

# RESEARCH AT THE COLOMBO INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION UNICOLOMBO

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**Summary:** This article is about formative research and research in the strict sense. An analysis of the different components is presented as follows: the philosophy of classroom projects, existing research groups in the different programs and proposed avenues of research, the essence of the research sources with their characteristics and functions and finally, existing groups in the programs.

**Key words:** Research group, research, research in the strict sense, formative research, lines research, classroom project and research sources.

Research is a set of processes directed towards understanding, interpreting and explaining reality. Its result is the production, application, transformation and advancement of scientific knowledge.

At UNICOLOMBO, research is generated in two dimensions:

**Formative:** This dimension corresponds to the way in which topics and research activities are inserted into the development of programs and seeks to mold students in this process.

In the strict sense: This dimension (formal and applied) is developed by groups of teachers, assistants and young researchers when trying to understand educational reality from varying perspectives and to provide new, contextual solutions.

These two dimensions are not conceived independently, but rather feed off of and promote the work of each other.

## 1.1 FORMATIVE INVESTIGATIVE.

For the Colombo International University Foundation, or Unicolombo, the creation, re-elaboration, appropriation and application of knowledge in well-defined social cultural and business contexts is important. This facilitates creative resolutions of the problems and historical contradictions that afflict society.

That is why research, in an institutional environment, is conceived as a social-cultural construction and understood as a creative and academic production of innovation, adaptation, diffusion and socialization. This process seeks to understand, explain,

contrast, propose and seek solutions to theoretical and practical problems relevant to Uicolombo, according to its Institutional Educational Project, Pedagogical Model, Institutional Principles, Policies and Objectives research proposals.

At UNICOLOMBO, formative research is developed through interdisciplinary classroom projects and teacher research projects. By way of this process, we have been building our own culture of research, but not one that is necessarily intertwined with projects intended to achieve innovative scientific results.



Through this strategy we hope to bring about a transcendental change in the curricular processes, with the creation of academic-administrative conditions to strengthen and develop the fundamental functions of the University: Teaching, Research and Social Projection. Thus, through the development of research around research lines and fields of interest, reflection can be done in the processes of accounting, administration, tourism, law and education. In

this way, the plans of study are improved, students are formed through research and teachers become qualified by the generation of pertinent and relevant knowledge.

With this in mind, research is based upon three Pedagogical Models:

- The research principle as a formative strategy
- The contextualization principle that provides sense and pertinence to the manifested and implemented actions
- The interdisciplinary principle as a meeting point for distinct forms of knowledge

This is why a strategy is proposed to orient curricular design towards science and supply the student a language that will allow him/her to be abreast of its rapid pace. From this standpoint, it will be necessary to:

- Perform activities (courses, workshops, seminars, discussion groups, exhibitions and others) to foster teacher and student awareness in research formation.
- Define the research lines and fields of interests among teachers and students
- Encourage students to join the research groups that the teachers are currently developing in the program.
- Integrate classroom projects with teachers' research as a contribution to the implementation of quality standards
- Participate in local, regional and

national events such as lectures and research publications developed in the programs

- Hold scientific-technical events on a semester basis in order to report research activity.

**1.1.1 Classroom Projects.** Classroom research is a strategy and methodology whose principal purpose is to mobilize the cognitive structures of the student in an autonomous and interactive process.

It is a didactic planning instrument and an integrating factor that articulates classroom curricular components and research. It is used as a means to question and to search and assures that classroom teaching is cross-curricular and globalized.

This answers the following questions: What do I do? Why do I do it? How do I do it? With whom do I do it? Where do I do it? This implies defining the intention, purpose, justification and the means that will be used to carry out the project.

- In education today, the concept of project is found among the following: constructivism, diversity, learning by understanding, the relationship between learning and content, text production, and interdisciplinary and intercultural concepts. Classroom projects are didactic paths that can be taken and an area of knowledge that should respond to:

- A theoretical framework implemented within a flexible curriculum

where educational practices are reformed into a new educational concept: learning and the role of the student and teacher.

- **Teacher Inquiries:** Francois Victor Tochon defines 'project' as a negotiation destined to produce a set of activities that will satisfy individual desires and at the same time meet social objectives. He adds that projects promote the liberation of the role of reproducer in education, the creative autonomy of the subject, novelty in liberation and the non-hierarchic pedagogical animation, which implies what the teacher must solve: What does it mean to act as a mediator or facilitator? How can I generate meaningful learning situations in the classroom?



- The student's demands, who acting as the main character in his own learning, builds his knowledge from group-class interaction in a research process in order to develop thinking strategies, choice, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
- An open, flexible curriculum with changing and interrelated contents that assigns importance to processes and employs formative evaluations and contextualizes knowledge.

- An integral course of action: according to Maite Maser and Maria Jose de Molina, every project has a direction or a path and a course of action.

### 1.1.1.1 Function of Classroom Projects.

- Foresee, guide and prepare a path to reach a purpose or a determined result.
- Mentally anticipate actions to be developed during the course of a project.
- Determine the diverse steps and actions that must be undertaken during the project.
- Direct, channel, and guide the way in a systematic and organized manner towards a determined purpose ( Main Function).

### 1.1.1.2 Important Aspects for the Development of Projects<sup>2</sup>

“For the development of projects, it is indispensable to convert individual searches into collective explorations in which each one of the participants has an option to be the main character of his work, starting with the appropriation of the idea of group work. The most important learning is achieved using the processes, *while always being cognizant of the search for the goals established by the group.*

<sup>2</sup>CHAPARRO. Clara Inés. Classroom Projects vs. Homogeneization. U. Pedagógica Nacional.

This is how ways to observe, organizational forms, dispositions (protagonist feelings and self-confidence) and values (articulated by the relationship of group members) are constructed.”

On the other hand, developing classroom projects, which are done using the resolution as the center of their research and shared by the group, has the characteristic of being multidisciplinary and local. In other words, the knowledge produced as the result of the project was surely built through the pertinent interplay of many disciplinary fields which appear in the curriculum or externally.

### 1.1.1.3 Teachers as Companions.

Doing a classroom project offers many options for student participation. The teacher does not resolve problems and difficulties, but rather fosters an appropriate environment with his comments. The point being that projects should be student-centered and that the teacher should not undermine this concept because of intellectual dependency. Having said this, it is conceivable that there are classroom projects in which the teacher plays the role of protagonist.

So that this eventuality is not excluded, we should confirm the existence of at least two types of projects: those generated by “genuine” problems and those which are didactic. A genuine problem is one that surges from the everyday world. In this case, the



teacher is incorporated into the classroom academic project as another participant because, thanks to his knowledge, he becomes a leader. In the case of didactic problems, the role of the teacher can be a different one, because he surely knows the answers to the questions and the solutions to the problems. As a result, he becomes a dynamic character in the activities.

Finally, if one considers what the teacher does while the student project is being developed, two aspects can be identified: the first is that of a companion who is always encouraging the students and suggesting ways to solve things and the other is that of a researcher who becomes distant from what his students are doing.



### 1.1.2 Groups and Lines of Research.

Unicolombo - Fundación Universitaria Colombo Internacional has two research groups registered in Colciencias:

- **Research Group in the English**

**Teaching-Learning Process, GIPEAIN.** This group conducts the project: *“The English Teaching - Learning Process in basic education institutions in marginalized urban areas within the Fundación Universitaria Colombo Internacional sphere of influence”.*

- **Research Group in the Internationalization of Accounting GIINCO.** This group conducts the project: *“Proposal for the improvement of administrative processes for companies in the city of Cartagena from an international point of view.”*

**1.1.2.1 Institutional Line of Research.** The line of research from which UNICOLOMBO embarks is English Teaching and Learning.”

- **Lines of Research per Program.** The research lines per program are as follows:

- **Line of Research for the BA Program Basic Education with Emphasis in English:** *“Teaching-learning the English language in marginalized urban contexts in the city of Cartagena”.*

- **Line of Research for the Public Accounting Program :** *“Internationalization of Accounting in business contexts”.*

- **Line of Research for the Program of Business Administration** *“Financial Management and Business Competitiveness at a national and international level”.*

- **Line of Research for the Programs of Management Tourism and Hotel Services and Management of Tourist and Hotel Companies:** The program of

Management of Tourism and Hotel Management focuses on the “*Management of Tourism and Hotel Companies and Company Social Responsibility*,” and the 'technological' programs sub-titled “*Management of Tourist Services and Management of Hotel Services*.”

• **Lines of Research for the Law Program:** Five research lines have been proposed. These are: “Globalization and Law,” “Philosophy of Law and Judicial Argumentation,” “Territorial Organization and Local Administration,” “Constitutional and Human Rights,” and “International Relations and Legal Systems.”

## 1.2 RESEARCH IN THE STRICT SENSE.

On the other hand, *de rigueur* research is conducted by research teachers assisted by students in formation (research source). Besides constituting a social process, this allows the generation of knowledge, recognized by the regional academic community.

Through research we seek to facilitate the insertion of teachers and students into academic and scientific programs locally, nationally and eventually internationally as well. The development of research processes such as these will facilitate the design and execution of future projects by other researchers with differing focuses.

UNICOLOMBO has been called upon to stimulate the social, economic, legal, touristic, business, technological and educational development of the region and

nation through the formation and permanent construction of the human factor. It is essential that an appropriate academic-research climate be established in order to produce, interpret and understand knowledge, as well as abilities and values inherent in the formative requirements of groups (students, teachers and management) in the different programs.

### 1.2.1 Research Sources.

**1.2.1.1 What are Sources?** Research sources constitute an extracurricular pedagogic strategy whose goal is to promote a culture of research in undergraduate students who are grouped so as to develop activities geared to research production, formative research and on-line work.

At UNICOLOMBO, young people from all the undergraduate programs are currently being utilized as sources to strengthen the research processes. The research groups are presently affiliated with the Colombian Network of Research Sources – RedCOLSI. These are collegiate bodies whose actions are based on three fundamental themes: learning how to research, performing the research with an eye towards the scientific and applications, and on-line work.

**1.2.1.2 Characteristics of Research Sources.** The characteristics of Research Sources are the following:

- Promote research training
- Promote interaction among teachers, researchers and students in order to



strengthen academic excellence, social development and the community's scientific progress.

- Stimulate training in group and inter-disciplinary work
- Foment a culture of learning and participation in research networks.

### 1.2.1.3 Functions of the Research Sources.

Their functions are the following:

- Design the organizational structure of the source
- Establish the strategic planning of the research source.
- Assure that it is permanently updated and formed.
- Support the research groups of the various programs
  - Hold meetings and research events.
  - Share the advances of research at a local, regional and national level with the scientific community
- Publish research in the written media.
- Exchange experiences with research peers, promoting joint projects and internships.

### 1.2.1.4 Uicolombo Research Sources.

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<b>SOURCES COLOMBO INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION</b>	
1.	<b>INPEUNICOL: COLOMBO</b>
Name of source:	<b>RESEARCHERS IN PEDAGOGY of Administrative Science and Accounting</b>

<b>SOURCES COLOMBO INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION</b>	
1.	<b>S.I.A.C Advanced by</b>
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