Writing Pedagogy at University

GUIDES FOR WRITING IN SPECIFIC DISCIPLINES

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1 What is Pedagogy?

Pedagogy is the science that provides the scientific and practical foundations needed for direct or indirect educational or training processes. These processes can take the form of formal education, imparting regular or specific programmes, or offer support; or social education, with activities that promote socio-occupational integration, social cohesion or well-being, and business, designing and deploying actions and resources related to people management, cultural management or training.

Pedagogy can involve different groups (children, young people, the elderly, specific groups, the unemployed, active population, etc.), various organisations (the tertiary sector, companies, museums, consultancies, the government, etc.) and specific areas (digital environments, mediation, guidance and professional insertion, cultural invigoration, etc.).

2 General characteristics of writing in Pedagogy

Since pedagogy can be involved in a myriad of situations, and can encompass people of all ages and personal attributes, there is an immense range of writing possibilities. A pedagogical text involves knowledge, decision and action. When we write about pedagogy, especially in a professional capacity, we must always follow the Code of Ethics of the Official College of Pedagogy of Catalonia (2023), adjusted to Law 7/2006, of 31 May, on the practice of qualified professions and professional associations, in terms of rights and obligations (article 8), professional intrusion (article 11) and the exercising of professional activity (article 14).

Working with people, even indirectly, requires us to be very mindful of the words we use, and to always follow the basic principles of democracy, ethics, respect and empathy, confidentiality, conscientious objection and professional responsibility. We must also remember that the ultimate goal of pedagogy is to contribute to the development and growth of people, both individually and collectively, while providing the most suitable and appropriate information for each individual at the appropriate time, and to be mindful of passing judgements.

We must also treat our professional colleagues with this same respect, since our interpretation of facts or situations is often influenced by personal or subjective experiences, which do not meet the standards of measurability or objectivity. A good way to counter this is to use appropriate vocabulary and to work together as a team. We are in a position of influence and therefore must use clear, correct and appropriate vocabulary in professional contexts, taking care to use person-centred language with the person or group we are addressing, to ensure understanding and avoid inappropriate or even incorrect interpretations.

Texts stem from a combination between an educator's knowledge, skills, and attitudes and values, which are the result of research, experience and continuous reflection, and should take care to recognise the past, understand the present and facilitate the future, to ensure their understanding There are at least two fundamental and indispensable people involved in a pedagogical text: the sender and the receiver, who may even adopt a specific name depending on their role and location (writer-reader, teacher-student, trainer-trainee, etc.). On some occasions, intermediaries participate in the adaptation of the final text between the sender (teacher) and the receiver, (for example, a computer scientist who adapts pedagogical ideas using technological resources, or a lawyer who reviews the legal aspects in the drafting of a decree or pedagogical documentation), or in the design of a specific pedagogical text (such as the proposal of the communication manager of a desalination plant who wants to inform different audiences about the plant, explain its operation and raise awareness of its economic, ecological and social importance). In all these examples, the professional educator will tailor the information to meet the needs of the audience, in order to make it easy to digest in terms of learning.

Finally, it is also necessary to bear in mind how this interaction will be carried out with the possible user, which may be face-to-face, blended or virtual, either through written texts or combining it with images, among others, where the pedagogue is present, but indirectly.

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3 Common written texts in Pedagogy

Considering the complexity of pedagogy, writing a text can be compared to preparing a recipe, in which we must define the different ingredients well beforehand: the scope of intervention, the specific topic to be treated, the person or group to whom it is addressed and the final objective.

If we specify these elements from the beginning, the task of preparing the text will be simpler and the result better. We have already dealt with some elements previously, but we want to focus on the final objective of the text; writing a text for a conference is not the same as writing a psycho-pedagogical report for a family of a student with a certain disorder.

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The **programme** or **plan** is a document that is frequently used in pedagogy to sequence a learning activity in maximum detail. It always starts with the same basic elements, although it is adapted to the situation of the organisation and the person or group to whom it is directed. In order to ensure learning, we must take into account the recipient (who we are addressing, by trying to collect as much information as possible beforehand), the purpose (what we intend to achieve; in the current educational environment we talk about basic and core skills), the contents (the basic contents that will be developed; which are called curricular because they depend on the prescribed curriculum), the methodology (aspects that will facilitate the task of teaching, and consequently of learning, among which stand out: didactic aspects, such as the most appropriate methodological strategies and human and material resources, and organisational aspects, for example, the distribution of time, the most suitable space and the number and specifics of the recipients) and finally, the evaluation (to ensure that the learning objectives have been correctly and fully achieved, using previously established criteria and indicators. Therefore, there are numerous examples of documents, from open documents, such as free text, to closed documents, such as a closed questionnaire; and for several years the rubric has been generalised, which proposes continuous monitoring based on a gradation of possible answers).

Didactic texts (for a class, conference, textbook, etc.) must be as appropriate as possible for the audience, focused on stimulating learning and promoting understanding, in as engaging a way as possible. Despite the fact that the person is unknown, an attempt will be made to obtain as much information as possible, such as age, educational level or training situation. In addition, we should take into account any previously acquired knowledge, the intended purpose and the assimilated learning strategies.

The text itself will depend on the type of channel or resource used, because a chapter in a school book is different to the text that makes up the oral information in a documentary, since each type of didactic resource follows its own rules of use and is combined with other elements not included in the discourse itself.

In the writing process, the following will be taken into account: the length of the text in relation to the time available to work on it, the layout of the different sections, the use of a suitable vocabulary adapted to the recipient, the distinction of basic concepts or key words or concepts, or the incorporation of elements to display information, such as

examples, diagrams or illustrations; and in some cases self-assessment proposals are added.

The **report** describes a set of information which is collected from verified facts and analysed according to certain pre-established criteria. This information highlights the relevant events experienced by a person or group, and provides recommendations that are achievable, with a view to solving the problematic or unwanted situation in the best possible way. It must be as objective and brief as possible, ensure confidentiality and be easily understood by its recipient.

Reports vary according to the situation of the pedagogue, for example, a psycho-pedagogical counselling team may write a report for the teacher of a child with a certain developmental delay, a care team for at-risk children and teenagers may write a report for a family who may lose custody of their children due to abuse, or the guidance counsellor of a vocational training student may write a report which describes the curricular process of a subject. In all reports, the first section will include a description of the situation, and the second part will include proposals for action to improve the situation. In some specifically academic reports, an assessment is also provided in addition to the research.

With regard to **scientific documentation**, which is wide ranging and can encompass the work of a first-year university student to a doctoral thesis, some basic aspects should be taken into account when writing: the different sections that correspond to each type of document; the criteria of scientific rigor: credibility, transferability, reliability and confirmation, and, finally, ethical aspects: social value, scientific validity, fair selection of subjects, favourable risk-benefit ratio, conditions for authentic dialogue, maximum independent and objective evaluation, informed consent and respect for the participants throughout the process. The drafting of a scientific document will always follow the latest version of the regulations of the American Psychological Association.

4 Writing conventions in Pedagogy

The consulted works are referenced in the various texts according to the latest edited version of the American Psychological Association (APA), which contains all the relevant information needed to cite all types of documentary references. Recently, there has been a tendency to show the references mentioned explicitly in the text instead of in additional bibliographies, except in large-format works, such as master's theses, doctoral theses or extensive research.

Working in social sciences and addressing people requires us to draft all texts meticulously in order to ensure good communication; thereby avoiding words or expressions that may be offensive due to gender, social class, religious beliefs, age or intellectual capacity.

As authors of a text, use the first person singular or plural to describe activities, reflections and evaluations that we have carried out, and not the third person, as previously used, since it is impersonal and does not give as much consideration to authorship.

The dissemination and socialisation of research has become, for some years now, a fundamental part of scientific activity. In the field of pedagogy, we mainly use the following academic social networks: *ORCID*, *Academia*, *AutorsRedalyc* and *ResearchGate*, which promote the dissemination of our texts, make it easier for us to communicate with other authors and follow up on those who cite us, and improve our academic ranking.

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5 Selected works and websites for writing in Pedagogy

1. *Diccionari d'educació* [online]. Barcelona: Termcat, Centre de Terminologia. [https://www.termcat.cat/ca/diccionaris-en-linia/132]

   A dictionary that includes more than two thousand terms from the world of education: general pedagogy, social pedagogy, educational research, educational organisation and management, psycho-pedagogical orientation, didactics, special education and technology for education. In addition to Catalan, it offers the equivalent terms in Spanish, French and English.

2. *The First Person in Academic Writing* [online]. Duke University. [https://twp.duke.edu/sites/twp.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/first-person.original.pdf]

   Tips for effective use of the first person and personal voice in academic writing.

3. *Guide for Writing in Education* [online]. Southwestern University. [https://www.southwestern.edu/live/files/4171-guide-for-writing-in-educationpdf]

   A simple guide aimed mainly at people who are new to writing in education, which briefly describes the basic aspects that are required when writing in education, from the different types of text to citations.

4. *Writing in Education* [online]. The University of Arizona.
   [https://writingcenter.uagc.edu/writing-education]

   A compilation of the most interesting issues to consider when writing in education, organised into four broad blocks: general aspects, frequent written works in education, writing academic texts and aspects to consider when conducting educational research.

5. *Education: Reflective Writing* [online]. Monash University.
   [https://www.monash.edu/learnhq/excel-at-writing/annotated-assessment-samples/education/education-reflective-writing]

   A review of what to take into account when writing reflectively in pedagogy, considering aspects such as subjectivity, planning, the incorporation of personal experiences or resources, among others.

6. *School of Authors. Comunicar*. [https://www.grupocomunicar.com/wp/school-of-authors/]

   Comunicar, the best internationally indexed journal in Spain in the field of pedagogy, provides an extensive number of resources, recommendations and steps for writing and publishing scientific texts in the field of education.

This guide complies with the accessibility criteria (with the assessment of Adaptabit and Mireia Ribera).