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Academic Training in the Double Degree on Teacher of Pre-Elementary and Elementary Education: A Reciprocity Model Among Three Agents Based on the Audiovisual Narratives

Moisés Selfa Sastre

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Abstract

The academic training carried out in teacher degrees refers to the period where the undergraduate faces the significantly diverse realities of education and teaching. During the entire building process, there are three main important agents involved: the trainee student and the supervisors from both the faculty and the school where the training takes place. Since the 2015–2016 school year, these three agents have been involved in joint sessions in the Faculty of Education during the academic training period (I and II) of the double degree of pre-elementary and elementary education (FEPTS-UdL). In these joint sessions, each trainee student, together with their school and faculty supervisor, has presented a significant educational action of 20' in an audiovisual document to the rest of their classmates and supervisors. This project is created with a two-fold objective in mind: (a) to reflect on the undergraduate's teaching and (b) to show a work experience in class to the rest of the educational community that can be uplifting for everyone. The presentation of this activity allows the rest of the trainee students and the school and faculty supervisors to reflect on other teaching models that can be enriching when building their professional identity.

Keywords: teacher, academic training, audiovisual narratives, hybrid spaces, reciprocity

1. Introduction

The framework from the *Program of Improvement and Innovation in the Teacher Training* (MOBMIF, for its acronym in Spanish) has the purposes of (a) contributing to the graduate's improvement, and (b) supporting the start-up process of the pilot offer about the double

graduation of pre-elementary and elementary education in the universities willing to offer such option. One of the pillars in the training of the graduates in teacher degrees is to promote the development of academic training in educational contexts. This period of educational training needs to be considered as a fundamental moment in the training of these graduates-to-be. From this perspective, the process of reconciling the university degrees in Europe is an attempt to establish the European Space of Higher Education. As a result, this process encourages university degrees to provide the undergraduate not only with knowledge but also with strategies to keep learning and developing their training throughout their lives [1]. It has become increasingly necessary that the curriculum includes enough practical credits (the named *Practicum* in teacher degrees) and provides the possibility to develop their knowledge by being close to the professional reality.

Academic training is understood as the period where the undergraduate in a teacher degree faces the problems about education and teaching. The main objective of the academic training is to prepare and improve the professional abilities of those who are involved in it. Teaching is considered to be fundamental in the process of training the undergraduate. This is because the teachers-to-be can contrast the pedagogical theory with the educational reality and be aware of their future role in the educational institution [2].

The practicum mainly aims at favouring the construction of the student's practical knowledge. In this way, students can revise and consolidate the theoretical foundations previously acquired and integrate them in the professional reality sphere. Hence, the intention is for the student to observe, analyse and reflect on the strategies, techniques, instruments and actions that are normally developed in the class. This is an intellectual attitude of constant openness, review and improvement that students would have to share with their teachers and supervisors.

2. Objectives and methods

Since the 2015–2016 school year, the academic training's main objective in the double degree of pre-elementary and elementary education (UdL) is that of sharing peer-to-peer the professional knowledge acquired through audiovisual narratives. In order to share this knowledge, some sessions are organised in the Faculty of education (UdL) with two objectives:

- (a) Design, develop and analyse the formulas of interrelation between the students and the educational reality in the schools. These formulas of interrelation are developed in hybrid spaces where trainee students can present, listen and exchange teaching experiences that could uplift the other members. Furthermore, they are able to revise their own teaching practices. As claimed by [3], “los ambientes híbridos de aprendizaje combinan instrucción cara a cara con instrucción mediada por las tecnologías de información y la comunicación. Detrás de esta definición existe una intención de combinar y aproximar dos modelos de enseñanza-aprendizaje: el sistema tradicional de aprendizaje cara a cara y el sistema e-learning, con el propósito de no renunciar a las posibilidades que ofrecen ambos.”

- (b) Analyse the impact of these interrelation formulas through audiovisual narratives. Hence, different agents participating in the practicum are able to analyse specific teaching situations. Accordingly, as stated by Costa Sánchez and Piñeiro-Otero [4] “el ser humano necesita contar historias. Necesita explicarse a sí mismo y poner sentido en el mundo que lo rodea.”

In order to develop these two objectives, two different strategies are used. First, two sessions with the students are organised. Second, two hybrid space meetings are held by the supervisors from both the school and university and the students involved in academic trainings. These sessions and meetings in hybrid spaces are not two separate moments for learning, they are actually complementary for the achievement of the work objectives.

Tutorial number 1 was attended by the double degree students, the supervisors and the support personnel in order to pool the educational interventions that would take place during the practicum I and II. This space was also used to share an explanatory document and to solve doubts about the methodology approach that is to be developed. In the same way, the importance of students developing an active role was emphasised as a possible way to improve their teaching training process.

In tutorial number 2, the students and a support person, expert in audiovisual language, met so as to talk about diverse matters. First, different aspects based on the elaboration of audiovisual narratives. Moreover, they also discussed the documentation of teaching-learning interventions in the schools during the development of practicum I and II. This tutorial was designed to facilitate the elaboration of audiovisual narratives, to share possible doubts about the project and to try and solve them together through significant photos of the practices carried out by the students. In addition, a reading and analysis of the articles by Dussel and Gutiérrez [5] and Hernández [6] was suggested.

The hybrid space number 1 is a meeting point for students, school supervisors, academic supervisors and support personnel. The monitoring of the practicum takes place in this space and it is completed through the presentation of audiovisual narratives (videos or photographs) created by the students. The main objective of the aforesaid presentation is that of reflecting on the students' own training and the school contexts where the practicum is developed. It also allows the teachers and professors themselves to improve their professional activities. A number of 13 students presented their experiences and reflections in front of their classmates and supervisors during the first session.

In the hybrid space number 2, a number of 17 students continued with the video presentations in front of the rest of classmates, the school supervisors, the academic supervisors and the support personnel.

Two groups of students were created in an attempt to carry out two sessions in the hybrid spaces. These groups shared their experiences in the big group consisting of classmates and supervisors in order to discuss *what* aspects they had to deal with during the Practicum (competences and content) and *how* they approached them. First of all, students presented the audiovisual narratives individually or in pairs. Subsequently, questions were answered and some aspects were discussed by both the school supervisors and the students.

3. Recording instruments and data analysis

On the one hand, the project considers the videos made by the students, and on the other hand, considers the video recordings of the sessions in the hybrid spaces.

The videos created by the students are instruments used in this teaching project in order to analyse and reflect on the activities, content and competences acquired by the students in the school contexts where the practicum takes place. These videos are called audiovisual narratives. As claimed by Dussel and Gutiérrez [5], the aforesaid narratives are aimed at suggesting other bonds between words and images. These bonds help to analyse their content load, to reflect on their specificity and to relate them with other images, stories, speeches and interpretations of that reality.

These audiovisual narratives are defined by five features that allow us to talk about a story as such: “(a) Tiene un comienzo y un final, lo que genera la sensación de cierre; (b) se trata de una secuencia doblemente temporal, la del acontecimiento narrado y la del acto enunciativo en sí mismo; (c) esto implica, entonces, que la narración es un discurso, y en esa medida remite necesariamente a un sujeto de la enunciación; (d) a pesar de que pueda ser basado en una historia real, el relato no es la historia en sí, por lo que siempre *irrealizará* el hecho narrado; (e) un relato muestra un conjunto de acontecimientos, y estos son sus unidades fundamentales.” [4].

In order to make that possible, the trainee students were asked to elaborate a video of 45–60' in length that included the educational interventions carried out during the practicum I and II. Moreover, students were required to create a summary in video format in order to present their project to the rest of the classmates during the hybrid spaces. This summary had to last about 20' and it had to include the essence of the work that had been carried out.

With regards to the elaboration of the video, students were given a written guide with the basic aspects of audiovisual language so that the video would be of high quality and have a narrative sense. Furthermore, classes and voluntary tutorials were simultaneously offered. In this way, students were provided with an individual and personalised monitoring of each of the audiovisual narratives and the processing of the images.

In relation to the videos of the hybrid spaces, they were videotaped during their presentation by the support personnel. This was done in order to carry out a posterior analysis since diverse voices and reflections arose from the students and the school supervisors. The analysis of these voices indicates to what extent these meeting points favour the learning of other educational models for the building of the own professional identity.

4. Observed results from the audiovisual narratives

4.1. Result 1

The students organised and planned educational activities in order to create learning spaces. This was attainable due to the creation and implementation of the teaching sequence as well

as the short interventions and the everyday nature in class. In this way, the visual narratives were useful to define, document and describe the educational interventions, reflect on them and, in some cases, modify them. As a student explains,

Given these audiovisual narratives, I find myself in a point of reflection where I understand that these photos and videos are useful to bring me closer to my environment and to the class reality. Moreover, the audiovisual aspect helps to have a more realistic notion of what is happening and of what is done at any time than if it was in a written format. However, I also believe that a photo or video only shows a small part of reality. (LT)

4.2. Result 2

Not only were the videos analysed, but also the reflections that arose during the presentation of the educational interventions in the hybrid spaces. This interpretation showed how some students have developed a critical and reflexive view regarding the observed teaching models. This is stressed by a student,

Doing the training and being able to observe the videos and photos has been useful to realise that I do not want to repeat the models I have seen. I want to take the best aspects of each of the contexts that I have observed in order to use them in my educational practice. (A)

4.3. Result 3

Self-management is a competence that has been observed throughout the whole process, both in the implementation of the teaching sequence and in the creation of the videos and the photographic material. It is important to consider that not all of the school contexts facilitated the attainment of the photos due to the law on the protection of children's personal data. Nevertheless, students found the way to explain their experiences with both inventiveness and the knowledge about the basic aspects of audiovisual language (composition, sound, edition). Hence, students venture to develop their professional training and to create the audiovisual works through actions, which were not initially defined by the teaching members.

4.4. Result 4

Both online and cooperative works are evinced to develop expressive and communicative competences. For instance, some students created teaching sequences based on the *Pinocchio* tale that were combined and interconnected albeit coming from different school contexts. In this way, students not only achieve heterogeneous and collective processes but also diverse significant learning situations. Therefore, it is more than necessary to empower online work in higher education in order to obtain learning results, and consequently, to revise the own learning practice.

4.5. Result 5

A wide range of voices have emerged through the use of videos documenting the teaching sequences by students, children and the educational institutions where the training

is carried out: “el derecho a participar ha sido resumido en el concepto de *voz*, que se ha constituido en una metáfora muy potente para identificar, describir y denunciar las relaciones de poder y representación que se establecían en las instituciones y los grupos sociales” [7]. In this sense, the voice in this paper is seen as the abilities to participate, interact and empower demonstrated by the participants in the different school contexts where the practicum was conducted.

In an attempt to reflect on the real participation of the students, the R. Hart scale was considered. The aforesaid scale describes the levels of action in a participative educational project with children. The author places the categories of *no participation* on the first three steps, which go from manipulation or ruse to symbolic participation. The other five steps are considered participation models and their educative and participative value increases according to its position on the steps. These five steps symbolise an *authentic participation* because they consider key elements such as the choice, information, enquiry and being part of decision-making (Figure 1) [8].

4.6. Result 6

After watching the 20’ videos created by the students from the practicum, it is plausible to say that they have delved into the observation and the comprehension of school contexts. Consequently, it can be stated that educating the gaze and work on the audiovisual language allows students to “alcanzar un mejor modo de ver más crítico, emancipado o liberador. Ayudar a abrir los ojos, es decir, a ser conscientes de lo que realmente sucede en el mundo, ayudarlos a reconocer el modo en que sus miradas están generalmente atadas a determinadas posiciones y perspectivas” [9].



Figure 1. The scale of children’s participation. Source: Wikipedia.

5. Conclusions

The incorporation of new information technologies in the Higher Space of European Education has resulted, among other advantages, in the access to immaterial information that can be shared peer-to-peer. This information is of a great quality since it is rich in images and sounds that can be easily distributed. Furthermore, this information is always under an ethical code that permits its use for educational purposes only [10].

In this sense, the audiovisual narratives facilitate the building of the own professional identity during the practicum. This is plausible due to a previous selection process of content and images that have to show and describe the tasks carried out in the class. It is not just about providing audiovisual material for recording and editing audiovisual material. In fact, a posteriori process of selection and reflection on what is to be shown is equally or even more important. This is because it is there where the professional identity is being shaped.

Once the selection of the audiovisual material has been accomplished, a process that is mainly individual, the peer-to-peer analysis of audiovisual narratives takes place. This process allows students to critically reflect on the own positioning of the professional practice. Observing *what* and *how* teachers behave in school contexts and reflect on that observation helps to acquire good professional models and to modify the own workaday behaviour.

Digital technologies have long been incorporated to teacher education and it has been observed that the needs and appropriation ways of the media by the audience are essential. That is what determines the efficacy and permanence of a specific technology or language. These changes allow the identification of new aesthetic, formal and semiotic possibilities, with the increasing hybridisation of genres and narrative multiple formats [11].

The six results presented through the work of peer-to-peer audiovisual narratives help to opt for a training model where the reflection through a posteriori observation is prioritised in the Faculties of Education [12]. The teaching intervention is so absorbent that it is indispensable to revisit it in an attempt to improve and work on it. It is necessary to devote some time for reflection that facilitates taking new decisions so as to enhance the teaching practices. The reflection in the pedagogical process needs to be promoted. Opening spaces to the own questioning and foster the open dialogue are important procedures that those responsible for the teacher training should advocate. The formula of the hybrid space, understanding it as a place where peers dialogue through multiple languages, is an option that needs to be examined.

The audiovisual narratives permit revising the teaching practice since they favour the reflection and both the mutual and external knowledge about the professional teachers' interventions. This revision, as it has been seen, is based on the visualisation of interventions in a hybrid space where the educational agents dialogue from a significant audiovisual document. That is the only way of building a real professional identity which, as it is known, is in a continuous process of revision and improvement.

Author details

Moisés Selfa Sastre

Address all correspondence to: mselfa@didesp.udl.cat

University of Lleida, Lleida, Spain

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