



TEACHER TRAINING IN SOCIO-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES IN URBAN AND RURAL NORMAL SCHOOLS: AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSFORM PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES.

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Date of receipt: 28 de febrero 2025

Acceptance date: 14 de agosto 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22267/huellas.251122.51>



Abstract.

This article, the result of implementing the Educational Social Innovation (ESI) research methodology, is energized by the formation of Communities of Practice (COPIEs). Through unity, collaboration, and mobility, these communities activate research practices, fostering identity, strengthening talents, and cultivating a passion for investigation. This process generates significant changes to inappropriate practices that have become normalized in daily school and social life, with negative consequences affecting institutions and communities. The article highlights the intervention through training and learning spaces (in dance, music, art, body expression, writing, psychology, social work, law, and pedagogy) with student teachers from the Complementary Training Program (PFC), practicing teachers from the Putumayo Higher Normal School (IENSUP), and teachers from the rural territory of Alto Putumayo. This intervention encourages diverse stakeholders to speak out, develop awareness regarding the management and strengthening of socio-emotional competencies, and contribute to building a culture of respectful treatment. The ISE prototype (intervention proposal) in preschool and primary school classrooms, whose objective is to address the problem of bullying, a "silent monster" that lives in educational institutions, generating serious consequences such as lack of school motivation, violent reactions, dropout and, in extreme cases, suicide.

Keywords: training, socio-emotional competencies, ISE, bullying.

Resumen.

El presente artículo resultado de la implementación de la metodología de investigación Innovación Social Educativa (I.S.E.) esta se dinamiza con la conformación de Comunidades de Práctica (COPIEs), que en un despliegue de unidad, trabajo y movilidad, activa el ejercicio investigativo, otorgando identidad, fortaleciéndose en sus talentos apasionándose por investigar; generando cambios significativos a las prácticas inapropiadas que en la cotidianidad escolar y social se han naturalizado, con consecuencias negativas que afectan las instituciones y las comunidades. Evidencia el momento de intervención

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mediante espacios de formación y aprendizaje (en danza, música, arte, expresión corporal, escritura, psicología, trabajo social, derecho y pedagogía) con maestros en formación (MeF) del Programa de formación Complementaria (PFC), Maestros en ejercicio de la Institución Educativa Normal Superior del Putumayo (IENSUP) y maestros del territorio rural del Alto Putumayo, promoviendo que los distintos actores levanten la voz, desarrollando conciencia frente al manejo y fortalecimiento de las competencias socioemocionales aportando en la construcción de una cultura del buen trato. El prototipo (propuesta de intervención) de la ISE en aulas de preescolar y básica primaria, cuyo objetivo se centra en abordar el problema del bullying, "monstruo silencioso" que habita en las instituciones educativas, generando consecuencias graves como la falta de motivación escolar, reacciones violentas, deserción y, en casos extremos, el suicidio.

Palabras clave: formación, competencias socioemocionales, ISE, bullying.

I. INTRODUCTION.

the development of a culture of respectful treatment has carried out up to the current proposal: "toward the strengthening of a culture of respectful treatment, a strategy for understanding emotional management."

The ESI methodology, across its various stages, charted the path toward awareness. During the problem prioritization and characterization phases, initial data collection through wall murals made it possible to identified bullying as a priority need for intervention. The initial deconstruction phase began with a review of bibliographic references on the research topic, alongside

an ideation phase aimed at addressing the problem by formulating innovative ideas.

Figure 1: *Timeline.*



Figure: The figure shows the research trajectory. Source: own elaboration. Martínez (2024).

In the third stage of the ESI, known as Resignification, the prototype (i.e., the intervention proposal) was developed and implemented in Physical Education classes and in the Observation and Assistantship Practicum Laboratory. Data collection continued through techniques such as: teacher interviews, student tests, and classroom observation guides.

The research process opened the opportunity to apply for the call issued by the Ministry of National Education (MEN): "Fund 1400 under administration: Call for the selection of projects led by Normal Superior Schools with pedagogical proposals linked to rural territories."

For the IENSUP, being selected in this call provided the opportunity to stand out in research, outreach, evaluation, and training in socio-emotional competencies from multiple perspectives drawing on the innovative ideas of the communities of practice and through interdisciplinary articulation encompassing writing, reading, music, dance, art, physical expression, law, pedagogy, social work, and psychology as pretexts and contexts for the strengthening of "emotional awareness, emotional regulation, emotional autonomy, social competence, and life skills for wellbeing" (Bisquerra Alzina & Pérez Escoda, 2007, p. 70).

In light of the above, the IENSUP leadership team posed the following question to guide the training work through the lens of research: How are socio-emotional competencies understood as an alternative for transforming educational and pedagogical practices among student teachers (MeF) and in-service teachers from urban and rural partner schools, through the ESI methodology in the year 2024?

Objectives: To train MeF from the PFC and teachers from rural partner schools in socio-emotional competencies through the ESI methodology in the year 2024, with the following specific actions:

- To share the ESI research experience at the IENSUP with rural schools, under the leadership of PFC student teachers (MeF).
- To develop the COPIEs intervention proposal addressing the problems identified in the observation and assistantship practicum laboratory.
- To promote research through the implementation of the ESI in the rural schools of Alto Putumayo.

In addition to teacher training in socio-emotional competencies, methodological and didactic tools were developed to foster "awareness, self-regulation, emotional autonomy, social competence, and life skills for wellbeing" (Bisquerra Alzina & Pérez Escoda, 2007, p. 70), contributing to the creation of safe and healthy school environments for all students.

It is worth noting that the population directly benefiting from the project comprised: 80 PFC student teachers (MeF), 7 PFC in-service instructors, 41 IENSUP teachers, and 26 teachers from partner schools. The population directly benefiting through workshop replication included: 169 students, 28 members of the IENSUP Student Council, and 17 members of the IENSUP Parent Council.

II. METHODOLOGY.

The experience demonstrates the implementation of the Educational Social Innovation (ESI) research methodology with early childhood education teachers and in-service teachers in both urban and rural settings, framed within

an interpretive paradigm, a critical-social approach, and a participatory action research method.

Training sessions are delivered through workshops: “The workshop, as a unit, articulates the strategies for applying the qualitative instruments required for the implementation of the proposal. It is developed from the perspective of sharing, reconstructing, narrating, creating, and imagining together in a kind, respectful, and enjoyable manner, in accordance with the guidelines and protocols defined by the Escuela Normal Superior del Putumayo (IENSUP). Each methodological strategy and tool uses guiding questions referenced in the consistency matrix, which was built and reviewed in advance”.

To support the development of the workshops, other data collection instruments were used, such as focus groups and body maps. In this way, participants were invited to engage in an inter-subjective dialogue that contributes significantly to understanding the central theme of the project.

The focus group, for its part, gave participants, in this case, the IENSUP Academic Council, the freedom “to express their opinions in their own words. The moderator’s role focused on using questions to guide the discussion, granting participants the freedom to express their opinions and experiences in their own words” (Cerdá, 2002). Questions suggested in the consistency matrix guided the discussion as needed, ensuring that all participants had the opportunity to speak.

The body map, as a methodological approach articulated for qualitative data collection, and given the nature of the research question regarding the strengthening of socio-emotional competencies in MeF, offered new ways of thinking about teaching practice aimed at transforming how teachers relate to children and young people. By integrating elements of social cartography and the study of the anthropology and sociology of bodies (Le Breton, 1990), understood as carriers of individual, territorial, and collective memory, as well as channels of communication, expression, feelings, projections, and ideas, this instrument validated the construction of participants’ memory in relation to the various events they have experienced and consider significant in their personal and professional development.

Anthropology contributes elements for understanding mapped bodies as cultural instruments, that is, as expressions of social practices embodied in bodily

behaviors, with possible differential elements depending on one’s culture of origin, upbringing, peer relationships, disciplinary experiences, and life events. However, although each person holds a delimited repertoire of possibilities, social interactions enable social change (Celis-Banegas, 2007), and potentially contribute to the transformation of pedagogical practice in the classroom.

The body map as a representation of the body invited participants to give visible and material form to narratives of memory and individual, social, and territorial transformation, through the capture of images, words, drawings, colors, symbols, gestures, wounds, and imprints that enable storytelling associated with life trajectories marked by difficult experiences within a context of harmful events or actions. This is especially meaningful in body- and art-based expressive approaches. The following are expressions from MeF participants. July 26, 2024.

Figure 2: MeF PFC Body Map Workshop.



*Figure: The figure shows the sharing of the body map.
Source: own elaboration.*

The way of recounting and illustrating their stories in a group and shared exercise opened new possibilities for the student teachers to adopt a fresh, reflective stance toward their own lives and toward the stories of others and, more importantly, to become aware their personal and professional growth.

The training cycle has so far made it possible for all members of the educational community to be involved directly or indirectly, engaging teachers from partner schools as active participants. In turn, the MeF co-created new didactic mediations, taking into account the workshop protocol and the step-by-step process for working on the understanding of emotions and feelings and thus learning to take responsibility for emotional management in the various spaces in which they interact.

III. RESULTS.

Up to now, as outcomes of the experience, communities of practice have been established with PFC cohorts that continue the process of identifying other problems from the perspective of educational community members.

A training cycle of 21 workshops was completed for the development of socio-emotional competencies with MeF and in-service teachers from both urban and rural settings. Socio-emotional competency work was carried out in preschool and primary classrooms. Within the Observation and Assistantship Practicum Laboratory and the third-semester Pedagogical Practicum, 11 pedagogical workshops were conducted with preschool students at the IENSUP and its partner institutions. The experience made possible direct collaboration with preschool teachers and, upon request, workshops led by school counselors were arranged, an activity that is currently ongoing.

The ESI, as a research methodology, generates educational innovation. Its process engages the entire educational community, developing skills among researchers who integrate community work prioritizing, characterizing, ideating, and implementing interventions in problems through pedagogical alternatives that seek to denormalize bullying.

Academic events attended include: the 9th Research Fair at the Instituto Tecnológico del Putumayo; the 1st Didactics Congress at the Universidad de Nariño; and a presentation at the Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia in Tunja, sharing the experience of implementing communities of practice, titled: "Early Childhood Education Teachers: An Experience in Implementing the Educational Social Innovation (ESI) Research Methodology."

from the perspective of educational community members.

Figure 3: Participation in the 9th ITP Research Fair.



Figure: The figure shows MeF participation with the ESI Methodology. Source: own elaboration.

Participation in the Departmental Education Forum and presentation of significant experiences: "Putumayo, We Are the Amazon" and "Thinking the School from within the school: Quality Education to Promote Equity, Inclusion, Peace, and Territorial Development" (SED PUTUMAYO, 2024).

IV. DISCUSSION.

Data collected from participants reveals that at least once, every student had been a victim of bullying during their school trajectory from preschool through the PFC. For this reason, it is essential to continue the project, which currently operates as a pilot in the resignification and reconstruction stage of the ESI methodology.

It is important to note that in bullying situations, three actors are recognized: the victim, the aggressor, and the bystander. Furthermore, the opportunity to eradicate

bullying from educational institutions lies in the promotion and communal effort of all educational agents to develop socio-emotional competencies through a conscious practice of co-responsibility, especially through the self-observation and self-correction of behaviors; that is, becoming aware and taking charge in order to transform personal and professional growth.

According to Bisquerra Alzina & Pérez Escoda (2007), “socio-emotional competencies are grouped into 5 major blocks: emotional awareness, emotional regulation, emotional autonomy, social competence, and life skills for wellbeing.” The proposed approach directly aims to guide sequential work that invites participants to recognize that they have emotions that are neither good nor bad; they are simply responses to environmental stimuli, and that it is therefore essential to manage and regulate them.

Adding to the above are recently enacted laws by the Colombian Congress that establish the development of socio-emotional competencies as a requirement, reflecting the government’s commitment to intervening in school coexistence:

“The purpose of this law is to promote, in a cross-cutting manner, the socio-emotional education of children and adolescents in educational centers and institutions at the preschool, primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary levels across the country, within a framework of comprehensive development” (Colombia, 2024).

“The purpose of this law is to strengthen training in school coexistence within the framework of social and emotional skills, in order to prevent children and adolescents from becoming involved in situations that put their lives at risk, within the framework of the Integral Care Route for School Coexistence” (Colombia, 2024).

Following this thread, it is essential to understand that educational institutions educate for life, hence the priority of guaranteeing bullying-free environments and reflecting on the risks that lead to school dropout, depression, cyclical violence, and, in the worst cases, suicide.

It is worth noting that the workshops implemented respond to the innovative proposal of addressing, through training, the solution alternative that seeks to equip participants with knowledge while insisting on the urgent need to implement actions from all disciplines, including art, writing, movement, dance, psychology,

social work, law, and pedagogy, that heal and liberate not only students who are victims of bullying, but all people who interact at the IENSUP. At the same time, spaces are fostered for listening, dialogue, conversation, and storytelling that, through a dual purpose, liberate and heal all participants while providing them with tools to confront and activate response pathways against the normalization of mistreatment in schools often disguised as camaraderie, friendship, or acceptance.

Figure 4: Evidence of the I.S.E. Research Process.



Figure: The figure shows MeF participation in the workshops and workshop invitations. Source: own elaboration.

The project has had an impact on the personal and professional lives of the participating teachers. Through their oral and written expressions, the way they recount and illustrate their stories in group and peer-sharing exercises, new possibilities open up for them to adopt a reflective stance toward their own lives and toward the stories of others. The following are some voices from participating student teachers:

“This topic is very important for us, as student teachers, because it provides significant elements for the comprehensive development of children. I am taking away many learnings, and from this process I can design new, relevant strategies so that children can enjoy learning.” MeF2 – 07/26/24.

“The writing workshop, where it was linked to emotions, was very helpful for me. We expressed emotions and feelings, and I realized that this approach helps my little ones create new stories, accounts, tales, and narratives so that they can express their emotions and feelings, thereby contributing to their learning to manage emotions such as anger, intolerance, and fear.” MeF1 – 07/16/24.

Through dialogue and exchange with others, participants were able to recognize significant aspects of their life experiences, transformation, personal growth, and change. They have developed awareness of the teacher’s role and of the social commitment to educating children and young people — conceiving students as whole human beings who deserve respect, appreciation, recognition, and value, grounded in joy, tenderness, and love.

Let us hear the voices of some of the participants: “The project has a positive impact on the development of socio-emotional competencies, because it allows participants to develop and/or strengthen skills for understanding and self-regulating emotions, achieving healthier relationships and improving decision-making. It also promotes greater wellbeing and academic performance. In addition, the project has helped respond to what the MEN proposes regarding training in socio-emotional competencies meaning it can serve as a reference and support. And finally, it has encouraged participation in various academic events in both the department of Nariño and the department of Putumayo.” Rural Teacher 8. Narrated Body Map Workshop.

One conclusion from this exercise was that it allowed participants to come to know their emotions, thoughts,

challenges, aspirations, strengths, and weaknesses. The workshop-based methodological strategy has proven to be a sound approach, and transforming the project into a research process has made it possible to bring it into classroom practice.

V. CONCLUSIONS.

As a conclusion, it is important to highlight that one of the project’s greatest achievements is moving away from normalizing bullying, and bringing the MeF closer to the development of emotional awareness, emotional self-regulation, emotional autonomy, social competencies, and the acquisition of life skills for wellbeing. Each of the 21 workshops in the training cycle offered the opportunity to experience emotions in environments connected to music, dance, and writing with the participation of 90 MeF and teachers and students from partner schools as well as exploring implications from the perspectives of law, psychology, pedagogy, and social work. In parallel, 11 intervention workshops were planned for preschool classrooms across 20 educational institutions. Reflecting on the process, challenges are envisioned in terms of building institutional capacity and continuing to work on socio-emotional competency training with other student groups at the ENSUP, while also insisting on the integration of socio-emotional work in classrooms under the guidance of teachers.

The purpose of this innovation is to contribute to the comprehensive education of girls, boys, adolescents, young people, MeF, and in-service teachers in both urban and rural settings by enabling them to develop socio-emotional competencies as an alternative solution to bullying, which has become normalized in educational institutions while simultaneously developing research skills.

It is essential to understand that the teacher’s role requires understanding, managing, and regulating emotions, which must be addressed in a cross-cutting manner across all areas of knowledge. The workshop-based approach made it possible to bring these competencies to partner institutions and to conduct workshops led by the UPTC project instructor and student teachers (MeF) with students from preschool through ninth grade.

The research project is institutional in nature, and accordingly, school leadership has managed the necessary spaces to ensure the participation of the educational community. Institutional capacity is also being developed to continue working on the development of socio-emotional competencies.

The involvement of strategic partners, including the MEN, the UPTC, the School Government, the PFC, the PFC teaching team, outreach work with partner schools, and interaction with other Normal Superior Schools (ENSC), has enriched the experience by enabling the transfer of the knowledge and skills acquired.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

To the PFC and the IENSUP educational community for supporting this research — conducting research alongside their community-building processes.

To the MEN for the support provided to carry out the training process.

To the third-semester MeF for researching with the ESI Methodology and developing educational innovations for the benefit of the educational community.

To the UPTC–IENSUP team for their committed support and inspiring camaraderie, and to the UPTC for being a strategic partner.

To our principal, Specialist Carlos Jairo Chamorro, for his management and unconditional support of research initiatives.

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