criticism of modernity or the postponement of modernity in Colombia.

One of the pressing problems that has been criticized of higher education and that is related to the crisis of educational models is the difficulty of teacher training and the absence of some elements that make universities centers of study and research training. The absence of a long tradition, given the recent foundation of Colombian universities, is further deepened by the lack of a training policy that articulates the stages of training as research and teaching assistants with the processes of research and teacher training. The idea of "forming schools" in which teachers with a great deal of experience cooperate with students who have teaching and research experiences is very limited. In the mentioned article, some of the criteria that need to be fulfilled for this purpose are investigated, as well as the benefits that would entail increasing and improving the training of assistants in higher education.

As it is well recognized, higher education requires critical and reflective skills that allow for the analysis and evaluation of the different knowledge that students in the various university programs face. While an increase in the quality and quantity of assistants in higher education could be positive, it is clear that strategies to improve the quality of education must encompass all university students. And what better way to increase critical and reflective skills than to develop argumentative and writing skills? The article *Towards the forms and functions of the mini-essay* presents a model for the elaboration of an argumentative text in which an attempt is made both to show the rhetorical components that allow the adherence to the proposed theses, and to evaluate the rationality of the arguments that indicate their validity. The writing of mini-essays is presented as a way to improve communication and argumentation skills.

The article *Gender-based violence and arbitrary discrimination in a private Chilean university: An initial exploration* is a document that differs from previous reflections on higher education. Its theme, instead, deals with the perception of discrimination and gender violence. It shows that although women's access to higher education has increased and female participation in the labor market is high, society still maintains high levels of occupational segregation and distribution of domestic and family work.

Four articles reflect on basic education, children and childhood: *Integrating ICT to improve the skills of foreign language learners in vulnerable communities* presents an excellent but sometimes overlooked question, are ICT tools that improve foreign language education? From research with vulnerable communities, the authors indicate that it is not so clear that the use of ICT improves students' foreign language skills. These disturbing results, especially given the emphasis that government policies on education have placed on ICT, lead us to ask what would be the best ways to integrate these tools into the learning process.

The article *Learning environments* presents a careful review of the theoretical references on the subject organized from regional and temporal categories. In turn, the document *Female identity in Afro-Colombian poetry* reminds us of the importance of education in difference and, also, the problems that must be overcome for this to be carried out. Finally, the article *Reading in infancy and childhood: incidence in the construction of the reading subject* is presented as a clear exposition of the way in which the construction of good readers can be encouraged from childhood.

Although they actually focus on basic and higher education, the varied group of articles is a sample of the flourishing research in the field of education today. In addition, they reflect broad concerns about training, research, and the social functions of educational activity. As the popular saying goes, this issue aims to make an impact, to do its bit that will allow our readers to continue their research on how to improve the quality of education in Colombia.