



# La lectura y la escritura en la formación universitaria de maestros y maestras: estrategias para la comprensión, la expresión escrita y el uso responsable de la tecnología

## Reading and writing in university teacher training: strategies for comprehension, written expression and the responsible use of technology

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### RESUMEN

**Introducción:** El contexto actual de la educación universitaria en España ha experimentado un declive en las prácticas de lectura y escritura, desplazadas por hábitos de consumo digital y caracterizadas por la inmediatez, la superficialidad y el uso intensivo de herramientas de inteligencia artificial.

**Metodología:** Este artículo analiza este fenómeno desde una perspectiva cualitativa y de pedagogía reflexiva y propone una intervención didáctica dirigida a la formación inicial de los futuros docentes de educación infantil y primaria.

**Resultados:** Presenta una propuesta de trabajo estructurada en tres fases integradas bajo el enfoque del Aprendizaje Basado en Proyectos y el uso de la narración digital. En primer lugar, se desarrolla un proceso individual de comprensión lectora y expresión escrita a partir del análisis de textos relacionados con la vida y la obra de una autora. En segundo lugar, el alumnado trabaja en equipos para crear narrativas digitales centradas en la biografía de esta y adapta una de sus obras para el público infantil, reforzando así la creatividad, la cooperación y las habilidades comunicativas. Por último, se incorpora una fase de adaptación para abordar la diversidad, integrando el uso responsable de herramientas de inteligencia artificial con fines educativos y de accesibilidad.

**Conclusiones:** Basado en la investigación pedagógica desde la práctica, este proyecto promueve el desarrollo de las habilidades lectoras, expresivas y críticas, al tiempo que integra el potencial de la tecnología educativa, preparando a los futuros docentes para afrontar los retos de la enseñanza en la era digital con responsabilidad y creatividad.

**Palabras clave:** Formación de maestros, habilidades comunicativas, pedagogía reflexiva, narrativas digitales, inteligencia artificial.

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## INTRODUCTION

The teaching of Spanish language and literature in university teacher training is facing a pressing and urgent problem: a lack of motivation to read and deficiencies in reading comprehension and written expression skills. This short reflective article is based on direct observation and the detection of deficiencies in reading comprehension and written expression in university degrees in Early Childhood Education and Primary Education since 2021. Based on teaching practice in Spanish Literature and Spanish Language for teachers in training courses in these degrees, with a sample of more than 580 students, with an estimated average of 65 students in seven groups from different years and levels: three first-year courses, one second-year course, and five fourth-year groups. Examining these groups has illuminated a general lack of interest in reading, insufficient reading comprehension, deficits in written expression, and poor development of critical thinking. Likewise, some ideas are outlined that integrate the responsible use of technology as an aid to implement improvements in the teaching-learning process in their future teaching practice, but not without first dedicating a space for reading and written expression based on pause and reflection.

These courses are usually organized in a theoretical-practical way, since applying knowledge, solving problems, and cases in a simulated real-life context are essential for developing professional skills in the teaching-learning process. However, for teachers training in these courses, it is essential to have a critical bibliography on language development in childhood education, as well as knowledge of the developmental stages of reading acquisition, text analysis, reading and writing strategies, and reading promotion for primary education. A general literary overview of canonical works in the history of literature and readings for children and young people that promote values such as equality and diversity is also important.

An assessment of the student's reading habits demonstrated a certain degree of shyness or lack of interest in reading – many acknowledged having barely read a whole book or not even liking the idea of reading. Similarly, an exercise was carried out on reading performance, writing, and literary references throughout their lives, together with recognition of compulsory reading during their educational stages. This exercise highlighted their memories of some fantastic books or romantic love stories that they found interesting, and an upward trend in self-help books in recent years. They only mentioned a few books by canonical male writers from the last stage of high school that were included in the assessment syllabus for the university entrance exam. However, they remembered them with a certain detachment and rejection, pointing out that reading comprehension was aimed at completing automated forms with specific information about them. Other ways of reading and writing also stood out: brief, concise, and sporadic reading of reels on social media, particularly Instagram and TikTok, as well as short written posts in social media or required written assignments for assessment in their degree program.

Assessing the quality of written expression can also be a difficult and frustrating task at times, as the increased use of artificial intelligence tools undermines the effort put into writing. Providing specific information to ChatGPT, which is the most widely used tool among university students, generates seemingly well-argued and organized text without any thought. The downside of this excessive use leads to a lack of creativity and independent thinking. Most students admit to using it on a daily basis to answer basic questions or concerns, even when working on a project in any university course. An example of this is a simple exercise that consisted of writing an email as a teacher to communicate to the families of a group of preschool students a series of developmental guidelines on language development, as well as recommendations to encourage it. The activity was carried out in groups of five students. Several of these groups did not develop an argument based on their course study but simply generated the email with ChatGPT with a perfect structure and formal, academic language. Detecting the use of these tools can be easy because the same response pattern is repeated, but it is not always possible to identify it, especially in tasks that require more written work.

In teacher training for primary education sessions, artificial intelligence was used to create images or adapt literary genres: for example, adapting a children's story into a dramatic script, which produced better results. Similarly, it was used to create songs with a specific semantic field or to give voice and movement to characters and authors. In this case, the potential for creating materials with artificial intelligence tools favors the adaptation of resources for students with special learning needs. However, returning to the main argument and setting aside the benefits that artificial intelligence provides, the development of written expression is undermined by the uncontrolled use of these tools. This causes a lack of creativity, effort, and independent thinking, an increase in spelling mistakes, and poor written and oral discourse development in basic communication practices. It is therefore worth questioning the practicality of completing tasks with virtual submission and without reflective guidelines, or whether it would be better to focus on improving comprehension and expression skills more traditionally: a return to synchronous, handwritten activities.

## METHODOLOGY

This article adopts a qualitative, reflective, and interpretative methodological approach situated within pedagogical inquiry. Rather than pursuing an empirical or experimental design, the study is conceived as a practice-informed analysis that examines educational phenomena through critical reflection on teaching–learning processes in university teacher education. The methodological orientation emphasizes descriptive and analytical interpretation, allowing for the identification of recurrent patterns, challenges, and pedagogical tensions related to reading comprehension, written expression, and the responsible integration of digital and artificial intelligence tools.

From this reflective framework, a didactic proposal is articulated as a conceptual and transferable model aimed at informing teaching practice, rather than as an intervention subject to outcome-based evaluation. The purpose of this methodological approach is to contribute to academic discussion by generating pedagogically grounded insights and offering structured strategies that support the development of communicative competence, critical thinking, inclusion, and responsible technology use in initial teacher training contexts. In this sense, the article aligns with qualitative approaches that prioritize understanding, contextualization, and educational meaning over generalization or statistical validation.

## RESULTS and DISCUSSION

It seems obvious that reading and writing are fundamental skills necessary for any university student; however, today, these practices are becoming increasingly relevant in light of recent responses, data, studies, and experiences in the academic context. The figure of the avid reader and the phenomenon of intensive reading are in decline, giving way to a more sporadic and occasional type of reader. Gone is the romantic vision and sensory experience of the smell of a new book or the feel of turning the pages as you read in a peaceful setting. Furthermore, the concept of reading as a symbol of prestige and reputation is being stripped away. Admitting a lack of interest in this practice, which previously caused a guilty conscience, is becoming increasingly common. Likewise, the lack of written expression skills and the neutralization of creativity or critical thinking have been mentioned.

Based on other data, the Barometer of Reading Habits and Book Purchases in Spain (Federación de Gremios de Editores de España [FGEE], 2025) revealed relevant aspects of reading habits, such as significant differences between genders, age groups, educational levels, and geographical distribution. It established that the typical reader in Spain would be a young, urban woman with a university education. It pointed out that, for the first time, leisure readers accounted for 65,5 % of the population. It sought to dispel the entrenched myth that young people do not read, arguing that the age group that reads the most is between 15 and 24, and that the decline in reading rates is greatest among the 25-63 age group (Portillo, 2025). However, the population that reads the least due to lack of time and motivation is between 25 and 63 years old, which usually coincides with the period of greatest professional activity. Likewise, these indicators could be relative, since 70,3 % of the population admits to reading for work and study, which is logical and not extraordinary. It should also be noted that the latest educational plans and laws governing primary and secondary education have emphasized plans to promote reading and reinforce reading comprehension, as well as providing guidelines for the preparation of reading plans by the Ministry of Education, together with the implementation of the LOMLOE (Organic Law on the Improvement of Educational Quality). Additionally, publishers have also committed to young people, and the range of reading material for young people has grown considerably in recent years.

Although the forecast percentages are better than in previous years, Spain still ranks below the European average in reading proficiency. The rise of social media and technology has led to other ways of reading. For some, excessive screen time has also contributed to a greater disinterest in reading. Faced with these novel realities, it is not a question of evading these realities, but rather of analyzing and recognizing a change in trends and habits among students influenced by the emergence of new cultural practices that compete for their attention and have led to the weakening of reading and writing, which, until recently, were inseparable from higher education. Recognizing this, it is not a question of nostalgically lamenting the past, but perhaps devoting time to reading comprehension and written expression, linking them to topics that are not far from their concerns, and devoting more space to communication skills and the development of critical thinking from other approaches. If the current environment around them is creating other ways of relating to—or rather, distancing themselves from—reading and writing, it will be in the educational environment where the pause and dosage of external stimuli that reading and writing require will be found. It is not a question of rejecting new cultural practices, but perhaps combining them and, at times, encouraging the isolation, intimacy, and calm that both tasks require.

The emergence of new formats—new technologies—generates another form of accessibility: facilitating information and immediacy in summaries, main ideas, or explanatory videos about a work, story, poem, play, movie, or news items. It requires less cognitive ability, avoids effort, and saves the dedication and attentive concentration that reading and writing entail. The permanent connection to the internet seems to have caused a resurgence of the need for simplicity and brevity, which even affects our ability to retain attention. Or rather, due to the large amount of stimuli that the mind cannot handle, we are forced to be succinct. Thus, an interest in concise messages that summarize the content of world events or 15-second videos that highlight the main aspects of an event, a work, an author, or an individual or collective anecdote is becoming more widespread. As for written expression, less time is devoted to thinking about the writing itself, but rather to the immediacy of generating the best request and instructions for ChatGPT so that it can write a grammatically correct, argumentative, informative, expository, reflective, etc., text in “academic and formal language,” organized at the discursive level and without spelling mistakes.

Immediacy is related to the effects of personal satisfaction in terms of productivity in an increasingly frenetic, unhealthy, and time-constrained routine. Therefore, it is also a social circumstance that depends on other rhythms, priorities, environments, and access to software and hardware. It is an opportunity that presents new functions such as searching for relevant information from hyperlinks, for example. However, paradoxically, the rapid sequence of images or accelerated and superficial reading poses a risk to memory processes and affects brain development. Furthermore, although there is free access to information, it is not without a certain bias due to the algorithm that filters what we read and how we read it. On the other hand, information is not so free of charge, as it also has an impact on data privacy when accepting cookies. At the written level, artificial intelligence-based writing generators facilitate plagiarism, and if these generators do not have the right information, they can use contradictory or unrealistic arguments.

As Emilio Pascual points out in the prologue to *El poder de la lectura: geografías del libro, el lector...* (2013), the internet has opened up the socialization of freely sharing “unleashed” writing, opinions, personal narratives, or the reproduction of events, giving free rein to the production of content that is sometimes true and sometimes false, which is used to inform, share, laugh, cry, or complete university assignments. Pascual (2013) points out that information overload generates speed and superficiality as opposed to slowness and reflection, but concludes that perhaps the smartest thing to do is to adapt to the current context and keep the good that this phenomenon can bring. For example, it may be beneficial to be able to read news, opinions, books, or digital magazines that facilitate access to other types of reading, making it more social and participatory. However, this raises other issues, such as the alteration of copyright, the lack of criteria and judgment, or the conformism of accepting a superficial message that overwhelms the need to develop one’s own critical thinking. Quickly reading *tweets* or biased headlines, watching a short video, or settling for listening to the personal opinion of an *influencer* leads to a certain social decline on issues that require citizen involvement. The lack of thorough reading of sources to learn about contrasting opinions or stay informed about an event makes it difficult to form one’s own opinion and, consequently, reduces analytical and critical thinking skills. The reach of immediacy and the overload of stimuli on the screen generate frustration with any task that requires discipline, perseverance, and critical thinking.

It is therefore incompatible that, faced with such a dilemma, reading comprehension and oral and written expression skills are required, and innovation in teacher training is also rewarded: new forms of augmented reality and the use of digital support in the classroom for students who are increasingly visual and less receptive to active listening, thinking, and note-taking. Similarly, debates are also beginning to emerge among students who have felt opposed to the excessive use of ChatGPT and to being dependent on this system, and are unable to remember the last time they created a text themselves. They recognize the time savings in combining extracurricular work with the completion of exercises that require student assessment. However, they also express fears about a decline in their creativity, effort, and critical thinking skills. The burden and debt are great on a personal level, but the machine is creative enough to solve tasks and projects much faster than the speed of human thought. Perhaps it is important to explore the extent to which it should be used, since outside the computer system, there are daily problems or interpersonal issues that a ChatGPT response cannot solve. This could also be related, for example, to the aforementioned increase in self-help reading that attempts to target individual complications when much of the problem is collective and social, related to stress, frenzy, and social isolation. Therefore, human beings are perhaps victims of these rhythms, precariousness, and inconveniences for interpersonal management. It is also essential to consider that knowing how to communicate, convey, adapt, deal with the unexpected, empathize, and build human relationships, which are not understood by computer systems, are necessary skills for forging a teaching identity. One of the objectives of education is to prepare students to develop their cognitive, social, and real-life problem-solving skills, enabling them to be competent in the professional world.

The ideal situation would be to provide tools for correctly managing digital environments, staying up to date, and even promoting their advancement and study, as well as generating the need for good reading and writing skills: creating interest in the intrigue generated by the plot of a novel, the beauty of a poem, and imagining a play while reading the script; interpreting the thoughts of an author; shaping the social thinking of a text to understand the past, the present, and glimpse future paths; to revive a taste for reading; to devote time to slow, thorough reading; to foster the need for spaces of reflection, tools for understanding and expression; to promote the development of critical thinking as a powerful tool for opinion and individual freedom; and to prepare strategies for analyzing and improving oral and written communication skills. Focusing on this will subsequently enable trainee teachers to implement reading development plans, encourage critical and analytical thinking in children, and educate citizens in values and good communication skills. Perhaps the analytical and reflective work on a text, based on in-depth reading, could later be combined with the responsible use of technology, innovation, and artificial intelligence.

### **Educational proposal**

Based on the reflective and interpretative methodological approach outlined above, this educational proposal is conceived as a pedagogically grounded framework aimed at fostering reading comprehension, written expression, and responsible technology use in initial teacher training. As a working proposal for trainee teachers, digital storytelling narratives could be created using a project-based learning (PBL) methodology. For university students training in Early Childhood Education or Primary Education, meta-learning could be carried out with the design of materials for the teaching-learning process of reading and writing. To bring the proposal together, we suggest a project based on the study of a female writer, as this would promote the study of women who have traditionally been relegated to the background. At the same time, the aim is to create an inclusive and egalitarian canon, with special emphasis on the study of the life and work of a female author for the subsequent design of materials.

A series of texts on the historical, personal, and artistic context of each writer will be assigned. Reading and writing strategies will be used to improve comprehension and expression, including reading aloud, which offers numerous benefits for the overall development of students. This practice also improves critical listening skills, enhances anticipation, and stimulates oral language. It also creates an atmosphere of trust and motivation towards reading, increases vocabulary and communicative competence, and provides access to cultural and linguistic content that broadens understanding (Cova, 2004). Similarly, there will be specific, selective, and comprehension reading in order to experiment with different techniques that can then be adapted to teaching children. After thorough reading work based on these strategies, time will be devoted to writing skills, which will also involve various strategies: reflective writing for analyzing one's own ideas, writing for formal and academic communication, writing for research with data collection based on questions, and strategic writing to organize information and improve writing. All these practices will be guided and collected in an individual portfolio.

The second part will be carried out through Project-Based Learning, a teaching methodology where students learn through cooperative work by carrying out real and meaningful projects. It is a way of learning that promotes the development of skills, competencies, and attitudes while acquiring knowledge. It encourages active learning, motivation, flexibility, and skill development. This practice is carried out through a series of actions, interactions, and resources to propose a solution to a real-world task (Martí et al., 2010). It will consist of creating a digital narrative with responsible use of technology.

The aim will be to create and share digital narratives about the life of an author in groups of five members, previously worked on individually, and an adaptation of one of her works for children or young people. In the first part of the activity, reading comprehension and written expression will be worked on using a compilation of texts through slow reading and analysis of their historical, social, and cultural elements. In this part of the cooperative work, digital narratives will be created – one focusing on the life story of the authors, and the other creating a resource based on an adaptation of one of their works for preschool and elementary school students. This second resource will include the design of digital characters and will help future teachers recreate their reading comprehension through a digital adaptation that combines audiovisual elements. In addition, creative writing will be activated again and subsequently adapted to a digital program for the creation of a story. These strategies put into practice future activities that can be used to create a reading promotion plan for children.

Regarding the benefits of digital narratives, Avilés-Dinarte (2011) highlights that, within this context, the potential of storytelling expands, providing students with tools to express their knowledge and skills through stories. Thus, storytelling becomes a key resource that drives creativity and strengthens learning by connecting knowledge acquisition with the everyday reality of the individual. Furthermore, this ability to tell stories is not limited to the

linguistic, communicative, or literary sphere. However, is a fundamental skill in the construction of knowledge and personal expression that is essential for teachers in training.

The third and final part of the project will be a proposal to adapt the digital narrative to special learning needs. In this last phase, time will be devoted to reflective thinking for the creation of the adaptation, and the responsible use of artificial intelligence will be facilitated for the design, but not for the content, as this has already been worked on in aforementioned stages: the first stage involved reflection and work on comprehension and written expression, and the second stage involved joint creativity. The third group stage involves a proposal for adaptation with greater use of interactive visual support. In this final stage, artificial intelligence is used responsibly as a complementary tool, as it can facilitate the personalization of learning, or example, learning techniques based on animated dialogues can facilitate greater understanding for children. Similarly, guided reading strategies can be incorporated to facilitate the teaching-learning process. Artificial intelligence has the ability to maintain or create dialogues in natural language and generate responses for educational interaction. In addition, the tool enriches access to educational materials such as videos and interactive exercises, offering new ways of learning. The appropriate and responsible use of artificial intelligence can make it a versatile tool for creating courses and activities tailored to the needs of students.

## CONCLUSIONS

The general lack of motivation to read and poor reading comprehension at higher university levels are becoming increasingly evident. Excessive screen time and the frenetic pace that increasingly defines communities accentuate the need for immediacy and conciseness. Reading and written comprehension remain essential for critical and reflective development. However, in the face of this novel reality, it is essential to integrate digital tools appropriately and encourage responsible use. The combination of slow reading and the responsible use of technologies to create an improvement project for teaching in early childhood and primary education can offer an opportunity to enrich comprehension, develop creativity, and address adaptation to special needs.

In this context, where reading and writing seem to have shifted from the center of the university experience to increasingly narrow margins, this article presents a proposal based on the critical recognition of a scenario transformed by the intensive use of technologies, the culture of immediacy, and attention fragmentation. Despite the growing disinterest in deep reading practices and the increasing delegation of writing to tools such as artificial intelligence, this paper advocates for the reevaluation of these skills as fundamental pillars of teacher training and critical thinking.

The educational proposal developed here, based on active methodologies such as Project-Based Learning (PBL) and digital storytelling, responds to the need to create meaningful reading and writing experiences in initial teacher training. By placing the study of historically neglected female authors at the center of the project, an inclusive canon is promoted that stimulates reflection, creativity, effective communication, and social awareness. It is essential to recognize the need for inclusive education that goes beyond simply mentioning female authors and instead integrates their works, careers, and thoughts into academic programs in an equitable manner.

Likewise, the proposal calls for the critical and responsible integration of technology and artificial intelligence as tools that complement, but do not replace, the educational process. The proposed didactic progression—from individual to cooperative, from reflective to creative, and from textual to digital and inclusive—allows future teachers not only to develop their communication skills, but also implement reading plans and teaching strategies adapted to diversity in their classrooms. This reflection and proposal reflect on the need to train technically competent teachers and critical citizens, capable of judiciously integrating the tradition of reading with new forms of learning and communication, for the benefit of a more humanistic, equitable, and innovative education.

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