



## Perceptions of school community stakeholders on digital narratives in the educational context

### Percepciones de los actores de la comunidad escolar sobre narrativas digitales en el contexto educativo

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#### ABSTRACT

Digital transformation has deeply permeated contemporary educational spaces. Thus, the research objective is to analyse the perceptions of school community actors on digital narratives in the educational context. Qualitative research with an interpretive phenomenological approach analysed the perceptions of school community actors on digital narratives in the educational context. It was carried out in two educational institutions in Montería, Córdoba, Colombia. Teachers reported gaps between conceptual knowledge and practical application; students showed high technical familiarity but limited understanding of the pedagogical potential; parents expressed ambivalence between educational recognition and technological concerns; and administrators had a decisive influence on the configuration of institutional environments. Perceptions are mediated by digital skills, previous experiences, pedagogical beliefs, and contextual factors. The results suggest a need for specialised teacher training, critical digital literacy for students, and differentiated strategies for the effective implementation of digital narratives.

**Descriptors:** short stories; electronic media; learning processes. (Source: UNESCO Thesaurus).

#### RESUMEN

La transformación digital ha permeado profundamente los espacios educativos contemporáneos. De ese modo; se tiene por objetivo de investigación analizar las percepciones de los actores de la comunidad escolar sobre narrativas digitales en el contexto educativo. Investigación cualitativa con enfoque fenomenológico interpretativo analizó las percepciones de actores de la comunidad escolar sobre narrativas digitales en el contexto educativo. Se desarrolló en dos instituciones educativas de Montería, Córdoba, en Colombia. Los docentes evidenciaron brechas entre conocimiento conceptual y aplicación práctica; los estudiantes mostraron alta familiaridad técnica pero comprensión limitada del potencial pedagógico; los padres manifestaron ambivalencia entre reconocimiento educativo y preocupaciones tecnológicas; los directivos influyeron determinantemente en la configuración de ambientes institucionales. Las percepciones están mediadas por competencias digitales, experiencias previas, creencias pedagógicas y factores contextuales. Los resultados sugieren necesidades de formación docente especializada, alfabetización digital crítica estudiantil y estrategias diferenciadas para implementación efectiva de narrativas digitales.

**Descriptores:** cuento; medios electrónicos; proceso de aprendizaje. (Fuente: Tesauro UNESCO).

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## INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has deeply permeated contemporary educational spaces, generating a fundamental rethinking of the teaching-learning methodologies that have traditionally characterised school systems. In this evolving context, digital narratives have emerged as an innovative pedagogical tool that integrates multimodal elements to build more immersive and meaningful educational experiences (Lambert, 2013; Robin, 2008). However, the successful adoption of these technologies depends fundamentally on the perceptions that different actors in the educational community hold towards them.

The phenomenon of digital narratives transcends the mere incorporation of technology in the classroom; it represents a reconceptualisation of the traditional narrative process that takes advantage of the expressive possibilities of contemporary digital media. These tools combine text, image, audio and video to create communicative experiences that resonate particularly with the information processing patterns characteristic of current generations (Robin, 2008; Barbosa et al., 2022). Their pedagogical potential lies in their ability to connect emotionally with students while promoting the development of communication skills essential for the 21st century.

The implementation of digital narratives in educational contexts allows for the meaningful construction of knowledge, as evidenced by recent studies that demonstrate their effectiveness in various curricular areas. Aranguren-Peraza (2020) highlights the learning paths generated through transmedia narratives applied to virtual classrooms, while Ochoa-Martínez & Díaz-Neri (2021) document successful experiences in facilitating the learning of fractions in primary education using these tools.

However, the effective implementation of digital narratives in educational contexts faces multiple challenges that vary according to the specific characteristics of each school community. The diversity of perceptions among teachers, students, administrators, and parents is a determining factor that can facilitate or hinder the processes of technological integration (Davis, 1989). This perceptual variability reflects generational differences, digital skills, previous experiences with technology, and pedagogical beliefs that directly influence the acceptance and use of these tools.

In Latin American contexts, particularly in Colombia, the adoption of digital narratives faces additional challenges related to inequalities in technological access, infrastructure limitations, and specialised teacher training needs. Valencia et al. (2016) point out that ICT skills and standards from a pedagogical perspective require a comprehensive approach that considers the levels of ICT appropriation in teaching practice. These contextual conditions create a complex scenario in which the perceptions of educational actors become particularly relevant for understanding pedagogical innovation processes (Londoño, 2013).

Digital narratives also face challenges related to the social appropriation of cultural and natural heritage, as documented by Ospina-Cordero & Robelto-Cantor (2021), who analyse how these tools can contribute to the appreciation and preservation of national heritage while developing communication skills. This cultural dimension adds complexity to the implementation process, requiring specific considerations about local contexts and community values. Therefore, the research focuses on analysing multidimensional perceptions of digital narratives, recognising that each group of actors brings unique perspectives based on their specific roles, experiences and expectations. Through this analysis, we seek to identify convergences and divergences between the perceptions of different groups, as well as the factors that influence the formation of these perceptions.



Thus, the research objective is to analyse the perceptions of school community actors on digital narratives in the educational context.

### **Theoretical framework**

Digital narratives represent a contemporary evolution of the ancient art of storytelling, adapting to the expressive possibilities offered by current digital technologies. Conceptually, these tools integrate multiple semiotic languages to create coherent communicative experiences that transcend the limitations of traditional media (Miller, 2014).

Their multimodal nature allows for the convergence of visual, auditory, and textual elements into a unified narrative experience that enhances both creative expression and conceptual understanding. From a psychological perspective on learning, digital narratives are grounded in principles established by theorists such as Ausubel (1963), who emphasised the importance of meaningful learning through the connection between prior knowledge and new information.

Digital narratives facilitate these connections by presenting content in a contextualised and emotionally resonant way. The pedagogical dimension of digital narratives is based on constructivist principles that emphasise the importance of active knowledge construction by the student. From this perspective, digital narratives function as mediating tools that facilitate the connection between previous experiences and new learning, promoting the construction of personal and contextually relevant meanings (Vygotsky, 1978). Bruner (1991) contributes to this understanding by highlighting how the narrative construction of reality allows us to organise and make sense of human experiences.

Mayer's cognitive theory of multimedia learning (2014) provides a solid theoretical foundation for understanding the educational potential of digital narratives. According to this theory, multimedia information processing activates multiple cognitive channels simultaneously, facilitating the encoding, storage and retrieval of information. Digital narratives take advantage of this natural cognitive ability by presenting content in a way that optimises learning processes. In this context, Bort-Caballero & Gil-Mediavilla (2023) analyse educational interventions with digital narratives in Spanish language and literature from a gender perspective, highlighting their potential to address specific issues in an innovative way, while Nunciaroni et al. (2024) explore storytelling in the teaching-learning process in nursing, demonstrating the versatility of these tools in higher education.

### **Perceptions and technology adoption in education**

The study of perceptions of educational technologies has gained significant relevance in contemporary pedagogical research, recognising that the attitudes and beliefs of educational actors are determining factors for the success of any technological innovation. The technology acceptance model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989) suggests that perceived usefulness and ease of use are key predictors of the intention to adopt a specific technology. In the educational context, perceptions are shaped by multiple variables, including prior digital skills, experiences of use, pedagogical beliefs, institutional support, and specific contextual factors. Prensky (2010) highlighted the importance of considering generational differences in technology adoption, noting that perceptions can vary significantly between 'digital natives' and 'digital immigrants.'

Perceptions are also influenced by broader ideological and cultural dimensions, while Ramírez-Ibarra (2023) analyses how the digital narratives of the new right in Latin America shape specific perceptions of freedom and ideology, showing that digital tools are not neutral but carry value judgements that influence their reception and adoption. Consequently, teachers' perceptions of digital narratives are influenced by intrinsic factors such as technological self-efficacy, beliefs about teaching and learning, and previous experiences with educational technology. At the same time, extrinsic factors such as administrative support, availability of resources, preparation time and curricular pressure also shape these perceptions (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010), while Acosta (2018) specifically documents teachers' perceptions of digital narratives in secondary education, providing empirical evidence on these factors.

Student perceptions tend to be characterised by greater familiarity with digital technologies, although this familiarity does not necessarily translate into an understanding of the pedagogical



potential of these tools. The distinction between recreational and educational use of technologies represents a significant challenge for the effective implementation of digital narratives in school contexts. Barbosa et al. (2022) analyse young adults' perspectives on digital storytelling campaigns, revealing complex perceptions about the communicative value of these tools. Meanwhile, educational leaders play fundamental roles as facilitators or barriers to the adoption of digital narratives. Their perceptions of costs, benefits, risks, and educational value directly influence investment decisions, institutional policies, and support for technological innovation initiatives (Fullan, 2020).

### Colombian educational context and technology

The Colombian education system has undergone significant transformations in recent decades, particularly in relation to the integration of digital technologies. The Ministry of National Education has implemented various policies and programmes aimed at promoting the incorporation of ICTs in educational processes, recognising their potential to improve educational quality and reduce gaps in access to knowledge. Valencia et al. (2016) document ICT skills and standards from a pedagogical perspective, providing a comprehensive overview of the levels of ICT uptake in teaching practice. Their work highlights the need for systematic approaches to technology integration that consider both technical and pedagogical skills.

However, the implementation of educational technologies in Colombia faces structural challenges related to infrastructure, connectivity, teacher training and equity in access. These contextual conditions create a complex scenario in which the perceptions of educational actors are particularly relevant for understanding technology adoption processes (García et al., 2019). Therefore, the cultural and socioeconomic diversity that characterises Colombia generates significant variations in perceptions of educational technology between different regions and communities. Factors such as geographical area (urban-rural), socioeconomic status, access to technology and previous educational experiences influence the configuration of these perceptions. While in the specific context of the department of Córdoba, educational institutions have shown progressive advances in the incorporation of digital technologies, challenges remain related to specialised teacher training and the sustainability of pedagogical innovation processes. Londoño (2013) specifically analyses digital narratives in rural Colombian contexts, providing evidence on the particularities of these environments.

### METHOD

This research adopted a qualitative approach with an interpretive phenomenological design, aimed at understanding the experiences and meanings that different actors in the educational community attribute to digital narratives in their specific contexts. This methodological approach facilitates understanding of the meanings that participants construct about digital narratives, transcending superficial descriptions to achieve richer and more contextualised understandings.

Therefore, the research was carried out in two educational institutions in the municipality of Montería, department of Córdoba, Colombia, intentionally selected to represent different socio-educational contexts. The Antonio Nariño Educational Institution, located in an urban area, serves a student population from middle and lower-middle socioeconomic strata with relatively stable access to digital technologies. The Kilómetro 12 Educational Institution, located in a rural area, serves a population with greater limitations in terms of technological access and connectivity.

The selection of participants followed theoretical sampling criteria guided by the research objectives and the theoretical saturation of emerging categories. A total of 475 participants were strategically distributed among different groups of actors: five Spanish language teachers, four technology and computer science teachers, fourteen teachers from other subject areas, five school administrators, 237 eighth-grade students, and 210 parents.

Specific inclusion criteria were as follows: for teachers, teaching eighth grade subjects with at least two years' experience at the institution; for students, being enrolled in eighth grade with basic access to technological devices; for parents, having children in eighth grade and expressing willingness to participate in the study; for administrators, exercising administrative responsibilities related to secondary education.



Specific data collection instruments were designed considering the particular characteristics of each group of participants. Semi-structured interviews were the main technique, with six different scripts developed to explore perceptions of digital narratives, virtual tools, basic digital skills, teaching strategies, and pedagogical practices.

The interview scripts included open-ended questions that facilitated the emergence of authentic perceptions without predefined restrictions. The questions were organised progressively from general to specific aspects, allowing participants to express their perceptions in a natural and contextualised manner.

Documentary analysis complemented data collection through the review of relevant institutional documents: institutional educational projects (PEI), curricula, curriculum guidelines for Spanish language and technology and IT, basic competency standards and basic learning rights. This documentary triangulation provided additional context for interpreting the perceptions expressed by the participants.

Data collection was carried out over a period of eight weeks, implementing specific protocols to ensure the quality and consistency of the information gathered. The interviews were conducted in person and virtually, depending on the specific conditions of each institution and the preferences of the participants.

All interviews were digitally recorded with the explicit informed consent of the participants, ensuring that the perceptions expressed were captured in their entirety. The recordings were transcribed in full, preserving relevant paralinguistic elements such as pauses, emphasis and emotional expressions that enriched the subsequent interpretation.

The collection process incorporated continuous verification strategies through field notes, contextual observations and reflective records by the researcher. These strategies facilitated the early identification of emerging patterns and the theoretical saturation of analytical categories.

## RESULTS

The gap between conceptual knowledge and practical application observed particularly in teachers is consistent with the specialised literature, which points to the importance of specific pedagogical support for educational technology integration (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Valencia et al., 2016).

This gap suggests that teacher training strategies should go beyond technical training to include deep pedagogical reflection on the educational value of these tools. In this sense, student perceptions, characterised by technical familiarity but limited understanding of pedagogical potential, reveal opportunities for the development of critical digital literacy. This situation suggests that the implementation of digital narratives should include specific meta-learning components that help students understand how and why these tools facilitate their learning processes, as suggested by the experiences documented by Nunciaroni et al. (2024) in higher education.

On the other hand, parental ambivalence towards digital narratives, manifested in recognition of their importance alongside concerns about technological dependence, reflects broader cultural tensions about the role of technology in the education of children and adolescents. These perceptions suggest a need for more effective communication by educational institutions about the specific purposes and proven benefits of these pedagogical tools, while the influence of ideological factors in shaping perceptions, as pointed out by Ramírez-Ibarra (2023), requires specific consideration in implementation strategies. Digital narratives are not neutral tools, but carry value judgements that can influence their reception by different community groups.

Therefore, it is argued that perceptions of digital narratives are not formed in a vacuum, but are mediated by multiple contextual factors, including geographical location, socioeconomic status, technological access, and institutional culture. These contextual mediations have significant implications for the design of implementation strategies that take into account the specificities of each educational community. The differences between urban and rural contexts highlighted in the study reflect structural inequalities in technological access that characterise the Colombian educational landscape, consistent with Londoño's (2013) observations on digital narratives in





rural contexts. These differences suggest the need for differentiated policies that recognise the particularities of each context without perpetuating gaps in access and educational quality.

In contrast, the cultural dimension of heritage, analysed by Ospina-Cordero & Robelto-Cantor (2021), adds complexity to implementation processes. Digital narratives can be valuable tools for the social appropriation of cultural and natural heritage, but they require approaches that are sensitive to local particularities and community values. Thus, the influence of institutional leadership in shaping teachers' perceptions of digital narratives confirms the importance of strengthening managerial capacities for the management of pedagogical innovations, consistent with the change management approaches proposed by Fullan (2020). Managers who demonstrated an understanding of the educational potential of these tools tended to create more favourable institutional environments for their adoption.

From this perspective, the barriers identified in the study, particularly insufficient technological infrastructure and limited teacher training, are consistent with challenges reported in the literature on technological integration in Latin American contexts (García et al., 2019). However, the simultaneous presence of facilitators such as student motivation and management recognition of pedagogical potential suggests favourable conditions for targeted interventions. Thus, resistance to change on the part of some teachers, identified particularly by administrators, requires specific support strategies that consider emotional and motivational factors in addition to technical aspects. The successful experiences documented by Ochoa-Martínez & Díaz-Neri (2021) in primary education suggest that demonstrating concrete results can help reduce this resistance.

On the other hand, the identified facilitators, especially student motivation towards digital technologies, represent valuable opportunities for the design of implementation strategies that take advantage of these positive elements. Consequently, the learning paths proposed by Aranguren-Peraza (2020) for transmedia narratives offer conceptual frameworks for channelling this motivation towards specific educational purposes through appropriate pedagogical mediation. Meanwhile, the successful application of digital narratives in various fields, from mathematics (Ochoa-Martínez & Díaz-Neri, 2021) to nursing (Nunciaroni et al., 2024), demonstrates their versatility and potential for adaptation to different disciplinary contexts. This evidence can help reduce resistance based on perceptions of limited applicability.

Therefore, this research contributes to the body of knowledge on educational actors' perceptions of technological innovations from the specific perspective of Colombian educational contexts, providing empirical evidence on how cultural, socioeconomic, and contextual factors mediate perceptions of digital narratives, complementing previous studies such as those by Acosta (2018) on teachers' perceptions in secondary education.

On the other hand, the multidimensional approach adopted in the study, which includes perceptions of all the main actors in the educational community, provides a more holistic understanding of the factors that influence the adoption of digital narratives. This comprehensive perspective is relatively scarce in the specialised literature, which often focuses on the perceptions of specific groups in isolation. The results on parental ambivalence towards educational technologies provide valuable insights into family-school dynamics in contexts of technological innovation. This contribution is particularly relevant given the importance of family support for the success of educational initiatives and complements the generational perspectives analysed by Prensky (2010).

Thus, evidence on differences between urban and rural contexts enriches the understanding of digital inequalities in Colombia, complementing Londoño's (2013) analyses of digital narratives in rural contexts and providing additional empirical evidence on these disparities. Therefore, the evidence on the gap between technical familiarity and pedagogical understanding of digital narratives contributes to debates on critical digital literacy and the need for educational approaches that transcend basic technical skills to include reflective understanding of the educational potential of these tools.

The study has important limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The focus on a specific geographical context (Montería, Córdoba) limits the direct transferability of results to other Colombian or Latin American contexts with different characteristics. Thus, the

cross-sectional nature of the study prevents an understanding of how perceptions evolve over time, particularly after specific implementation experiences with digital narratives. This limitation is significant considering that perceptions of technology tend to change with experience of use, as suggested by follow-up studies on the implementation of educational innovations.

In addition, although the focus on eighth grade is methodologically appropriate to ensure homogeneity in the cognitive development and educational experiences of the student participants, it limits understanding of how perceptions vary across different educational levels. The experiences documented by Bort-Caballero & Gil-Mediavilla (2023) in university education suggest significant variations according to educational level. It should be noted that the study did not include specific analyses of gender differences in perceptions, an aspect that could enrich the understanding of these phenomena considering the gender perspectives analysed by Bort-Caballero & Gil-Mediavilla (2023) in university contexts.

## THEORETICAL REFLECTION

This research revealed a complex and multifaceted landscape of perceptions of digital narratives in the Colombian educational context, characterised by significant convergences and divergences between different groups of actors. The main results indicate that, although there is widespread recognition of the educational potential of these tools, significant gaps persist between conceptual knowledge and practical application, particularly among teachers. The perceived diversity identified reflects the influence of multiple contextual factors, including prior digital skills, experiences of use, pedagogical beliefs, institutional conditions and socioeconomic characteristics, suggesting that the successful implementation of digital narratives requires differentiated approaches that consider the specificities of each group of actors and their particular contexts, consistent with the recommendations of Valencia et al. (2016) on ICT skills from a pedagogical perspective.

Student perceptions, characterised by high technical familiarity but limited understanding of pedagogical potential, highlight the need to develop specific critical digital literacy strategies that transcend basic technical skills. This need is fundamental to effectively harness students' natural motivation towards digital technologies, as suggested by the learning pathways proposed by Aranguren-Peraza (2020). For their part, parental ambivalence towards digital narratives, manifested in recognition of their importance alongside concerns about technological dependence, suggests opportunities to strengthen communication between educational institutions and families about the specific purposes and benefits of these pedagogical tools.

The results of this research have direct implications for multiple dimensions of educational practice, suggesting the need to redesign teacher training programmes to include not only technical skills in the use of digital narratives, but also deep pedagogical reflection on their effective integration into the curriculum, consistent with the approaches proposed by Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010). In this sense, educational institutions should consider developing specific policies that facilitate the gradual and sustainable implementation of digital narratives, taking into account both identified facilitators and structural barriers, including components of technical support, pedagogical accompaniment, and educational impact evaluation, following the change management models proposed by Fullan (2020).

The training of school leaders emerges as a priority to facilitate educational leadership that promotes institutional environments favourable to technological innovation, including understanding the pedagogical potential of digital narratives, change management strategies and cost-effectiveness evaluation of technological investments. Likewise, the design of communication strategies with parents should consider their specific concerns about educational technology, providing clear information on pedagogical purposes, proven benefits and digital security measures implemented by institutions. The curricular integration of digital narratives should consider successful applications documented in different subject areas, from Spanish language (Bort-Caballero & Gil-Mediavilla, 2023) to mathematics (Ochoa-Martínez & Díaz-Neri, 2021) and higher education (Nunciaroni et al., 2024), adapting approaches to the particularities of each context.

The evidence from this study suggests multiple promising directions for future research in the field of digital narratives and educational perceptions, requiring longitudinal studies that



examine how perceptions evolve after specific implementation experiences, allowing for an understanding of processes of perceptual change and factors that facilitate or hinder them. Future research should explore perceptions of digital narratives at other educational levels, particularly primary and secondary education, to understand how these perceptions vary according to cognitive development characteristics and educational experiences of different age groups, considering that experiences in university education documented by Bort-Caballero & Gil-Mediavilla (2023) suggest significant differences according to educational level.

Comparative studies between different Colombian regions and Latin American countries are needed to understand how specific cultural, socioeconomic, and political factors mediate perceptions of digital narratives, enriching knowledge about the contextualisation of implementation strategies and complementing analyses of digital narratives in specific contexts such as those of Londoño (2013). Research on the specific effectiveness of different types of digital narratives in diverse educational contexts would complement the perceptual findings of this study, providing evidence on relationships between positive perceptions and actual educational impact, considering that the successful results documented by Ochoa-Martínez & Díaz-Neri (2021) in mathematics suggest potential for controlled experimental studies.

Future studies should explore perceptions of other educational actors not included in this research, such as administrative staff, school librarians, and educational technology specialists, whose perspectives could enrich the holistic understanding of these phenomena. Research on gender differences in perceptions of digital narratives, inspired by the approaches of Bort-Caballero & Gil-Mediavilla (2023), could provide valuable insights for the design of more inclusive implementation strategies, while studies on the relationship between digital narratives and social appropriation of cultural heritage, following the lines initiated by Ospina-Cordero & Robelto-Cantor (2021), could explore specific applications in Colombian educational contexts.

## CONCLUSION

Perceptions of digital narratives in the educational community studied are characterised by their multifaceted nature, showing that each group of actors constructs different meanings based on their specific roles, previous experiences and particular contexts. This diversity of perceptions confirms that digital narratives are not perceived uniformly, but generate varied interpretations that reflect the particularities of each group within the educational ecosystem.

Teachers express an ambivalent perception characterised by theoretical recognition of the pedagogical potential of these tools, but limited by significant gaps between conceptual knowledge and practical application. This situation highlights the need for specialised pedagogical support that goes beyond technical training to include in-depth reflection on effective curriculum integration.

Students demonstrate perceptions marked by high technical familiarity but limited understanding of the specific educational potential of digital narratives. This characteristic reveals important opportunities for the development of critical digital literacy that helps channel their natural motivation toward digital technologies in pedagogically productive directions.

School administrators exhibit perceptions that vary significantly according to their understanding of the educational potential of these tools, exerting a decisive influence on the configuration of institutional environments that are favourable or unfavourable to their adoption. Their role as facilitators or barriers is crucial to the implementation processes.

Parents express ambivalent perceptions that combine recognition of the educational importance of digital narratives with concerns about technological dependence and effects on their children's development. This ambivalence reflects broader cultural tensions about the role of technology in youth development.





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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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