Reading and writing by students with intellectual disabilities: Contributions from comic books

ARTICLE

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Abstract
This article addresses the appropriation of reading and writing by students with intellectual disabilities in the early years of Elementary School. The study originated from the master's research entitled "Comic books as a mediating resource for improving the reading and writing of students with intellectual disabilities" (2022) and aims to analyze the contribution of comic books as a mediating resource for the learning of students with intellectual disabilities (ID), with a specific focus on the linguistic skills of reading and writing. The research is based on the Historical-Cultural Theory (HCT), with exploratory, descriptive and applied studies, through the use of a didactic-pedagogical experiment. The field of investigation was a municipal school in Apucarana, PR, Brazil, in a 5th-grade class of the early years of Elementary School. Among the selected subjects, two had intellectual disabilities and eight had learning difficulties related to reading and writing. In this excerpt, data referring to two participants are presented, whose results show satisfactory responses when compared to the proposals using prose texts.
Keywords: Historical-Cultural Theory. Learning. Intellectual disability. Reading. Writing.

Leitura e escrita do estudante com deficiência intelectual: contribuições das histórias em quadrinhos (HQs)

Resumo
Este artigo aborda a apropriação da leitura e da escrita por parte de estudantes com deficiência intelectual nos anos iniciais do Ensino Fundamental. O estudo tem origem na pesquisa de mestrado intitulada "História em quadrinhos como recurso mediador para o aprimoramento da leitura e escrita do educando com deficiência intelectual" (2022) e tem como objetivo analisar a contribuição das histórias em quadrinhos (HQs) como recurso mediador para a aprendizagem de educandos com deficiência intelectual (DI), com foco específico nas habilidades linguísticas de leitura e escrita. A pesquisa fundamenta-se na Teoria Histórico-Cultural (THC), com estudos exploratórios, descritivos e aplicados, por meio da utilização do

experimento didático pedagógico. O campo de investigação foi uma escola municipal de Apucarana – PR, Brasil, em uma turma do 5º ano dos anos iniciais do Ensino Fundamental. Entre os sujeitos selecionados, dois apresentavam deficiência intelectual e oito apresentavam dificuldades de aprendizagem relacionadas à leitura e escrita. Neste recorte, são apresentados dados referentes a dois participantes, cujos resultados revelam respostas satisfatórias quando comparadas às propostas com texto em prosa.
Palavras-chave: Teoria Histórico-Cultural. Aprendizagem. Deficiência Intelectual. Leitura e escrita.

1 Introduction

The inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream education has been reshaping the educational context, especially in the approach to pedagogical practices, with the aim of ensuring a quality teaching and learning process, since access to school is a legal guarantee. Within the scope of this research, we focus on students with intellectual disabilities, taking into account the barriers imposed by the condition of disability, particularly regarding the learning of reading and writing.

Our concerns have also been the subject of other studies, such as Oliveira (2018), who carried out research with the purpose of assessing the learning performance of students with intellectual disabilities (ID), through the *Referencial de Avaliação de Aprendizagem na área da Deficiência Intelectual* (*RAADI*). Based on this framework, we examined the performance of students with ID in the subjects of Portuguese Language and Mathematics, enrolled in mainstream classes from 2nd to 5th grade of Elementary School I, in the city of São Paulo, Brazil. In this context, the data presented in Portuguese Language revealed learning obstacles in reading and writing skills, since, overall, only 40% showed satisfactory performance (*RAADI*, 2008).

The data collected and analyzed, in light of the assumptions of Vygotsky *et al.* (2017), make it clear that students with ID are capable of curricular learning in an inclusive context. However, it is necessary to reflect on pedagogical practices and

forms of mediation that take into account students' prior and everyday concepts, with resources that carry meaning, so that the formation of scientific concepts can be achieved through the dialectical relationships fostered in the school environment.

On this basis, and considering that the greatest difficulties faced by students with ID are in Portuguese Language, given that the literacy process is as complex as the essential predictor skills for reading and writing, namely: phonological awareness, verbal fluency, phoneme knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension (Capellini et al., 2009), these skills must be developed so that the literacy process, and consequently the appropriation of reading, can be consolidated. However, for children with intellectual disabilities, in addition to requiring more time, the "path" toward such appropriation is also different from that taken by children without ID. According to Andrade (2016), in general, these difficulties may result from inadequate pedagogical processes or those that do not align with the specificities of the students.

In this context, for the appropriation of reading and writing skills, teaching methodology must go beyond the decoding of symbols or images, considering the learning of students with ID beyond existential relationships, since "It is not about reading and writing: it is about the use made of reading and writing, the meaning attributed by students with intellectual disabilities to this social practice" (Paixão and Oliveira, 2018, p. 88).

In line with the aforementioned authors, Rezende (2009, p. 3) argues that "the school and the university, as educational institutions, have prioritized only the reading of the written word" and neglected other textual presences in our daily lives. The author further stresses the need to value and explore the reading of images, as the media present in the everyday situations of students' lives lead them toward the continuous interpretation of visual symbols.

Based on these ideas, it is understood that pedagogical practices guided linearly by a single teaching model call for the need for ruptures. For us, the reading of images makes it possible to enhance mastery of reading and writing, even when such images contain verbal and nonverbal elements; these are iconographies that

convey representative meaning. In this regard, comic books (*HQs*) emerge as potential didactic-pedagogical resources for the teaching of reading and writing, since their images, plots, and forms of composition arouse in students a strong interest in production and reading.

The use of verbal and nonverbal teaching resources aligns with the assumptions presented by Braun and Nunes (2015) and Freitas (2012), whose studies indicate that students with ID demonstrate greater learning potential when they establish meaningful connections with what is proposed to them. The assumptions of Braun and Nunes confirm Vygotsky's (1997) position, as they state that a child learns through interaction with the social environment, building symbols and systems in social relations that, once appropriated, become part of individual organization. Along these lines, the contributions of *Historical-Cultural Theory* (*HCT*), developed by Vygotsky and his collaborators, emphasize that children's learning takes place through the mediation of signs and tools that act as aids in concept formation, assigning meaning from collective actions to the personal sphere (Rego, 2014).

Based on these principles, it is possible to identify in comic books elements that enable students to construct meaning in the process of acquiring reading and writing. According to Fogaça (2003), comic book images allow children to activate their mental actions by moving from the "visual concrete to the abstraction of the word." For the author, the representation of words through different symbolic images allows students to understand connotations distinct from those present only in written text.

In the same vein, Piconi and Tanaka (2003, p. 3) state that comic book resources "can contribute to developing the reader's capacity for analysis, interpretation, and reflection […] awaken interest in reading and writing, and foster text production."

In line with the conception of the aforementioned authors, Netto and Vergueiro (2018) advocate the use of comic books by teachers, explaining that each

teacher, by recognizing the language of comics as a source of students' interest, may employ such resources in their pedagogical practice in creative ways.

The elements present in comic books connect with students' school context, since the characters, settings, and objects bring components of everyday life, with familiar figures such as houses, animals, children, family, and toys, for example. In this regard, Netto and Vergueiro (2018, p. 11) recommend the use of comics in the classroom, as they are part of society's culture and are available in different spaces, media, and activities "such as in advertising, magazines, textbooks or not, newspapers, video games, campaigns, educational software, and even in Enem exams." In effect, in this study, which focuses on improving the reading and writing of students with ID, it is understood that comics can contribute to the appropriation of these domains, given their connection to context, usability, and accessibility for students in the early years of Elementary School. This leads us to ask: can comics contribute to the improvement of reading and writing for students with ID?

To this end, we adopt the principles of *Historical-Cultural Theory*, considering that reading and writing are not innate elements of the human being, but historical constructions developed in ontogenesis. Thus, in order to learn to read and write, the child must attribute meaning to the signs and symbols that correspond to real-life relations and entities.

Nevertheless, this process is only possible through mediation between the child and the environment, by means of cultural signs and instruments, in which language emerges as an essential factor. According to Leontiev (2004, p. 348), "the appropriation of language constitutes the most important condition of mental development," since it is through language that adults communicate with the child and transmit the knowledge accumulated by humanity. Given the role of language in human development, Vygotsky (1997) considers it fundamental for the formation of *Higher Psychological Functions* (*HPF*), since learning takes place through mediation. In consonance with these ideas, Luria (2017, p. 144) highlights that "in contrast with a certain number of other psychological

functions, writing can be defined as a function carried out culturally, through mediation"; thus, it requires great effort from both teacher and student, given that learning written language does not arise from a natural and inner need of the child, but is introduced by the teacher in a practice externally imposed on them.

In this scenario, based on Vygotskian principles, Coelho (2011) explains the role of literacy in the appropriation of scientific knowledge inherent to the "non-everyday" spheres of society, such as science, for example. According to the author, when "literacy remains in close relation with the realm of everyday life, it establishes a link in the transition to the realm of non-everyday life, since without written language, access to this universe is almost impossible" (p. 15).

To awaken in the student the need for reading and writing, approaching their sociocultural environment is a basic premise, since as these skills become their own objectives, they cease to be mere school tasks. Considering that, with or even before the word, the image has accompanied humanity in all its needs: to communicate, to teach, to criticize mistakes, to exalt or to destroy (Cagnin, 2014).

Expression through images revisits feelings and information that lead the reader to share in what is being communicated. Employed for this purpose, the represented image has always fascinated human beings, having served as the basis of communication since the dawn of humanity. According to Vergueiro (2020), primitive humans, when communicating through successive graphic images of the activities they performed, were already approaching what is known today as comic books.

Xavier (2019, p. 1) considers that "images in themselves carry memories, cultures, and traditions and, in this context, comic books integrate into the expressive relationship between 'image-text,'" in which such resources can be fully explored. Because of their free circulation worldwide, comics currently represent a remarkable means of social communication, since, with their accessible and attractive language, they capture the attention of readers from the earliest age.

In this context, the reading of comic books is enhanced by familiarity with their language, which, according to Vergueiro (2020), is conveyed through two constantly interacting codes: the visual and the verbal, which cannot be considered separately within comics. Thus, they are imbued with signs and meanings for those who consume them, while simultaneously paving a cultural path toward the expansion of knowledge.

According to Schneider (2011), when handling activities involving comics, students become engaged with the subject as they recognize in the elements of the genre issues that are part of their own culture. In this way, the interest in and desire for comics stimulate the child's volitional state, defined by Vygotsky (1993, p. 19) as "[...] a dynamic system of meanings in which the affective and the intellectual unite." Thus, the well-being generated by the student's willingness to read comics constitutes an intellectual activity that contributes to the appropriation of concepts and the development of thought.

Paiva (2016), in her doctoral dissertation[1], discussed comics in the light of the principles of *Historical-Cultural Theory*, emphasizing how signs can be conveyed through contact with comics as a mediating resource. She argues that:

> [...] the specific construction of comics enables differentiated interaction, with words and illustrations, in a dynamic that seeks to communicate from the simplest to the most complex elements, making use of situations, characters, and narratives that are part of humanity's cultural heritage and uniquely shaping educational development (p. 50).

In this endeavor, comics present a range of possibilities for pedagogical practices that allow teachers to adapt such resources to the reality of their classroom and stimulate students' critical thinking, imagination, and creativity (Netto and Vergueiro, 2018). Thus, the primacy of the reading process is understood as dependent on the student's own needs and meanings – and comics can support this

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[1] Histórias em quadrinhos na educação: memórias, resultados e dados.

process, as students "find it less difficult to concentrate on reading for study purposes" (Vergueiro, 2020, p. 23).

Grounded in the contributions of researchers and theorists of *Historical-Cultural Theory*, this study addresses the barriers faced by students with ID regarding the appropriation of reading and writing in the early years of Elementary School. The study derives from the master's research entitled *Comic books as a mediating resource for improving the reading and writing of students with intellectual disabilities* (2022) and has as its central objective in this article to analyze the contribution of comics as a mediating resource for the learning of reading and writing by students with ID.

To this end, we applied the didactic-pedagogical experiment (Davídov, 1988) to 10 students: 2 with intellectual disabilities and 8 with learning difficulties related to reading and writing. However, considering the space-time constraints of an article, we present here the discussions and syntheses of the results of the experiment referring to Episode 1, which involved skills related to writing, represented by a comic text in scene 2 and a prose text in scene 1.

2 Methodology

Given our objective, the study adopted bibliographic research as its methodology, with descriptive, exploratory studies and field research. For this purpose, in the bibliographic search we prioritized works on *Historical-Cultural Theory* (*HCT*), comics, and the learning of reading and writing, with special attention to students with intellectual disabilities (ID). Our research took place from January 2021 to July 2022, using the following platforms: *Biblioteca Digital de Teses e Dissertações* (*BDTD/IBICT*), Google Scholar, SciELO, and the *Portal de Periódicos da Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior* (*CAPES*).

In the field research stage, we used applied study, with an investigative method based on the principles of *Historical-Cultural Theory*: the didactic experiment (Davidov, 1988). The didactic experiment is both a method and an instrument for data

collection, and it was applied in a municipal school in Apucarana, PR, in a 5th grade class of Elementary School I, which included students with ID.

To ensure ethical compliance, the project was submitted to the Ethics Committee of the State University of Paraná (*CEP*), and was approved under Consolidated Opinion no. 4.781.303. The participants, a total of 10 students, were included through the signing of the Free and Informed Consent Form (*TCLE*) by their guardians, and the Free and Informed Assent Form (*TALE*) by the students. Data collection took place over three sessions, totaling six hours of intervention. The students carried out reading and writing production activities, being challenged to interpret and produce texts both in prose and in comic format.

The analysis of the data collected was based on Leontiev's (2004) *Activity Theory* and Vygotskian assumptions. The didactic experiment was divided into episodes, and each part of the proposal was called a "scene" (Moura, 1992). Each application of the experiment involved two episodes: one in prose and the other in comics. Each of them included a scene 1 and a scene 2. The latter challenged the participants with activities of analysis, interpretation, and text production in both prose and comic formats.

The proposed activities were based on some of the language skills set out in the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (*BNCC*) for Elementary School, such as EF15LP05, EF35LP07, and EF15LP05 (Brazil, 2018). The analysis was carried out based on the production of the ten participants, and in this article we present the analyses referring to the production of participants E1 and E2 (as they were identified in order to preserve the identity of the study's contributors). These students met the inclusion criteria, covering both those with ID and those with reading and writing difficulties.

The responses were organized into tables and analyzed with the aim of verifying the hypothesis that the use of comics fosters the development of reading and writing skills in students with ID.

3 Results and Discussion

As announced, our objective was to analyze the contribution of comic books as a mediating resource for the learning of reading and writing by students with ID. We therefore discuss the analyses referring to the responses of participants E1 and E2 to Episode 1, focusing on writing skills.

This episode, consisting of scene 1 (prose), proposed the following: "**Read the story below carefully. After reading, continue reporting the events and write an ending for it."**. The activity then required students to complete the text *The girl who drew*, by Márcia Hazin. Scene 2 (comics), in turn, proposed: "**Carefully observe the comic strip, imagine what the character is thinking and saying during the story. Then, write in the speech balloons the dialogues for the character according to the scenes presented.**". The comic strip *Melissa* (authored by the researcher) challenged students to interpret the visual symbols present in the narrative and later confront their perceptions when creating the dialogues.

Thus, supported by motivation through the choice of theme, the introduction of the episode encouraged students to reflect on the context of human activity in the face of environmental degradation and on their role within this reality, so that they could take on the writing activities.

To this end, they were guided to interpret and produce the text in the mentioned format. In this episode, for the analyses of the students' responses, since these consisted of discursive elements, we used as a reference framework the objectives adapted from the *BNCC*, related to writing practices. In Tables 1 and 2, we present the responses of E1 and E2, respectively, to scene 1, prose text.

Table 1 – Analysis of participants' responses in the writing practice – Scene 1 (prose)

Writing Practices – Scene 1 (PROSE)	E1	E2
The communicative situation	C*	C

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The interlocutors	C	C
The purpose or objective	C	C
The organization and form	C	IP
The organization and form	C	IP
The theme	C	C
Linguistic and grammatical knowledge	IP	IP
Spelling	IP	IP
Basic rules of nominal agreement	IP	IP
Basic rules of verbal agreement	IP	IP
Punctuation (period, exclamation point, question mark)	IP	IP
Division into balloons (with dialogues), according to the graphic conventions of the textual genre	C	IP

Source: Extracted and adapted by the author from the *BNCC* skills (2018).

*We used "C" for the aspect "Consolidated" in the students' responses, "IP" for "In Progress" of development, and "NC" for "Not Consolidated."".

Table 2 – Analysis of participants' responses in the writing practice – Scene 2 (Comics)

Writing Practices – Scene 2 (Comics)	**E1**	**E2**
The communicative situation	C	C
The interlocutors	C	C
The purpose or objective	C	C
The organization and form	C	C
The organization and form	C	C
The theme	C	C

Linguistic and grammatical knowledge	EP	EP
Spelling	EP	EP
Basic rules of nominal agreement	C	C
Basic rules of verbal agreement	C	C
Punctuation (period, exclamation point, question mark)	C	C
Division into balloons (with dialogues), according to the graphic conventions of the textual genre	C	C

Source: Extracted and adapted by the author from the *BNCC* skills (2018).

The analyses of Tables 1 and 2, although the quantitative data indicate variation in the correct answers obtained by the participants, emphasize that the central objective of this analysis is not limited to the measurement of numerical results. What is intended to be highlighted is the relevance of students' interaction with the comic book genre as a mediating pedagogical resource in the process of learning reading and writing. It was observed that the presence of visual elements characteristic of comics, such as sequential images, speech balloons, and facial expressions, played a fundamental role in mediating the content, fostering engagement and comprehension on the part of students with intellectual disabilities.

The correct answers, even if few in number, gain qualitative relevance when considered in light of the principles of *Historical-Cultural Theory* (*HCT*). From this perspective, learning is not a linear process or one restricted to rigid performance standards, but a phenomenon that develops within the dynamic between the individual and the cultural environment, being enhanced by mediation and the internalization of socially shared signs. Thus, the progress observed in the participants' responses indicates that the use of comics contributed significantly to the activation of the *zone of proximal development* (*ZPD*), by providing accessible semiotic support that fosters

the student's movement from what they can already do with assistance to what they may later achieve autonomously.

From this perspective, comics function as cultural instruments that promote the development of *Higher Psychological Functions* (*HPF*), as they allow students to appropriate language practices through an aesthetic, symbolic, and communicative experience. When considering the child in their entirety, as a historical subject in the process of formation, it is possible to understand that the signs of learning identified, even if not fully consolidated, represent concrete movements of advancement in the cultural development of the participants. In this sense, comics are not only a didactic resource, but a mediating tool capable of promoting access to written language, the construction of meaning, and active participation in the universe of literate culture.

In this context, we next present excerpts from the production of E1, elaborated from the prose genre proposal, shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Response of E1 to scene 1 of the prose text
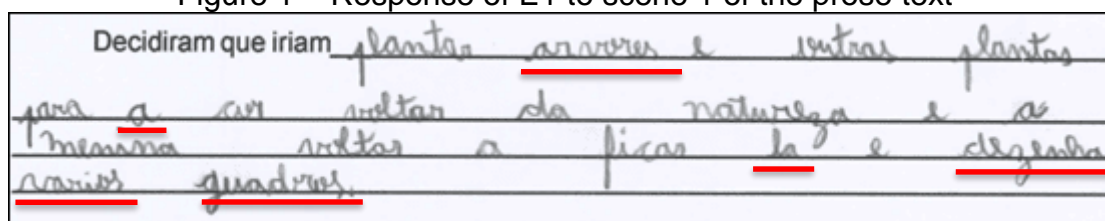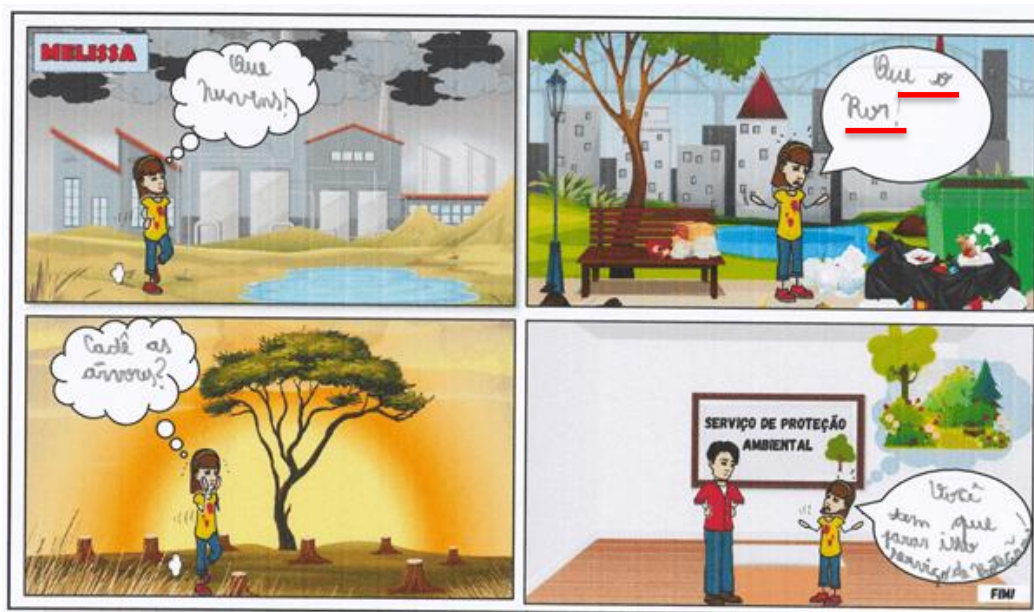

Source: Researcher's archive (2022).

When analyzing the production of participant E1 in scene 1 (prose), we noticed that he understood the proposed activity and wrote according to the theme presented. Thus, he presents a solution to the problem faced by the character through the sentence "plant trees and other plants so that nature will return" (E1), which suggests the participant's awareness of the consequences of the environmental problem, understanding it not only as an isolated issue, but as a collective problem. This perception is consistent with the *BNCC* base document (Brazil, 2018), which clarifies that through cultural practices, people become social subjects. His language use is

also consistent with the structure of the genre, since it presents continuity of the previous paragraph and uses prose in the sequence of the argumentative discourse.

However, in this production, linguistic and grammatical knowledge present some deviations, as highlighted in Figure 1. We observed that E1 recorded his idea without punctuation and with some spelling substitutions, such as in the words "dezenha" and "guadros," suggesting the need for more intentional mediation practices for the exploration and internalization of such concepts by the student. Next, we present Figure 2, with E1's data referring to the comic strip proposal.

Figure 2 – Response to scene 2 of the comic text

Source: Researcher's archive (2022).

In scene 2 (comics), from which the participant wrote the dialogue for the character, we noticed a logical sequence in the production, as well as the appropriate use of punctuation to demonstrate the character's discontent in the face of scenes of environmental degradation. In this case, the communicative situation directed its

message to the reader, who could find in the dialogue sentences the purpose of the text.

Thus, we observed that E1 relied on the images for the planning and organization of his production, unlike the previous activity, in which he presented a discourse with few details. According to Vygotsky (1997), this perception engendered by images, on the concrete plane, leads to the abstraction represented by the words of discourse, revealing the starting point for the formation of abstract thought.

Regarding the structure of the text in its linguistic and grammatical aspects, we can say that E1 organized it according to the format of comic books, with short sentences and with the effect produced by the use of punctuation and graphic signs, an aspect not observed in scene 1 (prose). The sentence in the last panel, "You have to stop this protection service!" indicates that the student assigned meaning to the scene by envisioning in the environmental protection service an option to solve the environmental situation.

The performance regarding the theme in the activity shows that the student demonstrates appropriation of literacy, which, according to Soares (2003), is established in the use of writing for social practices. Next, we turn to the analysis of E2's textual excerpt referring to scene 1, shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 – Response of E2 to scene 1 of the prose text
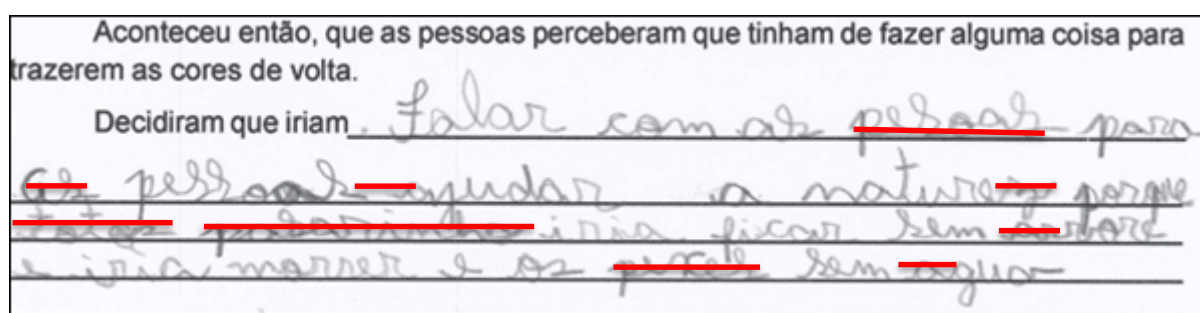
Source: Researcher's archive (2022).

In the production of scene 1 (prose) by participant E2, we observed a clear relation between the theme and the purpose of the text. Therefore, we can infer that,

in the communicative situation, E2 assumes that if people did not mobilize to help nature, there would be serious consequences for the animals' habitat. The persuasive message conveyed demonstrates that the context of environmental preservation was internalized and, according to Vygotsky (1997), belongs to his actual developmental level[2], demonstrated by the activity carried out independently.

The organization and the way the paragraph was concluded indicate that the participant needs pedagogical guidance and mediation through tools that help him understand the use of capital letters in the text, since he used them in two inappropriate situations: first, when continuing the paragraph with the word "Falar," and later with "As pessoas," which was a continuation of the previous idea—both written with initial capitals in the body of the text.

With regard to linguistic aspects, we noticed deviations in verbal agreement in the sentences "As pessoas ajudar a naturez" and "totos pasarinho iria ficar sem arvore," in addition to problems of punctuation and spelling, all highlighted in E2's production. Nevertheless, for the paragraph to present greater coherence with the theme, he could have explored the plot more deeply and concluded the narrative with additional elements. Next, we analyze the data from scene 2, presented in Figure 4.

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[2] According to Vygotsky (1997), a child's actual level of development encompasses the activities they are able to carry out independently, without adult assistance.

Figure 4 – Response to scene 2 of the comic text
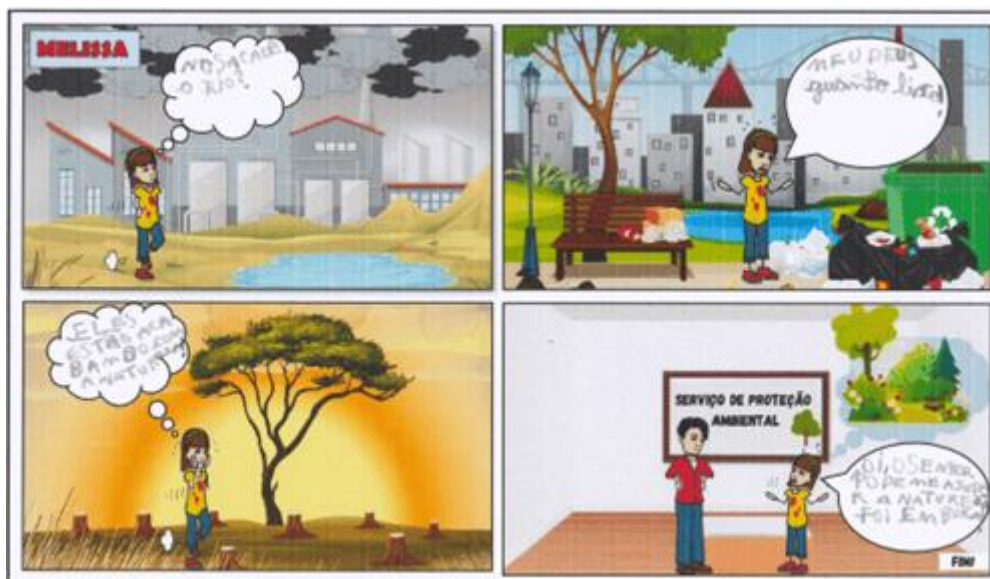
Source: Researcher's archive (2022).

With regard to scene 2, E2 demonstrated familiarity with the compositional structure of the comic book genre, including the use of capital letters in print—a stylistic feature common in comic books. The language is appropriate to the communicative situation, expressed through short and objective sentences, which contributes to the expressiveness of the characters and to the coherence in the temporal and visual sequence of events.

According to Vergueiro (2020, p. 54), this communicative potential of comics stems from "visual metaphors that act in the sense of expressing ideas and feelings," represented by signs based on everyday references. The reading and interpretation of these signs mobilize visual literacy and multimodal reading skills, which are fundamental for a full understanding of the comic genre and favor the active participation of students with intellectual disabilities.

In the last scene analyzed, the character asks for help from the agent of the Environmental Protection Service, which indicates an appropriation of the proposed theme, namely individual responsibility in the face of environmental problems. This

construction of meaning demonstrates, in light of the principles of Leontiev (2004), that cultural knowledge is being gradually assimilated, showing the role of guided activity in psychological development and in the internalization of concepts.

Linguistic knowledge also stands out, with a more consistent application of the standard norm, especially in the use of punctuation marks (exclamation and question marks), in nominal and verbal agreement, and in the structuring of coherent and contextualized sentences. These elements reinforce the progressive mastery of the conventions of the comic book genre, whose concise and graphic language fosters mediation between verbal and visual discourse.

On the other hand, spelling deviations were still observed in words such as "nosa," "guanto," and "acabamdo" (Figure 4), which indicates the need for didactic strategies that connect the teaching of written language to the students' social contexts. As Vygotsky (1997) points out, linguistic difficulties should not be interpreted as definitive limitations, but as indicators of the zones of proximal development that can be activated through pedagogical mediation.

Pletsch (2009) complements this perspective by affirming that students with intellectual disabilities present particularities in cognitive development, which may impact reading, writing, and problem-solving skills in everyday life. However, these particularities should not be seen as insurmountable barriers, but as starting points for inclusive pedagogical practices that value diversity.

The analysis of the productions shows that in the proposal involving the comic book genre, especially in the activity with the story *Melissa*, the evaluation criteria related to reading and writing skills were more successful compared to the previous production in prose. This is due, in part, to the accessible and visually stimulating language of comics, which fosters the expression of ideas and emotions while bringing students closer to socially meaningful literacy practices (Vergueiro, 2020).

Thus, working with the comic book genre proves to be particularly productive in the context of educating students with intellectual disabilities, as it offers multiple

possibilities for expression, articulation between image and text, and students' engagement with the processes of reading and writing.

4 Final Considerations

In this study, our objective was to analyze the contribution of comic books as a mediating resource for the learning of reading and writing by students with ID, with emphasis on the linguistic skills related to these practices.

To this end, we addressed as a central issue the fact that the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in mainstream education, regarding the barriers that hinder the learning of reading and writing, reveals the complexity of developing pedagogical practices that effectively meet the needs of these students.

We proceeded from the assumption that access to different languages, such as those found in comics, enables students with intellectual disabilities to achieve cultural and psychological development, which is essential for the appropriation of reading and writing.

In this context, teacher mediation, grounded in the principles of *Historical-Cultural Theory*, is paramount for the development of the cognitive and linguistic skills of students with intellectual disabilities.

As demonstrated in the research of authors such as Paixão and Oliveira (2018) and Netto and Vergueiro (2018), the student's engagement with the language of comics and the use of this tool in the teaching process contribute significantly to the improvement of reading and writing. Moreover, by considering the sociocultural context and the students' experiences, teachers have the opportunity to explore methods that make learning more meaningful and effective.

The research conducted points to the need for ruptures in the traditional model of teaching, seeking alternatives such as the use of comic books, which prove promising in mediating the literacy process. Through comics, it is possible to combine verbal and visual language, providing a more objective understanding of the signs

and symbols present in students' daily lives, thereby facilitating the appropriation of the concepts necessary for reading and writing.

Therefore, the use of comics is not limited to the simple reading or interpretation of images and words. The didactic experiment carried out in this study reflects the potential of comics as an inclusive pedagogical resource, and the results obtained suggest that these practices should be increasingly explored in the teaching-learning process of students with intellectual disabilities, ensuring not only access to knowledge but also the possibility of meaningful and contextualized learning.

Considering that, for Davídov (1999), children appropriate knowledge and skills when they present an internal need and motivation for such, for the purposes of analysis we employed the didactic experiment structured into episodes and scenes, with scene 1 consisting of a prose text and scene 2 of a comic text, aiming to involve students in experiences of social reality. Through the comic text, students with intellectual disabilities engaged in reading and writing practices, seeking to assign meaning to the tasks and overcome difficulties in the aforementioned linguistic skills.

The impressions derived from the analyses of the participants' productions suggest that the organization of activities with the comic book genre provides enough familiarity to elicit meaningful responses, indicating the mobilization of higher psychological functions, such as voluntary attention, perception, and creative imagination, for the execution of what was proposed.

This scenario was also reflected in linguistic aspects, in which most participants demonstrated consolidation of the concepts employed in the activities of text production, interpretation, and reading comprehension. These findings allow us to agree with Leontiev (2005) regarding the substantial role that education plays in the life of the child, since it acts precisely in their activity, in their behavior toward objective reality, and contributes to the development of their psyche.

Although we know that the development and learning of students with intellectual disabilities depend on different social and biological factors, in this research we sought to mitigate the barriers in the teaching of reading and writing by

believing in the possibilities of children's cultural and psychological development. As Vygotsky (1997, p. 10, our translation) emphasizes, "every disability creates stimuli for developing a compensation." This statement shows that disability is not a determining condition for the student, but that their stage is correlated with social demands.

From the study carried out, the results indicate that the use of comics fosters the cultural and psychological development of students when employed in the organization of teaching as a mediating instrument of learning. This resource has the potential to contribute to the improvement of reading and writing for students with intellectual disabilities and their peers, as it constitutes a language that can foster the appropriation of reading and writing by all students.

Finally, this study contributes to the understanding that students with intellectual disabilities have the potential to appropriate reading and writing; however, it must be considered that disability does not set the boundaries of students' learning but instead demands more assertive and accessible interactions and mediations. Referring to the words of Izabel Maior (2022), "disability is nothing more than the sum of denied opportunities."

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